



Launch Party

PROJECT :: **CRAIG – MAIN COMPLETE STREETS** SCHENECTADY, NEW YORK

MEETING DATE & TIME :: Monday May 20th 2019

MEETING LOCATION :: Electric City Barn 400 Craig Street, Schenectady

Meeting Summary of Discussion

In Attendance: (64 Signed in, 200+/- estimated attendance)

Name	Agency or Affiliation	Email and Phone
Kenneth Brooks	Community Fathers	518-881-5555
Kimberly Case	PLACE Alliance	kcase@placealliance.com 315-729-9102
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Summary:

Community members were invited to attend the kick off launch party for the Craig-Main Connection Project on May 20th, 2019 at 6:30pm at Electric City Barn in the Hamilton Hill neighborhood in Schenectady, NY. The event boasted free food from Memphis King Barbeque, Ya Ya’s House, Sandye’s Café, Roy’s Caribbean, and Nocturnal Cookies. Music was provided by Schenectady’s DJ Ketchup and dance and percussion performances were given by the Hamilton Hill Art’s Center. Community members were welcomed by Mayor McCarthy and Kristin Diotte. Community members were encouraged to participate in information gathering for the Craig-Main Connection project and were incentivized through raffle prizes to give their feedback. The design team was assisted by volunteers from the community as facilitators and ambassadors throughout the night. Local organizations in the Mont Pleasant and Hamilton Hill neighborhoods were invited to share information about their initiatives with community members.

Stations:

1. What do you think that empty lot should be?

Community members were asked to give feedback and ideas based on maps highlighting 1.) a City owned parcel called Pleasant Valley Park and 2.) opportunistic empty, vacant, or underutilized City owned and privately owned parcels along Craig Street. Community members were encouraged to give their own ideas, but also voted in the form of ‘yes, maybe, or no’ on ideas such as basketball courts, skate parks, quiet gathering space, walking paths, splash pads, dog parks, or sculpture parks for the park. The vacant parcels along Craig Street included voting ‘yes, maybe , or no’ on 1-2 family homes, larger family homes, community services, public green space, neighborhood gathering plazas, living amenities, access to fresh food, and sheltered bus stops.

Findings & Notes (Park):

- Of the ideas provided to the public to vote yes, maybe, or no on (basketball courts, skate parks, quiet gathering space, walking paths, splash pads, dog parks, or sculpture parks) all were desired.
- Basketball courts were removed by construction of the new Boys and Girls Club
- Access from bridge to Boys and Girls Club and schools
- BMX and Skate parks are becoming increasingly popular, kids ride in the streets now, which is dangerous
- Play spaces for kids of all ages
- Quieter areas for sitting

Findings & Notes (Craig Street Gaps):

- Of the ideas provided to the public to vote yes, maybe, or no on (on 1-2 family homes, larger family homes, community services, public green space, neighborhood gathering plazas, living amenities, access to fresh food, and sheltered bus stops) all were desired.
- Community urban garden with perennial hubs and fruit trees
- Disability Center and Resource Center
- Have to travel across town for any resources, services, or amenities

2. Craig Street – More Sidewalk or More Parking?

Participants reviewed potential streetscape applications including a separated multipurpose path with on-street parking on a single side, a shared multipurpose sidewalk with on-street parking on a single side, an expanded pedestrian sidewalk with on-street parking on both sides, and a shared multipurpose sidewalk with on-street parking on both sides. Participants reviewed the positives of each option and the trade-off's of each option and rated their preference from 1-4. 1 being the top priority, and 4 being the lowest priority.

Findings & Notes:

- Safer and wider sidewalks – safer to walk to school
- Identify public parking if all on street parking is taken
 - Possible shuttle to other parking lots
- The ability to plow walking paths will be very important
- Wide sidewalks are important for elders to feel safe
- Covered bus shelters are important for the many people who rely on public transportation
- Provide safe areas for kids to bike
- Parking would be great on both sides between Emmett and Albany streets because of bus stop

3. Intersections – Safer Connections

Community members were informed on the types of design implementations that would improve the safety of their intersections. All intersections along the Craig-Main Corridor were discussed, with a focused study on the Crane, Chrysler, and Main Ave intersection.

