Greater Glenwood

Neighborhood Survey Analysis 2021

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1 OVERVIEW

From August to November of 2021, YNDC's Neighborhood Steward, Patricia Stokes, **conducted a door-to-door survey of over 700 households in the Idora, Indian Village, and Greater Glenwood Avenue area on Youngstown's South Side**. The purpose of the survey was to determine how all residents felt about their neighborhood was doing, to determine what residents viewed as the highest priorities for improving the neighborhood, and to determine if the original priorities identified in the Idora Neighborhood: Comprehensive Neighborhood Plan were still priorities for residents today. The survey also asked basic demographic questions and a few questions about what types of businesses residents wanted to see (and NOT to see) on the Glenwood Avenue corridor in order to inform YNDC's ongoing corridor revitalization work. Between August and November of 2021, a total of 311 households out of 785 households visited have completed surveys - a response rate of nearly **40%.** The following memo outlines the initial findings from the surveys.

2 METHODOLOGY

YNDC's Neighborhood Steward visited all occupied households within the Idora, Indian Village and greater Glenwood Avenue areas and knocked on every door, introducing herself, the survey, and **asking residents to answer a series of specific questions about how they felt about the neighborhood and priorities for improvement.** Every door was knocked on at least once, and if no response was received the first time, the house was visited a second time. If no one answered the door or were otherwise unable to complete a survey at the time, a flyer with information about the survey and a phone number to call to schedule a time to complete it was left at the door. The second time each door was visited, a flyer was left that also included a link and QR code to an web-based version of the survey. If no response was received after two visits, each household for which YNDC had a phone number from our contact database was called up to two times to follow up.
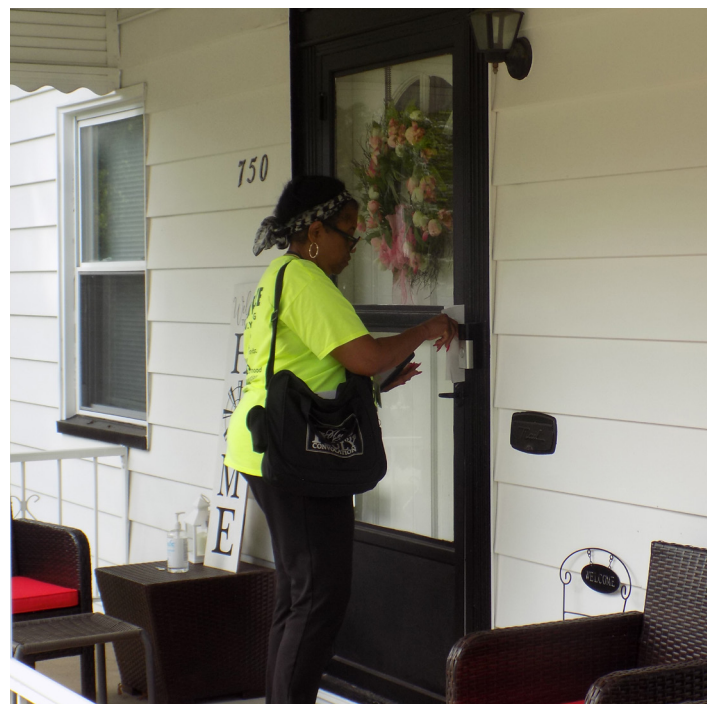
3 METHODOLOGY

