



INDIANA UNIVERSITY

**PUBLIC POLICY INSTITUTE**



# **COOK MEDICAL MANUFACTURING FACILITY**

## **Understanding and tracking impacts of the 38th Street and Sheridan Avenue community collaboration**

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# EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

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## OVERVIEW OF PROJECT

Cook Medical is developing a medical device manufacturing facility, in partnership with Goodwill of Central and Southern Indiana, Inc., the Central Indiana Community Foundation (CICF) and its affiliate The Indianapolis Foundation, IMPACT Central Indiana, the United Northeast Community Development Corporation (UNEC), and the Northeast Indianapolis neighborhoods where the facility will be located. Known as the 38th and Sheridan project, this development is focused on building stronger bonds between the company, its workforce, and the communities that surround the site. It is based on a new model for community-engaged development that goes beyond traditional corporate social responsibility. Its uniqueness is derived from both the level of collaboration and coordination between Cook and its development partners, as well as the ways in which this partnership is investing equitably in economic opportunities and quality-of-life issues for the neighborhoods around this new manufacturing facility.

Cook and its partners are approaching this development with a community viewpoint by seeking input directly from residents and advocates throughout each phase of the project. Cook has identified an overarching objective of economically lifting the community while not forcing out current residents. This type of displacement often occurs when there is redevelopment in disinvested and underinvested urban areas. A first step toward this objective is to mandate that this development and the manufacturing operations—as well as other investments in community amenities, such as a full-size grocery store—will be built by and employ community residents to the greatest extent possible. Employees of the manufacturing facility will receive skill-building training from the first day, including education tuition support and social services, if needed. Cook and its development partners also will use minority-owned and operated firms for all construction and construction services. Construction employees also have access to skill-building services regardless of the jobs for which they are hired.

A recognized disparity between established community development practices and reality serves as an impetus for Cook to try a different model and process for corporate social responsibility. This model emphasizes community-engaged development, wherein the company creates partnerships with the community and responsible community-based organizations at the beginning of the project. As the project progresses, the company uses community feedback, derived through those partnerships, to guide investments from the community's perspective, not just the company's position.

This approach does not hand over decision making to those outside the company nor does it ignore the company's economic purpose. Rather, it entrusts the community to provide the company with the information necessary to be both profitable and responsive to community and societal needs. It seeks to risk capital to achieve economic performance and real, objectively measurable social good.

The IU Public Policy Institute has been engaged by Cook and its partners to model the immediate and future economic impacts of the 38th and Sheridan project, provide a set of recommendations on instruments and metrics that will provide feedback on the project's community impact and employment outcomes over time, and enable a long-term evaluation of this important and innovative project.

## Key community-focused project details

- The project intentionally seeks to hire operations employees from the neighborhood and nearby community where the facility will be located and provide wraparound services, such as health and education support, to the employees and their families.

- The project seeks to hire construction workers from the community and supply services from local, minority-owned businesses. Construction workers also will receive upskilling support and services from Darden Group, a minority-owned construction management firm.
- The project development partners are working closely with each other, and they have clear roles for engaging with the community and its stakeholders. Each partner is focused on economically and socially empowering community residents to help them succeed over time.
- A portion of funds generated by facility rental profits will be reinvested into the community through a managed fund held by CICF.
- Finally, the project will include construction of a full-size grocery store, which has been identified as an important community need. The grocery store also will be operated by local residents who have operated a small grocery store and who will receive training and support to successfully own and operate the new full-size store.

