



Community Stability in Jersey City's West Side

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Jersey City's West Side**
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The Edward J. Bloustein School of Planning and Public Policy serves as one of the nation's key centers for the theory and practice of planning and public policy scholarship and analysis. As part of Rutgers, The State University of New Jersey, the school capitalizes on the strength and resources of this major research university. The Bloustein School reaches to the larger world beyond the realm of academia to contribute to the regional, national, and international communities.

New Jersey Community Capital

www.newjerseycommunitycapital.org

New Jersey Community Capital is a community development financial institution that finances the creation and preservation of housing, particularly affordable housing, and commercial real estate. It provides capital for the development and operations of early care and education centers, schools, health clinics, human and social service programs, cultural and arts institutions, and other community services. New Jersey Community Capital provides loans and investments to businesses that create financial returns for their owners and social returns for their workforce, the communities in which they operate, and the environment.

City of Jersey City, Division of Community Development

www.cityofjerseycity.com

The Division of Community Development develops and rehabilitates both housing and public facilities and provides services through partnerships with various public agencies, not-for-profit organizations and for-profit developers. Community Development is also responsible for administering numerous grants, including Community Development Block Grants (CDBG), Community Services Block Grants (CSBG), and Emergency Shelter Grants (ESG).

NeighborWorks America

www.nw.org

NeighborWorks America is a national nonprofit organization created by Congress to provide financial support, technical assistance, and training for community-based revitalization efforts. Together, with national and local partners, NeighborWorks creates new opportunities for residents while improving communities.

Success Measures

www.sucessmeasures.org

Success Measures is a social enterprise at NeighborWorks America that provides a range of outcome-focused evaluation services and tools for community development organizations and their funding and intermediary partners. Their outcome-based evaluation method is highly participatory and includes training, technical assistance and a Web-based data system that is comprised of 50 common outcome indicators and more than 115 corresponding data-collection tools. Since its launch in mid-2005, Success measures has been used by 170 community development nonprofits and 14 funders and intermediaries to create and measure both short-term milestones and broader, long-term impacts.

Acknowledgements

The study team would like to thank Darice Toon, Director of the Jersey City Division of Community Development, for her frequent and always good natured assistance; Councilmembers Donnelly and Richardson for helpful insights regarding their respective districts; all the remaining key informants who generously shared their experiences and ideas; the Jersey City Police Department, Tax Assessor's office and Mayor's Action Bureau for providing very helpful data; and New Jersey Community Capital for giving us the opportunity to do this fascinating project.

All photos used in this report were taken by Candice Valente.

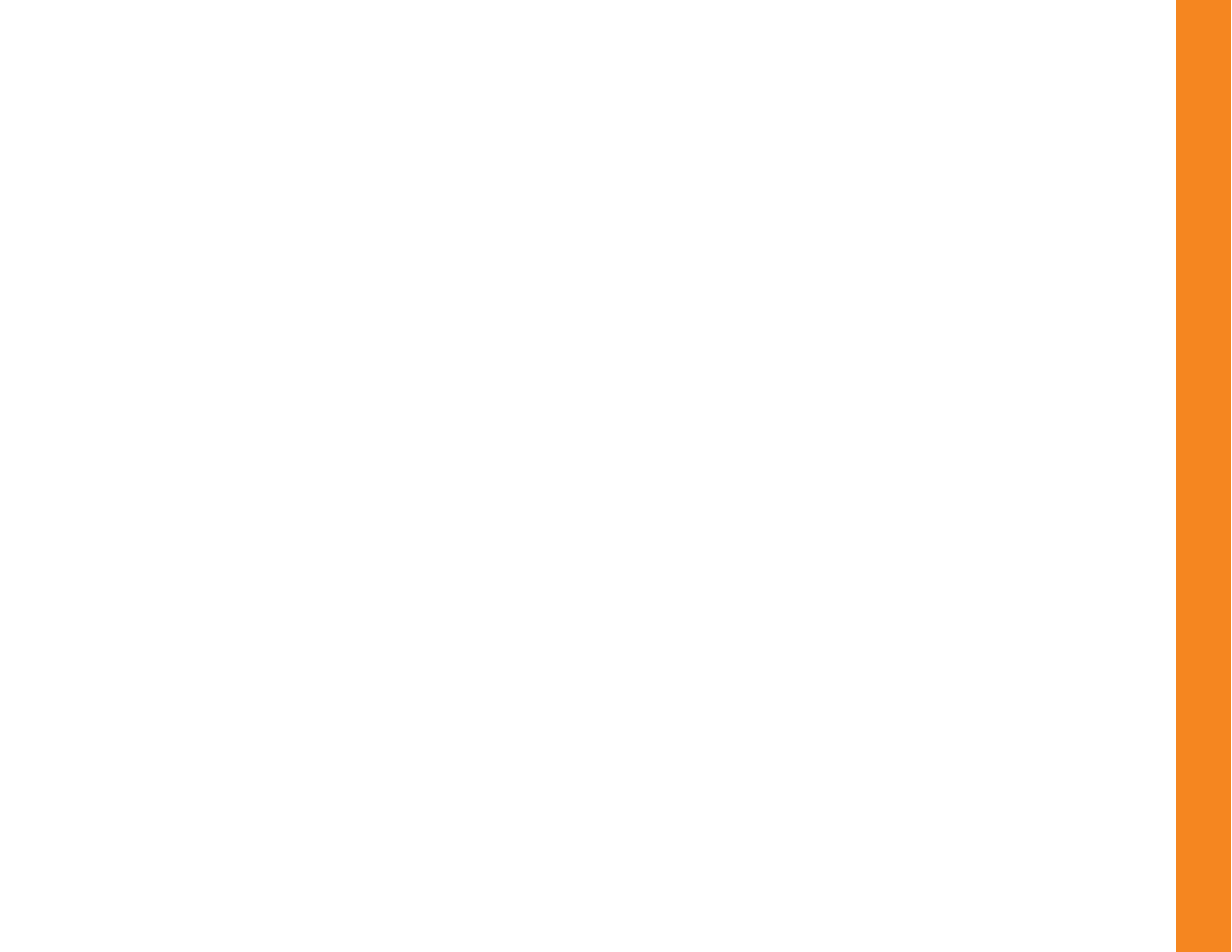
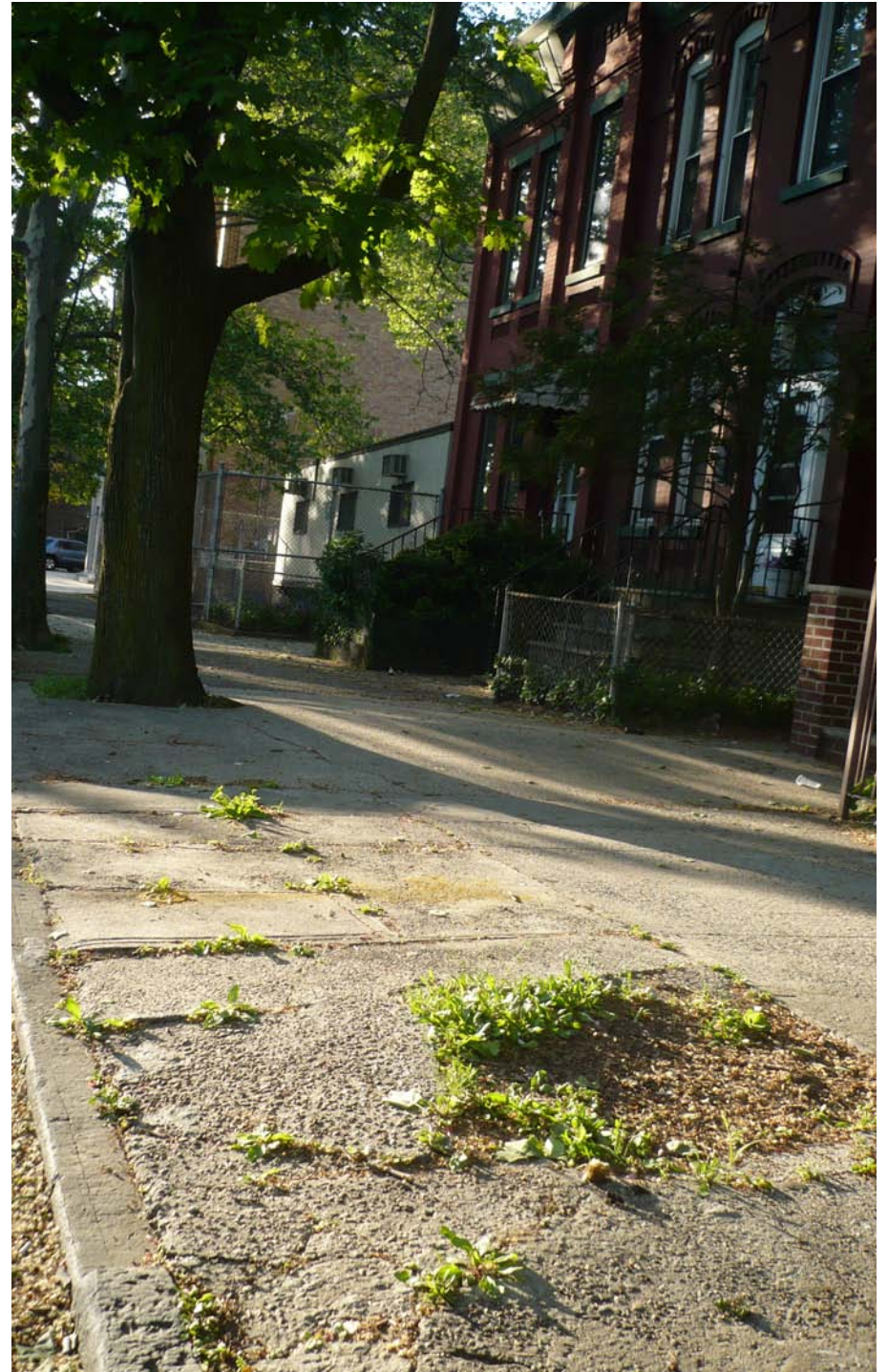


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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This presents the results of a participatory community assessment designed to measure various quality of life indicators for a neighborhood on the West Side of Jersey City. The assessment was conducted by graduate students from the Edward J. Bloustein School of Planning and Public Policy at Rutgers University, on behalf of the Jersey City Division of Community Development and New Jersey Community Capital.

Physical Condition of the Community

Our assessment of the physical conditions of the study area indicates two important strengths: a building stock that is generally in good condition, and a willingness on the part of residents to invest in improvements to their homes. The data also points to three potential concerns for the study area: the condition of windows and siding/ exterior walls of the residential and non-residential buildings; the condition of sidewalks, walkways and curbs; and the presence of litter and debris. Despite a large number of foreclosure filings in the study area, we found that the City has done an impressive job of minimizing their negative consequences on the surrounding neighborhood by making sure that these properties were properly maintained.

Public Goods & Services

Residents had a mixed assessment of the quality of public services in the study area. Public sanitation, emergency services, public utilities, police, local libraries, local parks, playgrounds and recreation centers were all well-regarded by the residents. Conversely, the quality of street repair, cleaning, and plowing services were rated much lower. Residents also had a mixed assessment of the quality of local public schools, particularly the public high schools in the area. Residents were most negative, however, when evaluating the responsiveness of local government to the needs of the community.

Transportation

One of Jersey City's greatest strengths is its access to public transportation, and this holds true for the study area as well. Ninety-seven percent of the residents surveyed were satisfied with their level of access to public transportation. Residents gave more mixed ratings to the quality of traffic control in the study area, and seemed generally unhappy with the availability of parking. Residents also rated the condition of curbs and sidewalks poorly, which can discourage walking versus driving in the study area. The redevelopment plans for the study area and its surrounding regions indicate that the City is aware of, and planning to address, many of these issues.