The map on this page shows some of the respondents locations within the Idora, Indian Village and greater Glenwood Avenue areas.
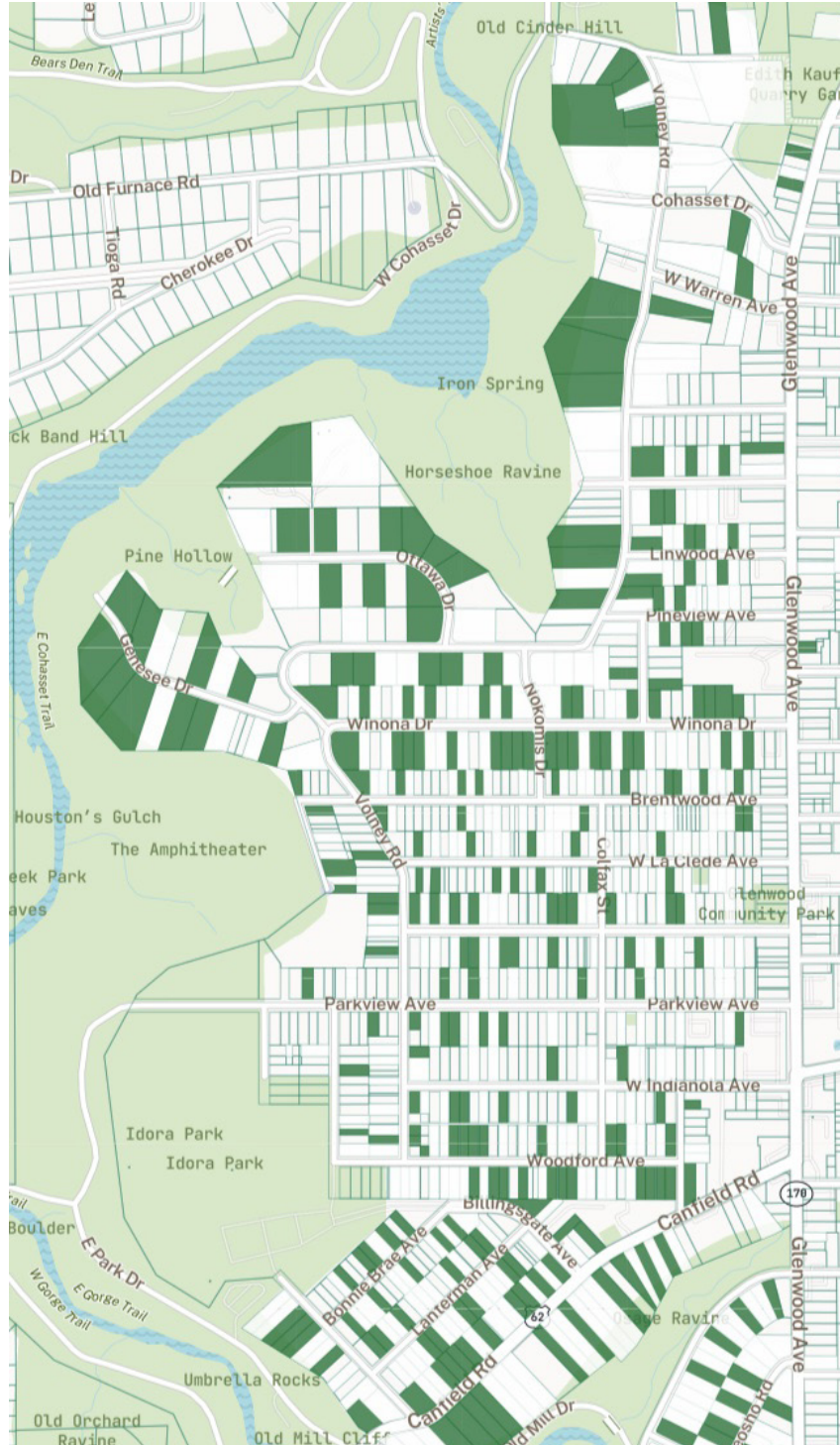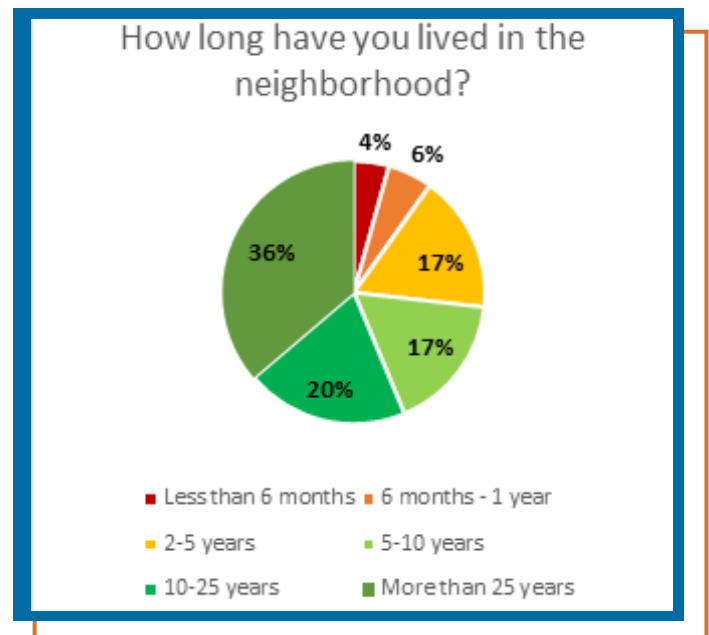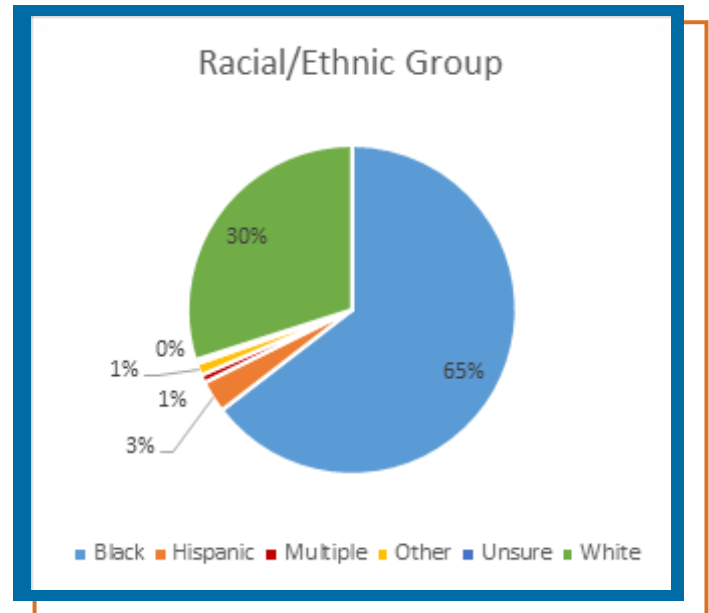
4 DEMOGRAPHICS