Findings & Notes:

- Building next to Family Dollar on Crane Street to be demolished
- Need for public parking
- Relocate bank parking
- Crane Street intersection is dangerous for pedestrians
- 6th Street 'hottest' street in Schenectady
- Crossing distances are long
- Many people use Crane Street commercial area for services and amenities, but it is lacking critical uses.
- Street trees would make the walking experience feel safer, and the vehicle traffic quieter
- Excess pavement caused by convergence of 4 streets is overwhelming for a pedestrian, and unclear for a driver
- Infill opportunities on the Crane Street commercial hub could include public green space, gathering plazas, community services, access to fresh food, living amenities, sheltered bus stops
- Medical Center, urgent care, pharmacy is needed in this area

4. Community Art – What Story do you Want your Neighborhood to Tell?

C.R.E.A.T.E Studio's led an art activity that encouraged participants to create a piece that reflected how they wished their streetscape to be. Participants were asked how community art could be incorporated and where.

Findings & Notes:

- Community art is desired in the community
- Location at bridge
- Painted intersections
- Form of empowerment, pride, and ownership

- Low-hanging fruit for neighborhood improvement

SAC Meeting #3

PROJECT :: **CRAIG – MAIN COMPLETE STREETS** SCHENECTADY, NEW YORK

MEETING DATE & TIME :: Tuesday May 21st 2019

MEETING LOCATION :: Electric City Barn 400 Craig Street Schenectady, NY

Meeting Summary of Discussion

In Attendance:

Name	Agency or Affiliation	Email and Phone
Kimberly Case	PLACE Alliance	kcase@placealliance.com 315-729-9102
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Matt Smith	City of Schenectady	msmith@schenectadyny.gov 518-382-5199 ext. 5393

Mary Moore Wallinger	LAndArt Studio	mmwallinger@landartstudiony.com 518-952-0531
Chris Wallin	City of Schenectady	cwallin@schenectadyny.gov 518-382-5082
Johan Matthews	Mutual Design	johan@mutualdesign.co
Jesse Vogl	Creighton Manning Engineers	jvogl@cmellp.com
Jacob Beeman	CDTC	jbeeman@cdtcmpo.org

Summary:

The project team including; PLACE Alliance, LAndArt Studio, and Creighton Manning; representatives from the City, the Study Advisory Committee, and representatives from the CDTC met the morning after the launch party to reflect on the success, finding, and direction of the Craig-Main Connection. Overall, the SAC, City, and design team agreed that the launch party was successful, that useful information was gathered, trust was built, and that the community felt heard.

Notes:

- There was a lot of litter outside from the party
 - Reinforces the need for trash cans and a shift in community mindset
- Many 'yes' votes on boards
 - People were happy to be a part of the process
- The process will help to build trust within the community
- Food, fun, and feedback – people in these communities are not used to being asked either ideas and opinions
- Projects will need to be prioritized based on feedback
- The youth of Hamilton Hill and Mont Pleasant has been very involved and happy to be involved
- Inspire career paths in the youth
- Low hanging fruit – benches, trash cans, community art, banners, creative crosswalks, etc. to keep trust and momentum in community
- Identify low hanging fruit projects at Pleasant Valley Park
 - Walking paths
 - Quiet gathering spaces
 - Identify master plan and phase from there
- Craig Street Trade-Off's
 - Develop a hybrid of separated bike path, utilize gaps, and extra space from bump outs for public spaces and bus shelters
 - Encourages community to be able to bike more than they currently do
 - Bike path model would be the first in Schenectady in this community
 - Bike Path and Sidewalk separated by raised curb, or at the same elevation?
 - Ease of plowing and maintenance
 - Reality of maintenance and disinvestment
 - Bike path could be plowed to become walking path
 - MUTCD paint

- Expensive
 - Regular paint fades too fast
 - Cars can get confused by a 8' bike path – need distinction
 - Minneapolis is a good case study city to explore
- Who maintains landscape buffers?
 - Stakeholders, organizations to help maintain and promote investment back into the neighborhoods, build sense of ownership & pride
- Identify and inventory city owned parcels
- Code Sweeps – it does not work in all neighborhoods
 - What are alternatives?
 - Trash cleanup days
 - Housing partners
 - Less/different penalties
 - Assistance versus penalty
 - Misconception of property improvements and maintenance leading to raised taxes
 - Connect the interest of the homeowner with that of the resident
 - SCAP, landbank, etc
 - Neighborhood associations to give warnings before calling the City
- Brand the Corridor
 - Name it, cohesive design elements that give a sense of place and entrance
 - Story to be told
- Positive Police presence
 - Uniform and trucks are all blacked out and uninviting
 - Does not say, 'I'm here to help'

