Weinland Park, Columbus, Ohio:
Building Community as a Neighborhood Transitions to Mixed-Income[1]

Kip Holley, The Ohio State University
Matthew Martin, The Columbus Foundation
Stephen A. Sterrett, Consultant

The Weinland Park neighborhood of Columbus, Ohio, has evolved from an area with the city's highest violent crime rate and highest concentration of project-based Section 8 housing into a mixed-income, mixed-race neighborhood. Since 2010, the Weinland Park Collaborative (WPC), a partnership of public, non-profit, and private entities, has cultivated that evolution and empowered the residents through a place-based and people-centered approach to providing investment and support. A baseline survey of residents in 2010 provided a valuable snapshot of neighborhood conditions that helped to guide WPC's investments. A follow-up survey in 2016 not only documented the changes in Weinland Park but also revealed the differing perspectives of the residents who make up this diverse neighborhood. In addition, applying innovative mapping techniques, the survey literally illustrated how black[2] and white residents perceive "safe" and "unsafe" areas of the neighborhood differently. While Weinland Park is one neighborhood geographically, it is not necessarily one community socially.

The 2016 survey has helped neighborhood leaders and WPC members understand the further challenge of creating a mixed-income, mixed-race *community* in which people develop authentic relationships across barriers of income, education, race, and gender. This article describes how the innovative survey and principles of equitable and inclusive community development are being used to transform Weinland Park into, as one observer suggested, "a safe place where people can come together and leave their status behind."

The Evolution of Weinland Park

Weinland Park is a compact urban neighborhood of about 30 square blocks that is adjacent to the Columbus campus of The Ohio State University (Ohio State) and about one and one-half miles north of downtown. The neighborhood's western border is High Street, the city's

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[1] This essay appears in Mark L. Joseph and Amy T. Khare, eds., *What Works to Promote Inclusive, Equitable Mixed-Income Communities*, please visit the volume website for access to more essays.

[2] Editors' Note: We have recommended that essay authors use the term "African American" when referring specifically to descendants of enslaved people in the United States and the more inclusive term "black" when referring broadly to members of the African diaspora, including African Americans, Caribbean Americans, and Africans. In this way, we seek to acknowledge the unique history and experience of descendants of enslaved people in the United States and also the diversity of backgrounds within the larger black community.

main north-south commercial corridor. Developed in the first decades of the 20th century as the city grew northward, Weinland Park's population peak was 8,521 in 1950, nearly twice what it was in 2010. The eastern portion of today's Weinland Park was part of an African-American neighborhood, extending south and east, that resulted from "redlining" and other housing discrimination. That old African-American neighborhood was fragmented by construction of the interstate highways and urban renewal in the 1950s and 1960s. As the suburbs developed, white residents left, and nearby manufacturing jobs vanished, Weinland Park had a steady decline in population to 4,386 in 2010. The population was 46 percent white, 36 percent black, 12 percent Hispanic, 3 percent Asian, and 4 percent other. Housing renovation and new construction since the last Census likely puts the current population closer to 4,900. The 2020 Census will most certainly document the neighborhood's first population increase in 70 years.[3]

Figure 1. Weinland Park's proximity to The Ohio State University's main campus and downtown Columbus
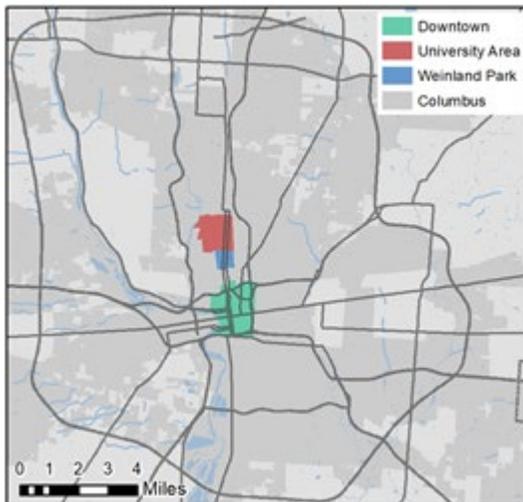
In the 1970s and early 1980s, many old townhomes and rowhouses were renovated to develop some 500 units of scattered-site, project-based Section 8 housing. Unfortunately, the Section 8 housing was poorly managed, had a high turnover rate, and contributed to the growing crime problem. The crack epidemic of the late 1980s added to the problem, as did a violent drug gang based in the neighborhood through the mid-1990s.

In response to the public safety concerns, deteriorated housing, and aging public infrastructure in the urban neighborhoods around Ohio State's campus, the University and the City in 1995 jointly funded development of a comprehensive improvement plan with significant public input. At the same time, Ohio State created Campus Partners for Community Urban Redevelopment as its non-profit community development corporation to spearhead the planning and to implement key revitalization initiatives. In 2001, Campus Partners negotiated an agreement with the private owners to acquire their entire portfolio of project-based Section 8 housing, which included the properties in Weinland Park. Campus Partners and Ohio Capital Corporation for Housing (OCCH), a statewide financial

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[3] For more background on Weinland Park, see Tamar M. Forrest and Howard Goldstein, Weinland Park Evaluation Project. (Columbus, OH: College of Education and Human Ecology, The Ohio State University, 2010).; *Weinland Park Demographic Analysis.* (Columbus, OH: The Kirwan Institute for the Study of Race and Ethnicity, The Ohio State University, 2012).; *Weinland Park Story Book* (Columbus, OH: The Wexner Center for the Arts, The Ohio State University, 2014).

intermediary for affordable housing, developed a strategy to preserve the government-subsidized housing. In 2003, OCCH acquired the portfolio and created Community Properties of Ohio (CPO) as a non-profit property management company. Over the next six years, CPO invested $30 million in the extensive rehab of the units in Weinland Park, instituted effective management and public safety measures, and reduced the turnover of residents. These actions planted the seeds of a mixed-income neighborhood by securing long-term affordable housing as a cornerstone of the revitalization effort.