## COMMUNITY FINDINGS

To inform a different model of corporate social responsibility and begin understanding what the area’s needs are, as defined by community members themselves, Cook and its partners developed a close working relationship with UNEC. To build on the initial understanding that was developed through that relationship, PPI sought further insights from community members who are active in Northeast Indianapolis. Researchers asked interviewees to share their perceptions of how the area has changed over time; what the area’s strengths, challenges, and needs are; and their desired outcomes for the new manufacturing facility and the collaboration that Cook and its partners are bringing to the area through the 38th and Sheridan project.

| COMMUNITY STRENGTHS   | COMMUNITY CHALLENGES   |
|---|--|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Resident social and emotional connectedness to the neighborhood</li> <li>• Optimism about the area’s future</li> </ul>   | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Lack of for-profit businesses and nonprofit social service providers</li> <li>• Poor or lacking infrastructure, such as sidewalks and streetlights</li> </ul> |
| PERCEPTION OF 38TH & SHERIDAN PROJECT   |  |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Enthusiasm for social and economic opportunities</li> <li>• Not aware of all project details</li> <li>• Enthusiasm for developing close, thoughtful collaborations that value community input</li> </ul> |  |

## Community findings recommendations

Based on the findings from interviews, PPI has identified three recommendations for the 38th and Sheridan project to expand and maintain good community partnerships, address existing community challenges, and mitigate possible negative effects of the development:

1. Hire a dedicated community liaison to complement the relationship with UNEC, maintain relationships throughout the community, and share information with community members.
2. Expand and deepen community engagement networks to reach all residents .
3. Conduct an annual or biannual area-wide survey to track high-level changes over time (sample survey provided).

## **STAKEHOLDER FINDINGS**

One objective among the 38th and Sheridan project partners is for this project to serve as a “playbook” for how other organizations can implement similar community-engaged business investments elsewhere. PPI researchers interviewed project stakeholders to understand the project’s evolution and the challenges thus far, as well as to help inform what measures should be tracked to evaluate long-term impacts of the project.

Stakeholders shared that, over time, the project details have evolved to better support the needs of the community. For example, through early conversations with residents, it was determined that some of the profits generated by facility rental payments could be reinvested through the creation of a community fund. Although this project is focused on uplifting the community, multiple stakeholders conveyed that it is important to ensure this type of community investment does not invite gentrification, wherein new residents move into the area and spur economic and cultural changes to the point that existing residents can't afford to live there or feel welcome. Instead, stakeholders emphasized that the project must benefit existing residents, and they acknowledged the importance of maintaining community trust to ensure the project is done with the community rather than to the community.

## **PRELIMINARY ECONOMIC IMPACT**

The construction and operation of the medical device facility will provide short-term, one-time economic benefits, as well as long-term annual benefits from operations.

An initial investment of \$15.6 million in construction and design is estimated to produce an additional \$8.6 million in indirect and induced economic activity in Marion County through the construction period, totaling approximately \$24 million in construction-related economic contribution. This work is estimated to create 138 full-time jobs with more than \$10 million in labor income (i.e., wages and benefits).

The 38th and Sheridan project anticipates employing 100 full-time workers, with initial annual aggregate wages of \$3.1 million, plus benefits. Based on these anticipated employee and payroll inputs, this project is expected to add \$25.9 million per year at current wage levels to the Marion County economy from direct, indirect, and induced spending. In addition to the production generated by 100 employees, purchases of supplies and services, plus employee spending, are expected to generate an additional 52 full-time jobs in the local economy and, initially, \$4.1 million in additional wages and benefits for each year of operations.

## **EMPLOYEE SURVEY RECOMMENDATIONS**

The 38th and Sheridan project is focused on lifting a disadvantaged community by identifying and hiring interested individuals who live in the neighborhood surrounding the facility and who may be struggling economically and/or professionally. The project aims to provide these employees with professional growth and development opportunities. It is expected that this intentional effort will provide improved economic stability and result in personal and professional growth opportunities and an enhanced quality of life for employees and members of their households. Additionally, the hope is that, by hiring neighborhood residents, those employees and their households will contribute to a higher quality of life in the neighborhood. To ensure that these intended employee outcomes can be measured over time, PPI evaluated Cook and Goodwill’s current employee surveys and created recommendations for additional questions to be added to the surveys to provide a more complete picture of the project’s impacts.