Employment

The majority of residents felt that the study area was close to their workplace, whether that was in Jersey City, New York City, or the surrounding area. Residents were less positive, however, about employment opportunities in the study area itself. This was particularly the case for manufacturing and other industrial jobs. Many residents felt that the City concentrated investments downtown, and did not view this as directly benefitting them or improving their employment prospects.

Retail & Other Services

Residents had mixed responses when questioned on the accessibility and their use of goods and services in the study area. With the exception of cultural and entertainment events, most of the basic services were deemed convenient and accessible. While residents took advantage of this accessibility when it came to shopping, they were less likely to do so for medical services, and were even less likely to eat out or attend cultural and entertainment events in the study area. In total, less than 40 percent of the residents chose access to amenities as one of the best reasons to live in the area. Improving this perception could help foster economic development and a stronger sense of community in the study area.

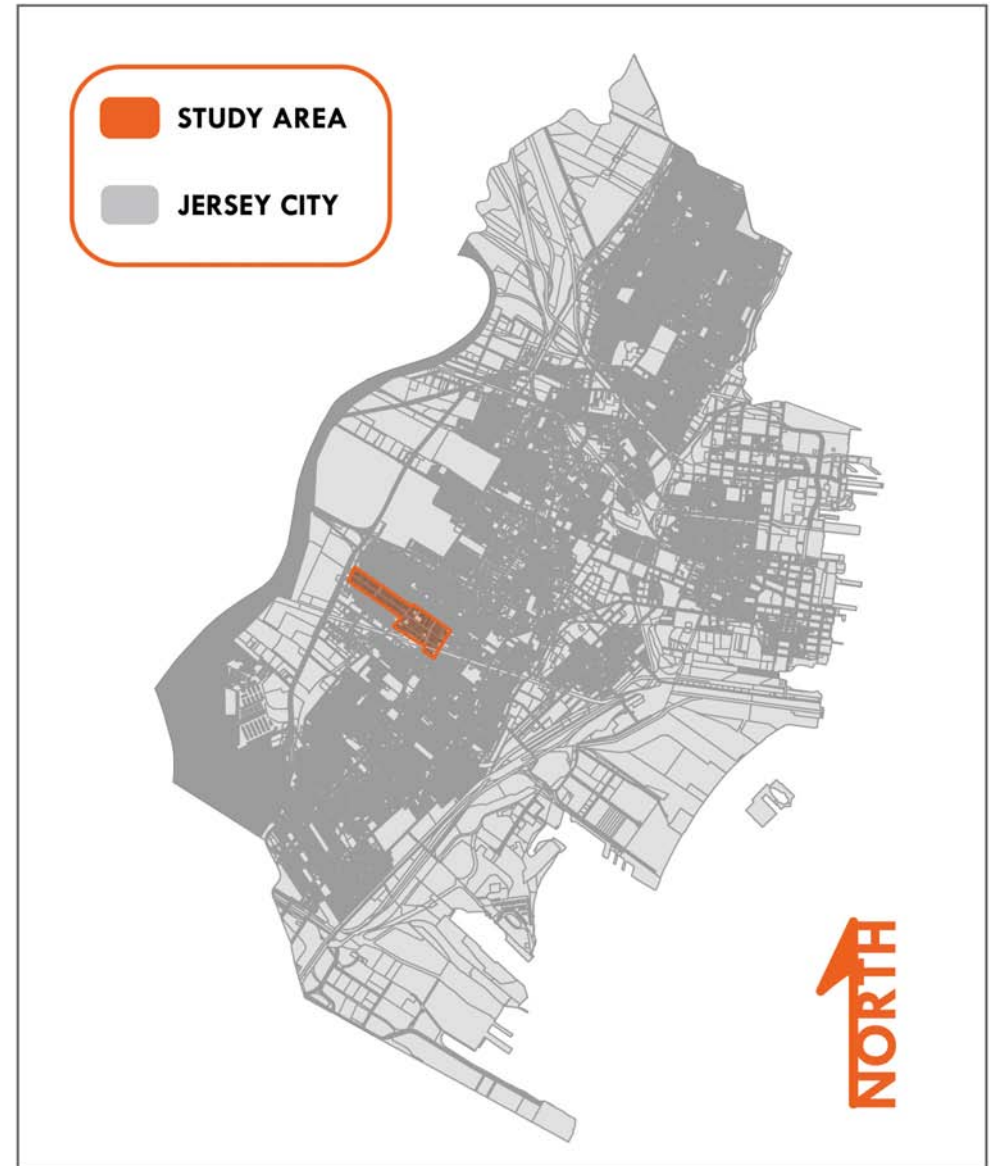
Safety

Although residents felt that drug activity and vandalism were issues for the community, they generally perceived the study area as a safe environment and did not feel that they were in danger in the course of their daily lives. However, crime data for the 15 months ending March 31, 2010, indicates that the study area has a disproportionately high rate of assaults and robberies. Increasing community policing activities, such as block watch programs, could help reduce the crime rate while also building additional social capital in the community.

Community Involvement

Residents expressed satisfaction with living in the community, a desire to continue to do so, and a willingness to recommend the community to others as a good place to live. They also felt connected to the community and thought that other residents were generally willing to be helpful to their neighbors. However, most residents did not feel involved in addressing issues of importance in the community or influential in getting others to take action on such issues. We found that homeowners were more likely to feel involved and able to influence others than renters. In addition, homeowners were more likely to have lived in the community much longer than renters. Regardless of whether they owned or rented, those who had lived in the community for more than fifteen years were more likely to feel connected, involved and influential than those who had moved to the community more recently. Longer-term residents were more likely to have been born in the community or to have moved there to be near family or friends while newer residents were more likely to have moved to the community for its convenience to jobs and public transportation, or its affordability.

STUDY AREA LOCATION



RESEARCH METHODS

Data for this study was collected over a 15 week period, between January and April, 2010. Primary data was collected using the Success Measures for Community Stabilization tool, a participatory evaluation method designed by NeighborWorks America “for community-based organizations and their stakeholders to document outcomes, measure impact and inform change” (NeighborWorks 2010) The Success Measures tool kit employs three means of data collection: Block and Parcel surveys; Resident Confidence surveys; and Key Informant Interviews.

Block and Parcel Surveys

The study team conducted 206 observational surveys of the physical condition of the eleven blocks in the study area. These included 152 surveys of residences (see attachment A) and 54 surveys of non-residential, mixed-use properties, and vacant land (see Attachment B). Each survey evaluated the level of maintenance and noted any repairs required at both the block and parcel levels.

Resident Confidence Surveys

Community residents were interviewed using the Resident Confidence Survey (see attachment C), in order to understand their perception of the physical condition of the community, confidence in community, changes in the community, as well as the availability of amenities, and management of public services. A total of 62 surveys were collected over a 12-week period, representing approximately 10 percent of the survey area’s households. This is consistent with the response rates obtained by NeighborWorks in other Success Measures evaluations. Fifty-one of the 62 residents who agreed to be surveyed also provided demographic information about themselves.

Several measures were taken to maximize the survey response rate. In order to make residents aware of the study, flyers in English and Spanish were placed in mailboxes of all study area residents two weeks prior to the start of the survey period. Businesses located on West Side Avenue were informed of the study and asked to display

flyers in their windows, on message boards, or on counters. In addition, the surveys themselves were available in both English and Spanish.

Surveyors went door-to-door and attempted to obtain responses from every household. Survey attempts were made during all daylight hours and on both workdays and weekends. The study team recorded refusals to take part in the survey and requests to return at a different time for each household. Households in which residents did not answer or appeared not to be home were visited at least twice at different times and on different days. In situations where residents expressed a willingness to complete a survey at a later time, surveys were left with the resident and subsequently picked up by surveyors. Surveys required approximately 20 minutes to complete, and were conducted by two surveyors at a time in order to capture all open ended responses and insights offered by respondents. Informed consents were reviewed with all potential respondents and respondents were ensured complete anonymity.

Key Informant Interviews

Nine in-depth interviews were conducted with individuals who worked and played a key role in the community. The individuals interviewed included a real estate agent; two local retail business owners; a pharmacist who owns a local pharmacy; two elected officials; an insurance agent; and a tavern owner. Interviews were conducted in person by teams of two to three researchers, and lasted approximately 30 to 45 minutes each. Sessions were recorded (with the permission of the interviewee) and later transcribed. All interviewees were given the option of anonymity. (See attachment D for interview protocol).

In addition to this original research, the study team collected secondary data on the study area from public sources such as the local police and other city and state government sources. The study team also reviewed the relevant academic literature, along with reports on and plans for the study area and for Jersey City more broadly.

COMMUNITY CHARACTERISTICS

The study area consists of 11 blocks, located between Route 440 and Bergen Avenue in the West Side District of Jersey City. The study area spans from Ege Avenue to Boyd Avenue and borders areas of investment along Boyd Avenue and Route 440.

The study area contains 753 households (Policy Map 2010). Approximately three-quarters of the housing units are in multi-family homes and small apartment buildings of fewer than 50 residences. An additional quarter of the units consist of single-family homes (Policy Map 2010).

The population was estimated at 2,410 as of 2009 (Policy Map 2010). The study area population has a higher proportion of people of color than Jersey City as a whole, with approximately 54 percent identifying themselves as African American or black; 14 percent as white; and 13 percent as Asian versus 26, 33 and 19 percent, respectively, for Jersey City (Policy Map 2010).

The study area's population also is wealthier than either the surrounding area or Jersey City as a whole. Thirty-three percent of study area households have incomes of \$75,000 or above while 26 percent have household incomes of less than \$25,000, versus 15 and 40 percent for the surrounding area and 31 and 27 percent for all of Jersey City (Policy Map 2010).

Income (% by Geography)	Less than \$25K	\$25K to \$50K	\$50K to \$75K	\$75K to \$150K	More than \$150K
Study Area	26	25	16	27	6
Zip Code 07304	40	29	16	13	2
Jersey City	27	24	18	23	8

Total study area and Jersey City data is from Policy Map; zip code 07304 data is from the American Community Survey of the US Census.

The demographics for the residents surveyed differed somewhat from the study area's overall population. Most significantly, women represented only 43 percent of the 51 residents who provided demographic information, versus accounting for 52 percent of the study area. Those 51 survey respondents also were more likely to be Asian (27 percent vs. 13 percent), and less likely to be African American or black (39 vs. 54 percent) than the study area as a whole.

Racial Composition (% by Geography)	White	African American	Asian	Other	Two or More Races
Survey Respondents	14	39	27 (22 Filipino)	16	4
Study Area	14	54	123	12	7
Zip Code 07304	21	46	12 (8 Filipino)	15	6
Jersey City	33	26	19	15	7

Total study area and Jersey City data is from Policy Map; zip code 07304 data is from the American Community Survey of the US Census.

Since only adults who were 18 and older were surveyed, the survey respondents also were older than the study area's total population or Jersey City as a whole, with 87 percent between 18 and 64 years old, and 13 percent aged 65 and over.

Age (% by Geography)	Under 18	18 to 64	65 and Older
Survey Respondents	0	87	13
Total Study Area	29	61	10
Zip Code 07304	29	62	9
Jersey City	24	66	10

Total study area and Jersey City data is from Policy Map; zip code 07304 data is from the American Community Survey of the US Census

The survey respondents were better educated than the overall population in the surrounding area. Eighty-six percent of respondents had at least a high school diploma and 34 percent had completed a Bachelor's Degree, versus 80 and 16 percent for the surrounding area.

Education (% by Geography)	High School Not Completed	High School Diploma	Some College	Associate's Degree	Bachelor's Degree	Graduate or Higher
Survey Respondents	14	22	10	12	34	8
Zip Code 07304	30	27	18	4	16	5

Total study area data from Policy Map; zip code 07304 data from American Community Survey of the US Census.

