

Name of Organization: Gary Community Health Foundation, Inc.

Name of Neighborhood: Gary Midtown NNORC Neighborhood

Geographic Region Covered: This NNORC is geographically located within the Midtown area bordered by:

- 19th Avenue on the North to
- 90/94 Expressway on the South and
- Grant on the West to
- Harrison Street on the East

History of the Neighborhood: By 1920, fifty-two nationalities, including a significant number of African-American migrants and Mexican workers, made Gary their home. This diversity created district neighborhoods and cultural centers. Steel mill executives and management lived in well-plotted north area of the city. The newcomers, mostly laborers, lived literally on the other side of the tracks, in the southern area of the city. African-American leaders organized the Central District -- a city within a city -- for themselves with desirable housing, good schools, and active clubs and community organizations.

Past Strengths: Historically, the Midtown section of Gary was once a thriving nucleus of central activity for family and community development, incorporating an expansive business district, cultural amenities, adequate/affordable housing, recreational/social venues, and an abundance of support services for both the aged and aging alike.

Past Challenges: The retiring of residents from the fields of education, medical, and the steel-related industries coupled with the loss of jobs and a decrease in population posed many challenges to rejuvenating the neighborhood.

Midtown Neighborhood Today: The Midtown area can be viewed in some instances as blighted and represents one of the most extreme areas of need in the City of Gary. Despite the apparent visual presentation of disrepair and desolation, the area nonetheless continues to be home to stable mixed family neighborhoods, including a dense senior population, many of whom are “aging in place.”

According to the 2000 Census, the Midtown NNORC Target Area contains 513 persons 60 years and older and 1,395 housing units (515 owners and 660 renters). The median year structures were built range from 1947 to 1950.

Current Strengths: Political and community leadership are supportive of the Gary Midtown NNORC’s vision to create an environment that nurtures healthy aging for its residents and inspires residents of all ages to work toward this goal. Midtown’s efforts to replace housing and stimulate public-private business ventures are consistent with the City’s short- and long-term planning efforts for urban revival.

Current Challenges: After decades of economic downturn and social decay, Gary is showing signs of revitalization. A concerted effort must be maintained to challenge public and private resources to help seniors maintain their homes, access health and human services, and be ensured public safety.

Opportunities for Growth: Expanding the current target area east to Broadway would encompass more seniors residing in single-family homes. The Midtown NNORC will serve as a model which can be reciprocated throughout the city in its community development planning.

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