The trends in the age, race and tenure of survey respondents generally reflect the demographics of the neighborhood. Areas of over- or underrepresentation generally reflect expectations.

Black and White residents are both slightly overrepresented, while Hispanic residents and residents identifying with more than one Racial/Ethnic group are underrepresented in the survey. The majority of residents who completed the surveys identified as Black (65%), with 30% White, 3% Hispanic, 1% as Multiple, and 1% as Unsure. ACS 2019 5-year estimates indicate that approximately 61% of residents are Black, 22% are White, 5% are Hispanic, and 11% identify as Two or more races. Women are overrepresented versus men in the survey. A majority of respondents identified as Female (63%), with 37% as Male and 0% as Other. ACS estimates that 48% of residents are Female versus 52% Male.

Older adults are somewhat overrepresented and younger adults are underrepresented. The majority of residents (57%) who completed surveys were older adults (ages 55+), with 30% were between 36 and 54 and 14% 18-35. ACS estimates indicate that about and 43% of all residents are 55+, 32% are 35-44, and 25% are 20-34.

Homeowners are overrepresented in the survey. An owner-occupancy analysis conducted by Youngstown State University in 2021 indicated that approximately 62% of households are owner-occupied. A supermajority of survey respondents (79%) were homeowners, with only 20% renters and 1% in a land contract or rent-to-own arrangement. A majority of respondents (56%) had lived in the neighborhood for over a decade. Only 10% were very recent residents, who lived in the neighborhood for 1 year or less.

Demographic trends indicate that additional approaches are necessary to reach a greater share of Hispanic and multiracial residents, male residents, younger residents, and renters in the neighborhoods surveyed.

Racial/Ethnic Group

- Black
- Hispanic
- Multiple
- Other
- Unsure
- White

30% · 65% · 3% · 1% · 0%

How long have you lived in the neighborhood?

4% · 6% · 17% · 17% · 20% · 36%

- Less than 6 months
- 6 months - 1 year
- 2-5 years
- 5-10 years
- 10-25 years
- More than 25 years

5 NEIGHBORHOOD PRIORITIES

1. The supermajority **(74%)** of residents felt that their neighborhood was either **improving (44%)** or **staying the same (31%)**, with **25%** feeling their neighborhood has **gotten worse**.

   a. Those who felt their neighborhood has **gotten worse** almost exclusively blamed crime, particularly the surge of violent crime taking place on the south side of Youngstown, as the cause for decline. The majority of this activity has taken place outside of the neighborhood, although some residents identified specific and known criminal nuisance properties in the neighborhood. Several significant incidents of violent crime have taken place along Glenwood Avenue in the past year. Example responses include:

   i.   "Since COVID it has gotten worse. People outside shooting…"
   ii. "Because of all the shootings"
   iii. "Because of crime too many shootings"
   iv. "Because of the crime on Glenwood, the shootings at Big A's, and the traffic"
   v.   "That house across the street is a problem."

   b. Those who felt their neighborhood **has stayed the same** often indicated that they did not live in the neighborhood long or that they had not experienced a significant change in their quality of life in recent years. Many specifically referenced that the neighborhood is quiet or that they felt there was not much crime in the neighborhood. Example responses include:

   i.   "Because I have only been here a few months"
   ii. "Since I have been here it hasn't gotten worse and they [YNDC] continue to cut the grass"
   iii. "There is not a lot of activity, most of the neighbors have stayed the same"
   iv. "We still have friendly neighbors"

   c. Those who felt their neighborhood had **improved** often cited improvements in housing conditions, specifically the efforts of YNDC and its partners' to repair and rehabilitate homes, sidewalks, and vacant properties as the primary reason that the neighborhood improved. Some reference a reduction in crime, elimination of nuisance properties, improved streets and sidewalks, and the demolition of blighted houses as primary reasons that the neighborhood improved. Example responses include:

   i.   "When they took away Gina's Drive-Thru it stopped a lot of the mess"
   ii. "Because we had a lot of vacant houses and YNDC came and fixed them up"
   iii. "Because of the combination of what YNDC and the City have done and the reduction in crime"
   iv. "They tore down vacant homes and put up fences."
   v.   "Because I have been here for quite some time and it has gotten better"
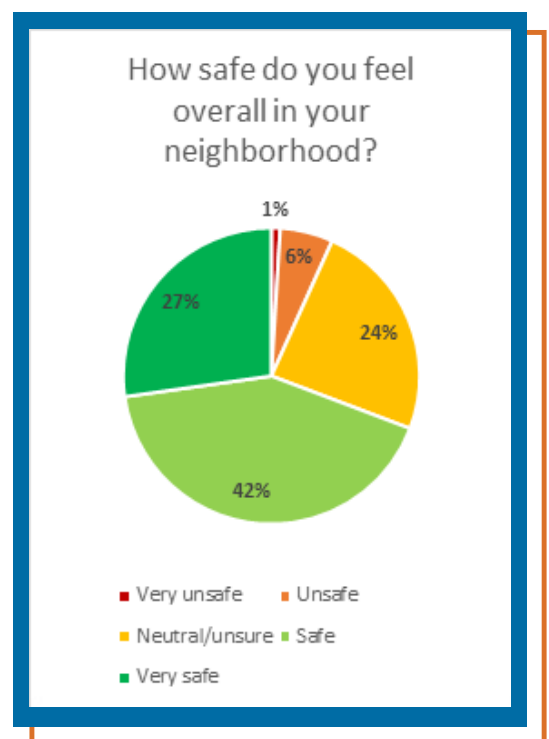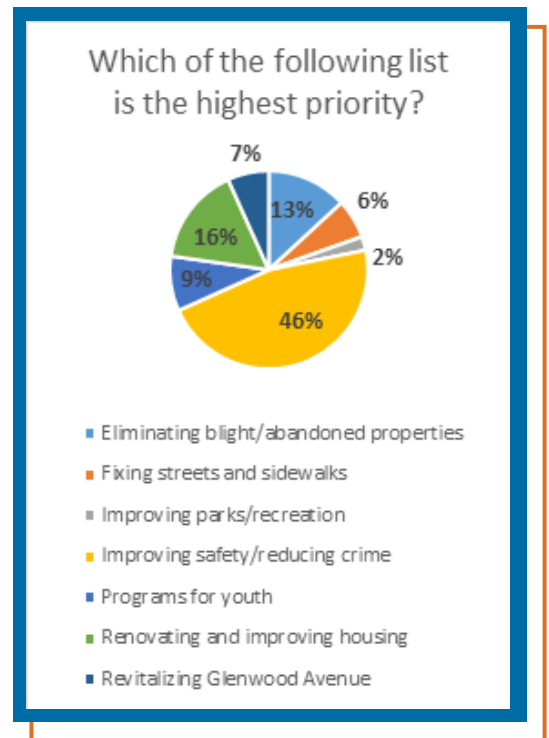   vi. "I see more people taking care of their yard."

2. Out of a list of 7 potential priorities generally aligned with the priorities of the Idora plan, a plurality **(46%)** of residents identified "Improving Safety / Reducing Crime" as the highest priority to improve neighborhood quality of life. Nearly 3 times as many residents chose this priority over any other priority selected. "Renovating and improving housing" **(16%)** and "Eliminating blight / abandoned properties" **(13%)** were the next two priorities most frequently selected by residents. Both of these priorities are closely connected, as renovating and improving housing is one method of eliminating blighted property in neighborhoods.

3. Despite concerns about increased crime, particularly violent crime, a majority of residents **(69%)** reported feeling safe in their neighborhood.

   a. When asked why they felt **safe**, residents cited a variety of reasons. The majority indicated that knowing their neighbors well and looking out for one another, or being longtime residents of the neighborhood, were the reasons that they felt safe. Others referred to various security measures they had put in place to feel safe, such as security systems, cameras, and dogs. Some also felt that their neighborhood in general was very quiet or that there were few safety issues that directly affect them. While residents were concerned about the increase in violent crime that the city has experienced overall, the majority did not feel unsafe in their own homes. Examples include:

       i. "Neighbors watch out for each other"
       ii. "I feel safe my neighbors watch out for me"
       iii. "My two dogs and I mind my own business"
       iv. "I grew up down here and its familiar to me"
       v. "My family and I have cameras all around"
       vi. "Because I have a tight-knit neighborhood"
       vii. "Neighbors we are on the same page"
       viii. "My dog and all our neighbors we are tight-knit"

Which of the following list is the highest priority?