The sample of the population surveyed also included a higher percentage of homeowners (46 percent) than the total study area (42 percent); the surrounding area (28 percent); or Jersey City as a whole (28 percent). This may reflect the challenges that the study team faced in getting past the locked front doors of the larger apartment buildings that house many of the renters. With the assistance of the Jersey City Division of Community Development, we were able to access one such building. However, only one resident of the 24 apartments in that building was willing to complete the survey, and he was the

building's superintendent. The owners' greater willingness to speak with the study team also may reflect their greater commitment to and tenure in the community.

PHYSICAL CONDITION OF THE COMMUNITY

Our assessment of the physical conditions of the study area indicates two important strengths: a building stock that is generally in good condition, and a willingness on the part of residents to invest in improvements to their homes. The data also points to three potential concerns for the study area: the condition of windows and siding/exterior walls of the residential and non-residential buildings; the condition of sidewalks, walkways and curbs; and the presence of litter and debris. Despite a large number of foreclosure filings in the study area, we found that the City has done an impressive job of minimizing their negative consequences on the surrounding neighborhood by making sure that these properties were properly maintained.

The dominant residential building form in the study area is multi-family dwellings with 2-4 units, which can be found on every block. Seven of the 11 blocks also contain single family homes and eight blocks have multiple-family buildings with 5+ units. Seven blocks have commercial-use properties such as restaurants and retail stores; six blocks have offices; five blocks have institutional-use properties such as schools, libraries, and churches; three have auto-related properties; one block has industrial-use properties; and six blocks have a combination of the aforementioned properties.

The study team's block, parcel and residence observations found that most of the buildings in the study area are in fairly good condition and do not require any major repairs. For example, about 60 percent of residential units were in good condition and needed no maintenance or repair. Similarly, 96 percent of non-residential buildings in the community were in good condition or needed only minor repairs. This was confirmed by the residents we surveyed, 61 percent of whom indicated that houses, apartments, and condominiums in the

community were in good (48 percent) or very good (13 percent) condition; and 51 percent of whom said the same about other buildings in the community (45 percent good and 8 percent very good). The residents also gave a positive assessment to the study area's public spaces, such as parks and playgrounds, with 56 percent rating them either very good (15 percent) or good (41 percent).

Another asset for the study area is the willingness of homeowners to invest in their properties. Eighty-seven percent of homeowners reported having made some home repairs over the last three years. Of that group, 59 percent fixed an exterior feature, such as siding, roof, chimney, window, door or porch; and another 21 percent fixed a fence, driveway or sidewalk or invested in landscaping. Another 68 percent of homeowners fixed their furnace, water heater, plumbing or a major appliance or remodeled or decorated a room. Ninety three percent of the homeowners also indicated that they would make repairs to their homes in the future, if it was needed and they could afford to do so.

Although most of the buildings and residences in the study area are in generally good condition, particular features of the properties need some work. Forty percent of the non-residential properties and 28 percent of the residential properties need maintenance, repairs or replacement of the siding or exterior walls. Some residential properties also needed maintenance, repair or replacement of windows (28 percent); residential doors (19 percent); or porches/balconies (27 percent).

A second problem with the physical infrastructure of the study area was the condition of the sidewalks, walkways and curbs. These were the only features that received a "poorly maintained" rating from the study team on five of the 11 blocks in the study area. Overall, 39 percent of the sidewalks need some repair or maintenance. Many of them are cracked and uneven and could pose a safety risk to residents. Residents concurred with the study team's assessment, with 22 percent giving the quality of the streets and sidewalks in the community either a poor (15 percent) or very poor (6 percent) rating, and 43 percent giving them only a fair rating. This was the lowest rating given by the residents to any of the physical characteristics of the community, including public spaces, houses and apartments, and other buildings.



Most of the study area had visible litter, trash and debris. Litter and trash on road surfaces and sidewalks were visible on six of the eleven blocks and on 32 percent of residential properties. Three blocks were identified as having graffiti on buildings, sidewalks or road surfaces. The residents confirmed that this was a problem, with 57 percent indicating that litter, trash and debris were a concern for the community and 30 percent saying the same about graffiti.

Despite the study area's generally positive appearance, these three concerns are significant and can affect the willingness of residents to commit resources to the area. For example, 45 percent of the residents who did not currently own their home pointed to the study area's physical condition as one of the factors driving their decision not to purchase a home there in the future.

In assessing the physical condition of the study area, we found that surprisingly few properties displayed the typical characteristics of foreclosure, such as boarded up windows and neglected lawns. In fact, we only identified 6 residential and 5 commercial and mixed-use properties as vacant. One vacant property was so well maintained that we only discovered it was vacant when we spoke with the tenants next door. Our assessment was echoed by the residents, who did not think

that abandoned or vacant houses/apartments (73 percent); non-residential buildings (77 percent); or squatters (85 percent) were an issue for the community.

However, the foreclosure data collected by Professor Kathe Newman of the Bloustein School paints a different picture. Between 2007 and 2009, the study area, had 73 foreclosure filings for residences of 5 or fewer units. It's important to keep in mind that these figures are for filings only rather than for the number of homes in foreclosure. Thus, it is possible that one house could have had several filings in the 3-year period or that there are multiple mortgages in foreclosure on the same house. Nevertheless, given that the study area contains

approximately 410 buildings of this size, these figures represent a large number of foreclosure filings relative to the total number of buildings. The lack of awareness of this problem by both residents and study team members indicates that the City has done an excellent job ensuring that foreclosed properties are well maintained. Continuing to do so is critical to keeping the study area from experiencing the decline in value and general economic instability found in neighborhoods that have significant numbers of foreclosures.

FORECLOSURE FILINGS 2007-2009

RATIO OF NUMBER OF FILINGS : NUMBER OF RESIDENTIAL STRUCTURES*



* Data collected from The Foreclosure Project, Community Research Initiative, at Rutgers University. Figures represent foreclosure filings only and not the number of homes in foreclosure. Data excludes buildings with 5 or more units. The number of 1-4 unit buildings is an approximation.

PUBLIC GOODS & SERVICES

Residents had a mixed assessment of the quality of public services in the study area. Public sanitation, emergency services, public utilities, police, local libraries, local parks, playgrounds and recreation centers were all well-regarded by the residents. Conversely, the quality of street repair, cleaning, and plowing services were rated much lower. Residents also had a mixed assessment of the quality of local public schools, particularly the public high schools in the area. Residents were most negative, however, when evaluating the responsiveness of local government to the needs of the community.

Emergency services, which include fire department and ambulance, received the highest ratings with 87 percent of residents rating them either very good (40 percent) or good (47 percent). Sanitation, which includes trash pickup and recycling, was also very highly regarded with 84 percent of residents rating it either very good (44 percent) or good (40 percent). Public utilities, which include water, electric and gas, were rated very good (37 percent) or good (42 percent) by 79 percent of the residents. Police protection services also received fairly positive ratings, with 59 percent of residents describing them as very good (17 percent) or good (42 percent). Forty-two percent of residents also felt that the quality of emergency services had improved from three years ago while only 5 percent felt that the quality of services had declined. Key informant interviews corroborated these findings, commenting specifically on both the consistency and quality of public services.

Residents were very positive about the quality of local public libraries, with 73 percent rating them either very good (14 percent) or good (59 percent). Public parks, playgrounds and recreation centers also received generally positive evaluations, with 62 percent of residents rating them either very good (8 percent) or good (54 percent).

Residents were more mixed in their assessments of the local public schools. Only 47 percent of the residents ranked the quality of public high schools in the study area as either very good (9 percent) or good (38 percent) and 34 percent ranked them either poor (23 percent) or very poor (11 percent). The public elementary schools fared a bit better, with 58 percent of residents rating their quality as either very good (14 percent) or good (44 percent) and only 21 indicating that they were either poor (16 percent) or very poor (5 percent). The poor quality of the schools was also mentioned as a factor for not buying a home in the study area by 18 percent of those residents who did not own their home. Additionally, 26 percent of the residents selected quality of schools as one of the three things they liked least about living in the study area. Seeming to lend credence to these critiques, the two main schools near the study area, Number 24 elementary school and the Henry J. Snyder high school, did not meet the adequate yearly progress for the 2008-2009 school year as determined by the New Jersey Department of Education (2010). Nevertheless, some of the residents were very positive about the schools, with 23 percent selecting quality of the schools as one of the three things they liked best about living in the community.



(Percentage by Type of Service)	Good	Fair	Poor
Emergency Services	87	13	0
Transportation	86	11	3
Sanitation	84	13	3
Utilities	78	17	5
Libraries	72	19	9
Parks	62	26	12
Traffic	60	28	12
Police Protection	58	30	12
Elementary Schools	58	21	21
High Schools	46	20	34
Street Repair	46	44	10

Residents were even less positive about the quality of street repair, cleaning, and plowing services, with roughly 44 percent rating them as “fair” and an additional 10 percent as “poor” or “very poor.” We found that trash and overall street cleanliness were at least somewhat of a problem. However, both the residents’ and our evaluation of the quality of street maintenance varied greatly by individual blocks. For example, we found the blocks between Boyd Avenue and Virginia Avenue, extending from Bergen Avenue to West Side Avenue, contained poorly maintained curbs and sidewalks. Conversely, we found that the blocks between Virginia Avenue and Ege Avenue, extending from Bergen Avenue to West Side Avenue, were well maintained. We conducted much of our research in the early part of 2010, during which a number of heavy snowstorms hit the area. In general, we found that, although the city experienced unprecedented amounts of snow, the streets and sidewalks were maintained at a functional level.

Residents saved their greatest displeasure for local government’s responsiveness to the needs of the community. Forty-two percent

of the residents indicated that local government was either “not very responsive” or “not at all responsive,” and 22 percent of residents rated local government as “not at all responsive” to the community’s needs. Several residents also volunteered negative comments about local government, with one resident stating that the “government is totally corrupt” and another indicating that it required several visits to local officials “to get things done.” A local business owner who had been raised in the community confirmed this perception, stating that “they [city government] say they do stuff for the community but they really don’t do stuff.”

The residents’ displeasure with local government responsiveness has not escaped the notice of local officials. A councilperson for Jersey City noted that city residents are “certainly not satisfied with their government, period. But nobody’s satisfied with any government. I would say people are just generally unsatisfied period with Jersey City, with the services they’re getting. Rightly or wrongly...people are just upset with government in general.”

There are a number of important caveats that must be considered when reviewing this data. First, the residents had diverse definitions of “local government.” While some residents perceived local government to be police and emergency services, others thought the term referred to the mayor and council members. Consequently, a resident’s satisfaction with local government may or may not be based on their evaluation of specific public services. Most residents also rated public services fairly highly, while rating the responsiveness of local government much lower. This indicates that residents may be unaware of the exact scope of local government, basing their dissatisfaction on factors other than the services received.

Second, trust and confidence in government in general is at historically low levels. Research has connected various factors to greater distrust of the federal government, including heightened partisanship, national scandals, and poor economic conditions (Tolbert and Mossberger 2006; Shaw and Reinhart 2001). While people generally trust state and local government more than the federal government, over the past few decades, there has been a marked decline in trust of state and local governments as well (Shaw Reinhart 2001; Tolbert and Mossberger 2006; Orren 1997).

Third, it is not unusual for urban neighborhoods that primarily consist of people of color dealing with issues of “an aging infrastructure and housing stock” to give lower ratings to local government and public services (Van Ryzin et al 2004, p. 616). In addition to improving those services that received the lowest ratings from residents, Jersey City’s government may wish to focus on changing the “public image of government institutions” and building trust between local government and residents (Van Ryzin et al 2004, p. 616). In combination with better services, such general outreach can be an effective way of increasing overall levels of resident satisfaction.