Open House

PROJECT :: **CRAIG – MAIN COMPLETE STREETS** SCHENECTADY, NEW YORK

MEETING DATE & TIME :: Wednesday May 22nd 2019

MEETING LOCATION :: C.O.C.O.A House 69 Stanley Street Schenectady, NY

Meeting Summary of Discussion

In Attendance: (14 Signed listed, 30+/- estimated)

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Joseph A. Bell	518-930-1443	

Summary:

The open house was located at the C.O.C.O.A House on Hamilton Hill, a very loved and safe space for the youth in the area. Community members were invited to come and give feedback on progress made since the launch party. Progress was broken out into 4 stations:

Stations:

1. Proposed Craig Street Improvements

The design team proposed narrowing drive aisle lanes to 10.5', with an 8' on-street parking lane on the west side of Craig Street, a 5' minimum landscape buffer street with street trees, an 8' separated, two-way bicycle path at roadway level, a 2.5' utility strip housing bollards and trash receptacles, with a 4' minimum pedestrian sidewalk. Expanded sidewalk with street trees on the west side of the street would provide a wide, safe pedestrian experience. Intersection bump-outs delineating -on-street parking would decrease crossing distances, slow traffic, a provide increased space for side amenities and bus shelters. Due to the first block from Albany Street being too narrow to accommodate bicycle amenities, on-street parking on both sides of the street with improved sidewalks with street trees and gateway signage is proposed. The Craig Street improvements connect from Emmett Street to Pleasant Valley School. Sheltered bus stops are proposed at Electric City Barn, at Emmett Street to replace excess parking lot pavement with a sheltered bus plaza, and at Delamont Ave. A pocket park is proposed at the wester corner of Stanley Street and Craig Street providing an open and visible seating space. A corner park on the eastern corner of Lincoln Ave and Craig Street is proposed to work in hand with the Carver Community Center, should it reopen. A City owned parcel at the western corner of Strong Street is positioned across from existing community gardens. A proposed Foraging pocket park with fruit trees, an edible landscape plan, and cut flowers is proposed to serve as a community gateway working with the community gardens. An open and visible seating plaza and a neighborhood splash pad are proposed. An opportunity for housing infill is proposed on the block between Lincoln and Duane Ave of the west side of the street, and 4 infill opportunities on the west side of the street between Duane Ave and Strong Street.

Notes & Feedback:

- Maintenance and care of foraging park should be considered, but loved the idea
- Bus Stops work in pairs, and must be at intersections
- Sheltered bus stops would make a huge difference
- Pleasant Valley and MLK to both display art on Bridge

2. Main Ave Trade-Offs

Main Ave presents a heavier challenge in accommodating bicycle infrastructure because of this already narrow distance from back of sidewalks. The project team explored what it would take to extend the bicycle connections proposed on Craig Street into Mont Pleasant and to Crane Street. Main Street at its narrowing is only 26' from edge of pavement's. With 10.5' drive aisles, that would provide only 5' for one-sided on-street parking. The minimum is 7', 8' being more appropriate on snow-prone regions. Currently in its existing condition, on-street parking should not be allowed until the block between Forest Road and Holland Road. The first concept would convert Main Ave into a one-way heading toward to DOT bridge from Crane Street to Forest Road. This would provide enough space for an 11' drive aisle, but would eliminate parking until Holland Road. A paved utility buffer with bollards, an 8' bicycle path, and separated sidewalk would be connect the Craig Street Bicycle/Pedestrian path to Crane Street. Given the loss of all on-street parking, in order to accommodate the Craig-Main Connection, the design team explore another option. The second exploration studied Forest Road for its wider nature. The proposed concept would convert both Main Ave(in order to preserve legal on-street parking) and Forest Road into one-way's. Forest Road would lose on-street parking on one of its sides in order to accommodate an 8' bicycle lane, sidewalks, and landscape buffer with Street Trees.

