

Civic Engagement in the Capitol Hill Area of Denver

Wartburg College Community Sociology

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In May 2005 a research team of seven upper-division Wartburg College Community Sociology students, supervised by their community sociology professor, partnered in a research endeavor with Capitol Hill United Neighborhoods in Denver, Colorado. Students developed a research proposal for review and approval by the partner organization, and subsequently conducted research with the intent of informing organization activity and effectiveness.

For the students, this research was a component of their Field Sociology course in Community Sociology, a qualitative research methods course. Integrating community into research methods is an accepted practice in sociology, and integral to student learning in community sociology. Community-based course activities such as these not only serve the interests of the learning process, they help students prepare for life-long community leadership and civic engagement. At the same time, community partners benefit from the completed research. As resources for community-based research diminish, partnerships with institutions of higher education have become important in continuing this important work.

As the faculty member supervising this research, I am pleased to present this final report. It is my sincere hope that the students have merged community theory and practice in a way that informs the important work of C.H.U.N.

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This research explores civic engagement and concerns of residents in the Capitol Hill area of Denver, Colorado. It identifies factors influencing resident involvement in neighborhood concerns, and methods of increasing civic engagement. Multiple research methods were employed, including 160 neighborhood and field interviews, seven key informant interviews, and unobtrusive observations made by the team of seven undergraduate researchers supervised by a Wartburg College community sociology faculty member.

Two specific research questions are posed.

What are the concerns of neighborhood residents within the boundaries of Capitol Hill United Neighborhoods?

What techniques or activities can be employed to encourage civic engagement by neighborhood residents?

While the research compiled a data set that can continue to be explored, this analysis points to seven key findings for the consideration of Capitol Hill United Neighborhoods.

A. What are the concerns of neighborhood residents within the boundaries of Capitol Hill United Neighborhoods?

1. Residents of the Capitol Hill area view their most immediate concerns as crime and safety. Theft, graffiti, vandalism, and drugs in particular were cited often, and crime and drugs were particularly related to one another in the content analysis. Participants reported personal experiences with all of these concerns and noted a general lack of response and/or change, and not much optimism for improving petty crime or drug use. The vehicle used most often to respond to this was contacts with city officials rather than neighborhood-based organizations. The one issue-based neighborhood action that respondents identified as needed at this time was a crime or neighborhood watch.
2. Related to crime and safety is the theme of neighborhood appearance/ cleanliness. Appearing second most often in responses, clean included terms such as well kept, neat, clean yards, clean parks, maintain, and the length of grass. But it also referred to problems with graffiti, and drug use and sales in public places. Having a clean neighborhood appears to be a value for resident of the Capitol Hill area, and while having a clean neighborhood means having mowed lawns and people picking up after their dogs, it also means the elimination of crime, graffiti, and public drug use.
3. In regard to redevelopment activities on Colfax Avenue, neither awareness nor concern is significant, and there were notable differences between neighborhood and field interviews and the key informant interviews. While just over half of the respondents in

the neighborhood and field interviews indicated their awareness of changes to Colfax Avenue, only 14 percent of those aware of the changes were concerned with possible impacts. Key informants, however, did express concern with changes on Colfax Avenue, both the change that has occurred (perceived as aiding in the increase of crime) and the planned redevelopment.

B. What techniques or activities can be employed to encourage civic engagement by neighborhood residents?

4. Residents of the Capitol Hill area had no problem identifying concerns they would be willing to work on to address, or the positive aspects of their neighborhood. They were also open about the low level of neighborhood civic engagement. Among key informants, the most commonly cited reason for lack of neighborhood civic engagement was simply shortage of time. And when residents were asked to state up to two activities they would like to see available in their neighborhood, it was difficult for many to answer as they felt there were already many events and activities available. Their most common response to this query was a need for neighborhood activities that include gathering around food. Block parties and cook-outs were cited as examples. Parties and social gatherings appear to be the vehicle residents are looking for to engage with their neighbors, not additional issue-based organizations.

5. This examination clarifies that a low level of membership in neighborhood organizations does not mean a low level of neighborhood satisfaction. While 52 percent of residents interviewed were aware of C.H.U.N., only 1 percent of all residents of the Capitol Hill area are C.H.U.N. members. At the same time, nearly all respondents (152 of 160) quickly and easily provided positive attributes of their neighborhood. Overall, the research points to a high level of neighborhood satisfaction in the Capitol Hill area.

6. While respondents may not be looking for ways to engage in neighborhood issues, they may still seek information regarding neighborhood issues that is provided to them in multiple ways. Neighborhood associations were pointed to as the entity to facilitate or encourage dissemination of information. Residents would like to receive information through newspapers, newsletters, forums, meetings, and city council interaction. Related to this is the manner in which residents communicate concerns regarding their neighborhoods. The most common response was to contact a city representative rather than a neighborhood-based organization.

7. An interesting finding identified early in the research, was that residents of the Cherry Creek neighborhood, and to some extent the Country Club neighborhood, did not consider themselves part of the Capitol Hill area. This could be attributed to the higher socio-economic status of households in this neighborhood, or that Cherry Creek is the farthest neighborhood from Capitol Hill in this sample.

INTRODUCTION

Capitol Hill United Neighborhoods (C.H.U.N) is an umbrella organization representing ten neighborhoods in the Capitol Hill area of Denver, Colorado. This is one of the oldest areas of Denver, dating back to 1864. The Colorado capitol building, state offices, and downtown Denver, are located at the west edge of the Capitol Hill area.

C.H.U.N. emerged in 1969 to address resident concerns with zoning (C.H.U.N. Denver 2005) and was formed before most other neighborhood associations began to emerge (Green and Haines 2002). Similar to other neighborhood associations formed across the country (Green and Haines 2002), C.H.U.N. was created to address specific issues of development and zoning and then built upon success in this area by expanding to other issues. C.H.U.N. now addresses issues such as crime prevention and neighborhood beautification, and communicates on behalf of area residents with local and state governments. In addition, there are more than 30 other organizations located within this area of Denver that represent specific neighborhoods or neighborhood causes and issues. The activities of C.H.U.N. are directed by a board of representatives from each of the ten neighborhoods, and are funded by an annual event called the People's Fair. C.H.U.N. distributes a portion of People's Fair profits to neighborhoods through grants for community programs (C.H.U.N. Denver 2005).

The area examined in this research specifically encompasses ten identified neighborhoods within Capitol Hill (Figure 1). These neighborhoods are¹ North Capitol Hill (1), West City Park (2), South City Park (3), Capitol Hill (4), Capitol Hill/Cheesman Park (5), Cheesman Park (6), Congress Park (7), Alamo Placita (8), Country Club (9), and Cherry Creek (10). These neighborhoods of the Capitol Hill area vary in terms of income, age, housing type, and race (Piton Foundation 2000). Many have undergone change in recent years, most often gentrification. In the past, C.H.U.N. has focused on zoning and historical preservation issues - issues of most concern to homeowners. Greater C.H.U.N. involvement by low income renters as opposed to middle-income owners has also been recognized. In addition, C.H.U.N. membership is low when compared to potential membership. Current membership is approximately 600 in an area of 60,000 potential members (C.H.U.N. Denver 2005). C.H.U.N. realizes the importance of participation in neighborhood associations, and recognizes from its own history that neighborhood associations have proven effective.