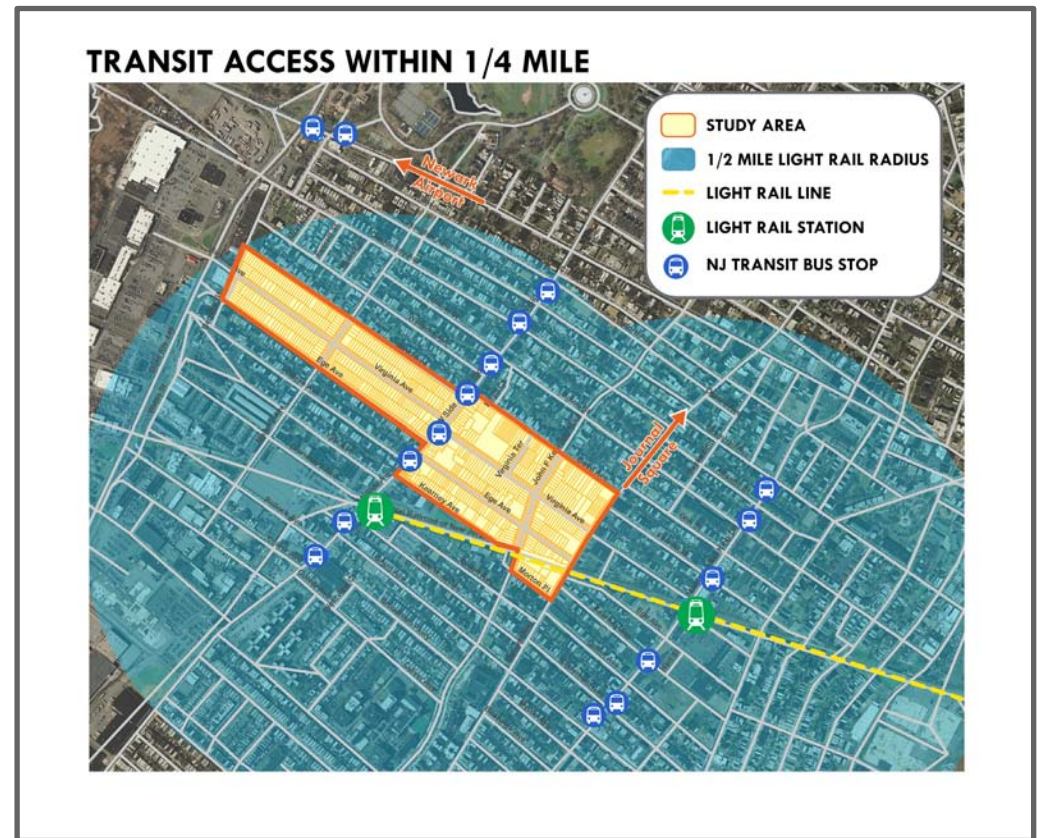
TRANSPORTATION

One of Jersey City’s greatest strengths is its access to public transportation, and this holds true for the study area as well. Ninety-seven percent of the residents surveyed were satisfied with their level of access to public transportation. Residents gave more mixed ratings to the quality of traffic control in the study area, and seemed generally unhappy with the availability of parking. Residents also rated the condition of curbs and sidewalks poorly, which can discourage walking vs. driving in the study area. The redevelopment plans for the study area and its surrounding regions indicate that the City is aware of, and planning to address, many of these issues.

The study area has excellent access to public transportation. It is adjacent to the West Side Avenue and MLK Drive light rail stations, has NJ Transit bus routes running along West Side Avenue, Mal-lory Avenue, and Bergen Avenue, as well as private Coach buses and informal jitney service on Kennedy Boulevard. The entire study area is within ½ mile from a light rail station and most of the area is within ¼ mile from a bus stop. In September of 2009, the NJ Transit Board of Directors approved a contract for an alternatives analysis to extend the Hudson-Bergen Light Rail (HBLRT) to Route 440 and the Hackensack Riverfront (NJ Transit 2009). Given this plethora of convenient transportation options, it’s not surprising that 86 percent of residents rated the quality of public transportation as either very good (42 percent) or good (44 percent) and 50 percent indicating that

proximity to public transportation was one of the three things they liked best about living in the study area.

Residents’ perceptions of traffic control in the study area was more mixed. While 60 percent of the residents rated the way traffic is controlled as very good (11 percent) or good (49 percent), 52 percent indicated that traffic or speeding vehicles were an issue in the community. More consistently, both residents and key informants volunteered their concerns with the current access to parking. As noted previously, residents also gave poor ratings to the condition of curbs and sidewalks, which can discourage walking in the study area.



The redevelopment plans that incorporate or are near to the study area indicate that Jersey City is aware of these concerns and is already taking action to address them. The West Side Avenue Redevelopment

Plan, for example, has strict parking guidelines that include parking requirements for multi-family developments, design guides on parking facilities, and prohibitions on front yard parking. Many of the design guides and concepts proposed in the area's redevelopment plans also look to address traffic and build community through physical improvements.

By enhancing walkability and access for bicycles, these plans can improve the overall sense of place and increase pedestrian foot traffic. Reduction in automobile traffic also can lead to better air quality and increased safety for pedestrians and cyclists. For example, the Bayside Development Plan looks to promote Transit-Oriented Development (TOD), a combination of mixed-use building, density thresholds, access to public transportation, pedestrian-friendly streets and cycling networks. The Bayside Plan calls for "traffic calming" measures on Kennedy Boulevard to make walking and biking safer. These measures can include median strips, shortening crosswalks, and lowering speed limits. In addition to reductions in traffic, increasing walking and biking can lead to improved public health. Physical inactivity is second only to tobacco as the largest risk factor for disease (Pucher 2007).

Another example is the area surrounding the West Side Avenue light rail station, which abuts the study area. This area, currently underutilized due to the uninviting entrance to the station, is designated for redevelopment, which should improve access to the light rail station and make the area safer, increasing the percentage of residents who walk and use light rail.

In addition to physical improvements, the Hudson County Transportation Management Association (Hudson TMA) has various programs to promote carpooling, vanpooling, walking, and cycling. The TMA has a Safe Route to School Program that uses a walking bus to pick children up on their way to school. This teaches children the importance of walking and helps to promote a sense of community as parents and children get to meet and interact with neighbors. The TMA also has a database of people looking to carpool to and from work. Residents are able to enter their information into the database and the TMA will help to match them up with someone commuting to similar locations. In addition, the TMA will also help employees

and employers work with a van rental company to set up a vanpooling program. To promote cycling to work, the TMA will provide free bike maintenance to those who cycle to work at least 2 days per week. As a registered cyclist, residents are eligible for the Emergency Ride Home program, which will arrange for a car to take a bike rider home in case of emergency. In order to help residents become comfortable cycling in an urban area, the TMA also runs Savvy Cycling classes (Hudson County Transportation Management Association 2010).

The data gathered from the survey supports these planned investments in the transportation infrastructure of the study area. The combination of access to public transportation and various amenities in the area could help to promote a community with less traffic congestion and more people walking and biking. Increasing multimodal transportation connections serves not only to promote cleaner air quality, healthier people, and a stronger sense of community, it also can serve as an economic development strategy, to help support local businesses and create employment opportunities.



EMPLOYMENT

The majority of residents felt that the study area was close to their workplace, whether that was in Jersey City, New York City, or the surrounding area. Residents were less positive, however, about employment opportunities in the study area itself. This was particularly the case for manufacturing and other industrial jobs. Many residents felt that the City concentrated investments downtown, and did not view this as directly benefitting them or improving their employment prospects.

Jersey City's high quality public transportation and proximity to other urban centers are important draws for residents, who want to live near their work. Almost 28 percent of the residents surveyed indicated that they moved to the study area to be close to work (21 percent) or to job opportunities (6.5 percent). Furthermore, 66 percent of residents think their distance to work is one of the best reasons to live in the neighborhood.

The proximity to job opportunities includes those in Jersey City itself, the surrounding area, and New York City. As one survey respondent noted about living in the area, "You're close to New York without paying New York prices." Both residents and key informants also noted the job creation and residential growth that has occurred in Jersey City's downtown neighborhoods. While several respondents noted this development as a positive for the City, however, they did not necessarily see it benefitting them or their neighborhood. As one resident stated, "All the money has moved downtown." In fact, only 23 percent of respondents feel that job opportunities in the study area were a good reason to live there. A store owner on West Side Avenue observed, "[M]ost of the people I think, they just go to New York to work and around here... I don't see a lot of job opportunities."

One key informant, a local tavern owner that has been in the community for over thirty years, identified the employment-related changes in the study area. "Fifteen years ago, you had...down where they built those new condos [there] was...trucking outfits. In fact, where the storage is, that was trucking. There was a lot of work down here. And it was union jobs, good paying jobs... Employment now means

McDonald's." This theme was repeated throughout key informant interviews.

When probed to explain where the jobs went, several informants noted that the overall shift in the U.S. economy from manufacturing to the service sector has greatly affected the study area. As a local official observed, "[W]e have an under-educated population who cannot get the jobs that are presently [available]. People [in the neighborhood] have a tougher time getting the jobs downtown and the blue-collar jobs have left. There are fewer and fewer of them."

The challenges that urban areas in particular face in maintaining or attracting blue-collar jobs are well documented. The facilities appropriate for modern manufacturing and warehousing are no longer suitable to the available urban land parcels. Today's manufacturing facilities are generally larger, more horizontal buildings, which are not feasible in older cities that have a lack of available contiguous land. Where land may be available, the difficulty in land assemblage and complex property ownership schemes, high levels of potential environmental remediation, and more expensive lease rates help to make industrial city centers less competitive than their suburban counterparts. Changes in zoning also push industrial facilities farther away from the neighborhoods (Foster-Bey 1997).

Despite these challenges, there are compelling reasons for urban municipalities to maintain a mixed economic base instead of shifting all economic development strategies to commercial and service-sector development. A mix of development strategies can stabilize the city during economic downturns and help local residents resist the forces of gentrification (Phillips-Fein 1998). Working locally also has positive impacts for the quality of life in the community and its overall level of social capital (Immergluck 1998). Besides the obvious benefits of reducing commuter traffic and promoting the growth of local employment networks, working locally also supports neighborhood economic growth. Better paying local jobs can mean more commercial activity in the area, and increased revenues for local businesses.

The City has done an admirable job of attracting state and federal resources to help retrain those residents who can no longer find in-

dustrial work to develop skills that better fit the region's employment opportunities. While Jersey City's current development plans reflect a continued shift in zoning away from industrial and towards commercial, office and residential uses, there are additional steps that the City may want to take to provide jobs for the residents least likely to find work in the increasingly dominant financial and service sectors. Encouraging the development of warehousing and distribution centers within the city limits -- based on the city's unparalleled location and access to major highways, railways, a major airport and seaport -- can help to bring some blue collar jobs back for local residents and encourage economic diversity. Jersey City also could be an attractive and convenient location for new and emerging green industries to expand or develop.

RETAIL & OTHER SERVICES

Residents had mixed responses when questioned on the accessibility and their use of goods and services in the study area. With the exception of cultural and entertainment events, most of the basic services were deemed convenient and accessible. While residents took advantage of this accessibility when it came to shopping, they were less likely to do so for medical services, and were even less likely to eat out or attend cultural and entertainment events in the study area. In total, less than 40 percent of the residents chose access to amenities as one of the best reasons to live in the area. Improving this perception could help foster economic development and a stronger sense of community in the study area.