In 2004, the City of Columbus, in cooperation with the newly formed Weinland Park Community Civic Association (WPCCA), launched a two-year community planning process to develop the *Weinland Park Neighborhood Plan*. Central to the plan was a vision that Weinland Park become a mixed-income neighborhood. In 2008, the JPMorgan Chase Foundation and The Columbus Foundation jointly funded a grant to Campus Partners to develop a strategy to realize that vision. Among the factors that favored Weinland Park's evolution to a mixed-income neighborhood were:

- Proximity to Ohio State, downtown, and higher-opportunity neighborhoods and the University's role as an anchor institution;
- Relatively well-maintained housing stock along with remediated "brownfield" land that could attract new housing construction;
- Access to public transportation and freeways;
- A significant supply of well-managed government-subsidized housing that would remain affordable to low-income families for years to come; and
- The continued population growth of Columbus and central Ohio.

If crime and the distressed conditions of the neighborhood could be addressed, existing residents, including those in the subsidized apartments, would be more likely to stay and new residents would be attracted to Weinland Park.

Campus Partners proposed a bold place-based and people-centered strategy. Central to the strategy was a collective impact model with multiple partners and a broad approach that focused on expanding opportunities for affordable housing, while creating the conditions for development of renovated and new market-rate housing. The approach included improving opportunities for existing residents and expanding their input. In 2010, the Weinland Park Collaborative (WPC)[4] was formally launched with nearly two dozen members, including the University, the City, The Columbus Foundation, JPMorgan Chase Foundation, Cardinal Health Foundation, United Way of Central Ohio, social service agencies, a private developer, and the Weinland Park Community Civic Association. Weinland Park Collaborative members met monthly to share information, consult with residents, and guide public, philanthropic and private

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[4] For more on the WPC, see: *Weinland Park Collaborative Progress Report.* (Columbus, OH: Weinland Park Collaborative, 2013).; *Weinland Park Collaborative Progress Report 2013-2015.* (Columbus, OH: Weinland Park Collaborative, 2016).

investments in dozens of programs and activities in the areas of resident engagement, housing, workforce development, early childhood and elementary education, public safety, youth development, health, and community art. The philanthropic funding partners each maintained their own decision-making processes for neighborhood investments, but those decisions were informed by the discussions within the WPC.

To activate a weak private housing market, WPC initially invested federal and philanthropic funds in the acquisition of properties that had been foreclosed and abandoned due to the Great Recession. WPC partner organizations subsequently renovated and constructed more than 135 single-family homes for affordable housing, including exterior home repair grants to more than 70 existing income-eligible homeowners. By 2015, neighborhood improvements were visible and the private real estate market began rebounding with construction underway on new market-rate houses on a vacant remediated brownfield site. In 2016 and 2017, construction of market-rate apartments and condominiums began on the brownfield site and along the High Street corridor.

The Annie E. Casey Foundation joined as a national partner of the WPC in 2013, integrating Casey's Family-Centered Community Change initiative with the Weinland Park work. One objective of the WPC was to improve opportunities for low-income families who would continue to occupy CPO apartments even as new and renovated housing attracted more affluent neighbors. Casey's initiative brought a clearer strategy and additional resources to working with low-income families. It uses a two-generation approach that emphasizes the need to serve children and their caregivers at the same time to help both succeed in breaking the cycle of generational poverty. WPC partners involved in the Casey initiative have used a coaching model to assist families and to focus on the healthy development and education of children and on the parenting skills, job readiness, and financial security of adults.

From its inception, the WPC has emphasized resident engagement and empowerment, working to build the capacity of the Weinland Park Community Civic Association. A key early initiative was a series of study circles designed "to create a vision for building a more livable Weinland Park community." With support from the WPC, the civic association in 2013 engaged a consultant from Everyday Democracy to train neighborhood residents as facilitators for the study

Figure 2: Vision for Weinland Park Created through Study Circles

circles. These facilitators then led study circles involving more than 80 neighborhood residents. The summary from the study circles was expressed in a poster design (Figure 2) that captured key words from the visioning discussions. The word most often used was "connectedness." The residents who participated in the study circles shared that they felt more connected to their neighbors and they appreciated the diversity of life experiences among participants.

While the neighborhood vision reflected the experience of the study circle participants, the ongoing challenge for the WPCCA and WPC's partner organizations has been to maintain the "connectedness" among the wider population of residents even as new and renovated housing brings in new residents and as some existing residents, particularly in market-rate rental housing, leave the community. The Weinland Park Community Civic Association and WPC have attempted to realize this vision by cultivating a mixed-income, racially-diverse community where people connect with each other and develop authentic relationships. We define authentic community relationships as those in which participants share openly and honestly from their lived experiences and contribute meaningfully to the common good. We believe such relationships should be conducted in an understanding and inclusive manner. While long-time neighbors can often develop personal relationships and friendships with others like themselves, we also must promote community relationships that permit us to interact positively with people we may not know well and whose life experiences may be much different than our own.