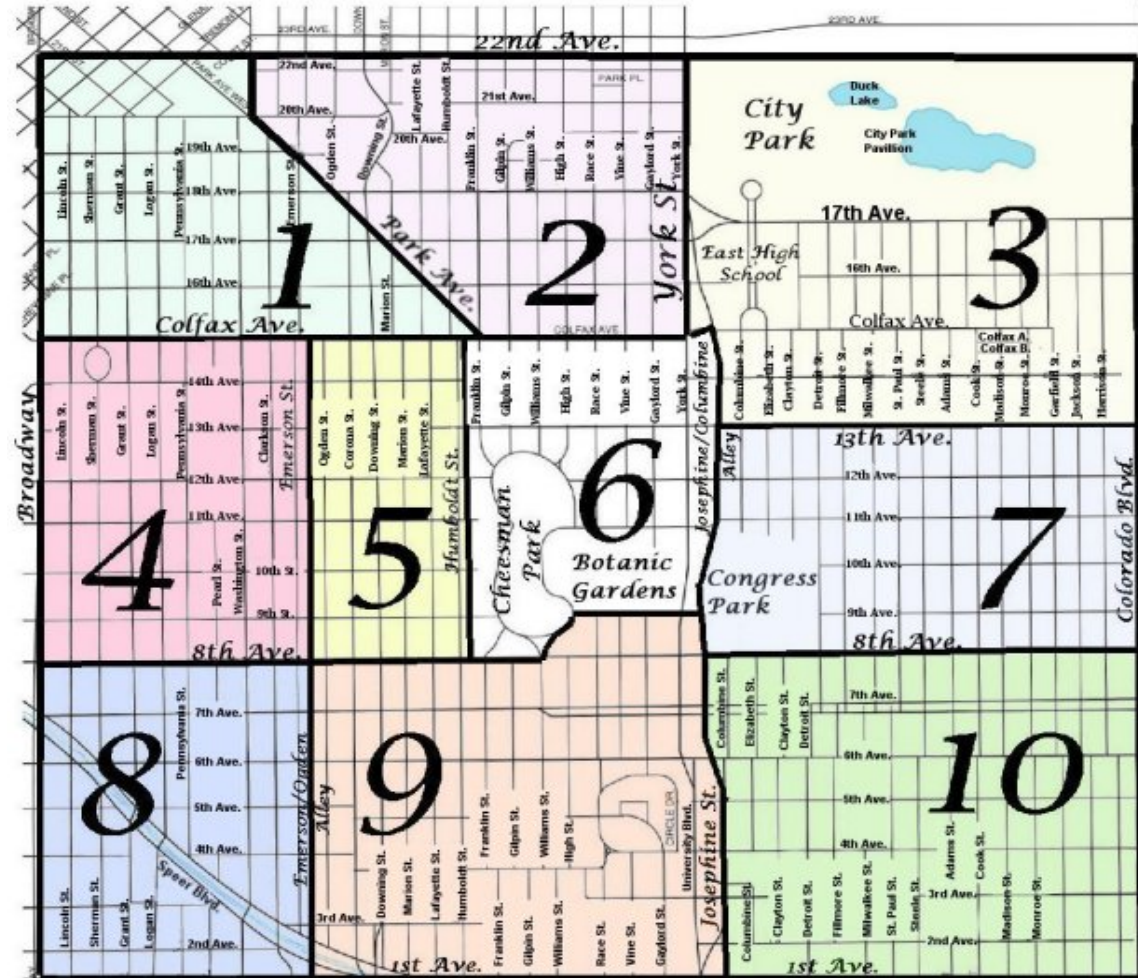
This research explores concerns of Capitol Hill neighborhood residents, factors influencing their involvement in neighborhood concerns, and methods of increasing civic engagement in their neighborhoods. Multiple research methods were employed, including neighborhood and field interviews, key informant interviews, and unobtrusive observation. Two specific research questions are posed.

¹ C.H.U.N provided researchers with the map represented in figure 1. The names of the neighborhoods were found to be consistent in most cases with resident perceptions.

What are the concerns of neighborhood residents within the boundaries of Capitol Hill United Neighborhoods?

What techniques or activities can be employed to encourage civic engagement by neighborhood residents?

Figure 1. Capitol Hill Neighborhoods



(C.H.U.N. 2005)

- | | |
|-------------------------------|------------------|
| 1. North Capitol Hill | 6. Chessman Park |
| 2. West City Park | 7. Congress Park |
| 3. South City Park | 8. Alamo Placita |
| 4. Capitol Hill | 9. Country Club |
| 5. Capitol Hill/Cheesman Park | 10. Cherry Creek |

NEIGHBORHOOD ASSOCIATIONS AND CIVIC ENGAGEMENT

The questions this research explores are important to most neighborhoods and neighborhood associations. Previous research has centered on neighborhood initiatives and their success, participation in neighborhood associations, the effectiveness of neighborhood organization, and increasing civic engagement. Formation of neighborhood associations and success is attributed to a variety of reasons, and research has focused on neighborhood association variant success rates and effectiveness in different contexts.

Logan and Rabrenovic identified issues of greatest concern for neighborhood associations, and grouped these concerns into four wide-ranging categories: safety, items collectively used by neighborhoods, development, and lifestyle (Mesch and Schwirian 1996). The research of others is consistent with these themes. Safety is clearly a common problem. Action almost always occurs when neighborhood residents feel an immediate threat to their lifestyle (Mesch and Schwirian 1996). Many times parents become involved in neighborhood associations because of these concerns. Collective consumption, including things such as playgrounds and streets, and development concerns, such as zoning, are also broad, consistent worries of residents. Development of new physical structures is a highly engaging concern and community members appear concerned with neighborhood changes they did not initiate (Kingston et al. 1999). Finally, lifestyle issues are common among residents (Green and Haines 2002). Mesch and Schwirian (1996) identified environmental change as most motivating for civic engagement and threats of land-use change increased awareness of residents regarding local problems and the ability of the neighborhood association to deal with problems. Some subdivisions of this issue may include population shifts, housing deterioration or crime rates (Green and Haines 2002).

While many neighborhood associations develop in response to one of these four areas of concern (Mesch and Schwirian 1996) other concerns residents organize to confront include drugs, crime, or city decisions, and (in the past) in opposition to racial diversity and integration. However, most associations currently address more broad concerns and have grown to encourage civic engagement (Kleiniewski 2002). The majority of opposition to neighborhood associations comes from business owners, and land developers specifically find themselves in greatest opposition to neighborhood associations. (Green and Haines 2002).

The Dudley Street Neighborhood Initiative (DSNI) is a well known example of neighborhood organization (Andrews 1997). Prior to organizing, there were 1300 empty lots in the Dudley Street neighborhood where garbage collected. The neighborhood residents joined together and lobbied the city to not “dump on” them. The city finally agreed and planned redevelopment projects for the neighborhood. The residents wanted to steer the redevelopment in their neighborhood though, so they requested and received the power of eminent domain. DSNI created a plan for redevelopment that the city eventually adopted. The Dudley Street Neighborhood Initiative demonstrates how

residents can come together to work toward the common goal of improving their neighborhood. Participation in DSNI was essential for the group to create the changes they accomplished

When considering a neighborhood association's ability to increase involvement, it is difficult to predict success. Effective techniques are necessary to turn interest into action, as more residents indicate a desire to become involved in neighborhood associations than those who actually become active (Greenberg and Lewis 2000). Involvement in neighborhood organizations is associated with the perception of the effectiveness of neighborhood social action. Additionally, those neighborhood associations that are most effective are found in neighborhoods with higher socioeconomic status and participation in neighborhood associations increases with increased socioeconomic status. In neighborhoods where residents have higher socioeconomic status, the perception that problems and issues are being solved by the neighborhood association is higher. While there is no significant difference between mostly African-American and Caucasian neighborhoods in terms of perception of neighborhood association effectiveness, the majority of associations are located in primarily white neighborhoods (Mesch and Schwirian 1996).

Although DSNI had great participation among residents, not every neighborhood organization has excellent participation. Some research (Olsen et al. 1989) points out that involvement within neighborhood organizations is low in cities across the United States. Strategies for neighborhood organizers to increase participation include status interests, neighborhood cohesion, and sociopolitical mobilization. Neighborhood cohesion is the easiest for organizers to employ in particular neighborhoods, and refers to encouraging interaction between residents through neighborhood activities. By creating relationships within the neighborhood, residents are more likely to join and participate in their neighborhood organization.