Residents gave the study area mixed ratings on the accessibility of its amenities. Seventy percent of the respondents believe that almost all basic retail necessities can be found in the study area, and that medical (70 percent) and dental (62 percent) services are convenient in terms of location and hours of operation. Indeed most residents regularly do their grocery shopping (77 percent), purchase gasoline (79 percent), and do other kinds of shopping (56 percent) in the study area. Fifty-nine percent of residents also attend religious services in the study area, at least periodically.

Despite their recognition of the availability of these amenities, however, only about 46 percent of respondents regularly eat out or receive medical care in the study area, and an even smaller percentage obtain dental care locally (36 percent). In addition, only about 42 percent of respondents attend local cultural or entertainment events at least sometimes. Unlike the other amenities, however, the level of attendance at local cultural events is more consistent with residents' perception of their convenience, with 57 percent of residents indicating that such events were only somewhat (27 percent) or not at all (30 percent) convenient in terms of location and hours of operation. Several residents also noted that New York City had plenty of cultural attractions and was close enough for them to travel to, highlighting



the challenge of drawing residents to cultural events given the diversity of high quality entertainment options available nearby.

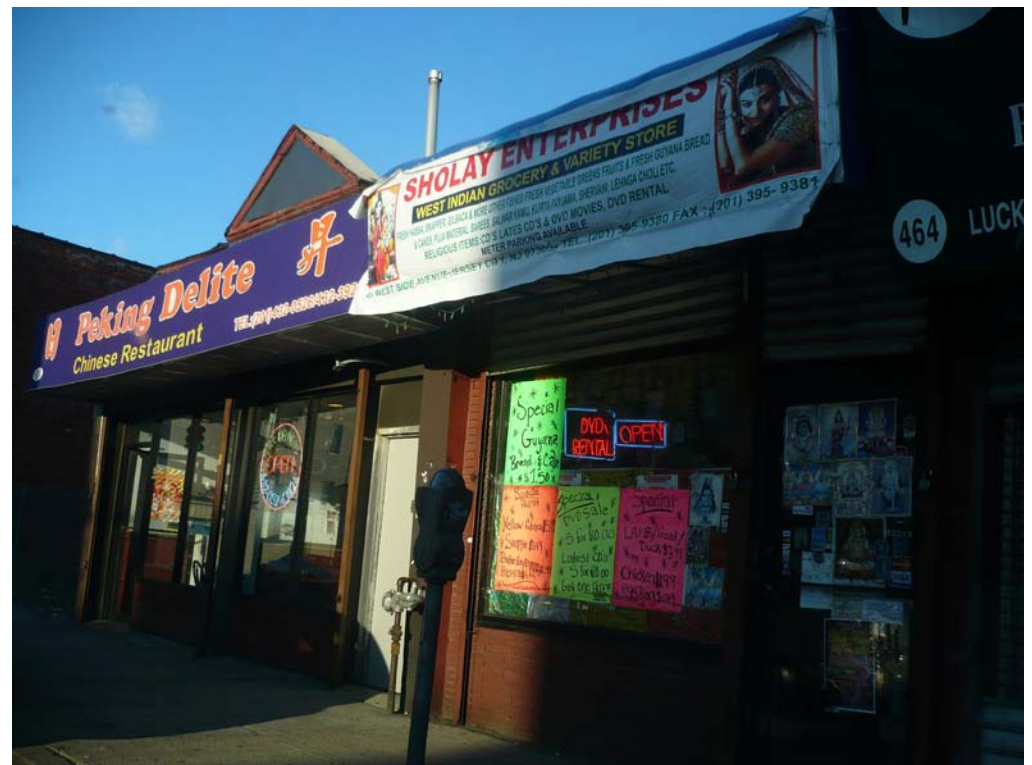
Overall, only slightly more than a third of residents (38.7 percent) chose access to amenities as one of the best reasons to live in the area, versus the 50 percent who chose proximity to public transportation, suggesting that one of the things most valued by study area residents is how easy it is to get to other neighborhoods. In fact, only 1 respondent identified access to amenities as a major reason for moving to the community.

However, access to amenities -- such as retail establishments, restaurants, and other service providers -- is an important consideration for individuals in deciding where to live, especially for higher wage earners that can utilize these amenities more frequently (Cropper 1981). In fact, cities with high levels of amenities grow faster, in both population and income, than those with low levels of amenities (Glaeser, Kolko, and Saiz 2001; Ades and Glaeser 1995). The loss of local jobs and the rise of phenomena such as reverse commuting suggest that although commuting time remains a significant consideration for residents, available amenities may be the key to distinguishing among neighborhoods just outside of central business districts (Glaeser, Kolko, and Saiz 2001).

Several key informants suggested that businesses and service providers in the area could improve their image in order to better market themselves to the community. As one noted, the businesses are not organized. Although some business owners mentioned that they communicate with other neighboring businesses, there is no formal organization that encourages upkeep and maintenance of the physical standard, shares valuable information on crime and market trends, or coordinates community events to increase patronage in the neighborhood. The City could help improve the appearance and image of local businesses by encouraging a local merchants' association.

One barrier to organizing the businesses and service providers may be the diverse cultures represented by their owners. As noted by both residents and key informants, however, the neighborhood's diversity should be valued as a strength rather than being seen as a barrier to

growth. As one example of that, the City could encourage increased local cultural events, which can draw on the diversity of the neighborhood's residents and bring local businesses in touch with their community. The city also could encourage increased availability of amenities such as community centers, local medical and dental care, and arts and entertainment venues. For example, redevelopment plans could designate office space for new medical and dental care facilities and the use of nearby waterfront properties for the development of arts and entertainment venues. By targeting development to meet the needs of local residents, the City could improve residents' perceptions of the availability and accessibility of the study area's amenities.



SAFETY

Although residents felt that drug activity and vandalism were issues for the community, they generally perceived the study area as a safe environment and did not feel that they were in danger in the course of their daily lives. However, crime data for the fifteen months ending March 31, 2010, indicates that the study area has a disproportionately high rate of assaults and robberies. Increasing community policing activities, such as block watch programs, could help reduce the crime rate while also building additional social capital in the community.

Urban areas are often portrayed as blighted by violent crime. However, study area residents generally did not perceive this to be a significant problem. All the residents we spoke with indicated that they felt it was safe to go about their daily lives. When asked more specific questions, residents indicated that they felt at least somewhat safe inside (98 percent) and outside their homes at night (91 percent), and walking around the community during the day (96 percent). Residents also felt it was at least somewhat safe for children to play outside (86 percent); senior citizens to go about their daily lives (88 percent); and for children and youth to be in school (86 percent).

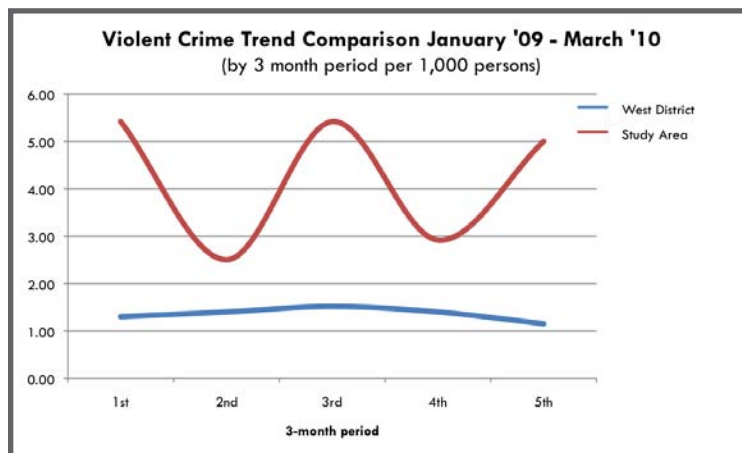
Although they felt that the study area was generally safe, 35 percent did not feel safe walking around the community at night and a significant percentage of the residents indicated that drug activity (47 percent) and vandalism/break-ins (43 percent) were issues for the community. Eleven percent of the residents also volunteered comments that indicated crime was a problem in the community.

The study area's most recent crime statistics demonstrate a surprisingly high level of some types of crime, although none of the most serious violent offenses (such as homicide and rape). While the study area contains only 4 percent of the population of the West District as a whole, it accounted for 27 percent of the assaults and almost 10 percent of the robberies in the West District during the 15 months between January 2009 and March 2010. More positively, the study area accounted for none of the District's reported rapes, arson attacks, or murders during this time period.

Unlike the West District as a whole, the study area also did not appear to be experiencing a reduction in overall levels of crime. Although we did not have data for the study area prior to January 2009, we found that the most recent 3 month period saw both violent and non-violent crime rates in the study area increase.

January '09 - March '10	Population	Homicide	Rape	Arson	Robbery	Aggravated Assault	Simple Assault	Burglary	Theft	Violent	Property
Study Area	2,410	0	0	0	34	17	114	35	28	165	63
West District	60,066	8	26	16	346	284	543	539	1278	1233	1817
Percentage of Total	4.0	0	0	0	9.8	6.0	21.0	6.0	2.2	13.4	3.5

Crime data provided by the Jersey City Police Department



The police department appears to have taken targeted action to address the high rate of assaults and property crimes in the study area. For example, Councilmember Donnelly noted that there was an increase in crime on West Side Avenue, between 1:00 PM and 3:00 PM, when there is much less foot traffic. In response, the Police Department put more police officers in that area during this time period. While effective, this solution can be short-term, lasting only as long as the extra patrols continue. It also can divert the police officers from other areas of need.

Other crime reduction strategies could include the formation of additional block and tenant associations and community policing programs, all of which improve communications between neighbors and help to build a stronger sense of community. Such programs consistently have been found to lower crime. Block Watch programs, for example, have been “associated with a relative reduction in crime of about 16%” (Bennet, Holloway, Farrington 2006, p.453). As previously mentioned, there currently is only one block association in the study area -- on Ege Avenue in Ward F.

Viola Richardson, who worked as a Jersey City police officer for 21 years and currently is serving her 3rd term as a Jersey City councilmember, is working to build block associations and block watch programs and to encourage residents to attend community meetings in order to get the “community involved in its own well-being, in maintaining itself.” The community also is working with an organization called the Peace Keepers on mentoring programs for young men and women. Councilmember Richardson feels that getting the community involved is the key to improving safety and overall quality of life for residents.

COMMUNITY INVOLVEMENT

Residents expressed satisfaction with living in the community, a desire to continue to do so, and a willingness to recommend the community to others as a good place to live. They also felt connected to the community and thought that other residents were generally willing to be helpful to their neighbors. However, most residents did not feel involved in addressing issues of importance in the community or influential in getting others to take action on such issues. We found that homeowners were more likely to feel involved and able to influence others than renters. In addition, homeowners were more likely to have lived in the community much longer than renters. Regardless of whether they owned or rented, those who had lived in the community for more than 15 years were more likely to feel connected, involved and influential than those who had moved to the community more recently. Longer-term residents were more likely to have been born in the community or to have moved there to be near family or friends while newer residents were more likely to have moved to the community for its convenience to jobs and public transportation, or its affordability. Study area residents were generally satisfied with living in the community, with 92 percent indicating they were at least somewhat satisfied, of which 56 percent were satisfied or very satisfied. Sixty one percent of the residents said they would continue to live in the community if given a choice. Residents also felt connected to the community, with 77 percent indicating they felt at least somewhat connected, of which 42 percent felt connected or very connected.

Residents felt that people in the community were at least somewhat. Study area residents were generally satisfied with living in the community, with 92 percent indicating they were at least somewhat satisfied, of which 56 percent were satisfied or very satisfied. Sixty one percent of the residents said they would continue to live in the community if given a choice. Residents also felt connected to the community, with

77 percent indicating they felt at least somewhat connected, of which 42 percent felt connected or very connected.