Over the years, the Weinland Park Community Civic Association and WPC have encouraged community relationships and resident empowerment through a variety of initiatives. For example:

- The WPC has brought all of its housing-related projects before the WPCCA's Housing Committee for review and has actively encouraged private developers to do the same. The committee's recommendations about issues such as project size, location, and design are taken seriously in the city's formal review processes for housing and zoning.
- The WPC provided staff support to neighborhood volunteers who led the Weinland Park Community Civic Association, its committees, and many of its projects.
- Ohio State's Wexner Center for the Arts has engaged neighborhood teenagers and local artists in projects to record, illustrate and publish residents' memories of the neighborhood in the *Weinland Park Story Book* and to help change the public perception of Weinland Park through billboard art.
- WPC and its partners have supported a more informal network of CPO residents, a resident-led youth football team and cheerleading squad, an annual neighborhood festival that draws some 500 people, and activities in the neighborhood elementary school.

Weinland Park Community Civic Association's leaders, most of whom are homeowners, have consistently supported an inclusive approach to resident engagement, recognizing that

deliberate efforts are needed to involve low-income people and renters. While some older homeowners have multi-generational roots in the neighborhood, the fact that no more than 10 percent of the neighborhood is owner-occupied has made the wellbeing and stability of renters crucial to maintaining neighborhood home values. As a result, homeowners in Weinland Park have tended to promote engagement among their neighbors who rent and have often advocated on behalf of renter interests, as well as their own.

An Innovative Survey Highlights Differences

At the request of the WPC and with funding from The Columbus Foundation, Ohio State researchers in 2010 conducted a comprehensive, in-person survey of 441 residents, representing 26 percent of the households in Weinland Park. The survey covered demographics, housing and mobility, access to basic needs, neighbor interaction, public safety, education and child development, economic wellbeing, and more, providing baseline data on neighborhood conditions and residents' attitudes. This snapshot of the neighborhood helped to guide the WPC's investments and programming decisions. Survey responses included the following highlights:

- Only 18 percent of respondents had full-time employment, 26 percent worked part-time, and 36 percent were unemployed. The remaining were homemakers, retired, or receiving disability payments. Health-related issues were reported as the number one barrier to employment. WPC partner organizations offer job readiness programs, but barriers of health, transportation, childcare, and illegal drug use have made economic self-sufficiency a challenging goal for many residents.
- Half the households contained an individual diagnosed with one or more chronic conditions of asthma, diabetes, high blood pressure, heart disease, and obesity, while 38 percent of households had an individual with a diagnosed mental health condition. The WPC promoted community health resources to residents and encouraged cooperation among local health providers to better serve the neighborhood. Moms2B, an innovative program addressing prenatal health, was founded in Weinland Park and, after several years of intensive work, the neighborhood was no longer a hot spot for infant mortality.
- Respondents identified unsupervised neighborhood youth as a major public safety problem in the neighborhood. The WPC established a collaborative program of special-duty Columbus police officers, a local neighborhood agency specializing in counseling and treatment for youths and their families, and the county juvenile court system. The goal was to respond quickly and divert juvenile offenders to immediate opportunities for counseling and treatment, rather than send them through the court system. The program was successful, but far fewer juveniles were identified as

offenders than had been expected. The perception among many residents that unsupervised young people were a major problem was found to be inaccurate.

With support once again from The Columbus Foundation, Ohio State's Kirwan Institute for the Study of Race and Ethnicity conducted a follow-up survey in 2016[5] that replicated and modified portions of the 2010 survey to understand changes in the neighborhood. Kirwan staff collected 422 usable responses. The results indicated the demographic composition of Weinland Park had remained stable since 2010 and the black population of the neighborhood had remained around 1,000, despite an increase in Latinos and the first growth in the white population in several decades. Overall, residents reported that the appearance and safety of Weinland Park were improving and that they felt that they were influencing decisions affecting the neighborhood. There was an increase in the perception that children are safe when playing outside. The financial wellbeing of residents was improving. While the survey helped to confirm many of the positive changes in Weinland Park as a whole, the survey also revealed that not all residents share the same lived experience and perceptions.

The Kirwan Institute staff analyzed and mapped the survey results to examine the variation in experiences and attitudes of different groups, or clusters, of residents. The results of this cluster analysis help illuminate the challenges of creating a community where people develop authentic relationships across lines of demographic difference. Kirwan staff used two-step cluster methods to determine if discrete groups exist within the neighborhood. After running more than 100 simulations of the data, they determined that nine demographic factors created reliable clusters: age, sex, race, highest attained education, type of housing, time in the neighborhood, employment status, student status, and children in the household. While the clusters correlate with demographic factors, such as race and education, the clusters reveal a much more nuanced understanding of different attitudes and perceptions among sub-groups of residents who share common life experiences. Using the nine demographic factors, five cluster groupings were identified:

- Neighborhood Core (31 percent of respondents) – These are the most typical neighborhood residents: working-class renters with a high school diploma and children in the household. 88 percent are in the labor force, but only 29 percent are employed fulltime. 82 percent are black.
- Educated Workforce (19 percent – Residents with bachelor's or post-graduate degrees, who may be renters or homeowners. 88 percent are in the labor force, with but 57 percent employed fulltime. 81 percent are white.

[5] Zachary E. Kenitzer, *A Portrait of Weinland Park: Results and Analysis of the 2016 Weinland Park Collaborative Neighborhood Survey*. (Columbus, OH: The Kirwan Institute for the Study of Race and Ethnicity, The Ohio State University, 2017).

