

Introduction

Health starts where we live, work and play. Tacoma-Pierce County Health Department partners with the City of Tacoma to hear what local residents have to say about their neighborhoods in order to live happier and healthier. The Health Department has organized three focus groups on July 8, August 4 and August 6, 2015 at three convenient locations with easy access to populations living in different parts of the Tacoma Mall area. The purpose of these community conversations is to identify local needs, concerns and aspirations to improve neighborhood livability.

Major Needs Assessment Findings

We heard five recurring themes from community members:

- Neighborhood Safety –Partly attributed to the high residential vacancies, lack of places for youth to go, and limited access to needed resources.
- Parking, Speeding and Traffic –This safety issue is exacerbated as a result of poor signage (speed, children, disabled, etc.) in the community. This is a safety and injury threat to children playing in or near the streets, in lack of parks facilities. The current limited number and the poor condition of on-street parking have challenged property and human safety.
- Walkability and Alternative Transportation – Disjointed, incomplete, poorly maintained, and non ADA-compliant sidewalks make walking and navigating with strollers very difficult. While shuttle services provide great support, the overall level of bus service was inadequate to connect with employment centers.
- Parks and Public Amenities for Youth and Children – There’s a lack of safe places for children and youth to recreate. The Lincoln Heights area west of S. Steeles St., which creates a barrier to safely access Lincoln Heights Park, has no play structure for children. The absence of appropriate places for youth and young adults to gather and recreate has created multiple problems in the community.
- Access to Healthy Food – Besides Marlene’s (which is almost unaffordable to local residents), there’s no easy access to affordable healthy food options where people can walk, bike or bus to. There are no food banks or other food sources within reasonable walking distance.

Other concerns include property encroachment, lack of neighborhood cohesion given gated areas, compatibility between various types of housing, and fast turn-over of apartment residents.

If you have other suggestions to improve your neighborhood, contact:

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