7% 13% 6% 2% 16% 9% 46%

- Eliminating blight/abandoned properties
- Fixing streets and sidewalks
- Improving parks/recreation
- Improving safety/reducing crime
- Programs for youth
- Renovating and improving housing
- Revitalizing Glenwood Avenue

How safe do you feel overall in your neighborhood?

1% 6% 24% 27% 42%

- Very unsafe
- Unsafe
- Neutral/unsure
- Safe
- Very safe
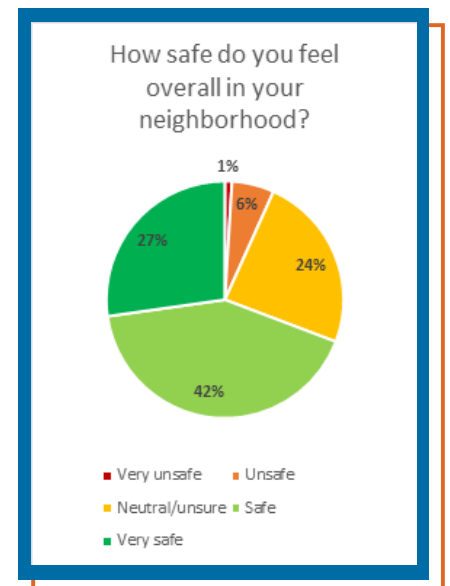
b. Those that felt **neutral/unsure** about whether or not they felt safe primarily expressed general concerns about crime and criminal activity taking place either in the neighborhood or throughout the area at large. Many specifically referred to the uptick in shootings and more specifically the shootings and murders that took place along Glenwood as reasons why they felt unsure about their safety. Examples include:
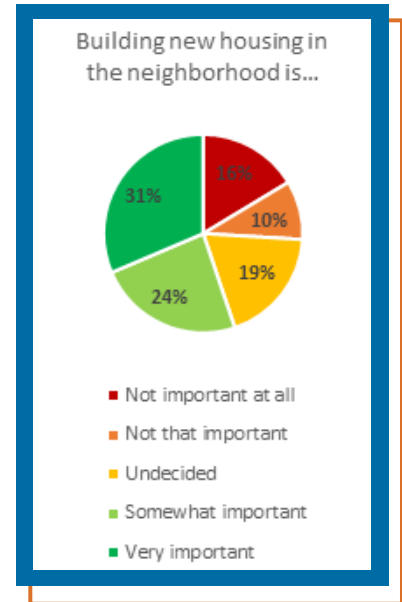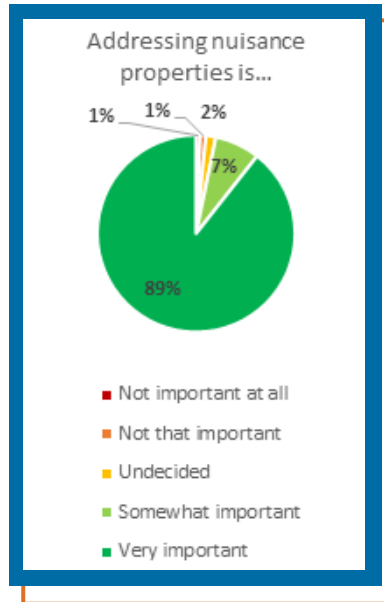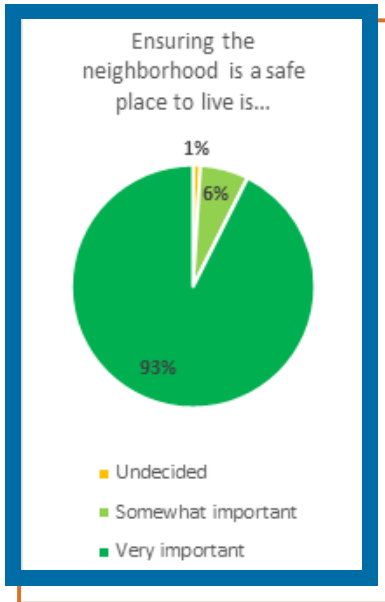
i.   "Because of the gun fire on Glenwood"
ii.   "Because the property right next to me had a shooting, so I feel neutral."
iii.   "Because no one is bothering us"
iv.   "Because I pretty much watch my area but the whole area needs to be safe"
v.   "Because of some of the violence "
vi.   "Because no one has bothered me with any violence"
vii.   "Neutral because the stuff I see happening only happens to the people that are doing those things"

c. Those that felt **unsafe** specifically cited fears of violent crime, slow police response time, and drug activity taking place within the neighborhood. Gunfire and the recent uptick in shootings throughout the south side and along Glenwood Avenue contributed to residents feeling unsafe. Several residents felt very unsafe due to criminal incidents they personally witnessed. Examples include:

i.   "Not enough police protection"
ii.   "I feel very unsafe because of I have had to call the police in my neighborhood"
iii.   "I feel very unsafe in Youngstown; I was shot on my street"
iv.   "No police involvement; I think the youth need more hands on involvement"
v.   "Police response time is not good"
vi.   "All these gunfire around here"
vii.   "Not seeing police around a lot of traffic at houses"