- Buckeye Undergrads (18 percent – Traditional undergraduate students at Ohio State. All are renters. 79 percent are in the labor force, but only 12 percent work fulltime. 68 percent are white, and 20 percent are black.
- Aspirational Families (14 percent – These residents have children, live below the poverty level, tend to rent with housing assistance, and typically have a high school diploma or are pursuing one. 93 percent are black.
- Boomers and Independents (14 percent – These residents are typically older and moving toward retirement with no children in the households. This cluster also includes disabled residents not in the labor force. 62 percent are black, and 14 percent are white.

The survey report found differences in perceptions and conditions among these clusters, resulting in a richer understanding of the life experiences of the people who reside in the neighborhood. As it turns out, resident experiences and perspectives vary widely, even within the same racial groups, economic classes, and age cohorts. Among these findings were:

- Some 40 percent of Aspirational Families felt they had a "great deal" of input on community decisions, and 28 percent agreed they had a "fair amount." (This compares with 29 percent and 28 percent, respectively, for the Neighborhood Core; 33 percent and 22 percent for Boomers and Independents; 13 percent and 37 percent for Educated Workforce; and 7 percent and 19 percent for Buckeye Undergrads).
- The percentage of each cluster who agreed the neighborhood is getting "better" was 81 percent of Educated Workforce, 80 percent of Aspirational Families, 75 percent of Boomers and Independents, and 73 percent of Neighborhood Core. Of the Buckeye Undergrads, 47 percent agreed it was getting better, while 51 percent felt it had "not changed much," likely reflecting their short tenure in Weinland Park.
- Between 45 percent and 49 percent of Aspirational Families, Neighborhood Core, and Boomers and Independents reported daily interaction with neighbors. Slightly less than one-third of Buckeye Undergrads and Educated Workforce reported daily interaction.
- Approximately one-quarter of Boomers and Independents and Neighborhood Core reported attending the neighborhood civic association meetings. Their primary reasons for attending were to be engaged and to meet neighbors. Slightly more than one-sixth of Educated Workforce and Aspirational Families reported attending the meetings. For Educated Workforce, the primary reasons to attend were to be informed and to be engaged. For Aspirational Families, the primary reason was to be informed.
- The Educated Workforce and Buckeye Undergrads were very satisfied with the neighborhood, while the other clusters were moderately satisfied.
- The Educated Workforce cluster was the most trusting of police, while the Neighborhood Core and Aspirational Families were the least trusting of police.

- The Aspirational Families cluster felt most safe in the neighborhood, while the Buckeye Undergrads felt the least safe.
- The Boomers and Independents cluster was the most food insecure and the most likely to experience homelessness.
- If rents continue to rise, the Neighborhood Core cluster may become cost-burdened for housing (meaning the residents are spending more than 30 percent of their income on housing). The Buckeye Undergrads have the highest cost-burden for housing.

The statistical analysis that resulted in these five clusters brought significantly more nuance to the understanding of who lives in the neighborhood, bringing greater contrast and clarity than simply characterizing residents based on race or class alone. In doing so, the cluster analysis also produced a much better understanding of what civic engagement looks like across Weinland Park, and how changes in the neighborhood have impacted residents differently, highlighting the groups that are most vulnerable to experiencing housing instability as market conditions continue to evolve.

To further understand the differences that residents have in their perception of neighborhood safety, Kirwan staff used an applied methods approach. Survey respondents were asked to identify specific areas in Weinland Park where they feel most safe and least safe. With the location data collected in the survey software, Kirwan staff turned the data points into geographic coordinate points for analysis and then created raster maps for each cluster, race, and sex subgroup. The areas of green on each map in Figures 3 through 6 are areas where there are positive perceptions of safety; areas of red signify areas perceived as unsafe. The darker the respective green or red, the more people selected that area. The map in Figure 7 compares the areas of the neighborhood where females feel unsafe and where males feel unsafe. The maps illustrate distinct differences in perception between black and white respondents, among the clusters, and between men and women.

Figure 3. Map of overall perception of safety
Source: A Portrait of Weinland Park, 2017. Michael Outrich

Figure 3 combines the perceptions of all residents regarding which areas of the neighborhood they deem "safe" and "unsafe." Residents in general viewed the High Street commercial corridor, which has a market orientation to the university campus, and major neighborhood landmarks as "safe." The bright red area along Summit Street was the location of a carryout store that attracted loitering and illicit activities. The red along North Fourth and North Fifth streets is an area with a significant number of CPO apartments inhabited primarily by black families.

Figure 4. Map of black residents' perception of safety

Figure 4 illustrates the perceptions of black respondents regarding the areas they viewed as "safe" and "unsafe." Generally, they felt safe throughout the neighborhood.

Figure 5. Map of white residents' perception of safety

       Figure 5 shows the perceptions of white respondents. While white residents felt "safe" along the High Street corridor and neighborhood landmarks, their perception of being "unsafe" in the interior of the neighborhood where African-Americans are the majority was even more pronounced than in Figure 2.


By not including follow-up questions to ask why residents identified particular parts of the neighborhood as unsafe, the survey avoided eliciting explicit statements from respondents about fear associated with race or class. The result is a potentially more transparent portrayal of the unconscious biases of residents, even among white residents who claim to value a more diverse and inclusive sense of community. As a result, the maps have provoked ongoing dialogue among neighbors not only about public safety, but also about how to build a deeper sense of community across racial and economic differences in a neighborhood that is now more integrated in a variety of ways than ever before.