Knickmeyer, Hopkins, and Meyer (2003) examined ten neighborhood organizations in Baltimore, and the collaboration between the organizations. They found that only a few members were active in each organization, and although the ten neighborhood organizations had the same issues and concerns, they did not collaborate on these issues. Residents were concerned with large issues, such as drug dealing and vacant housing, but the activities in the neighborhood did not address these issues. Activities included flea markets and clean-up projects. Residents felt because of low participation in neighborhood organizations it was difficult to address larger issues.

Participation and organization need to be present for a neighborhood organization to be fruitful, but a neighborhood organization does not necessarily mean a good neighborhood environment. The increasing capacity of neighborhoods to organize relates to readiness to create change. At the same time, it is important to note a non-significant correlation between hours of involvement in community organizations, and perceptions of neighborhood climate. A neighborhood organization should examine a neighborhood and try to increase a feeling of community before addressing issues through resident involvement. Neighborliness among residents is important for a neighborhood

organization to increase participation, and therefore better address resident issues (Kingston et al. 1999).

Neighborhood organization representation can be analyzed in two ways; the characteristics of community leaders and activists, and the issues an organization chooses to address, juxtaposed with the issues of most importance to neighborhood residents. Swindell (2000) used the second approach, and found that neighborhood organizations with a large residential area were more representative than less populous neighborhoods. He also found neighborhood organizations that held discussion forums and regular meetings better represented residents than organizations which did not hold forums and meetings.

Neighborhood cohesion is another element that increases the likelihood of active involvement or civic engagement (Olsen et al. 1989). Two elements of neighborhood unity are length of residency and home ownership status which affect the value residents have for both their homes and the neighborhood (Green and Haines 2002). Homeowners tend to be more involved in their neighborhoods, perhaps because they feel more permanently connected to the neighborhood and the benefits of civic engagement are more personal (Mesch and Schwirian 1996).

Personal attributes of neighborhood residents also play a role in civic engagement. Socioeconomic status of a resident positively correlates with both participation rates and effectiveness of action. Mesch and Schwirian (1996) believe neighborhoods with higher status residents may be more successful because they have an increased perception of being influential. However, residents with higher socioeconomic status sometimes take less action because they perceive fewer problems in their neighborhoods. These neighborhoods tend to be predominantly white with higher incomes (Mesch and Schwirian 1996). Poorer neighborhoods are sometimes identified as less effective because they have lower perception of influence and can also have poorer leadership. Most importantly, lower income neighborhoods face greater opposition from bureaucracy which not only reduces the effectiveness of organizations, but also reduces civic engagement (Green and Haines 2002). Research has also consistently found a connection between gender and civic engagement where women have higher rates of participation in neighborhood associations. This is most likely due to expected roles and socialized tendencies for women to work closer to home and have stronger ties to their neighborhood. Often the primary household caregiver, females may feel more personally connected to the issues neighborhood associations address. More women than men take leadership roles and actively engage in solving neighborhood and community problems (Kleniewski 2002).

Regardless of other influences, community sociology literature points to several actions neighborhood associations can employ to become more effective and encourage civic engagement among residents. Neighborhoods that sponsor activities encouraging neighborly relationships and promote a unified neighborhood have many benefits. Encouraging interaction can lead to neighborhood identification, a precursor to civic engagement (Olsen, et al 1989). Additionally, collaboration with other neighborhood

organizations increases civic engagement, increases the effectiveness of neighborhood associations, and is more positive for the associations than connection to city government (Mesch and Schwirian 1996). Strongly endorsing participation in neighborhood associations not only increases membership, but amplifies the effectiveness of associations (Green and Haines 2002).

RESEARCH METHODS

This examination of civic engagement in Denver's Capitol Hill employed a combination of primarily qualitative analysis conducted by a team of seven upper-division undergraduate researchers from Wartburg College in Waverly Iowa. All researchers had previously completed either one or two research methods courses and projects, were currently enrolled in a qualitative research methods course, and have a major in community sociology. Research was supervised and reviewed by their professor, who holds a Ph.D. in Rural Sociology with an emphasis in Community Development and Social Change, and has 13 years of community development experience. Prior to commencement, the research proposal and all instruments were presented to and approved by the sponsoring agency (C.H.U.N.) and the Wartburg College Human Subjects Research Review Committee.

Structured Interviews

Structured interviews were conducted with 160 Capitol Hill residents. The total number of households in the Capitol Hill area is 43,407 (Piton 2000). For this research, contacts were made at the rate of one percent of households within each of the ten neighborhoods (435 total households) with a goal of a 40 percent response rate (173 completed interviews).

Because residents interviewed in the Cherry Creek Neighborhood did not identify with the Capitol Hill area, and it was difficult to find residents willing to participate in the interviews, this neighborhood was deleted from the structured interviews. Also, neighborhoods 4 and 5 (Capitol Hill and Capitol Hill/ Cheesman Park) were combined because field interviews were conducted near both neighborhoods and census data combines the two neighborhoods. One-hundred and sixty questionnaires were completed, just short of the 40 percent goal. This sample was determined to be sufficient for this research, as the contacts were made randomly in an unsolicited manner by approaching individuals in a public location (field interviews) or knocking on their front door and requesting their participation in an interview (neighborhood interviews) throughout the neighborhoods and at different times and days of the week.

Any resident of the research area was eligible to participate in a neighborhood or field interview, regardless of age, sex, or other factors. In the final analysis, most respondents were between the ages of 24-40 with a range of 18 to 86 and a mean age of 43. Men made up 57 percent of the respondents, while women were 42.6 percent. Eighty-one percent placed themselves in the racial category of white/non-Hispanic. Homeowners made up 52.3 percent, while 46.5 percent of respondents rented their home and 1.3 percent said they had other arrangements. Length of residency ranged from one month to 70 years with a mean of 11 years.

Neighborhoods primarily comprised of single-family residences (North Capitol Hill and Uptown, Uptown and West City Park, South City Park, Congress Park, Alamo

Placita, Country Club, and Cherry Creek) were questioned in a neighborhood interview format, most often on the doorstep of their residence. The initial process for selecting homes for neighborhood interviews was to approach the first house on every block and this house was the only house on the block where interviews would be solicited. After initiating the data collection, it was determined that in the case of “no soliciting” signs, small apartment buildings, or having no route of access to the sample house, the researcher would instead sample the second residence on the block. But ultimately, due to the composition of some of the neighborhoods and the small sample being collected, researchers were forced to modify the sample procedure and approach every door to obtain a sufficient sample from the neighborhood. While researchers walked the neighborhoods at various times during the day and in the evening, the most frequent case was that residents were not at home or did not answer their door. In this case, the researcher would note the address and attempt to contact that resident at a later time or date. If the resident still did not answer the door when approached for a second time, the researcher would no longer attempt to interview a resident at that address. Residences with *no* soliciting signs were not approached.

Capitol Hill neighborhoods primarily comprised of businesses and high-rise apartments (Capitol Hill, Capitol Hill/Cheesman Park, and Cheesman Park) were sampled in a field interview format. A field interview occurs in a public setting, such as a park, sidewalk, or grocery store parking lot. Given the large number of secured and gated residences in some areas of Capitol Hill, field interviews were the best option for obtaining an adequate sample of residents in those neighborhoods. This is consistent with the sampling process used by Greenberg and Lewis (2000). Field interviews used random sampling in public places until the sample goal was obtained. In business parking lots selected for field interviews, such as a grocery store, approval from the manager was received prior to commencing data collection.