Notes & Feedback:

- Forest Ave has more houses fronting the Street than Main Ave
- More owner-occupied houses on Forest Road, more renters on Main Ave
- Mont Pleasant may not be ready for this bicycle path – need more jobs in the neighborhood to bike to. Most people without a car take the bus because most of the jobs they are going to are not in the immediate area.
- Implement Craig Street first to use as an incentive for Mont Pleasant residents to want to give up parking in order to have the corridor connect to them
- Must study how the school traffic would impact traffic
- Converting both streets to one-ways would allow circulation to work together
- Short blocks in between Forest Road and Main Ave would make circling the block very easy
- It would help improve Crane Ave intersection and Forest Road intersection

3. Proposed Pleasant Valley Park Plan

Currently, the city owned parcel known as Pleasant Valley Park is used as a parking lot, construction storage, and snow storage in the winter. With information gathered from the community, the project team proposed a park plan with a bmx/skate park designed to look and function like a seating plaza while not in use, a basketball court, connection to the bike path, connections to schools and the Boys and Girls Club, a picnic park structure, workout station, entry arches, art wall with rotating local muralists, and parallel and pull-in parking spots along Education Drive.

Notes & Feedback:

- Incorporate fencing around basketball courts to dissuade skaters or bicyclists from riding on the courts (happens during games a lot)
- Four-sided court preferred
- Passive open lawn space for Cricket, lacrosse, etc
- Coordinate with school arts department for public arts
- Stanley eastbound toward MLK
- Park needed in walking distance from MLK Elementary with splash pad

- Splash Pad or water park area
- Local kids getting into BMX groups and need a safer place to rider
- Park amenities for the older kids as well

4. Proposed Crane Street/Main Ave Intersection Improvements

The Crane Street commercial hub suffers from poor pedestrian conditions such as long crossing distances, excess pavement, lack of defensible space, gaps in the urban fabric, high traffic volumes, and the hectic convergence of four roads. The design team proposed to reduce the amount of excess pavement by extending the point between Chrysler and Crane and limiting the turns from Crane to Chrysler and Chrysler to Crane. This will provide a crossing reprieve. Bumpouts will also reduce the crossing distances, making for a safer pedestrian experience. The concept proposed to table the intersection with a different material alerting vehicles to reduce speeds and increasing alertness. Proposed infill development will fill the gaps between storefront along Crane Ave. Public and commercial parking lots will fill the back of the storefront and provide strong, lit pedestrian connections to the front of the businesses. The existing parking on the corner of Main Ave and Chrysler Ave will be relocated to the parking lots behind Crane Street and be converted into a pocket park with a unique sheltered bus stop.

Notes & Feedback:

- Great opportunities for public art
- Safer crossing is very important
- Currently very overwhelming to approach the intersection as a pedestrian

Final Presentation

PROJECT :: **CRAIG – MAIN COMPLETE STREETS** SCHENECTADY, NEW YORK

MEETING DATE & TIME :: Thursday May 23rd 2019

MEETING LOCATION :: Friendship House 966 State Street Schenectady, NY

Meeting Summary of Discussion

In Attendance: (19 listed, 25+/- estimated)

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Chris Wallin	City of Schenectady	cwallin@schenectadyny.gov 518-382-5082

Introductions:

Kristin Diotte welcomed those in attendance and proposed having one or two more presentation opportunities in different locations for more people to attend.

Mary Moore and Ian Law Presented the following:

- **Project Scope and Goals**
 - Community inspired
 - Links Mont Pleasant, Hamilton Hill, and the community amenities in between
 - Create a more efficient and inviting corridor that balances the needs of all travelers, including pedestrians, cyclists, transit riders, and motorists.
 - Building both a physical and social connection
- **Existing Conditions**
 - Roadway varies greatly
 - Sidewalk conditions inconsistent but overall poor
 - Parking utilization generally low
 - Main Ave – parking on one-side (really not enough room for even that)
 - Craig Street – parking on both sides
 - Highest transit ridership and Crane Street and Emmett Street
 - High sidewalk availability, but poor conditions
 - Higher than expected side swipes on Main Ave (too narrow for parking)
 - Most crashes occur at intersections
- **Design Parameters**