       Just as revealing and perhaps more surprising than the differences in perceptions of safety between black and white residents are the nuances across resident groups illuminated by these maps. Figure 6 shows the maps of safety perceptions for each of the clusters side by side. These maps reveal inherent racial patterns as well as differences within the three clusters composed primarily of black residents. The older adult cohorts of Boomers and Independents and Neighborhood Core both identified a few specific places in the neighborhood as unsafe, while the Aspiring Families cluster appears to have identified the fewest unsafe areas of any group in the neighborhood. Not surprisingly, Buckeye Undergrads consistently identified the part of Weinland Park most adjacent to campus as safe, and it was the only group that didn't specifically identify the park and elementary school near the center of the neighborhood as a safe place. The Kroger grocery is the one place identified by all clusters as a safe place. Perhaps ironically, it is

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also the place in the neighborhood where residents are most likely to interact with neighbors and members of all clusters.

Figure 6. Perceptions of safety by neighborhood cluster
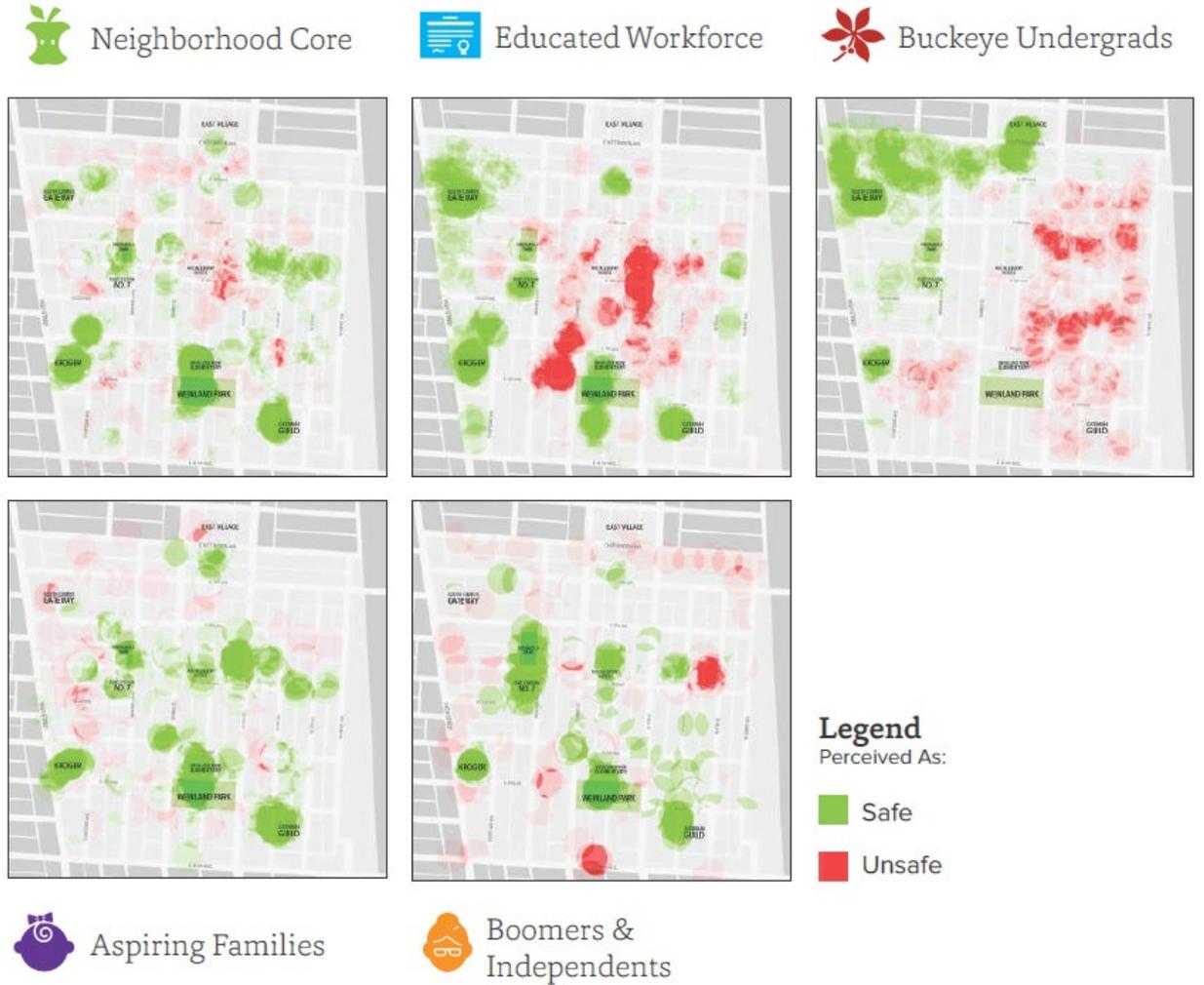
Figure 7. Map showing differences between male and female perceptions of unsafe areas.
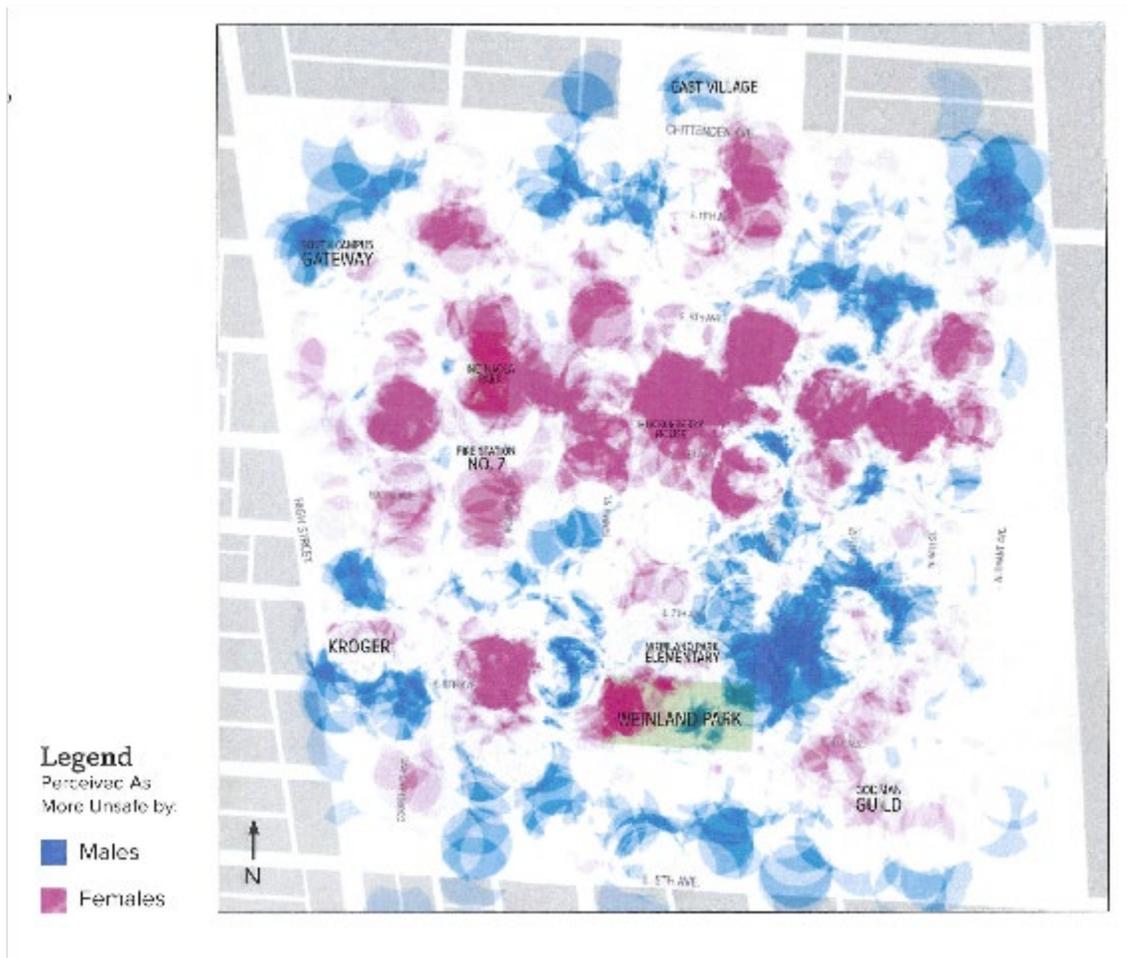
Figure 7 illustrates the differences between perceptions of safety among men and women by highlighting areas that each gender perceives to be more unsafe than the other gender. Based on the survey responses, women generally tend to perceive the periphery of the neighborhood as more safe than men do, while men tend to view the core of the neighborhood as more safe than women do. Interestingly, there also appears to be a noticeable contrast between how women and men perceive prominent public spaces such as the elementary school and the park. While men perceive the area around the entrance to the school to be more unsafe than women do, women perceive the part of the park with the playground as more unsafe than men do. It is also worth mentioning that one of the last remaining corner stores in the neighborhood was located across the street from the park. While women perceive the side of the street with the park to be more unsafe, men perceive the side of the street with the corner store to be more unsafe.