Neighborhood and field interviews each took approximately 10 minutes to complete and respondents were asked to sign an informed consent form (Appendix A and B) prior to beginning the interview. Each interview was guided by a standard set of questions (Figures 2 and 3) that collect three sets of data. Researchers worked in teams of two persons, with one asking the respondent the questions, while the second team member recorded the responses on the interview form. The first set of questions (1, 2, and 3) collect respondent demographic information, including gender, age, ethnicity, length of residency in their present neighborhood, and home ownership status. The next set of questions (3, 4, 7, 8, and 9) assesses neighborhood quality of life, including both concerns and positive aspects as perceived by respondents. The last set of questions (6, 10, 11, 12, and 13) collects information on the interests of respondents in regard to neighborhood associations and civic engagement.

Figure 2: Neighborhood Interview Questionnaire

Hi, my name is _____. I am a researcher from Wartburg College and I am doing research on behalf of Capitol Hill United Neighborhoods. Would you mind answering a few questions? It will take about 5-10 minutes and you may stop participating at any time. YES—Please read and sign this consent form. NO—Would a better time work for you?

- 1) What is your age? _____ M or F
- 2) In what racial category do you place yourself? (read categories)
White/non-Hispanic African-American Asian-American Latino/non-White
Multi-Racial Other
- 3) Do you rent or own your home? _____
RENTER-Are there any specific concerns or issues you have as a renter in your neighborhood?
- 4) How many years have you lived in this neighborhood? _____
- 5) Have you heard of Capitol Hill United Neighborhoods (C.H.U.N.)? Y or N
- 6) Please state one thing you think a neighborhood association should do.
- 7) Please list up to 2 positive aspects of your neighborhood.
- 8) Are you involved in volunteer activities in your neighborhood? Y or N
NO—are you interested in being involved? Y or N
- 9) Please state up to 2 activities or events you would like to see available in your neighborhood.
- 10) Please list a few concerns about your neighborhood *that you would be willing to spend time working on.*
- 11) Are you aware of the changes planned for Colfax Ave.? Y or N
YES—are you concerned about possible impacts on your neighborhood? Y or N
- 12) Is there anything else you would like to tell me that I haven't asked about?
- 13) We're having an hour-long group discussion about these topics on _____, between 5:30 and 8pm. Would you be interested in participating? Y or N

YES— We will send you an invitation with more information later this week.
YES— What time works best for you?
5:30 6:00 6:30 7:00
- 14) Do you know of anyone else who might be interested in participating in a group discussion?
Y or N
- 15) May we please have their name and address?

Thank you for your participation in this research. If you have any questions, contact information is on the informed consent form that we gave you. Have a nice day.

Figure 3: Field Interview Questionnaire

Hi, my name is _____. I am a researcher from Wartburg College and I am doing research on behalf of Capitol Hill United Neighborhoods. Do you live in (neighborhood), between (state neighborhood boundaries)?

YES— Would you mind answering a few questions? It will take about 5-10 minutes and you may stop participating at any time. Please read and sign this consent form.

NO—Thanks for your time. Have a good day.

- 1) What is your age? _____ M or F
- 2) In what racial category do you place yourself? (read categories)
White/non-Hispanic African-American Asian-American Latino/non-White
Multi-Racial Other
- 3) Do you rent or own your home? _____
RENTER-Are there any specific concerns or issues you have as a renter in your neighborhood?
- 4) How many years have you lived in this neighborhood? _____
- 5) Have you heard of Capitol Hill United Neighborhoods (C.H.U.N.)? Y or N
- 6) Please state up to 2 things you think a neighborhood association should do.
- 7) Please list up to 2 positive aspects of your neighborhood.
- 8) Are you involved in volunteer activities in your neighborhood? Y or N
NO—are you interested in being involved? Y or N
- 9) Please state up to 2 activities or events you would like to see available in your neighborhood.
- 10) Please list a few concerns about your neighborhood that you would be willing to spend time working on.
- 11) Are you aware of the changes planned for Colfax Ave.? Y or N
YES—are you concerned about the possible impacts on your neighborhood? Y or N
- 12) Is there anything else you would like to tell me that I haven't asked about?
- 13) We're having an hour-long group discussion about these topics on _____, between 5:30 and 8pm. Would you be interested in participating? Y or N

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- 15) May we please have their name and address?

Thank you for your participation in this research. If you have any questions, contact information is provided on the informed consent form we gave to you. Have a nice day.

Focus Groups/Key Informant Interviews

In addition to structured interviews, the research plan included focus groups of neighborhood residents. The target sample was 173 participants at approximately eight per neighborhood. This calculation was based on identifying approximately 17 residents in each of the 10 neighborhoods, with just under one-half attending. These residents would be grouped into six facilitated groups: Neighborhoods 2 and 3 (West City Park and South City Park), 5 and 6 (Capitol Hill/Cheesman Park and Cheesman Park), 1 and 4 (North Capitol Hill and Capitol Hill) and 9 and 10 (Country Club and Cherry Creek). Neighborhoods Seven (Congress Park) and Eight (Alamo Placita) would have individual focus groups. This component of the data collection was significantly altered due to events described below. As a result, focus groups were converted to key informant interviews, with seven residents from Capitol Hill sampled.

Per the sampling process identified in the research proposal, focus group participants were solicited at the closing stage of the neighborhood and field interviews. At this point respondents were offered an opportunity to attend a focus group in their neighborhood to expand upon the topics covered in the interview in a less structured manner. Focus groups were designed to include broad discussion areas in an open-ended format. If the resident being interviewed had interest in attending the focus group, the researcher sent invitation to that residents' address providing them with details regarding the location and time the group would be held. During the invitation process, participants were informed (verbally by the interviewer and in writing in the invitation) that the focus group was expected to last approximately one hour. With the invitation (Appendix C), they were provided with a copy of the guiding questions.

The first two focus groups had a response rate of three people: one representative from Neighborhood 5/6 and two from Neighborhoods 2/3. Those attending were very active Capitol Hill residents, highly engaged in their neighborhoods. Anticipating similar response rates at subsequent focus groups, the approach and data collected was modified from focus group to key informant interviews using the same guiding questions, but not limiting responses and allowing those being interviewed to lead the conversation. The third and fourth focus groups had no attendees, and the final two focus groups had two residents per group.

Individuals participating in the focus groups (now key informant interviews) were read a consent form upon their arrival (Appendix D) and were asked to sign the form and given a copy for their own records. They were specifically informed that the interviews would be tape-recorded and later transcribed. Informed consent forms containing participants signatures were kept in a safe location, and following transcription, the tapes were erased.

The interviews began with demographic background. Participants were asked orally the length of their residence in their neighborhood and whether they owned or rented their home. The open-ended questions in the interviews (Figure 4) collect two sets of data. Questions 1 and 5 collect information on neighborhood quality of life, and questions 2, 3, and 4 collect information on respondent and neighborhood civic engagement.

Figure 4. Key Informant Interview Format

Hi, my name is _____. I'm a researcher from Wartburg College and I will be facilitating this discussion about your neighborhood. This discussion group will be approximately one hour in length. Please remember that no identifiable information will be disclosed within the results of this research. Feel free to abstain from discussion at any time. Refreshments are available; please feel free to help yourself.

To begin, as we work around the circle, please state your first name and how long you have lived in the neighborhood.

Please raise your hand if you own your own home (state the number aloud).

1. To begin with, what are some issues or problems in your neighborhood that you feel need to be addressed? (13 minutes)
2. What do you feel would be an ideal way for you to communicate concerns you have about your neighborhood? (13 minutes)
3. Is there anything that discourages you from participating in neighborhood associations or civic engagement? (13 minutes)
4. What types of activities would you participate in to address neighborhood concerns or encourage civic engagement? (13 minutes)
5. Are there any other concerns or comments anyone would like to express or share that we haven't covered?

We appreciate your taking the time to come out and participate in this discussion. You have been very helpful. If you have any questions or concerns, please feel free to contact either Dr. Kathy Kremer or Drew O'Connor. Their contact information is listed at the top of the consent form you signed earlier this evening. Thank you again.