- Corridor separated into 4 focus areas (Craig Street, Bridge, Main Ave, Crane Street Gateway)
- Strategies and trade-offs to accommodate bikeability, walkability, parking, transit, intersection improvements, etc.
- Strategize the urban gaps and improvements of public space
- **Public Engagement**
 - Website
 - Surveys & Survey Results
 - Top repeated comments: better lighting, trash cans, better sidewalks, neighborhood pride
 - 50% drive daily, 40% ride transit occasionally (10% daily), 55% walk daily, 40% ride a bike occasionally (10% daily)
 - 60% rated walking conditions as fair, 40% said poor
 - Stakeholder Focus Group Workshops
 - 2 different locations and times
 - Discussed: youth programming, arts & culture, business promotion & development, housing & redevelopment
 - Working Group on Girls Design Workshop
 - Day long workshop to learn about how design can influence public space and brainstorm about the future of the Craig-Main Connection
 - Curbside Conversations
 - Habitat for Humanity supplied living room furniture, snacks and drinks were provided and passerby's were encouraged to share their stories and ideas
 - 2 different locations and times (Carver Center & Corner of Education Drive & Main Ave)
 - Youth Ambassadors helped to facilitate and disperse flyers
- **Design Charrette**
 - Launch Party
 - Review of sponsors & organizations involved
 - Music, food, fun lead to information gathering
 - Performances by neighborhood groups
 - Incentives to visit project stations to win raffle prizes
 - Review of station information results
 - Open House
 - C.O.C.O.A. House – safe space within community
 - Opportunity for community to view the progress of the project and give feedback before the final reveal
 - Stations: Proposed Craig Street Concept, Proposed Main Ave concepts, Pleasant Valley Park, Proposed Crane Street and Main Ave Intersection Improvements
- **Proposed Concepts – The Big Reveal & final day of the charrette**
 - **Proposed Craig Street Improvements**
 - Reduce drive aisle to 10.5' to slow down traffic
 - Eliminate on-street parking on east side of street
 - 2-way dedicated multipurpose path from Electric City Barn to Pleasant Valley Park/Elementary
 - 4' Landscape buffer with street trees and decorative lighting

- Minimum 4' sidewalk zone
- Enhanced sidewalk zone on west side to include street trees
- Bumpouts at key intersections
 - Shortened pedestrian crossings
 - Site furnishings (benches, trash receptacles, wayfinding signage)
- Protected Multipurpose path and sidewalk across bridge
- Infill opportunities along Craig Street – Filling the gaps
 - Proposed development at Albany Street
 - Pocket parks
 - Affordable housing infill
 - Community orchard
- Reveal included before images, conceptual plan, conceptual section perspectives, concept images, and model views
- **Proposed Craig Street Bridge & Pleasant Valley Park**
 - Safe and direct connection from bridge
 - Pleasant Valley Elementary
 - Boys & Girls Club
 - Mont Pleasant Middle School
 - 4-Court basketball
 - Park shelter for picnics/shade
 - Youth Park
 - Skate Board / Skating, BMX
 - Dancing, Gathering
 - Art wall with mural
 - Pull-up park
 - Landscape buffer between park and vehicular use areas
 - Connection to large open space
 - Reveal included before images, conceptual plan, conceptual section-perspectives, concept images, and model views
- **Proposed Main Ave Trade-Off's**
 - How could the connection be extended from Craig Street to Crane Street – what are the trade-off's and sacrifices? Is it a priority in the community?
 - Option 1: Main Street as one-way
 - Loose all on-street parking
 - Option 2: Main Ave and Forest Road as one-ways
 - Keep parking on Main Ave
 - Loose one-side of parking on Forest Road
 - Reveal included before images, concept diagrams, conceptual section-perspectives, and model views
- **Proposed Crane Street & Main Ave Concept**
 - Infill gaps – mixed use development and pocket park with sheltered bus stops
 - Shorten crossings – bump outs and pedestrian reprieves
 - Raise intersection
 - Reduce excess pavement
 - Provide commercial and public parking

- Limit turning movement from Chrisler to Crane and Crane to Chrisler around gas station parcel
- Reveal included before images, conceptual plan, concept images, and model views

- **Next Steps**

- Design Refinement
- City and Community Partners to begin Installation of Short-Term Goals
- Cost Estimates
- Report Development
- Public Meeting and Comment Period
- Finalize Report
- City Council Adoption
- Funding Applications
- Implementation

Notes & Feedback:

Liked:

- **Craig Street:**
 - Bike path throughout entire project
 - Gateway to community is vital
 - Sheltered bus stop beneficial for all ages/abilities
 - Trash cans would encourage people to litter less, especially since we are improving walkability
 - Thriving neighborhoods
 - Show Love Where You Live
 - Refurbishing old receptacles and buying some new
 - Education through school and ambassadors to take ownership of trash management
 - Flower plot is great and could produce nice cut-flowers
 - Liked the pavilion at PVP but would like grills
 - Grills at proposed park across from Carver Center
 - Closest area like this is Central Park
 - Like that the Carver Center pocket park is on the same side as the MP path
 - The gateway at Albany is great, coordinate with TCB
 - Strong Street is often an access road to area when coming FROM 890 – possible location for gateway signage
 - Lots of lighting and cameras installed (coordinate with spacing of trees)
 - Liked the narrowing of the bridge drive aisles
 - Children cross bridge every day to go to school
 - Art installation is a good remedy for the negative feeling of 890 below
 - Add bollards to bridge cross section
 - Linear light strip along fence
 - Area between Strong and Wyllie is excessive
- **Pleasant Valley Park**
 - Mural on fence is great at PVP
 - Transitional space will be useful
 - Movies in the park
 - Some kind of stadium seating
 - Park basketball – 4 courts is practical, basketball is very popular
 - Would be difficult to play 4 games at once, keep one court regulation, push the other out slightly

- Provide stadium seating at courts
 - Liked the skate park, there are not allowable opportunities for kids to skate In the area
 - Chess tables around the basketball courts
 - Young and old mesh
 - misting stations/drinking fountains to cool off
 - Could school create a connector path (south of park)?
 - keep programed areas closer to roads (eyes on park) – discourage negative behavior
 - ability to grow (south) in the future
- **Main Ave**
 - Main Ave- would prefer the one way on Main and Forest Road
 - Better flow and efficiency and safer conditions for vehicles and bike/ped
 - Do a demo of the concepts
 - Grand scheme – not as big of a deal. People afraid of change
- **Crane Street & Main Ave Intersection**
 - Great move to extend the point at the gas station, it would be much safer
 - Rear parking would definitely be utilized
 - It is currently an incredibly dangerous intersection
 - Have to cross many different street to get to any destination
 - Seating area at Crane and Main
 - State Street downtown is a great example of investment in the public realm
 - Love the murals and lighting behind storefronts and in pedestrian connections
 - Must be mindful of how we can encourage more positive behavior through good design
 - It's important that the streetscape improvements will not solve it all, but will serve as a platform and a catalyst

Concerns:

- **Craig Street**
 - Wish path could connect to Albany Street
 - Concerned about bumpout at Albany street intersection
 - What are the negatives of having TOO many seats
 - Especially across from a market (Emmett Street Bus Stop)
 - Bus plaza at corner of Electric City Barn parking lot would eat into parking lot
 - It would help to delineate parking dimensions
 - Replace the excess pavement with bus plaza
 - Park at parking lot parcel (next to mechanic), relocate those proposed houses
 - Flower parcel/orchard could be a concern
 - Currently not well maintained
 - Would need a group to adopt
 - Fresh Food market may be better suited for parking lot parcel (parking already in rear)
 - Food truck park (ability for transitional space while trucks are not there)
- **Main Ave**
 - Main Ave – One Way with no parking – there is no 'friction' for traffic calming without any on-street parking
 - Forest Road – many roads fronting with driveways many transitions
 - Second block on Forest does not have driveways, they park on street
- **Crane/Main Intersection -**
 - Does Mont Pleasant have the market to sustain the proposed infill?
 - The concepts are great, especially in the models, but the building will still look poor
 - Grant for façade improvements of Crane Street
 - Are we just creating an improved corner on the point of Crane and Chrysler for drug dealers and prostitutes?
 - Think of the mindset of the people who live at the intersection

- How do we revitalize a place without displacement?
- How do you get people to believe when they've never had anything to believe in before?
 - Better communication, more involvement and ownership
- Need more jobs and income
- Affordable housing is a relative term – you need a job to be eligible
- Quality of existing houses are not livable
- Need more programs to train people and invest labor back into community
- Projects that are implemented in these neighborhoods need to be sources from the neighborhoods