

1. What kind of community do you want?

- Cultural Diversity – business, recreation, life
- Inclusion/support/activity/embrace all the people
- Voices for the vulnerable
- More community service/volunteerism
- More civic pride/no negative image
- ‘Stick around and make it better’
- ‘Be our own ambassadors’
- Holistic health – become a medical center
- Safe family friendly place
- More participation – support events
- More united
- Healthy, clean, self sufficient
- Vibrant public transportation system

2. and 3. Given what we just said, what are the 2-3 most important issues or concerns when it comes to the community? What concerns do you have about these issues? Why?

- Health issues
 - Bad statistics on health outcomes
 - Addiction – in neighborhoods
 - Older population
- Economic Development/Opportunity Issues
 - Lack of opportunity
 - Economic issues
 - Poverty is the ‘biggest issue’
 - ‘Not much to do’
 - Blight
 - Commercial gridlock
 - Resources in neighborhoods
 - Racism
 - Code enforcement makes building anything difficult – it is more punitive than cooperative – blocks investment
 - City Hall/Police Department
- Education
 - Disunited – 4 school districts are too many/represents a legacy of racism/wasteful

3. How do the issues we're talking about affect you personally?

- Frustration
- Anger
- Inability to reach goals

4. When you think about these things, how do you feel about what's going on?

- Frustration with the pervasive negativity
- Area is a nice place to live – 'not a lousy place'
- Unhappy people
- Entrepreneurship is kept down
- Are things getting better? Depends on whose perspective
- Crime rates are going up
- Tired of talking – need more doing
- Who are the 'we'? We are the 'we' – have to take action

5. What do you think is keeping us from making the progress we want?

- Negativity – unhappy people here
- Crime
- Lack of participation – people don't show up
- Lack of motivation
- People have given up – vote doesn't count
- Technology has disconnected us
- Lack of individual commitment/personal responsibility
- Regulations – state and local
- Lack of incentives to commit
- Too much time on crisis management – 100% of money goes into crisis management
- Funders – always want to fund something new all the time
- Funders – are keeping places open that are no longer effective

6. When you think about what we've talked about, what are the kinds of things that could be done that would make a difference?

- Working together
- Consolidate schools
- Better communication – getting the word out
- Better neighborhoods
- Community houses/tool sharing
- Everyone connect with each other

- Better distribution of resources to the grass roots
- Settlement houses- organizing/making action
- Investing in property/turning neighborhoods around
- Community service for high school students
- Create environment for investing
- Fairer employment practices for those with a criminal history – ‘we are missing some of our best minds because of this stupidity’
- Small simple changes – lead by example
- Better signage on the Sojourner Truth monument

- 7. Thinking back over the conversation what groups or individuals would you trust to take action on these things?**
- 8. If we came back together in 6 months or a year, what might you see which would tell you that the things we talked about tonight were starting to happen?**
- 9. Now that we’ve talked about this issue a bit, what question do you have about it?**

We did not have much time left for the last 3 questions, but our group made it clear that action should come from local residents from the bottom up. We should not wait for business or government to take action for us although these entities should assist as much as possible or at least not get in the way.

Our group wanted to leave with a list of positive features of our community, which included:

- The continuing commitment of the Kellogg Company to the region
- Riverside Park
- Woodland Lake
- Revitalized Downtown
- Riverwalk
- Fort Custer bike trails