How safe do you feel overall in your neighborhood?

1%
6%
24%
27%
42%

- Very unsafe   - Unsafe
- Neutral/unsure   - Safe
- Very safe

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Ensuring the neighborhood is a safe place to live is...

1%
6%
93%

- Undecided
- Somewhat important
- Very important

Addressing nuisance properties is...

1% 1% 2%
7%
89%

- Not important at all
- Not that important
- Undecided
- Somewhat important
- Very important

Building new housing in the neighborhood is...

31%
16%
10%
19%
24%

- Not important at all
- Not that important
- Undecided
- Somewhat important
- Very important

4. The majority of residents feel that all of the priorities based on the Idora plan remain important for the neighborhood today. Residents were asked to indicate how important they felt each priority from the plan was, on a scale from "Very Important" to "Not Important at All" with an "Undecided/Neutral" option in the middle.

a. The priority that the highest percentage of residents agreed upon was **"ensuring the neighborhood is a safe place to live,"** with **93%** of residents identifying this priority as "Very important" and **6%** as "Somewhat Important." This may also be influenced in some capacity by the recent increase in violent crime on the south side and the city in general.
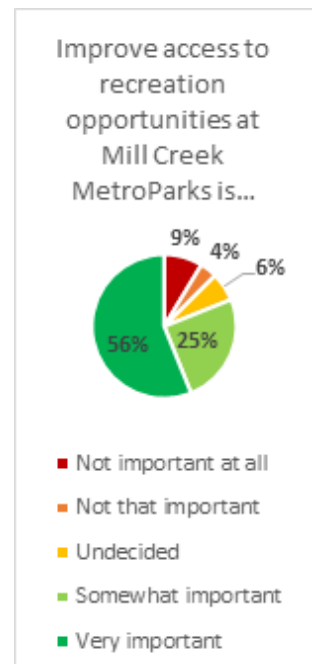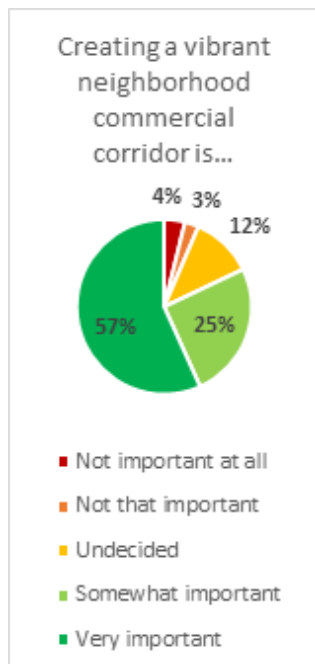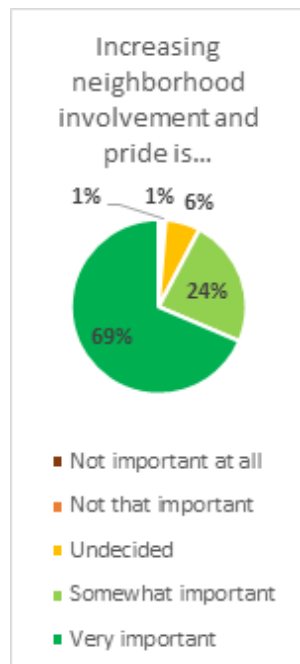
b. The priority that the second highest percentage of residents agreed upon was **"Addressing nuisance properties",** which were defined as "houses that are severely neglected or where illegal/illicit activity is taking place". A total of **89%** of residents indicated this priority was "Very important, **7%** as "Somewhat important."

c. The priority on which the most residents were divided was **"building new housing in the neighborhood,"** which **31%** of residents identified as "Very important," **24%** as "Somewhat important", **19%** as "Undecided," **10%** "Not that important," and **16%** as "Not important at all."

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d. The graphs on this page identify resident responses to the other priorities that were referenced in the survey.

Repairing occupied homes throughout the neighborhood is...

1% — 3%
16%
80%

- Not that important
- Undecided
- Somewhat important
- Very important

Fixing streets, sidewalks, and crosswalks is...