Residents felt that people in the community were at least somewhat likely to help out if they needed a ride somewhere (56 percent); to accept a package for them when they weren't home (69 percent); to pick up their mail or lend them a tool (79 percent); to watch their house when they were away (67 percent); to check on an elderly neighbor (72 percent); or to provide childcare in an emergency (73 percent). A majority of the residents (53 percent) also felt that people in the community share at least some information about what is happening locally, with 33 percent feeling that residents shared a fair amount or a great deal of information.

These overall positive feelings about the community help explain why 84 percent of the residents indicated that they would definitely or probably recommend the community to someone else as a good place to live. Nevertheless, fewer than half of the survey respondents indicated that they were involved in addressing issues of importance in the community (41 percent) or felt influential in getting members of the community to take action on important community issues (46 percent).

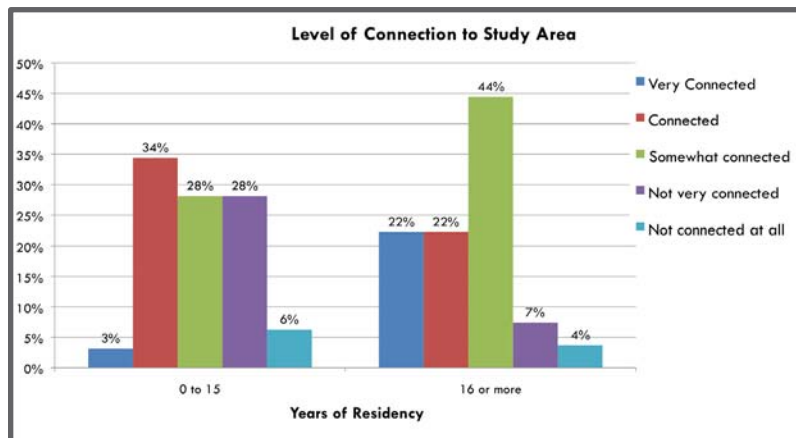
It is possible that the residents' lower levels of involvement with the community may reflect the fact that some of them do not view the community as their permanent home, so do not wish to take a more active role in shaping that community. For example, while owners and renters expressed fairly comparable levels of connection to the community (76 percent owners vs. 71 percent renters), those who owned their home were more than two times as likely to indicate that they were involved in addressing issues of importance in the community (53 percent owners versus 24 percent renters) and were significantly more likely to feel influential in getting members of the community to take action on important community issues (50 percent owners versus 34 percent renters).

Some of the key informants proposed an alternative explanation, suggesting that the study area residents had lost social cohesion due to the area's changing demographics. For example, a local business

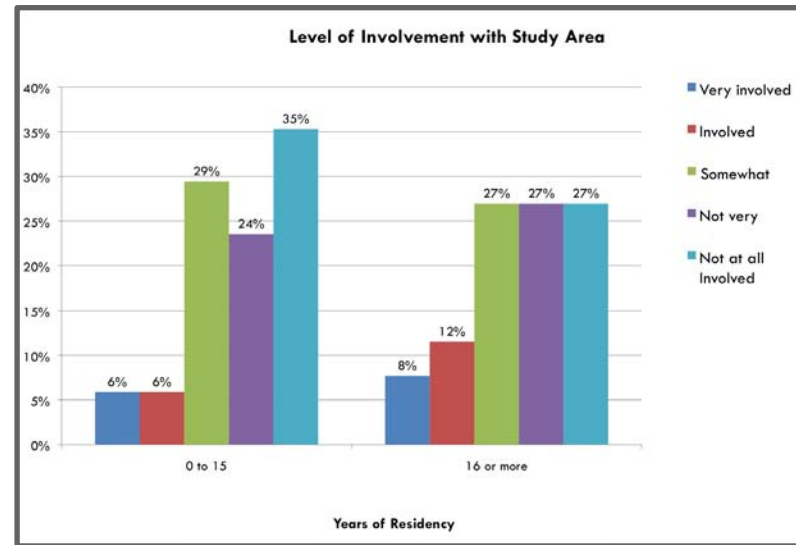
owner who has worked in the community for thirty years lamented that when he first opened his business, the community “was a neighborhood. More people knew each other.” In contrast, he felt that “everyone is very much into themselves right now.” He further noted that today the study area has “more of a bedroom [community] feeling”, alluding to residents who work elsewhere and seem less involved in the community.

Our analysis of owners versus renters provided some support for this hypothesis as owners had lived in the community for longer than had tenants. Two-thirds of the owners who took part in our survey had lived in the study area for at least 10 years, with a median length of residency of 15 years. Two thirds of the renters, on the other hand, had lived in the community five years or less, with a median length of residency of 3 years.

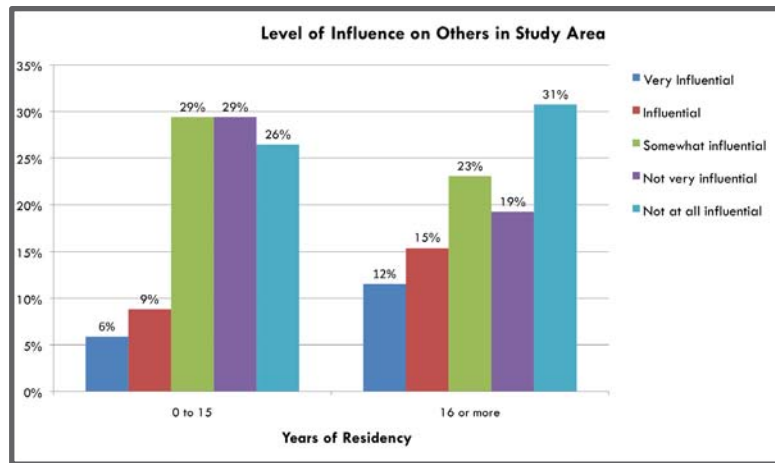
We then examined if longer-term residents felt more connected to the community. We found that 89 percent of residents who had lived in the community for 16 or more years felt at least somewhat connected to the community, while only 66 percent of the newer residents felt that way. Furthermore, 22 percent of the longer-term residents felt very connected to the community versus just three percent of the newer residents.



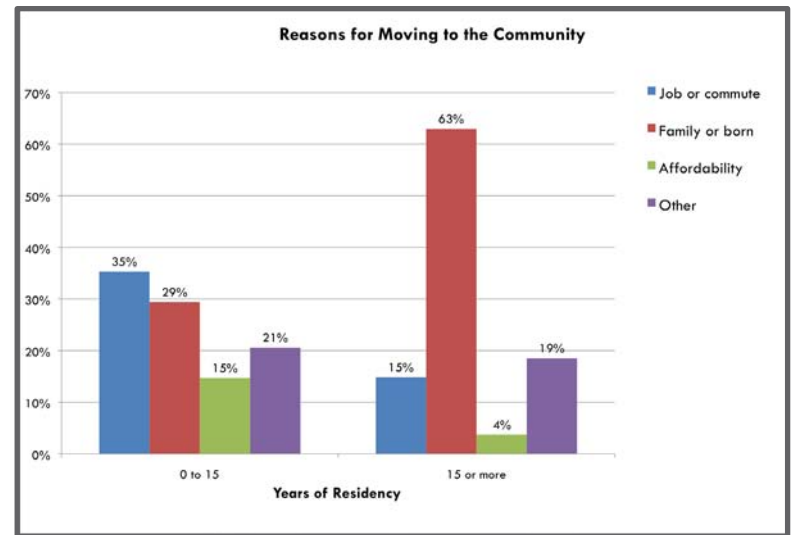
This relationship held up, although not as strongly, for how involved the residents felt in the community, with 47 percent of the longer term residents indicating they felt at least somewhat involved and 27 percent feeling not involved at all, versus 41 percent at least somewhat involved versus 35 percent not at all involved for residents who had lived in the community 15 years or less.



The relationship also held up for level of influence over others in study area, with 50 percent of longer-term residents feeling at least somewhat influential versus only 44 percent of those who had lived in the study area for 15 years or less. Interestingly, the longer-term residents were also more likely to feel not at all influential (31 versus 26 percent).



We then examined the reasons residents gave for moving to the community, separating those who had lived there for fewer than 15 years from those who had lived there longer than 15 years. We found a fairly dramatic difference between the two groups, with 35 percent of those who had lived in the community 15 years or less indicating that being near jobs or transportation was the primary reason they had moved there, followed by 29 percent who moved to be near family or friends or were born in the community, and 15 percent who moved to the community because of its affordability. In contrast, 63 percent of those residents who had lived in the community longer than 15 years indicated that they had moved there to be close to family or friends or had been born in the community, versus just 15 percent who had moved there to be near jobs or transit and 4 percent who moved there because of its affordability.



This data lends support to key informants' perception that community composition had changed over the last twenty years, with newer residents moving there primarily for its convenience to jobs and public transportation and its affordability while longer-term residents had moved there overwhelmingly to be near family or friends or had been born there. We would expect the longer-term residents' strong bond with other members of the study area to be reflected in measures of social capital such as feeling connected to the community, feeling involved in addressing issues of importance in the community, and feeling influential in getting others to take action on important community issues.

While more of the newer residents moved to the study area for convenience vs. personal connections, almost a third of them did move there to be near family or friends or were born there. Furthermore, the overwhelming majority of all residents feel connected to the area. Several of the residents we interviewed also volunteered that the individuals moving into the community were actually contributing to social cohesion. One resident indicated that the "younger people moving in seem more involved...[and] want to start another block association," while another resident pointed to the influx of Filipino-Americans in particular as responsible for improving and continuing to maintain the community. All of this speaks to the generally high levels of social cohesion and social capital in the study area.

Residents and key informants suggested that social cohesion among all the residents could be further enhanced via block associations. According to data provided by the Mayor's Action Bureau, only one block association is currently active in the study area, on Ege Avenue in Ward F. Encouraging community members to establish additional block associations could not only increase social capital within the community, it also could improve communication between residents and community leaders and provide an avenue for shared interests or concerns to be addressed. Similarly, encouraging the formation of tenant organizations could provide a platform for community involvement and help build social networks for residents of the larger rental properties.



CONCLUSIONS

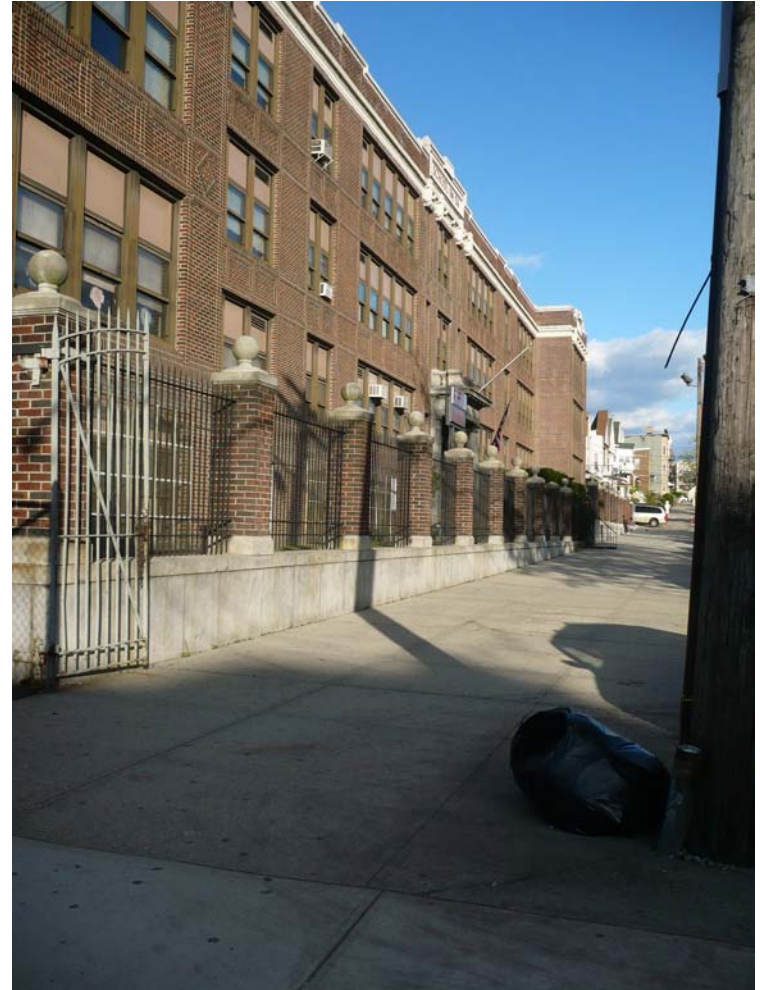
Our assessment of this Jersey City community found many strengths on which the City can build going forward. The area is located near New York City and other urban centers and has extensive and high quality public transportation. The housing stock is generally in good shape and homeowners are willing to invest in maintaining and upgrading their properties. Residents are very satisfied with the quality of most public and private services; feel a strong sense of connection with each other; and sufficient pride in the community to recommend it to others.