### **Recommended questions to be added to Goodwill Industries Application Form**

- Educational attainment of household members, including perspectives on possible future education
- Perceptions of the future, including how employees and their households describe the future and general levels of optimism or pessimism they currently have

### **Recommended questions to be added to Cook Group New Hire Survey**

- Neighborhood connectedness, including perceived opportunities to contribute to the community
- Impressions of current community amenities, including retail, restaurants, schools, safety, and other offerings
- Understanding of the 38th and Sheridan project, including understanding of project goals and approach
- Perceptions of Cook—including Cook’s reputation for contributing to the local community—and whether this reputation influenced their decisions about working for the company

### **Recommended questions to be added to Cook’s Annual Employee Engagement Survey**

- Neighborhood engagement, such as perceived value of any neighborhood or employee impact programs and opportunities to volunteer or otherwise serve in the community





**PART 1.**

# **OVERVIEW**

# PROJECT OVERVIEW

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## BACKGROUND

Close collaborations between community leaders, corporations, nonprofits, and community foundations have the potential to restore opportunities to communities in need. The key to success is developing a team of partners who have the resources and skills to provide the types of jobs, training, and wraparound services that can break down systemic barriers. Success means positive impacts on families and communities while stopping the pattern of joblessness and destitution that keeps people from realizing their full potential.

A unique collaboration underway on the northeast side of Indianapolis, Indiana, is seeking to bring such impacts to the area. Community, corporate, nonprofit, and philanthropic leaders are partnering to develop a new medical device manufacturing facility, as well as other important community investments that will bring employment opportunities to the area. They are also bringing opportunities for personal and professional growth, economic stability, free education, wraparound services, and community ownership to people and places that have long faced high rates of poverty and unemployment. This group is operating based on a concept of corporate social responsibility that is different from traditional models. These partners include Cook Medical, Goodwill of Central and Southern Indiana, the United Northeast Community Development Corporation, the Central Indiana Community Foundation and its affiliate The Indianapolis Foundation, as well as IMPACT Central Indiana, an LLC created by CICF and its affiliates. These partners are working together to create solutions that will address some of the area's most persistent challenges.

## THE PROJECT

The new manufacturing facility will produce medical device components for Cook. The facility will cost approximately \$15.6 million and will seek construction and supply services provided by local, minority-owned businesses. The facility will be owned by Prosper Devington Building Corporation, a newly formed 501(c)(2) entity. It will be operated by Goodwill's Commercial Services division. After paying its applicable expenses, including debt service, Prosper will distribute its remaining cash to IF Charitable Holdings LLC, a subsidiary of CICF-affiliate The Indianapolis Foundation. A 501(c)(2) organization is known as a title holding corporation, whose purpose is to collect income and turn over the entire amount—less expenses—to an organization which itself is exempt from federal income taxes. Beginning in 2022, it is projected that \$100,000 will be available annually for six years to reinvest in the community.

Goodwill intends to hire, to the extent possible, approximately 100 production employees from the surrounding community, defined as the area from 42nd Street to 34th Street (north to south) and Sherman Drive to Shadeland Avenue (west to east) (Figure 1). The estimated starting production employee wage will be \$15/hour, plus benefits. Goodwill also will provide wraparound services such as mental and physical health support and educational assistance to employees and their families, all with the goal of improving employee and community outcomes.

### Project partners

Cook Medical is a medical device manufacturing company based in Bloomington, Indiana. The company provides medical device products to 135 countries across the world.<sup>1</sup> Cook Indy Investments LLC, a subsidiary of Cook Medical, is partnering with its above-listed partners to build and operate a medical device component manufacturing facility in Indianapolis, known as the 38th and Sheridan project. Focused on building stronger bonds between the company, its workforce, and the community in which this facility will be located, this project is based on a new model of corporate social responsibility that engages with community members to ensure that the project's investments equitably create and distribute economic opportunity and an enhanced quality of life throughout the community.