1%   1%   1%
15%
82%

- Not important at all
- Not that important
- Undecided
- Somewhat important
- Very important

Reclaim and rehabilitate vacant properties and land is...

1%   6%   1%
19%
73%

- Not important at all
- Not that important
- Undecided
- Somewhat important
- Very important

Increasing neighborhood involvement and pride is...

1% __ 1% 6%
24%
69%

- Not important at all
- Not that important
- Undecided
- Somewhat important
- Very important

Creating a vibrant neighborhood commercial corridor is...

4% 3%
12%
25%
57%

- Not important at all
- Not that important
- Undecided
- Somewhat important
- Very important

Improve access to recreation opportunities at Mill Creek MetroParks is...

9% 4%
6%
25%
56%

- Not important at all
- Not that important
- Undecided
- Somewhat important
- Very important

5. The survey also asked an open ended question about neighborhood priorities: **"What do you think is the MOST important thing that can be done to improve the neighborhood?"** The purpose of asking this question was to determine if there were additional priorities above and beyond what had been identified in the original Idora plan, and to draw out what specific actions/strategies residents felt would have the most impact at improving their neighborhood. A follow-up question asking why residents felt their proposed action was the most important was included to provide them the opportunity to give further detail and context. Most resident responses tied back to the priorities already identified and fell into the following thematic categories:

a. **Improve housing and property conditions** – repair, rehabilitate, and maintain the housing stock in the neighborhood. Strengthen code enforcement efforts. Eliminate blighted properties and maintain grass and vacant land.

    i.   "Clean up the blight. Because if you get rid of blight then we [the neighborhood] would be inviting."

    ii.   "Keeping up the properties; we have lived here since '91 we have seen a lot of problems. This is how you bring your property back up."

    iii.   "Making people keep up with their property. It's important-- it says who we are."

    iv.   "Upkeep of homes. Because the nicer each home is, the more value you add to the neighborhood."

    v.   "When YNDC [fixes up and] resells the property, it's the best thing for our neighborhood."

    vi.   "To allocate funds for home owners to repair our homes because we need stability."

b. **Improve neighborhood infrastructure** – repair/replace sidewalks, streets, crossings, improve parks, and remove/replace large dead and dying street trees.

    i.   "Upkeep of roads and streets because they are heavily traveled."

    ii.   "Fix the sidewalks on Glenwood Ave. It would add to the neighborhood's beautification."

    iii.   "The streets need to be repaired in my neighborhood. Because it reduces accidents and it makes the neighborhood look better."

    iv.   "Improvement to the sidewalks because I have children and they are not safe."

    v.   "Make something [more] for the kids at the park. Because the kids need access to fun things."

    vi.   "Cutting down trees and replanting new trees make the neighborhood look better. It helps with morale."

    vii.   "Cut down trees in our neighborhood. Cut them down before they fall down."

    viii.   "I would like for a speed bump around the bend. Because children are waiting for the bus and it's not safe.

    ix.   "Improve cross walks at Canfield. It makes it safer for the people. This will make it easier for people to be able to get to market."

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c. **Improve safety** – stronger police presence in the neighborhood, quicker response times, improve lighting, and eliminate longstanding nuisance properties and known crime hotspots.

   i.   "Improve lighting [because] it would feel more safe."
   ii. "I would like a strong active police presence because it would give us a sense of security."
   iii. "Improve police patrols in the neighborhood. This would help with safety."
   iv. "More cameras and more policemen [that are] hands-on. It would reduce crime."
   v.   "Keep drug dealers out of our neighborhood for the safety of my family."
   vi. "More police involvement more police presence. I don't feel they get involved enough. They don't until the last minute."
   vii. "The most important thing is to get rid of the drug houses… because the drug houses bring crime and they destroy property."
   viii. "Some type of way to stop the killings on Glenwood Ave. I worry about the kids getting hurt."

d. **Improve the Glenwood Avenue corridor** – eliminate nuisance businesses and activities and attract quality of life retail and services (especially food and health related).

   i.   "Revitalize Glenwood Ave. It will attract more people."
   ii. "We need a grocery store. We shouldn't have to go all the way too Boardman to shop."
   iii. "Remove the blight on Glenwood, repair the streets. It's an eyesore and terrible."
   iv. I think we need more legitimate businesses. It would distract a lot of crime."
   v.   "Improvement to the Glenwood corridor is really important. No bars no vape stores, no corner stores, no gas stations, no car dealerships."
   vi. "Remove all these unwanted businesses. Because it brings pride to our neighbor hood."
   vii. Glenwood needs businesses that are relevant to the neighborhood. When you have relevant businesses you attract better people."

e. **Build community** – Generate activities and programs for youth and for residents to get to know one another and build both skills and stronger relationships.

    i. "I think some work shops that teach skills, paid training. Because once you empower the people, they matter."

    ii. "I feel like it's important for neighbors to get to know each other because than you will know the people around you."

    iii. "I feel like we need activities for the children [because we need] something for them to do."

    iv. "I think we should love each other and stop and talk with each other. Find out why someone is the way we are. Because that's where it starts."

    v. "The togetherness in the neighborhood would help with crime."

    vi. "If there was a way for people to communicate more because I think little bit of learning can go a long way."

    vii. "Look out for each other all people. Because it stops a lot of crime and stupid things."