In mid-2017, Kirwan Institute staff members prepared a formal presentation of the survey results specifically designed to encourage understanding and dialogue about the meaning and implications of the results. The staff presented to a general meeting of the civic association involving approximately 60 residents—a broad cross-section of the neighborhood, although homeowners and whites were more heavily represented. The survey results with the clusters and maps generated a great deal of discussion, often uncomfortable for participants. Reactions were strong, but mixed. While community members were generally excited to engage in the conversation about diversity and opportunity in the neighborhood, the various clusters and the idea that perceptions of the neighborhood might differ based on those clusters was a difficult topic for some. The most heated comments focused on the maps of residents' perceptions of safety. Some whites disputed the maps showing that, in general, white residents felt least safe in the areas of the neighborhood where most blacks live (Figure 5) and the map that indicated, in general, that blacks had far fewer areas of the neighborhood where they felt unsafe (Figure 4). Other residents, both white and black, asserted that their personal views differed from the cluster that appeared to represent them.

The Kirwan staff made the formal presentation to additional groups involved in Weinland Park, including CPO residents and WPC members. In general, the more diverse the audience was, the more wide-ranging and emotional the discussion. The emotion in the dialogue was a sign of the level of honest discussion about these difficult topics. The purpose of the presentation was not to determine whose perceptions were correct, but to begin a process of understanding the variety of experiences and attitudes among neighbors and why perceptions of safety differed so noticeably across the neighborhood. The strong reactions to the presentation, however, underscored the importance of sharing survey results in a format accessible to a general audience, preparing for a structured dialogue that permits people to feel safe when talking about difficult topics such as race, and allotting adequate time for the discussion.