Data Analysis

Data collected in the field and neighborhood interviews was analyzed using two computer analysis programs – the Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS) and Qualrus to identify both frequencies and correlations. Data analyzed using SPSS was collected in the closed-ended and demographic questions (1, 2, 3, 5, 8, and 11).

Open-ended questions (3, 6, 7, 9, 10, and 12) were analyzed for themes and links in the content using Qualrus, a program specific to qualitative data analysis.

Transcriptions from the key informant interviews were entered as a data source for content analysis in Qualrus, as were field notes reflecting observations made by the research team. Field notes were individually recorded by each researcher and compiled into ten source documents. The files from the research team were able to be comparatively examined because of the format the Qualrus program requires. The qualitative data was coded and links were created to analyze connections and form conclusions.

Reliability and Validity

Reliability is the extent that research findings accurately reflect the population being examined and are consistent with replication. Validity is the extent to which the research methods accurately measure the stated research questions. In qualitative research, such as presented here, “reliability and validity are conceptualized as trustworthiness, rigor and quality “ (Golafshani 2003:604). “researchers search for convergence among multiple and different sources of information to form themes or categories in a study” (Creswell and Miller 2000:126).

In this research, reliability was ensured through
Qualrus and reliability.
Reliability – coding with Qualrus, neighborhood and field interviews to accurately reflect the population.

Validity was ensured by having the research instruments reviewed by three separate experts or groups of experts to ensure the included items measure the research questions. This review, known as content validity, is the best test in cases using qualitative research methods that sample one area of knowledge (Salkind 2003). First, the executive director of C.H.U.N. reviewed the research questions and measurement tools. He is most familiar with the neighborhoods and neighborhood residents.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

This examination identified several consistent concerns for Capitol Hill residents. The results are divided into following three parts: field and neighborhood interviews, key informant analysis, and field observation, and are discussed within each of the two research questions.

Field and Neighborhood Interviews

Responses from field and neighborhood interviews were combined, and each open ended question from the questionnaire was analyzed individually and then combined to identify themes that appeared across the questions. The most frequently noted themes, called codes in the analysis, are summarized below. Tables that detail responses are included in Appendix D.

A. What are the concerns of neighborhood residents within the boundaries of Capitol Hill United Neighborhoods?

The most common concern, identified by 49 respondents, was crime, followed by neighborhood appearance/cleanliness cited by 44 respondents. Safety was the third most frequently cited concern for residents (41 responses), which is also related to crime. Drug issues were a related concern noted by two respondents, one noting “crackheads are scary.” Crack was the only specific drug to appear in the responses. While the key informant interviews found that residents were specifically concerned with crime and drugs on Colfax Avenue, field and neighborhood interview responses did not identify this correlation.

Crime focused on theft and sexual assault, but graffiti and vandalism were also noted. Graffiti and vandalism are consistent with both crime and neighborhood appearance, and were of particular concern for residents within the North Capitol Hill and Uptown, Capitol Hill, and Capitol Hill/Cheesman Park neighborhoods. A serial rapist had recently been active in the area, which may be why sexual assault and rape were specifically noted in four of the forty-nine crime responses.

The three most common resident concerns (crime, neighborhood appearance, and safety) are clearly related elements for Capitol Hill area residents. These are key issues residents feel should be confronted and would be willing to spend their own time addressing. Respondents were asked if they were aware of changes planned for Colfax Avenue, and 53 percent indicated their awareness of these changes. Of those who were aware of the changes, 14 percent were concerned with the possible impacts changes on Colfax Avenue would create.

Both the neighborhood and field interviews gave respondents an opportunity to respond to a final open-ended question. Six of 22 responses note that neighborhood residents need to be informed. Specifically mentioned were newspapers, newsletters, forums, meetings, and the city council. One resident suggested “creative ways to inform”

and another would like, “more things posted on happenings.” It seems as though residents want to stay informed about neighborhood activities, events, and issues, but through multiple media outlets and not just newsletters. It is encouraging that residents think being informed is important because this could increase civic engagement and involvement in neighborhood organizations.

Four residents also mentioned Colfax Avenue in response to the open-ended question. Residents are interested in “redevelopment,” the introduction of new businesses and homes, sometimes including the construction of buildings, on Colfax Avenue. One resident likes Colfax Avenue though; “The best thing about Colfax Avenue is its honky-tonk and griminess, so I don’t want it to lose that.” This exemplifies the mixed feelings about Colfax Avenue - some people are anxious for change, while others don’t want it to lose what is perceived as its authenticity.

One interview question was specifically directed toward renters, soliciting issues that may be specific to Capitol Hill renting households. Respondents who were renters did not generally have concerns that could be specifically connected to their renting status. However, in ten cases the respondent indicated concerns with crime. The crimes mentioned repeatedly in the interviews were sexual assault, theft, and rape. Some typical responses concerning crime were concerns with “serial rapists” and “sexual assaults.” The second most frequent concern for renters was safety, which came up eight times out of 34 responses. Typical answers to the question were “safety at night” and “a little dangerous”. There was also a response of “a garage fire that is still being looked at as an arson case”.

B. What are effective techniques or activities that can be employed to encourage civic engagement by neighborhood residents?

Residents were asked to list two positive aspects of their neighborhood. Most residents were quick to respond to this question, saying they “love it”, the most common theme was location. Seventy-five respondents indicated that location was a positive aspect of their neighborhood, and they were happy to be, “close to downtown”, “walking distance from amenities”, and close to “conveniences.” It is obvious from the results that residents live in the Capitol Hill area because of the accessibility to restaurants, shops, schools, and other facilities.

Fifty-two respondents indicated a sense of neighborliness as a positive aspect of their neighborhood. Twenty-one of those responses claimed the neighborhood was, “friendly” or had “friendly neighbors” or “fun people.” These positive relationships are positive precursors for civic engagement and involvement in neighborhood associations. Location and neighborliness were associated responses in 15 cases.

Respondents were also asked to state one thing they thought a neighborhood association should do. The most frequent response was the theme of civic engagement, identified in 49 responses. The code civic engagement included being involved in the neighborhood, membership in CH.U.N., being a member of a neighborhood association, and volunteering in the neighborhood. One resident thought a neighborhood association

should, “provide a community place” and another said they should, “have more community events.”

Safety came up the most after civic engagement with 40 responses. Residents would specifically like to see a neighborhood or crime watch program. Cleanliness, related to neighborhood appearance, also 36 times in responses. Three responses were directed toward cleaning up after dogs, but the rest of the responses related to the appearance of the neighborhood like, “keep the neighborhood clean,” “keep things looking nice,” and “improve the area visually—clean up the streets.” The relationship between cleanliness and crime comes up again here, with the mention of graffiti. The responses also indicate that some respondents would expect a neighborhood association to police their neighbors on matters of visual presentation of the neighborhood. One resident suggested a neighborhood association should, “represent a neighborhood’s beliefs on how it should be maintained” connecting neighborhood appearance to a neighborhood association. Crime and keeping the neighborhood informed both came up 20 times as a potential focus for neighborhood civic engagement. We again see information on their neighborhood as important to residents of the neighborhoods being examines, and this time connected to a neighborhood association.

Just over half of the respondents (52%) were aware of C.H.U.N., many times this was connected to the People’s Fair.

And finally, neighborhood residents were asked to state up to two activities they would like to see available in their neighborhood. This question was difficult for many respondents to answer, and they indicated that there were already a lot of events and activities available. However, their responses do point to a desire for activities that promote interaction between neighbors. The most common response to this question was gathering around food, cited by 28 respondents. This included block parties and cook-outs. Block parties were specifically noted in 18 out of the 28 responses. This suggests neighbors would like to increase their engagement with each other through parties and other social gatherings.

Music was noted by 14 respondents as an activity they would like to see available in the neighborhood. Music in the parks was noted by four of these respondents. And sporting activities and flea and farmers’ markets each appeared 12 times in responses.

