

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The Housing Authority of the County of Sacramento (HACOS) received a Choice Neighborhood Initiative planning grant from the US Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) in October 2011. The purpose of this planning grant was to address the 60 year-old Twin Rivers public housing complex located in a larger area targeted for redevelopment. Between April and August the planning process focused on a needs assessment designed to engage residents of Twin Rivers and to solicit their input for the planning process. HACOS contracted with LPC Consulting Associates, Inc. to conduct a needs assessment survey with the residents of 218 housing units that make up Twin Rivers.

LPC conducted the Twin Rivers Resident Needs Assessment Survey in May, analyzed the data in June, and presented findings to all planning committees for the Choice Neighborhood Initiative in July. The findings represented input from the heads of household for 181 of the 218 Twin Rivers housing units, for a response rate of 83 percent. In addition to the quantitative findings from that survey, LPC attended a focus group meeting with approximately 50 residents and participated in monthly committee meetings over the duration of the needs assessment process. These meetings provided additional qualitative input to enhance the interpretation and understanding of the survey results.

Highlights from the needs assessment are summarized, as follows:

- **Residents like living at Twin Rivers.** They especially like the availability of single story semi-detached housing, the neighborhood ambiance, the mature canopy of trees, and the proximity to downtown Sacramento. Many want to remain here, and there are some concerns about relocation and/or finding themselves in “high rise apartments.”
- **Accessibility to basic amenities and services is limited.** Unlike public housing in other parts of Sacramento, there are either natural or manmade barriers between Twin Rivers and retail shopping, grocery stores, a pharmacy, public schools, a library, public parks, libraries, and programs for youth and children. Although some of these services are within two miles of Twin Rivers, residents must use their personal vehicle or public transportation (with transfers and additional costs) to reach these basic services.
- **Transportation options are good, though access is challenging.** Twin Rivers is located at the intersection of a busy thoroughfare where an urban expressway transitions to city streets and traffic signals. Walking and biking are challenges due to the flow of in-bound traffic and the nature of the surrounding community; bus and light rail stops are accessible but present hazards and inconvenience to Twin Rivers residents; bus and light rail ticket prices are beyond the means of some residents.
- **Programs and services for children and youth are high priority.** Almost two thirds of the households in Twin Rivers have children. Their parents want to enroll them in early childhood education and pre-school, have them attend high quality schools nearby, provide recreational, sports, and enrichment activities to promote healthy development

and to mitigate risk for delinquent behavior and school failure. An on-site community center or community room was one suggestion for bringing more programs onsite, including computers and books.

- **Adults want to work.** Although the majority of adult residents of Twin Rivers are unemployed (76%), many express high interest in pursuing higher education and vocational training to improve their employability. They also have interests in jobs and careers that align with their training needs.
- **Access to health care is challenging.** Twin Rivers is home to families with children, senior citizens (10%), and adults and children with disabilities, primarily related to mobility. Although nearly all children are insured and most see a doctor for regular checkups, adults are both less likely to have insurance and more likely to seek care at the emergency room over preventive care. Compared to county and state rates, residents at Twin Rivers have higher rates of asthma, diabetes, high blood pressure, weight problems, and heart conditions. For adults, many of these conditions are untreated.
- **Residents are interested in pursuing healthy lifestyles.** Among the amenities that survey respondents would like to see in the “transformation of Twin Rivers” are: recreational parks where families can gather to barbecue, play team sports, bike and walk, and toddlers can play safely; community gardens and farmers’ markets; walking and biking paths; and classes on healthy living and nutrition.
- **Crime and personal safety are concerns for many residents.** Twin Rivers residents consider improved security among one of their greatest needs. Although there are mixed perceptions about personal safety in Twin Rivers, there are shared concerns about the close proximity to a nearby complex of services for most of Sacramento’s homeless population, as well as transiency, drug use or dealing, and even some disturbances related to neighbors or their unsupervised children. Residents have been outspoken about their desire for additional street lighting, fencing or gated access, and on site security, whether provided by HASOC or police patrols. There is moderate interest in activating a Neighborhood Watch group.