There also are aspects of the community that need to be strengthened. Most critical among these are the weak quality of the public schools; the high rate of violent crime; and the large number of foreclosure filings. Additional opportunities include the area's limited employment options; the maintenance of some streets and sidewalks; the presence of garbage throughout the study area; and the general lack of parking.

Although area residents were critical of local government, we found an impressive level of responsiveness and planning by the City. Perhaps the best example of this is the City's very effective efforts to minimize some of the negative consequences of the study area's high foreclosure rate by ensuring that those properties are well maintained. Equally important is the work the City is doing with New Jersey Community Capital to keep foreclosed properties from staying vacant.

The City government's awareness of the area's needs and extensive planning efforts to address them is demonstrated most comprehensively by the 2010-2014 Strategic Plan, which lays out both a short- and long-term agenda around the housing, transportation, services, cultural events and employment needs of the City. Although we did not read the plan until our research and recommendations were completed, we found that it incorporated most of our recommendations. These included the need to increase employment and job training opportunities; address the lack of parking; and improve the quality of retail services, cultural attractions, and the condition of streets and facades in the study area.

Given the disconnect between the City's efforts to address the community's needs and the residents' perception of those efforts, we urge the City to reach out to residents in order to build their awareness of the work being done, and to encourage them to take a greater role in strengthening their community. This could be accomplished by the formation of additional block and tenant associations, as advocated by Councilmembers Richardson and Donnelly. We also encourage the City to involve residents in the planning process as much as possible, both to increase the responsiveness of those plans and to provide an opportunity for residents to learn more about what the City is doing to improve the community.



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ATTACHMENTS

Attachment A: Resident Property Survey

Attachment B: Block Conditions Survey

Attachment C: Resident Confidence Survey

Attachment D: Key Informant Interview Protocol



ATTACHMENT A

Address: _____ Block Group: _____

Number of Units: _____

Overall Exterior Condition of the Dwelling around the Dwelling: **Overall Condition of the Features around the Dwelling:**
 Good and needs no maintenance or repair
 Needs minor repairs only
 Requires a limited number of major repairs
 Requires comprehensive renovation
 Dilapidated and not able to be repaired or renovated
 Construction of dwelling is not complete

	Sound condition and in good repair	Minor maintenance, repair, or replacement needed	Major repair or replacement needed	Not observable	Not applicable
Exterior of the Dwelling					
Roof					
Gutters					
Windows					
Exterior doors					
Siding/Exterior walls					
Foundation					
Porches/Balconies					
Attached garage					
Paint					
Features around the Dwelling					
Detached garage					
Other detached structure(s)					
Fencing					
Sidewalk(s) and walkway(s)					
Driveway					
Other:					

Visible on the Property
 Trash, debris, or litter
 Abandoned vehicles, appliances, or other equipment
 Deteriorating or abandoned toys, tools, or other paraphernalia

A lot Some None

Lawn and/or Landscaping
 Well maintained
 Adequately maintained
 Poorly maintained

Signage on Site
 "Leads to For Sale" sign
 "For Sale by Owner" sign
 Foreclosure/Bank ownership sign

Dwelling Appears Vacant
 Yes (Complete S, P, T, C)
 No

Comments on the dwelling and the features around the dwelling
House Proud: A = Definitely: These homeowners are proud of their home and committed to high maintenance standards
B = Some elements: These homeowners may be proud of their home OR committed to maintaining it, but not both; could also indicate lower maintenance standards.
C = No elements: There are no indications of pride of ownership or adherence to high maintenance standards.

Address: _____ Block Group: _____

Block Description: _____

Security Treatment:

- Fully secured in a solid and professional manner so that it appears occupied or in use
- Fully secured in a solid and professional manner without attempting to make it appear occupied or in use
- Fully secured in a casual or makeshift manner
- Not fully secured
- Not secured in any way

Dwelling and Site Condition: (Check all that apply)

Broken window(s) or door(s)	Holes in the foundation	Overgrown vegetation
Holes in the roof	Graffiti	Areas marked with wide yellow tape
Holes in the walls	Fire damage	Other

Visible Evidence: (Check all that apply)

Dumping	Squatting	Drug activity	Prostitution
Positive assets or attractive qualities?			
Yes (Describe) No			
Major health or safety hazards?			
Yes (Describe) No			
Interim maintenance (e.g., lawn mowing, trash clean-up)?			
Yes (Describe) No			
Active construction, rehabilitation, renovation, or repair?			
Yes (Describe) No			

Adjacent Sites: (Check all that apply)

Occupied residence	Vacant residence
Occupied non-residential building	Vacant non-residential building
	Vacant land
Other comments on the vacant property	

ATTACHMENT B

Block Description: _____

Block Group: _____

Land Use	Found on block Check <u>all</u> that apply	Predominant land use Check <u>only one</u>	Vacant structures Check <u>all</u> that apply
Single-family homes			
Multiple-family buildings with 2-4 units			
Multiple-family buildings with 5+ units			
Commercial (e.g., restaurants, retail stores)			
Industrial (e.g., factories, warehouses)			
Office (e.g., companies, nonprofit organizations)			
Institutional (e.g., schools, libraries, churches)			
Auto-related (e.g., car lots, repair shops, gas stations)			
Mixed use (e.g., combination of the above)			
Other:			

Structures in sound condition and good repair						
Structures	All	Most 75-99%	Many 50-74%	Some 25-49%	Few 1-24%	None
Single-family homes						
Multiple-family buildings with 2-4 units						
Multiple-family buildings with 5+ units						
Commercial buildings						
Industrial buildings						
Office buildings						
Institutional buildings						
Auto-related buildings						
Mixed use buildings						
Other:						

Condition of space			
Found on block Check <u>all</u> that apply	Well maintained	Adequately maintained	Poorly maintained
Spaces			
Parks			
Playgrounds			
Gardens			
Parking lots			
Vacant lots			
Other:			

<u>Other Elements</u>	Condition of element			
	Well maintained	Adequately maintained	Poorly maintained	Not applicable
Street surfaces				
Curbs				
Sidewalks				
Street lighting				
Other:				

<u>Appearance</u>	Visible on the block		
	A lot	Some	None
Trash, debris, or litter on road surfaces			
Trash, debris, or litter on sidewalks			
Graffiti on buildings, sidewalks, or road surfaces			
Illegal dumping (e.g., large household items)			
Abandoned cars			
Other:			

Overall attractiveness of the block

- Very attractive
- Attractive
- Somewhat attractive
- Somewhat unattractive
- Unattractive
- Very unattractive

Address: _____ **Block Group:** _____

Block Description: _____

Type of Structure: Check all that apply.

- Commercial (e.g., restaurant, retail store)
- Industrial (e.g., factory, warehouse)
- Office (e.g., company, nonprofit organization)
- Institutional (e.g., school, library, church)
- Auto-related (e.g., car lot, repair shop, gas station)
- Mixed use without residential
- Mixed use with residential
- Other: _____

Overall Exterior Condition of the Building:

- Good and needs no maintenance or repair
- Needs minor repairs only
- Requires a limited number of major repairs
- Requires comprehensive renovation
- Dilapidated and not able to be repaired or renovated
- Construction of building is not complete

Overall Condition of the Features around the Building:

- Good and needs no maintenance or repair
- Needs minor repairs only
- Requires a limited number of major repairs
- Requires comprehensive renovation
- Dilapidated and not able to be repaired or renovated

	Sound condition and in good repair	Minor maintenance, repair, or replacement needed	Major repair or replacement needed	Not observable	Not applicable
Exterior of the Building					
Roof					
Gutters					
Windows					
Exterior doors					
Siding/Exterior walls					
Foundation					
Other:					
Features around the Building					
Detached structure(s)					
Fencing					
Sidewalk(s) and walkway(s)					
Driveway(s)					
Parking lot(s)					
Other:					

	A lot	Some	None
Visible on the Property			
Trash, debris, or litter			
Abandoned vehicles, appliances , or other equipment			
Deteriorating or abandoned toys, tools, or other paraphernalia			

Lawn and/or Landscaping:

Well maintained
Adequately maintained
Poorly maintained

Signage on Site: (Check all that apply)

Realtor's "For Sale" sign
"For Sale by Owner" sign
Foreclosure/Bank ownership sign

Building Appears Vacant:

Yes (Complete S 6.1b)
No

Comments on the building and the features around the building	

Address: _____ Block Group: _____

Block Description: _____

Security Treatment:

- Fully secured in a solid and professional manner so that it appears occupied or in use
- Fully secured in a solid and professional manner without attempting to make it appear occupied or in use
- Fully secured in a casual or makeshift manner
- Not fully secured
- Not secured in any way

Building and Site Condition: (Check *all* that apply)

- | | | |
|-----------------------------|-------------------------|------------------------------------|
| Broken window(s) or door(s) | Holes in the foundation | Overgrown vegetation |
| Holes in the roof | Graffiti | Areas marked with wide yellow tape |
| Holes in the walls | Fire damage | Other: |

Visible Evidence: (Check *all* that apply)

- | | | | |
|---------|-----------|---------------|--------------|
| Dumping | Squatting | Drug activity | Prostitution |
|---------|-----------|---------------|--------------|

Positive assets or attractive qualities? Yes (Describe) No	
Major health or safety hazards? Yes (Describe) No	
Interim maintenance (e.g., lawn mowing, trash clean-up)? Yes (Describe) No	
Active construction, rehabilitation, renovation, or repair? Yes (Describe) No	
Adjacent Sites: (Check <i>all</i> that apply)	
Occupied residence	Vacant residence
Occupied non-residential building	Vacant non-residential building
	Vacant land
Other comments on the vacant property	

Address: _____ Block Group: _____

Block Description: _____

Type of Community Space:

- Park
- Playground
- Public or community garden
- Commons, square, plaza, or other gathering space
- Market square or farmer's market
- Sports field, ball park, tennis court, pool, etc.
- Other: _____

Overall Condition of the Space:

- Good and needs no maintenance or repair
- Needs minor repairs only
- Requires a limited number of major repairs
- Requires comprehensive renovation
- Dilapidated and not able to be repaired or renovated

Space Features	Well maintained	Adequately maintained	Poorly maintained	Not applicable
Structures on the property				
Equipment on the property				
Paved surface(s)				
Fencing				
Sidewalk(s) and walkway(s)				
Lawn				
Landscaping				
Public art or sculpture(s)				
Lighting				
Other:				

Visible in the Space	A lot	Some	None
Trash, debris, or litter			
Abandoned vehicles, appliances, or other equipment			
Deteriorating or abandoned toys, tools, or other paraphernalia			

Comments on the space	
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ATTACHMENT C

Thank you for taking the time to participate in this survey. Please answer the following questions about the community in which you live. When we use the word “community,” we are referring to [define community].