Creating an Inclusive Community: The Path Ahead for Weinland Park

Since 2017, Weinland Park's population has continued to grow due to market-rate housing construction on a former brownfield site on the neighborhood's eastern edge and along the High Street corridor on the western edge. The leaders of the civic association have changed. Although the new officers remain committed to an inclusive community, resident involvement in civic association meetings and similar activities has slowed due to fewer neighborhood crises and some exhaustion from a decade of civic activism. Having achieved success in Weinland Park, many of the WPC partners have turned their attention to other distressed Columbus neighborhoods. Key place-based partners, such as the University and Community Properties of Ohio, remain engaged. The Annie E. Casey Foundation will conclude its investment in 2020, but

CPO and other partners are committed to sustaining and expanding in geographic scope the most effective two-generation strategies.

In Weinland Park, new structural challenges to inclusivity are related to the neighborhood's growing popularity. As the neighborhood improvements have become visible, more people are choosing to live in Weinland Park. While that is positive, rising rents and housing costs throughout central Ohio are impacting Weinland Park as well. There is limited land on which to add more affordable housing in the neighborhood. It also remains a challenge to successfully engage the black men in Weinland Park who are connected to the women and children living in the CPO apartments but who, for a variety of reasons, are not on the apartment lease. One factor in this disconnect may be their lack of stable housing. In addition, more needs to be done to reach the Hispanic/Latinx residents and other immigrant families for whom language or immigrant status may be barriers.

As the physical infrastructure and housing market in the neighborhood continue to transform through development of vacant lots and increased sale prices for owner-occupied homes, the neighborhood has begun to face new challenges and predicaments. Non-profit organizations are considering ways to sustain their most successful programs and services as the aggregate amount of funding decreases each year, despite ongoing need among low-income seniors and families.

Weinland Park now must deal with an overly simplistic misperception across Columbus that it is all but gentrified, although it continues to have one of the highest concentrations of subsidized housing in the city. This has resulted in confusion and dissonance among institutional stakeholders and policymakers. Residents who have lived in the neighborhood for more than a few years recognize that the social challenges are morphing into more complicated forms of division. New residents, especially those of the recently built market-rate, suburban-style development, are barely aware of the diverse racial and economic composition of the neighborhood, and they understandably do not appreciate the civic effort that has gone into the revitalization of the past two decades.

Conclusion

Over the past decade, the Weinland Park Collaborative and Weinland Park Community Civic Association invested in improving the housing and physical conditions of Weinland Park and in generating greater opportunity and empowerment for the residents. Due in part to the national and local economy, market conditions, and its location, Weinland Park evolved into a racially diverse, mixed-income neighborhood relatively quickly. The WPC and WPCCA have been intentional in attempting to create an inclusive community within the neighborhood. The 2016 neighborhood survey identified important differences in life experiences and perceptions

among the residents of Weinland Park that must be validated and accepted if we are to develop the authentic relationships that comprise a community. The survey did not spell out the next steps, however, and even with the best of intentions, authentic relationships aren't developed overnight. Over time, the proximity of people in a neighborhood can create some sense of community as adults and children interact in the elementary school, at the grocery store, in the park, and during neighborhood festivals and other social activities. The insights from a tool such as the 2016 neighborhood survey, paired with well-planned public dialogue, holds promise for speeding up the process of defining an inclusive community for a particular neighborhood and the steps for getting there. As the people of Weinland Park and their institutional partners "take a breath" and consider what has been accomplished, their challenge in the next few years is to reflect on the insights from the 2016 survey and consider organizing a neighborhood-wide dialogue. These discussions would include long-term residents and the many new residents to reaffirm their vision for the neighborhood and to identify the steps needed to get there.

The promise of inclusive community-building in Weinland Park is only possible because of effective efforts to make diverse economic and racial proximity possible. Truly successful revitalization must build on those accomplishments by weaving together a heterogeneous social cohesion that has been largely discouraged or elusive throughout the history of neighborhood development in America. Consistent civic engagement and iterative research have helped surface many of the biases that present obstacles to building inclusive community. Many of the structural forces that make integrated housing difficult to achieve are being discussed on a regional level for the first time. These are all ingredients that will be necessary in order to move beyond old prejudices and injustices.

While Weinland Park has made undeniable progress in fulfilling the vision of a mixed-income, racially diverse neighborhood, much work remains to cultivate a cohesive multicultural community. Many of these challenges are related to people's habits of creating community around racial and economic similarities. Robert Putnam[6] pointed out that greater diversity often disrupts existing feelings of solidarity that are based on homogeneity. In a study by the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development, ethnographers found that in the face of greater diversity, residents in some neighborhoods tended to align around social identities (homeowners vs. renters, length of tenure, etc.).[7] They also found that certain rules and regulations from the housing authority worked to preserve social boundaries. A general consensus among those who study mixed-identity neighborhoods, however, is that these are learned behaviors and activities that can and have been unlearned in many communities. Community engagement frameworks that prize recognizing and sharing assets and skills, creating space for mystery and lifelong

[6] Robert Putnam, "E Pluribus Unum: Diversity and Community in the Twenty-first Century. The 2006 Johan Skytte Prize Lecture." Scandinavian Political Studies, 30, no. 2 (2017).
[7] U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development. "Mixed-Income Community Dynamics: Five Insights From Ethnography." *Evidence Matters*, Spring 2013.

learning, and empowerment through community leadership can be found in resources such as Kip Holley's *The Principles of Equitable and Inclusive Civic Engagement*[8], John McKnight and Peter Block's *The Abundant Community*, and the Annie E. Casey Foundation's *Making Connections* series. These frameworks can provide useful guidelines for developing a more expansive view of "community."

As community-building continues in Weinland Park, the civic association leadership and the WPC partners aspire to embrace this diversity of race, income, education and gender as a gift and a source of strength. As social capital is continuously built, new connections between people will unlock their capacities for growth, wellbeing, and benevolence. In turn, these connections generate strong attachments to communities and a commitment to making them better places to live for everyone.