The Twin Rivers Resident Needs Assessment Survey has provided considerable data to inform the planning process and insure that the resident voice is part of that process. The detailed findings provide a combination of quantitative data and qualitative input, as well as a baseline for assessing changes over time, as the Choice Neighborhood Initiative proceeds with implementation.

**Twin Rivers Public Housing Development
Resident Needs Assessment Summary
(N=183)**

Household Characteristics

- 50% of HHs have a computer, of which 77% have access to the internet
- 50% of HHs do not use a traditional bank or have a traditional bank account
- Average household income (N=208) is \$9,572

Under \$5,000	51 (25%)
\$5,000-9,999	71 (34%)
\$10,000-14,999	51 (25%)
\$15,000-19,999	19 (9%)
\$20,000-24,999	10 (5%)
\$25,000-29,999	2 (1%)
\$30,000-34,999	4 (2%)

Educational Attainment

	Twin Rivers	Sac County
No High School Diploma/GED	28%	15%
High School/GED	26%	22%
Some College	41%	35%
College Degree or higher	5%	28%

- 17% are current attending college or a vocational training program
- Of those not attending college or vocational training program, 44% are interested

Employment

- 25% of adult household members are currently employed
 - Of those employed, 48% are working full time
- Of 75% not employed, primary reasons include:
 - disability (40%)
 - children at home (17%)
 - cannot find job (25%)
 - currently in school (21%)
- Cited barriers to employment for neighborhood residents:
 - Lack of job opportunities (40%)
 - Lack of transportation (39%)
 - Lack of job experience/skills (31%)
 - Lack of childcare (27%)
 - Lack of education (23%)
 - Criminal record (11%)

- Areas of employment interest are:
 - Health/medical (34%)
 - Administrative (28%)
 - Food industry (26%)
 - Retail/sales (24%)
 - Education (18%)
 - Childcare (21%)
 - Self-employment/own business (21%)
 - Computer/technology (18%)
 - Hospitality (18%)
 - Transportation (15%)
 - Maintenance (14%)
 - Personal services (13%)
- Skill development program interests:
 - computer skills (56%)
 - small business training (33%)
 - budgeting/finances (30%)
 - vocational training (28%)
 - cooking/food prep (19%)
 - child development/parenting (19%)
 - college prep (15%)
 - leadership training (15%)
 - English skills (12%)
 - relationship skills (12%)
 - citizenship (9%)
- Employment assistance services Requested:
 - Job Skills Training (65%)
 - Transportation (42%)
 - Job Fairs (39%)
 - Before school (21%), after school (28%) and 24-hour (32%) childcare
 - Others identified – GED classes, discounted bus tickets, computer/internet access

Children/Youth

- Of households with pre-school age children, only 21% are enrolled in an early childhood education program.
- Enrichment program participation – 35% do not participate in any, of those who do:
 - Afterschool programs – 44%
 - Church activities -29%
 - Sports/recreational – 22%
 - Tutoring – 14%

- Boys & Girls Club – 7% - Use of the B&G Club is very low, reasons for non-use were mainly folks don't know about, too hard to get there, and it costs money
- 80% would like youth programs to be offered after school and in the summer, 60% want them on the weekends
- Activities they would like to see for children/youth include:
 - Recreation/sports – 61%
 - Arts and crafts – 53%
 - Computer classes – 52%
 - Job Skills training/ employment assistance – 45%
 - Drug prevention – 43%
 - Youth leadership – 43%
 - Music/band/singing – 41%
 - Academic tutoring – 41%
 - Violence/safety prevention programs – 38%
 - Mentoring – 37%
 - Safe sex education – 36%
 - Dance – 33%
 - Life skills/financial literacy – 33%
 - Social activities – 31%
 - Religious instruction – 19%

Health

	Adults	Children
Current Health	73% (good to fair)	85% (excellent to good)
Have Health Insurance	80%	96%
Access to Affordable Health Care	72%	88%
Access to Dental Care	50%	93%
Medical Home		
Doctor's Office	65%	56%
Emergency Room	21%	9%
County Clinic	24%	9%
Medical Conditions (Being Treated)		
Asthma	39% (73%)	33% (67%)
Type 1 Diabetes	11% (36%)	7% (11%)
Type 2 Diabetes	17% (41%)	1% (0%)
High Blood Pressure	49% (48%)	2% (0%)
Mental Health/Depression	33% (52%)	4% (60%)
Arthritis	35% (54%)	1% (0%)
Weight Problem	33% (32%)	5% (14%)
Heart Disease	10% (46%)	2% (50%)