LIVING IN THE COMMUNITY

First, we’d like to know your thoughts about living in this community.

1. How long have you lived in this community? _____

2. What was the major reason you decided to live in this community?

To live near family or friends
To be close to work
Accessibility of amenities, such as community centers and stores
Proximity to public transportation
Schools for my children
Access to job opportunities
Safety in the community
Affordability of housing
Born here
No choice / No where else to go
Something else, Specify: _____

3. Overall, considering everything, how satisfied would you say you are living in this community?

Very satisfied
Satisfied
Somewhat satisfied
Somewhat dissatisfied
Dissatisfied
Very dissatisfied

4. Right now, how likely are you to recommend this community to someone else as a good place to live?

Definitely would recommend
Probably would recommend
Probably would not recommend
Definitely would not recommend

5. If you had the choice, would you continue to live in this community?

Yes
No

Please describe why you feel this way.

6. What are the things that you like best about living in this community? Please choose up to three of the following characteristics.

- My house or apartment
- My neighbors
- Distance to work
- Access to amenities, such as community centers and stores
- Proximity to public transportation
- Schools for my children
- Access to job opportunities
- Safety in the community
- Affordability of housing
- Types of housing available
- Something else
- Specify: _____

7. What are the things that you like least about living in this community? Please choose up to three of the following characteristics.

- My house or apartment
- My neighbors
- Distance to work
- Access to amenities, such as community centers and stores
- Proximity to public transportation
- Schools for my children
- Access to job opportunities
- Safety in the community
- Affordability of housing
- Types of housing available
- Something else
- Specify: _____

8. How connected would you say you feel to this community?

- Very connected
- Connected
- Somewhat connected
- Not very connected
- Not at all connected

9. How involved would you say you are in addressing issues of importance in this community?

- Very involved
- Involved
- Somewhat involved
- Not very involved
- Not at all involved

10. How influential would you say you are in getting members of this community to take action on important community issues?

- Very influential
- Influential
- Somewhat influential
- Not very influential
- Not at all influential

11. Please indicate how likely you think it is that people in this community would help out if the following occurred.

Very likely Likely Some-what likely Not very likely Not at all likely

- I needed a ride somewhere.
- A package was delivered when I was not at home and it needed to be accepted.
- I needed a favor, such as picking up mail or borrowing a tool.
- I needed someone to watch my house when I was away.
- An elderly neighbor needed someone to periodically check on him or her.
- A neighbor needed someone to take care of a child in an emergency.

12. To what degree do people in this community share information about what’s happening locally?

- A great deal
- A fair amount
- Some
- A little
- Not at all

13. How responsive would you say local government is to the needs of this community?

- Very responsive
- Responsive
- Somewhat responsive
- Not very responsive
- Not at all responsive

YOUR HOME

Next, please tell us a little about your home.

14. Do you currently rent your home or do you own it?

- I rent my home. *Please go to question 15.*
- I own my home. *Please go to question 18.*
- I live with family or friends. *Please go to question 15.*

Questions 15 – 17 are for those who Rent their home or live with family or friends

15. Would you consider buying a home in this community?

Yes Please go to question 16.

No Please go to question 17.

16. Which of the following factors are reasons you have not yet bought a home in this community? Please check all that apply on the left.

Of the factors you have chosen, which one would you say is the primary reason you have not yet bought a home in this community? Please check only one on the right.

Reasons Check all that apply	Primary Reason Check <u>only one</u>
Houses that are available in the community	
Physical conditions in the community	
Crime or other safety issues	
Quality of public services and/or schools	
Convenience to work, school, and/or shopping	
My personal financial situation	
State of the economy	
Something else Specify _____	

Continue with the GOODS AND SERVICES section starting with Question 23.

17. Which of the following factors are reasons you would not consider buying a home in this community? Please check all that apply on the left.

Of the factors you have chosen, which one would you say is the primary reason you would not consider buying a home in this community? Check only one on the right.

Reasons Check all that apply	Primary Reason Check <u>only one</u>
Houses that are available in the community	
Physical conditions in the community	
Crime or other safety issues	
Quality of public services and/or schools	
Convenience to work, school, and/or shopping	
My personal financial situation	
State of the economy	
Something else Specify _____	

Continue with GOODS AND SERVICES section starting with Question 23..

Questions 18 – 22 are for those who own their home

18. How long have you owned your home? _____

19. In your opinion, what is your home currently worth?

- More than I paid for it
- About what I paid for it
- Less than what I paid for it

20. During the past three years, have you made any repairs, renovations, or improvements to your home?

Yes Go to the next question.

No Skip question 21 and go to question 22.

21. What have you done in the past three years to fix up your home? Please check all that apply.

- Fixed an exterior feature of the house (e.g., siding, roof, chimney, windows, doors, porch)
- Fixed a feature outside the house (e.g.fence, driveway, sidewalk, landscaping)
- Fixed an interior feature of the house, (e.g., furnace, water heater, plumbing fixture, major appliance)
- Remodeled or decorated a room inside the house (e.g., kitchen, bathroom, living room, bedroom)
- Built an addition to the house
- Something else Specify: _____

22. If, in the future, your home needed major repairs and you were able to financially afford them, how likely is it that you would make those repairs?

- Very likely
- Likely
- Somewhat likely
- Not very likely
- Not at all likely

GOODS AND SERVICES IN THE COMMUNITY

Now, we have a few questions about what is available in and around this community.

23. Thinking about basic retail necessities, such as food, clothing, and banking, what portion of those basic goods and services are available right here in this community?

- Almost all
- Many
- Some
- Few
- None

24. How often would you say you do the following right here in this community?

	Often	Sometimes	Rarely	Never
Your main food shopping				
Other kinds of shopping				
Purchase gasoline				
Eat out				
Receive medical or health care				
Receive dental care				
Attend entertainment or arts and cultural events				
Use child care				

Participate in religious services

25. Thinking about such things as the distance from your home and the hours of operation, how convenient is it for you to use the following services?

Very convenient Convenient Somewhat convenient Not very convenient Not at all convenient

Grocery stores

Other types of stores

Gas stations

Restaurants

Medical and health care

Dental care

Pharmacy

Dry cleaner

Laundromat

Entertainment and arts and cultural events

Child care services

Religious services

PHYSICAL CHARACTERISTICS OF THE COMMUNITY

Next are some questions about what the community looks like.

26. Please indicate how you would rate the physical condition of each of the following aspects of this community.

Very good Good Fair Poor Very poor

Streets and sidewalks

Public spaces, such as parks and playgrounds

Houses, apartments, and condominiums

Other buildings in the community

27. Please indicate whether or not you think the following are issues in this community.

	Yes	No
Inadequate street lighting		
Traffic or speeding vehicles		
Litter, trash, or debris		
Graffiti		
Abandoned or vacant houses and/or apartments		
Abandoned or vacant non-residential buildings		
Drug activity		
Dumping		
Vandalism and/or break-ins		
Squatting		
Stray cats and/or dogs		
Other issue: _____		

PUBLIC SERVICES IN THE COMMUNITY

Now, we'd like to know what you think about the services offered in this community.

28. How would you rate the following public services in your community?

	Very Good	Good	Fair	Poor	Very Poor
Police protection					
Emergency services, such as fire department and ambulances					
Public utilities, such as water, electric, and gas					
Public transportation					
Sanitation services, such as trash pickup and recycling					
Street repair, cleaning, and plowing					
Public elementary schools					
Public high schools					

Parks, playgrounds, and recreation centers

Public library facilities

Traffic control

COMMUNITY SAFETY

Next, please tell us about safety in this community.

29. How safe would you say you feel in each of the following places?

Very safe	Safe	Somewhat safe	Not very safe	Not at all safe
-----------	------	---------------	---------------	-----------------

In your home at night

Outside your home at night (on the porch or stoop, or in the yard or alley)

Walking in the community during the day time

Walking in the community at night

In parks, playgrounds, and other outdoor recreational areas

30. How safe do you feel the following groups of people are in this community?

Very safe	Safe	Somewhat safe	Not very safe	Not at all safe
-----------	------	---------------	---------------	-----------------

Children who are playing outside

Children and youth in schools

Senior citizens who live here

Community residents going about their daily lives

CHANGE IN THE COMMUNITY

Now, we'd like to find out about how you think this community has changed in the past three years.

For the following questions, please compare the community now to how it was three years ago. If you have lived in this community for less than three years, please compare it to how it was when you first moved in.

31. Compared to three years ago, how has this community changed overall?

- The community has improved a lot
- The community has improved some
- The community has stayed about the same
- The community has declined some
- The community has declined a lot

32. Please describe why you feel this way.

33. Compared to three years ago, how would you say the following aspects of this community have changed?

	Improved a lot	Improved some	Stayed about the same	Declined some	Declined a lot
Physical condition of the houses, apartments, and condominiums					
Physical condition of streets, sidewalks, and public spaces					
Safety in the community					
Quality of the public services in the community					
Variety of goods and services available for purchase in the community					

FUTURE OF THE COMMUNITY

Finally, please share your thoughts about the future of this community.

34. Thinking about the next three years, how would you say this community is likely to change?

- This community will improve a lot
- This community will improve some
- This community will stay about the same
- This community will decline some
- This community will decline a lot

35. Please describe why you feel this way.

36. Over the next three years, how do you think home values in this community will change?

- Home values will increase
- Home values will stay about the same
- Home values will decrease

Thank you for completing this survey!

Please now think back to what the community was like three years ago.

8. Compared to three years ago, would you say this community has improved a lot, improved some, stayed about the same, declined some, or declined a lot?
9. Please tell me why you feel this way.

Now, let's talk a little about specific aspects of [name of community].

10. How would you describe the [aspect] of the community?
 - a. Physical condition of the houses, apartments, and condominiums
 - b. Safety in the community
 - c. Quality of public services in the community
 - d. Variety of goods and services available for purchase in the community
 - e. Quality of the schools in the community
 - f. Access to transportation
 - g. Access to places of employment

11. In your opinion, do residents of this community appear to be proud of and satisfied with their community? How is this evident?
12. Would you say that this level of pride and satisfaction has changed over the past three years? If so, how do you feel it has changed?
13. In your opinion, do the businesses in this community have an impact on the image and quality of life in the community? How is this evident?
14. Would you say this impact has changed over the past three years? If so, how do you feel it has changed?

Next, I'd like to better understand your views of the housing situation in [name of community].

15. Do you think that buying a house in the community is a good investment? Why or why not?
16. Would you say that the quality of homes in the community match the prices? Why do you think that is the case?
17. Would you say that the quality of apartments in the community match the rents? Why do you think that is the case?
18. If a close relative of yours, like a child, parent, or sibling, was considering purchasing a home in the community and they asked you for your opinion, what advice would you give him/her?

19. If a close relative of yours, like a child, parent, or sibling, was considering purchasing a home in the community and they asked you for your opinion, what advice would you give him/her?

Now, I have a few questions about the people who are moving into and out of [name of community].

20. Who do you see moving into the community?

a. *If people moving in:* Why do you think they are moving into the community?

b. *If people not moving in:* Why do you think people are not moving into the community?

21. Who do you see moving out of the community?

a. *If people moving out:* Why do you think they are moving out of the community?

b. *If people not moving out:* Why do you think people are not moving out of the community?

Finally, I'd like to get your thoughts about the future of [name of community].

22. Overall, considering everything, how confident are you that the future for the community is positive? What would increase your confidence about the future of the community?

23. Thinking about the next three years, would you say this community is likely to improve a lot, improve some, stay about the same, decline some, or decline a lot?

24. Please tell me why you feel this way.

25. Thinking about the next three years, how do you think home values in the community will change?

26. Please tell me why you feel this way.



Community Stability in Jersey City's West Side

May 2010