C. Aggregate Analysis of Neighborhood and Field Interviews

The most frequent response to interview questions was neighborhood appearance/cleanliness. This theme appeared in 122 out of 648 total responses, 44 times to question ten, 36 times to question six, 26 times to question seven, nine times to question nine, five times to question three, and two times to question twelve. This suggests neighborhood appearance/cleanliness is important to residents across issues. Neighborhood appearance/cleanliness has a strong connection with crime and with safety.

Participants mentioned parks 43 times in the interviews. Residents from each

neighborhood talked about parks, but it came up 20 times in the Capitol Hill and Capitol Hill/Cheesman Park neighborhoods. This makes sense because the largest number of respondents was from the Capitol Hill and Capitol Hill/Cheesman Park neighborhoods, but it is interesting that there was not a similar response in the Cheesman Park neighborhood where a park is also located. The importance of the park was noted in seven responses from the Congress Park neighborhood.

Key Informant Interviews

The transcribed key informant interviews were analyzed using content analysis, identifying themes within the two research questions.

A. What are concerns of neighborhood residents within the Capitol Hill area?

The most commonly cited concerns among key informants were crime and safety, cited 25 and 24 times respectively in the interviews. Crime included theft, vandalism, graffiti, rape, and arson. Other crimes or petty law violation mentioned in interviews included prostitution and panhandling. One key informant expressed his personal concern with graffiti, stating “the problem in this area is graffiti and taggers. Nothing seems to be done to control it. I don’t know what the solution is.” Another concurred by stating “I am sick of these people scribbling up your property and everything else in their sight.”

Crime was also strongly associated with drugs. It was the most noted coincidental code in the interviews. Crime tended to be referenced without drugs, but drugs almost always included reference to crime as well. Drugs, crime, and safety were three out of the seven most referenced themes and all of these were concerns of residents. One key informant expressed his concern regarding the relationship between drugs and crime by stating “there’s a neighborhood that’s got a lot of crime and a lot of drug dealing and things like that.” He, like the others interviewed, believed there was a strong connection between drugs and crime.

Other key informants focused solely on their concern with drugs. One participant described his personal experience with his neighborhood and drugs.

Within Capitol Hill, 13th and Pearl that is known as “crack street.” It was so bad, the drug problems are so severe, that 7-11 had a store there on the corner and they had to close it down because all the drug deals going on. I have found walking through condo buildings over there and their old buildings, through them I find syringes up on the door casings.

Another concern noted by key informants was the apparent lack of enforcement of ordinances and laws. Many referenced specific cases they had witnessed and others reported a lack of interest when they had reported crimes or concerns. Ordinances that caused the most concern were forestry laws, sidewalk ordinances, and water usage. One participant summed it up by stating “they have ordinances but they don’t have enough people to keep on top of it.” Several had called in crimes or requested more policing but

felt they were not taken seriously. One key informant described drug using and dealing occurring on her property and explained,

Do you know how much time I spend keeping the prostitutes, druggies, and alkies out . . . I want the police to come. The problem is, the police got things more important, most of the time they don't get there before those people leave.

Responses from the key informants suggest they care about maintaining the neighborhood. The general concern is keeping it safe and free of crime. They feel there are problems but little or nothing is being done by local officials to address the problems. This is a further concern than just crime – this is a concern regarding a lack of response from those they expect to assist them.

Key informants were not specifically asked about changes occurring on Colfax Avenue, but this subject was brought up frequently in all interviews. Concerns at one end related to the deterioration of the area, as one key informant stated “I would say that over the years we have regarded Colfax as not a particularly pleasant place to spend much time. And so we tend not to go there too often.” And at the other end, apprehension regarding current redevelopment, as one individual expressed “I would be much averse to it if they have it in their plan to go in and tear down the building and put up modern buildings . . . not another Colfax, closer to Colorado Boulevard.”

There was generally an opposition to change of the Colfax Avenue area, but it was noted that residents preferred the Colfax Avenue of years ago as compared to today. They noted that previous changes had led to the current problems on Colfax, and suspected additional change might exacerbate these problems. These results seem to point to out that maintaining the state of the neighborhood was important to the residents. They seemed more concerned with keeping things the same than entering a mode of additional development.

B. What are effective techniques or activities that could be employed to encourage civic engagement by residents?

The second research question explores key informant views on civic engagement in the Capitol Hill area, and effective ways to communicate neighborhood concerns, things that discourage civic engagement, and activities perceived as effective in increasing civic engagement.

Key informants most frequently cited informing neighborhood residents (cited 34 times in the interviews) as essential. Most expressed a neighborhood and individual tendency to communicate with city representatives rather than communicating in an association with neighborhood representatives, but that even that communication doesn't occur as it should. In coincidental coding, there was little association between C.H.U.N. and informing neighborhood residents. As one key informant expressed,

If we were so inclined we would let our neighborhood association which happens to be C.H.U.N. to know about it. We would let our city council person know about it. And occasionally we would call our mayor's office with a complaint, which we don't do that very often.

Suggestions for informing residents included continuing meetings or forums, The non-responsiveness of city representatives was again noted in response to this set of questions.

Generally, key informants were consistent in their explanations of lack of participation in neighborhood associations and civic engagement. One responded that he was discouraged by "lack of participation. Period." Lack of time was listed as an attribute of civic engagement, the theme that appeared most frequently in connection to civic engagement. Most informants explained their busy work schedules or other activities left them little to no time for civic engagement. Lack of motivation was also pointed to, and one participant explained "there's too many people around who, if they're not the problem, they don't want to do anything." Another noted,

Well it takes a really burning issue. I think more people tend not to turn out for meetings if everything appears to be going along commonly and nothing new is happening to stir up the neighborhoods and I think the interests kind of tend to slack off.

Lack of participation in the focus groups was another indicator of disinterest. Although interest was apparent when completing interviews and delivering invitations to the focus groups, the actual participation rates resulted in a change of methodology in this research.

Key informants had few specific ideas regarding encouraging neighborhood action, but agreed new possibilities were needed. During content analysis, the codes of C.H.U.N. and civic engagement frequently emerged suggesting respondents do connect the two.

Unobtrusive Observation

Field notes made during unobtrusive observations were another valuable tool for understanding the neighborhoods of the Capitol Hill area. During the research, each member of the team recorded field notes, most often while they were walking through neighborhoods. The observations were organized specifically by neighborhood and analyzed for content both by neighborhood and in the aggregate. It is worth noting that most field observations discussed the physical characteristics of neighborhoods and did not necessarily address probable neighborhood concerns.

References to housing were by far the most noted observations. Notes described different types of housing, whether they appeared to be rentals or homeowner occupied. Researchers noted "for rent" signs and houses with several mailboxes and deduced it was

common in several of the neighborhoods to break up older homes into apartments. One researcher made the following note in neighborhood 5 (Capitol Hill/Cheesman Park).

I came across numerous “for rent” signs in both apartment windows and house yards throughout the neighborhood. With those signs being posted it turns your attention to thoughts of possible high housing cost and housing quality to find reasons why those residences are not presently being lived in

Other researchers described the condition of properties observed and the appearance certain residences and neighborhoods had of privacy. In neighborhoods 9 and 10 (Country Club and Cherry Creek) there were more references to fences and gated communities. One researcher noted in this area what appears to be a popularity of seclusion within a densely populated urban neighborhood.

Population diversity was also frequently observed by the researchers. In neighborhoods 8, 9, and 10 (Alamo Placita, Country Club, and Cherry Creek) observations tended to comment on the lack of diversity. Researchers noted most residents seemed white, but workers and service jobs drew the presence of ethnic diversity. One observation was “there was not much diversity besides the workers I saw working on people’s yards.” Observations from neighborhoods 1-7 commented on a greater presence of racial and ethnic diversity, one note suggesting “the people seemed to be a diverse mix, both in age, race, and ethnicity.”