- 79% have health insurance through Medi Cal, 26% have Medicare
- Adults generally eat fewer servings of fruits and vegetables per day than their children

- Most adults (74%) report being pretty active getting 30+ minutes daily, while children are even more active at 60+ minutes/day (63%)
- Only 36% of adults participate in any exercise or fitness activities
- More likely to exercise if had:
 - walking/running path nearby (31%)
 - felt safe walking around area (49%)
 - had dance classes (31%)
 - gym in neighborhood (64%)

Food Security

- 43% reported that there are times when there is not enough food in the house to eat
- Reasons for not enough food are:
 - not enough money (68%)
 - too hard to get to the store (42%)
- Strong interest (75%) in community garden, courses on healthy living, and learning about nutrition, cooking, etc.

Transportation

- 37% use the bus, 27% use light rail, and 30% have someone drive them. Only 18% walk, and 6% bike.
- 50% say transportation is a barrier when trying to go to work/school/store/doctor's office

Safety

- While people felt generally safe during the day in the neighborhood (74%), but 57% feel unsafe after dark.
- For those who go to parks in the neighborhood, 56% said they did not feel safe there
- If local services are not being used, about 30% say because feel unsafe or uncomfortable in the area
- The biggest safety concerns in the area were:
 - Speeding traffic (44%)
 - Transient/homeless population (42%)
 - Drug dealing (41%)
 - Drug use (37%)
 - Juvenile delinquency (37%)
 - Gang activity (32%)
 - Theft (28%)
- Crime prevention activities include:
 - Better street lighting (57%)
 - Better security systems (53%)
 - More visible police patrol (50%)

- Fencing and gates (45%)
- Crime watch program (27%) – note that 54% of households said they would NOT participate in a neighborhood watch, many noted the fear of retribution were they to participate
- People generally trust and have confidence in the PD, 38% said they have little to no trust
 - 36% want to see an increase in police presence
 - 34% want to see them working with youths
 - 29% community policing
 - 26% increase in enforcement
 - 25% crime prevention advice/training

Neighborhood

- 81% are interested in pursuing homeownership
- Biggest strength of neighborhood, aside from affordability, was transportation (44%)
- Most desired businesses:
 - Grocery store (86%)
 - Large retail (53%)
 - Pharmacy/drugstore (43%)
 - Farmer's market (35%)
 - Library (31%)
 - Restaurants (30%)
 - Clinic/hospital (30%)
 - Laundromat (24%)
- Dislikes about neighborhood:
 - Poor street lighting/street layout (48%)
 - Distance from school, job, groceries, services (47%)
 - Crime/violence on street (45%)
 - Not enough rec facilities (30%) / Lack of community center (25%)/Not enough green areas/parks (24%)
 - Poor quality school (25%)
 - Unemployment (25%)
 - Not enough childcare options (20%)

Overall Services would most benefit from:

- Job skills training/employment assistance (48%) / GED Adult Education (26%)
- Physical fitness for adults (42%)
- Transportation (40%)
- Computer classes/lab (39%)
- Youth programs (36%)
- Childcare (31%)
- Healthcare/medical services (31%)

- Credit repair (30%) / Financial counseling (21%)
- Arts/Dance/Music (26%)
- Counseling services (22%) / Mental health services (20%)

Neighborhood Strategies – From August 22, 2012 meeting

Businesses

Objective 1: Bring a range of employment opportunities to residents in study area.