Implications for Action

Implications for Policy.

- **Prepare for more deliberate and intensive community engagement** in mixed-income neighborhoods to resolve civic issues, because residents bring more diverse experiences and perspectives to the public square.
- **Build the capacity of neighborhood civic leadership** to engage effectively with public and private partners, to provide the most useful advice, and, ultimately, to take responsibility for sustaining the neighborhood initiatives. This could involve providing staffing support for neighborhood representatives and holding community discussions at times and locations convenient for neighbors.
- **Commit to long-term engagement and support** by public and private partners, particularly those in the role as anchor institutions. The challenges of distressed neighborhoods and the processes for developing mixed-income communities will require well more than a decade of investment.
- **Develop policies for the inclusive use of public and private community spaces.** Local governments can support powerful and sustainable community dialogue in diverse communities by creating policies that ensure inclusive access and belonging in public spaces and developing "community use" policies for corporate or privately-owned community gathering places such as grocery stores and plazas.

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[8] Kip Holley. *The Principles for Equitable and Inclusive Civic Engagement: A Guide to Transformative Change.* (Columbus, OH: The Kirwan Institute for the Study of Race and Ethnicity, The Ohio State University, 2016).

Implications for Research and Evaluation.

- **Develop the research tools** to define terms such as "mixed-income" and "inclusive community" and to measure the progress toward these social goals.
- **Map survey data** to more effectively illustrate and understand the social groups that compose a mixed-income neighborhood and their varying perspectives.
- **Translate the research data and analysis** into strategies and information that policymakers, civic leaders, and citizens can apply in their work. This may require the development of new techniques, such as the cluster analysis and mapping data described in this paper, to communicate research findings.

Implications for Development and Investment.

- **Cultivate a deeper understanding** of the neighborhood's history, built environment, and social groups so that new developments and investments are widely accepted and are seen as benefiting the whole neighborhood. The diversity of a mixed-income neighborhood may require a variety of both formal (i.e., legally mandated) and informal processes for seeking resident input and acceptance on a project.
- **Remain engaged with the neighborhood.** As a new project becomes part of the neighborhood's fabric, the developer becomes a neighbor and remains responsible for maintaining an appropriate level of communication with civic leaders and other neighbors. This is especially critical in a neighborhood like Weinland Park where only 10 percent of residents are homeowners. Although a variety of rental products exist to provide housing for individuals and families at various price points, the regular turnover among student and family rental units makes building civic history and maintaining momentum a constant challenge. This also is one reason for the burnout among homeowners who have invested years of involvement on behalf of an ever-changing group of neighbors.
- **Pay attention to the placement of private amenities within mixed-income neighborhoods.** As developers conceive of market-rate projects, they must consider the impact that private assets and amenities can have on reinforcing the gaps between economic "haves" and "have nots" in increasingly diverse settings. One poignant example is the swimming pool included in the most recent market-rate apartment development in Weinland Park. As a private amenity reserved exclusively for use of residents of that particular apartment community, the pool and clubhouse symbolize the divide between those in the neighborhood with agency and those whose access to recreational opportunities like swimming pools have historically been limited.

Implications for Residents and Community Members.

- **Participate in honest community dialogues about community data and trends.**
Sometimes the results of surveys and other analyes may generate emotional
discussions about the meaning of the data, particularly regarding difficult issues such
as those involving community change, public safety, and structural racism. It is very
important for community members to interact around these issues intellectually and
emotionally, so they can better understand the experiences their neighbors have had
that shape differing attitudes and perceptions. Civic leaders should use the data and
dialogue to more effectively represent their neighborhood.

- **Use frameworks of shared opportunity and community assets to approach
questions of public safety and greater diversity**. Building a sense of
"connectedness" within increasingly diversifying neighborhoods can be essential for
effective community planning. By framing sometimes difficult conversations related
to race, income, and community change in terms of *shared* assets and goals,
community members can help confront biases and plan for more equitable policies.

- **Take advantage of everyday opportunities for authentic relationship-building.**
Community members experience challenges related to community diversity on an
everyday basis. Therefore, it is important that neighbors make the discussion of
challenges and opportunities part of their ongoing community conversations. While
the forms and venues of conversations may vary, it is important for residents to
engage in them both intellectually and emotionally so that community members can
grow and change through their experiences together.

About the Volume

This essay is published as part of a volume titled, *What Works to Promote Inclusive, Equitable Mixed-Income Communities*, edited by Dr. Mark L. Joseph and Dr. Amy T. Khare, with developmental editing support provided by Leila Fiester. Production is led by the National Initiative on Mixed-Income Communities (NIMC) at the Jack, Joseph, and Morton Mandel School of Applied Social Sciences at Case Western Reserve University, with lead funding provided by The Kresge Foundation. The volume aims to equip a broad audience of policymakers, funders, practitioners, community activists, and researchers with the latest thinking and tools needed to achieve more inclusive and equitable mixed-income communities. This is the fifth volume in the Federal Reserve Bank of San Francisco's What Works series, which has sought to analyze a variety of key themes in urban development.

The views expressed in the essays reflect the authors' perspectives and do not necessarily represent the views of The Kresge Foundation, the Federal Reserve Bank of San Francisco or of the Federal Reserve System.

Readers can view this essay, the framing paper for the volume, and all currently posted essays on NIMC's website where new pieces are being uploaded every month. Essays will be compiled and released in a final print volume, with an anticipated release in 2020.

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