It is worth noting that a number of respondents answered this question with "continue doing what you're doing," suggesting that YNDC's efforts to clean up and maintain vacant property, repair owner-occupied housing, rehabilitate vacant homes, and improve commercial properties on Glenwood Avenue are all things that they view as a high priority for improving the neighborhood:

- "To continue doing what you are doing. If we keep up doing what you are doing, then value goes up on our homes."
- "I think what YNDC has been doing… because people will see that an effort is being done [and this] will attract people."
- "I think YNDC has helped with the neighborhood…because it helps with the pride people have."
- "Continue to invest in property…considering you already have invested in our neighborhood."
- "Continue to renovate run down property. It keeps the neighborhood nice."
- "I think YNDC has the right approach…I purchased my home back in 2017 and I have witnessed a marked improvement in the area."

Residents were asked **two open-ended** questions regarding what types of businesses they would like to see, and what types they would NOT like to see, on the Glenwood Avenue corridor. The first question asked residents what types of businesses they would **LIKE** to see. A number of basic quality-of-life retail and services were listed for residents when the question was asked in order to start the conversation. These businesses types provided as examples were (in this order): restaurant, daycare, laundromat, fitness center, coffee shop, grocery store, bookstore, and health clinic.

38%+

Of residents specifically identified a grocery store or fresh food market as the most important type of business they would like to see on the corridor.

24%

Nearly a quarter of all respondents said "all of the above," indicating that they wanted to see all of the example types of quality of life businesses along Glenwood Avenue. Many were also in favor of restaurants, fitness centers, coffee shops, daycare centers, drug stores, laundromats and health clinics.

The second question asked residents what types of businesses and activities that they would **NOT LIKE** to see along the corridor. For this question, no examples were provided in order to avoid bias in the response. Bars were referenced the most of any response, but all of these business types were mentioned in a multitude of responses. Some also mentioned specifically that they did not want any businesses that attracted panhandling, drug abuse, or drug sales.

The most frequent responses included bars/night clubs, liquor stores, corner stores/ gas stations, used car dealerships, dollar stores, smoke/vaping shops/ dispensaries, adult businesses of any kind, and vacant and neglected buildings.

14 CONCLUSION

The majority of residents continue to view the priorities identified in the Idora plan as high priorities for improving quality of life in the neighborhoods along Glenwood Avenue today. Most residents agree that improving neighborhood safety, eliminating blight, and addressing nuisance properties are among the highest priorities for neighborhood improvement. Safety concerns in the neighborhoods appear to stem from the increase in violent crime throughout the city overall, but some stem from specific and longtime nuisance properties both in the neighborhood and along the Glenwood Avenue corridor.

Residents also view repairing/rehabilitating housing and addressing streets, sidewalks, crossings, dead street trees, and other infrastructure issues to be very high priorities for continued neighborhood improvement. Residents had the most mixed views on the construction of new housing in the neighborhood, however this is likely because very little new housing exists as a point of reference for residents within Youngstown's neighborhoods overall.

Residents believe that more police involvement in the neighborhood and a proactive, hands-on, community policing approach is one of the most important ways that neighborhood safety can be improved. Residents support stronger code enforcement and continued home repair and vacant home rehabilitation efforts along with neighborhood cleanup and vacant lot maintenance. Most residents would like to see fewer vice-oriented and exploitative businesses along Glenwood Avenue and want to see more businesses that provide goods and services that meet neighborhood needs, improve health and quality of life, and attract people and investment to their neighborhoods. Residents also value opportunities to build community and get to know one another and create more activities and safer spaces for youth in the neighborhood.

This information will be used to update the Idora plan over the next year to address current priorities provided by residents. YNDC will continue surveying additional neighborhoods along Glenwood Avenue as well as businesses and stakeholders to obtain additional feedback in the spring. These surveys are also part of a broader listening campaign to inform YNDC's neighborhood organizing work over the next year to ensure efforts to effect long-term systemic change directly respond to the priorities of Youngstown's residents.

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DEVELOPMENT CORPORATION

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