One interesting coincidental code was homelessness and diversity. Though diversity was often mentioned without homelessness, homelessness was noted only once with reference to diversity. While several field observations noted homeless individuals who are white, they were most often located in poor or diverse neighborhoods. One observation summarizes this connection.

Although most of the people who seemed homeless were white, the people of color seemed poor. Their clothing seemed worn and most of them were on the bus stop. There seemed to be a lot of white people who worked in the capitol building. However, there were people of color working outside the capitol building doing construction.

Pets and parks were not only individually referenced often, but were also noted in conjunction with one another. Field observations noted many outside activities involved walking dogs. References to parks were only made when the neighborhood contained a park, and observations noted different activities available in various parks.

When walking past Congress Park, I observed the park to be very spacious and well kept. I observed that activities they offer in Congress Park are baseball, picnic areas, playground and a swimming pool.

Parks and sports were also mentioned together, but the most notable themes for parks were utilization and condition. Researchers noted that most parks were kept in good condition and commented on families and athletes using the park. One noted “being a weekday, it seemed the park was well utilized, and many people expressed their strong, positive feelings about the neighborhood parks.”

SUMMARY AND CONCLUSIONS

Key Findings

While this research has collected a data set that can continue to be explored, this analysis points to seven key findings for the consideration of Capitol Hill United Neighborhoods. While some findings can be attributed to particular neighborhoods (as noted in the previous section), most data was analyzed in the aggregate for the Capitol Hill area.

A. What are the concerns of neighborhood residents within the boundaries of Capitol Hill United Neighborhoods?

1. Residents of the Capitol Hill area view their most immediate concerns as crime, safety, and neighborhood appearance/cleanliness. Theft, graffiti, vandalism, and drugs in particular tended to be cited often, and crime and drugs were particularly related to one another in the content analysis. Participants reported personal experiences with all of these concerns and noted a general lack of response and/or change, and not much optimism for improving petty crime or drug use. The vehicle used most often to respond to this was contacts with city officials rather than to neighborhood-based organizations. Clearly the lack of response neighborhood residents feel is as important to them as the concerns with crime and safety. The one issue-based neighborhood organization that respondents identified as needed at this time was a crime watch or neighborhood watch.
2. Related to crime and safety is the theme of neighborhood appearance/ cleanliness. Appearing in 122 out of the 648 responses, clean included terms such as well kept, neat, clean yards, clean parks, maintain, and the length of grass. But it also referred to problems with graffiti, and drug use and sales in public places. Having a clean neighborhood appears to be a value for resident of the Capitol Hill area, and while having a clean neighborhood means having mowed lawns and people picking up after their dogs, it also means the elimination of crime, graffiti, and public drug use.
3. In regard to Colfax Avenue redevelopment, both awareness and concern are underwhelming, and there are notable differences between the neighborhood and field interviews and the key informants. While just over half of the respondents in the neighborhood and field interviews indicated their awareness of these changes, only 14 percent of those aware of the changes were concerned with the possible impacts changes on Colfax Avenue would create.

On the other hand, key informants did express concern with changes on Colfax Avenue, both the change that has occurred (perceived as aiding in the increase of crime) and the planned redevelopment. The majority of key informants preferred no future change. Of note is that key informants provided researchers with a larger block of their personal time, and made the effort to attend a scheduled meeting. This may point to a greater degree of community engagement and concern regarding community development activity among this sample.

B. What techniques or activities can be employed to encourage civic engagement by neighborhood residents?

4. While residents of the Capitol Hill area had no problem identifying concerns they would be willing to work on to address, or the positive aspects of their neighborhood, they were also open about the low level of neighborhood based civic engagement. Among key informants, the most commonly cited reason for lack of neighborhood civic engagement was simply shortage of time. Informants responded their jobs kept them busy and a lack of participation in neighborhood organizations did not motivate them to make time for involvement. The lack of participation in the focus groups also suggests a lack of connection.

And when residents were asked to state up to two activities they would like to see available in their neighborhood, it was difficult for many to answer as they felt there were already a lot of events and activities available. With more than 30 neighborhood and issue-based organizations already active in the Capitol Hill area, it seems residents are not looking for a new organization to address issues. Their most common response to this query was neighborhood activities that include gathering around food. Block parties and cook-outs were given as examples. Parties and social gatherings appear to be the vehicle residents are looking for to engage with their neighbors, not issue based organizations.

5. This examination clarifies that a low level of membership in neighborhood organizations does not mean there is a low level of neighborhood satisfaction. Absence of neighborhood based action cannot be construed as a sense of apathy toward the community. While 52 percent of residents interviewed were aware of C.H.U.N., only 1 percent of the total population in the Capitol Hill area is members of C.H.U.N. At the same time, nearly all respondents (152 of 160) more quickly and easily responded with positive attributes of their neighborhood than they did concerns. Clearly this research points to a high level of neighborhood satisfaction in the Capitol Hill area.

6. While respondents may not be looking for ways to engage in neighborhood issues, they are seeking information provided to them in multiple ways. Residents of the Capitol Hill area felt being informed is important, and pointed out that a newsletter is not enough. Neighborhood associations were pointed to as the entity to facilitate or encourage dissemination of information. They would like to receive information through newspapers, newsletters, forums, meetings, and city council interaction.

Another component connected to information is the manner in which residents communicate concerns regarding their neighborhoods. The most common response was to contact a city representative rather than a neighborhood-based organization. Even when they identified a lack of response or effectiveness of this method, most respondents continued to give city officials the responsibility for addressing neighborhood concerns.

7. An interesting finding identified early in the research, was that residents of the Cherry Creek neighborhood, and to some extent the Country Club neighborhood, did not consider themselves part of the Capitol Hill area. This became apparent when multiple residents were approached at their homes by researchers and would respond by saying they did not live in the Capitol Hill area. This may be attributable to gentrification and/or the higher socio-economic status of households in this neighborhood than in other Capitol Hill area neighborhoods. Another possible explanation is that Cherry Creek is the farthest neighborhood from Capitol Hill in this sample. In fact, it is likely closer in terms of social distance to the suburbs of Denver than to the other neighborhoods of Capitol Hill.

Discussion and Implications

Research in the Capitol Hill area of Denver is consistent with community examinations in other areas of the country. As Green and Haines (2002) point out, common concerns of neighborhood residents are crime, safety, and redevelopment. And while Capitol Hill area residents were most often concerned about these issues as well, they pointed to social activities within neighborhoods as their first suggestion for increasing civic engagement, with block parties most frequently cited. Previous research suggests that while neighborhood residents may be concerned with larger issues, like drugs and crime, they do not know how to go about addressing these issues and instead hold social gatherings within the neighborhood (Knickmeyer et al. 2003). And while holding a block party may not, at first blush, appear to be the logical community response to crime and safety, we do know that increasing positive neighborhood relationships and developing common identity can lead to civic engagement and eventually impact larger concerns within the neighborhood.

In their earlier examination of collaboration among urban neighborhood associations in Baltimore, Knickmeyer et al. (2003) found cleanliness was the main concern, with crime following closely. A similar pattern emerged within Capitol Hill neighborhoods where residents seem more concerned with graffiti defacing their neighborhood than with the fact that tagging is a crime. This reinforces the finding that cleanliness of the neighborhood is a top priority among residents.