Strategy 1: Conduct skills assessment of residents – *SHRA, SETA- seed grant?*

Strategy 2: Connect with organizations/agencies that provide training and employment placement – *SETA, PRIDE, JobCorps, Existing employers in study area, Enterprise Zone – targeted fund*

Strategy 3: Focus on cluster of businesses regarding:

- Biotech/life science or other business that require flexspace
- Engineers/architects
- Light industrial users (the provide opportunities for variety of skill sets)
Economic Development, SARTA/SACTO, professional organizations for desired businesses

Objective 2: Attract pharmacy and medical clinic

Strategy 1: Co-locate a pharmacy/variety store with a medical clinic – ground floor retail co-locate with or adjacent to a grocery store – *Economic Development, Developers like T-9 and Railyards, Brokers, Med 7*

Strategy 2: Locate pharmacy in an adjacent neighborhood with easy access to the River District and Railyards (improve transit access) – *Alkali Flats, Mansion, Regional Transit*

Strategy 3: Work with nearby pharmacies and RT to improve access – *Regional Transit*

Objective 3: To increase grocery store access and accessibility to fresh food

Strategy 1: Locate a farmers' market in or adjacent to the neighborhood that offers fresh foods at least once a week – T9 RT Station, Goodwin – *Certified Farmers' Markets of Sacramento County*

Strategy 2: Improve transportation options to provide direct access to existing grocery stores not in the neighborhood – *Regional Transit*

Strategy 3: Work with the selected housing developer and/or City to locate a community garden as part of the development or in the neighborhood – *Housing developers, City Parks and Recreation, Sacramento Area Community Garden Coalition*

Strategy 4: Explore the creation of a retail outlet with one of the existing produce wholesales in the neighborhood – *General Produce, La Superior*

Strategy 5: Work with Cash and Carry to make improvements to the existing store to increase range of products offered and/or sizes of products offered more suitable to small households, must accept Cal Fresh (food program vouchers) – *Cash and Carry*

Strategy 6: Advocate for the location of a new grocery store as a high priority as new development occurs in the neighborhood - *Private developers, City Economic Development*

Strategy 7: Urban harvest program?

Strategy 8: Food truck that delivers produce?

Strategy 9: Dollar General, Maxx Value

Transportation

Objective: To increase transportation options for typical trips

Need: According to resident needs assessment, transportation is a barrier when trying to go to work/school/store/doctor's offices.

Goal: Greater mobility within the area without relying on a car.

Strategy 1: Light Rail Stop: Dos Rios Station development would provide easy access to Light Rail Transit and the opportunity for Transit Oriented Development in close proximity that could be marketed to provide many of the services that are currently lacking (small grocery, library, etc.) – *Regional Transit, City of Sacramento*

Strategy 2: Grocery Shuttle: - *TMA's*

Strategy 3: Cooperative Bulk Purchasing

Strategy 4: Community Organization: Help the community to coordinate transportation needs such as doctor's appointments, grocery runs, school carpools, etc. – *Model on Zimride or TMA ridesharing.*

Strategy 5: Carshare – *Site-based but modeled on Zipcar*

Strategy 6; Subsidized Transit Passes – *Regional Transit, look to San Francisco models*

Homeless

Objective: Reduce the impact of homeless in ways as it applies to health, safety, and economic vitality.

Need: Concentration of services becomes a magnet for homeless and people roam aimlessly throughout the community; encroaching on business; loitering and interruption of business; crime

Goal: No homeless foot traffic from 7pm – 7am

Strategy 1: Develop a street management program

- Move people more quickly through system for those who want to engage in services
- Develop a safety patrol – navigators, security

Sac Steps Forward, Services Provides, Police Department, The River District

Strategy 2: Change the image

- Provide trash cans
- Set a standard
- Neighborhood watch/engage community residents
- Signage to promote

Police Department, Planning, Residents

Strategy 3: Deconcentrate and improve services – establish policies – *SSF, County Board of Supervisors, CC*

Strategy 4: Enforce Trespassing Ordinance – signage - *Businesses, SPD, The River District*

Strategy 5: More affordable housing – *SHRA, Non-profit developers*

Strategy 6: Accelerate development – more eyes on the street

Parks/Open Space

Objective: Increase and improve open space and recreational opportunities

Need: Dislike of neighborhood – lack of open space, lack of access to parkway and American River Trail

Goal: High quality parks and open space developed

Strategy 1: Continue to build inland parks – *T9, City Parks and Rec*

Strategy 2: Joint use of Smythe Academy – *TRUSD, City Parks and Rec*

Strategy 3: Access to Parkway via 10th

Strategy 4: Development to include open space with recreational opportunities

Strategy 5: Community Center