This research clarifies that a low level of membership in neighborhood organizations, such as C.H.U.N., does not correlate with a low level of neighborhood satisfaction. Perhaps one of the key informants points out a reason for this pairing of statuses when they suggested “. . . it takes a really burning issue. I think people tend not to turn out for meetings if everything appears to be going along commonly and nothing new is happening to stir up the neighborhoods . . .” Alternately, resident satisfaction with the neighborhood also had a close relationship to attributes such as accessibility, public transportation, shops, schools, restaurants, and closeness to downtown. Thus, satisfaction with their neighborhood of residence may be more closely related to geographic location. Or perhaps, as Swindell (2000) has suggested, neighborhoods located closer to the downtown area of a city tend to be geographically smaller, with a higher population density and usually face a wider array of issues and challenges than neighborhoods

located farther away, for example, suburban neighborhoods. This means that inner-city neighborhoods, while conveniently close to downtown, may be at a disadvantage in terms of issue representation in their neighborhood association.

This examination points out two areas for further examination. First, what is the impact of the numerous existing community organizations and activities and events (social pulls) for residents of the Capitol Hill area? Is the perception that there is a lack of civic engagement in reality being influenced by too many demands on individual residents' time? The research team noted how difficult it was to find residents at home in the neighborhood interviews, even when they returned to the same area at different times of the day. Their feeling was not that people were avoiding them and not answering their doors (although there was likely some of this). But rather, that people were just not at home during either the day or in the evening. Are residents already engaged in many activities, and adding involvement in a neighborhood association or C.H.U.N. would be more than time permits?

And second, further clarification is needed of reasons for residency and residency satisfaction in the Capitol Hill area as it relates to civic engagement. If location is an important reason for residency in the Capitol Hill area, does this mean that residents are seeking housing close to work, rather than seeking housing in a neighborhood in which they would like to be engaged? Has Capitol Hill become an amenity-based community of consumers, rather than a community that seeks to build social networks?

This research collected information that informs these two questions, but does not provide sufficient data to suggest findings. Both of these questions will be important to pursue through additional research endeavors as C.H.U.N. continues to work toward increasing civic engagement in the Capitol Hill area.

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Appendix A: Consent form for Neighborhood Interviews

Kathy S. Kremer, Ph.D
Department of Sociology
Wartburg College
(319)352-8389

Drew O’Connor, Executive Director
Capitol Hill United Neighborhoods
(303)830-1615

Purpose of Study: You are being asked to participate in research concerning Capitol Hill neighborhoods. The research is investigating what concerns or specific issues residents within the Capitol Hill area may have. Additionally, the research will investigate what activities or techniques which could be employed to encourage neighborhood association involvement and civic engagement.

Procedure and Duration: You are being asked to participate in an interview. The interview will take approximately five to ten minutes; it will take place in your home or right outside your home. The researcher will ask you questions and you will respond orally. Your answers will be recorded by the researcher, upon your permission. Your answers to the questions will not be identified with you; any personal information will **not** be included with the data collected. Your participation is completely voluntary. You may stop participation at any time or choose to not answer any question.

Although disclosure of your identity is a possible risk, every precaution will be taken to ensure confidentiality and to protect your privacy. Your name or any other identifying information will not appear in any reports or documents that may be published or shared as a result of this research project.

If you have any questions about what you are being asked to do, or the contents of this form, the researchers are available to provide a complete explanation. Please direct further questions or concerns to either Kathy Kremer or Drew O’Conner at the phone numbers listed on this form.

I have been informed of any and all possible risks or discomforts.

I have read the statements contained herein, have had the opportunity to fully discuss my concerns and questions, and fully understand the nature and character of my involvement in this research, and the potential risks and consequences.

Research Participant	Date
Researcher	Date

Appendix B: Consent form for field interviews

Kathy S. Kremer, Ph.D.
Department of Sociology
Wartburg College
(319)352-8389

Drew O’Connor, Executive Director
Capitol Hill United Neighborhoods
(303)830-1615

Purpose of Study: You are being asked to participate in research concerning Capitol Hill neighborhoods. The research is investigating what concerns or specific issues residents within the Capitol Hill area may have. Additionally, the research will investigate what activities or techniques which could be employed to encourage neighborhood association involvement and civic engagement.

Procedure and Duration: You are being asked to participate in an interview. The interview will take approximately five to ten minutes; it will take place in the approximate location you are currently at. The researcher will ask you questions and you will respond orally. Your answers will be recorded by the researcher, upon your permission. Your answers to the questions will not be identified with you; any personal information will **not** be included with the data collected.

Your participation is completely voluntary. You may stop participation at any time or choose to not answer any question.

Although disclosure of your identity is a possible risk, every precaution will be taken to ensure confidentiality and to protect your privacy. Your name or any other identifying information will not appear in any reports or documents that may be published or shared as a result of this research project.

If you have any question about what you are being asked to do, or the contents of this form, the researchers are available to provide a complete explanation. Please direct further questions or concerns to either Kathy Kremer or Drew O’Conner at the phone numbers listed on this form.

I have been informed of any and all possible risks or discomforts.

I have read the statements contained herein, have had the opportunity to fully discuss my concerns and questions, and fully understand the nature and character of my involvement in this research, and the potential risks and consequences.

_____	_____
Research Participant	Date
_____	_____
Researcher	Date

Appendix C: Focus Group Invitation

Focus Group Invitation

Date

Dear _____,

You are invited to attend a group discussion on issues related to your local neighborhood. We are researchers from Wartburg College working on behalf of Capitol Hill United Neighborhoods (C.H.U.N.), and are doing research to improve civic engagement in the Capitol Hill area. C.H.U.N. is an umbrella organization which represents the residents in the Capitol Hill area

The group discussion will provide you with the opportunity to express your opinions and ideas about your local neighborhood. The information obtained from you is intended to help improve civic engagement in the Capitol Hill area. Enclosed is a list of questions that will be used to guide group discussion. You will be asked to sign an informed consent form when you arrive, assuring confidentiality and making known the purpose and process of this research. Refreshments will be provided.

This discussion will be a valuable opportunity for you to voice your opinions and concerns to benefit your neighborhood. We hope to see you at the focus group.

Sincerely,

Kathy S. Kremer, Ph.D.
Assistant Professor of Community Sociology
Fellow of the Institute for Leadership Education

If you have any questions please contact:

Kathy S. Kremer, Ph. D.
Assistant Professor of Community Sociology
Fellow of the Institute for Leadership Education
Wartburg College
Waverly, IA 50677
(319)-352-8389

Drew O'Connor, Executive Director
C.H.U.N.
1490 Lafayette St.
Denver, CO 80218
(303)-830-1615

Appendix D: Consent Form for Focus Groups/Key Informant Interviews

Kathy S. Kremer, Ph.D.
Department of Sociology
Wartburg College
(319)352-8389

Drew O’Connor, Executive Director
Capitol Hill United Neighborhoods
(303)830-1615

Purpose of Study: You are being asked to participate in research concerning Capitol Hill neighborhoods. The research is investigating what concerns or specific issues residents within the Capitol Hill area may have. Additionally, the study will investigate what activities or techniques which could be employed to encourage neighborhood association involvement and civic engagement.

Procedure and Duration: You are being asked to participate in a focus group. This discussion group will take approximately one hour. Open ended questions will be directed at the group and participants will be given a chance to share their opinion.

With your permission, the interview will be audio taped and later transcribed. Your answers to the questions will not be identified with you; any personal information will **not** be included with the data collected. At the completion of the research project, the audio tapes will be destroyed.

Your participation is completely voluntary. You may stop participation at any time or choose to not answer any question.

Although disclosure of your identity is a possible risk, every precaution will be taken to ensure confidentiality and to protect your privacy. Your name or any other identifying information will not appear in any reports or documents that may be published or shared as a result of this research project.

If you have any questions about what you are being asked to do, or the contents of this form, the researchers are available to provide a complete explanation. Please direct further questions or concerns to either Kathy Kremer or Drew O’Conner at the phone numbers listed on this form.

I have been informed of any and all possible risks or discomforts.

I have read the statements contained herein, have had the opportunity to fully discuss my concerns and questions, and fully understand the nature and character of my involvement in this research, and the potential risks and consequences.

Research Participant Date

Researcher Date

Appendix D: Tables