## CORPORATE SOCIAL RESPONSIBILITY

The history of what is commonly known as corporate social responsibility (CSR) is extensive and well-known. Although definitions have varied across time, modern definitions from the past 60+ years identify key characteristics of business' obligations to society that go beyond the maximization of shareholder profits. CSR concepts recognize the economic imperative of the firm and motivations for engaging in socially responsible and responsive activities, including return on firm capital.<sup>2</sup>

Nevertheless, systems and activities that promote social good through corporation-sponsored initiatives—such as minority hiring, environmental stewardship, and business ethics—remain constrained by the firm's internal idea of social responsibility. That is, the definitions, frameworks, processes, and performance measures associated with CSR remain based in top-down notions of what companies—and their public and/or nonprofit partners—believe is good for communities, rather than obtaining authentic feedback from community members. This feedback comes from investing time and resources into building trusting relationships and finding out from community members themselves what is good for them. When externally defined benefits fail to recognize and align with established community needs and goals, they can result in cultural and economic shifts that exclude existing residents and disrupt, rather than enrich, the existing community. This can lead to gentrification and displacement.<sup>A</sup> These urban phenomena are the devastating long-term consequences of inequitable and exclusionary economic growth.<sup>B</sup>

A core component of the 38th and Sheridan project is the deployment of a different model of corporate social responsibility wherein project partners proactively and intentionally define success with the community in the early stages of project conception and before construction. Project success is based on the extent to which the development's benefits reach community members in meaningful ways, as defined with input from the community. Thus, a notable distinction between traditional CSR models and the model that Cook and its partners are developing is that the 38th and Sheridan project benefits will extend beyond the facility's employees—and the wraparound services available to them—and also impact families who live in proximity to the facility and can benefit from the plant's economic spillovers. Additionally, other community investments will be tailored to meet community needs. For example, in addition to constructing and operating the manufacturing facility, Cook and its partners will build a full-size grocery store adjacent to the facility to address the existing food desert in the area. This grocery store project was based on community input over the lack of healthy food options in the area. It is also a collaborative partnership with existing owners of a small local grocery store.

The project's goal of proactively and intentionally collaborating with the community was established in response to growing concerns at local and national levels about inequitable and exclusionary economic growth, as well as the lack of solutions or models offering guidance on how to develop differently. Therefore, the 38th and Sheridan project partners intend for it to serve as a model for a new form of corporate/community partnership. They also hope that carefully measuring and tracking project impacts will serve as a playbook for how other organizations can implement similar community-engaged business investments elsewhere.

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A For a recent Indianapolis-based case study on this issue, see Abbey Chambers, "Taken Spaces: Perceptions of Inequity and Exclusion in Urban Development" (Dissertation, Indianapolis, IN, Indiana University, 2020), <https://scholarworks.iupui.edu/handle/1805/24787>.

B There is abundant writing on gentrification and displacement as consequences of inequitable and exclusionary economic growth. Some good sources include:

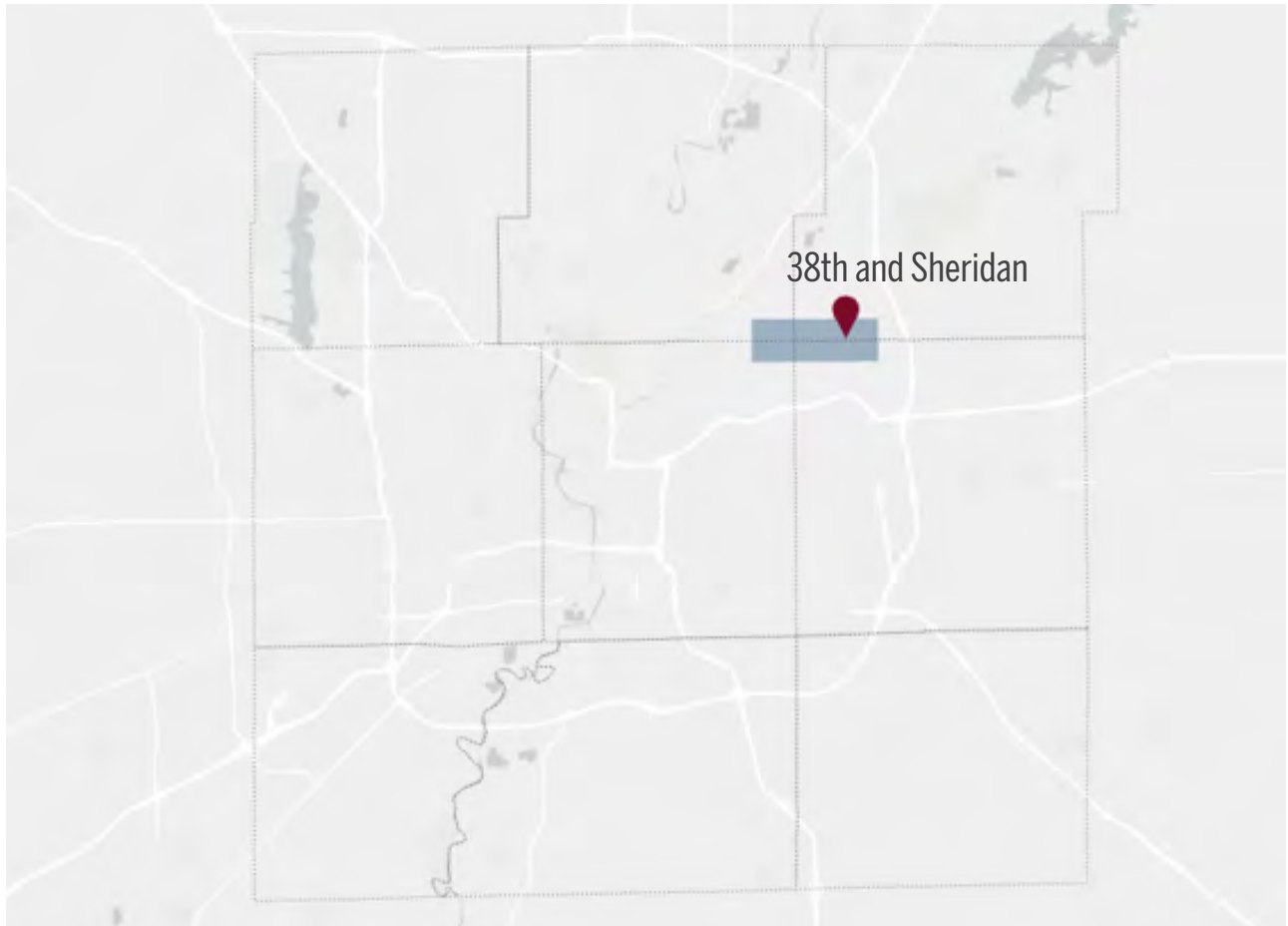
- Derek S. Hyra, *Race, Class, and Politics in the Cappuccino City* (Chicago and London: University of Chicago Press, 2017)
- Peter Moskowitz, *How to Kill a City: Gentrification, Inequality, and the Fight for the Neighborhood* (New York: Nation Books, 2017)
- Kathe Newman and Elvin K. Wily, "The Right to Stay Put, Revisited: Gentrification and Resistance to Displacement in New York City," *Urban Studies* 43, no. 1 (2006): 23–57, <https://doi.org/10.1080/00420980500388710>
- Jason Richardson, Bruce Mitchell, and Juan Franco, "Shifting Neighborhoods: Gentrification and Cultural Displacement in American Cities," (Washington, D.C.: National Community Reinvestment Coalition, 2019)
- Miriam Zuk et al., "Gentrification, Displacement, and the Role of Public Investment," *Journal of Planning Literature* 33, no. 1 (2018): 31–44, <https://doi.org/10.1177/088541221716439>

# PROJECT AREA GEOGRAPHY & HISTORY

## GEOGRAPHY

The new medical device manufacturing facility is located on the northeast side of Marion County at the intersection of 38th Street and Sheridan Avenue, approximately 8 miles from downtown Indianapolis. The boundaries that have been designated as the 38th and Sheridan project area stretch north to south from 42nd Street to 34th Street and west to east from Sherman Drive to Shadeland Avenue.

**FIGURE 1. 38th and Sheridan project location in Marion County**

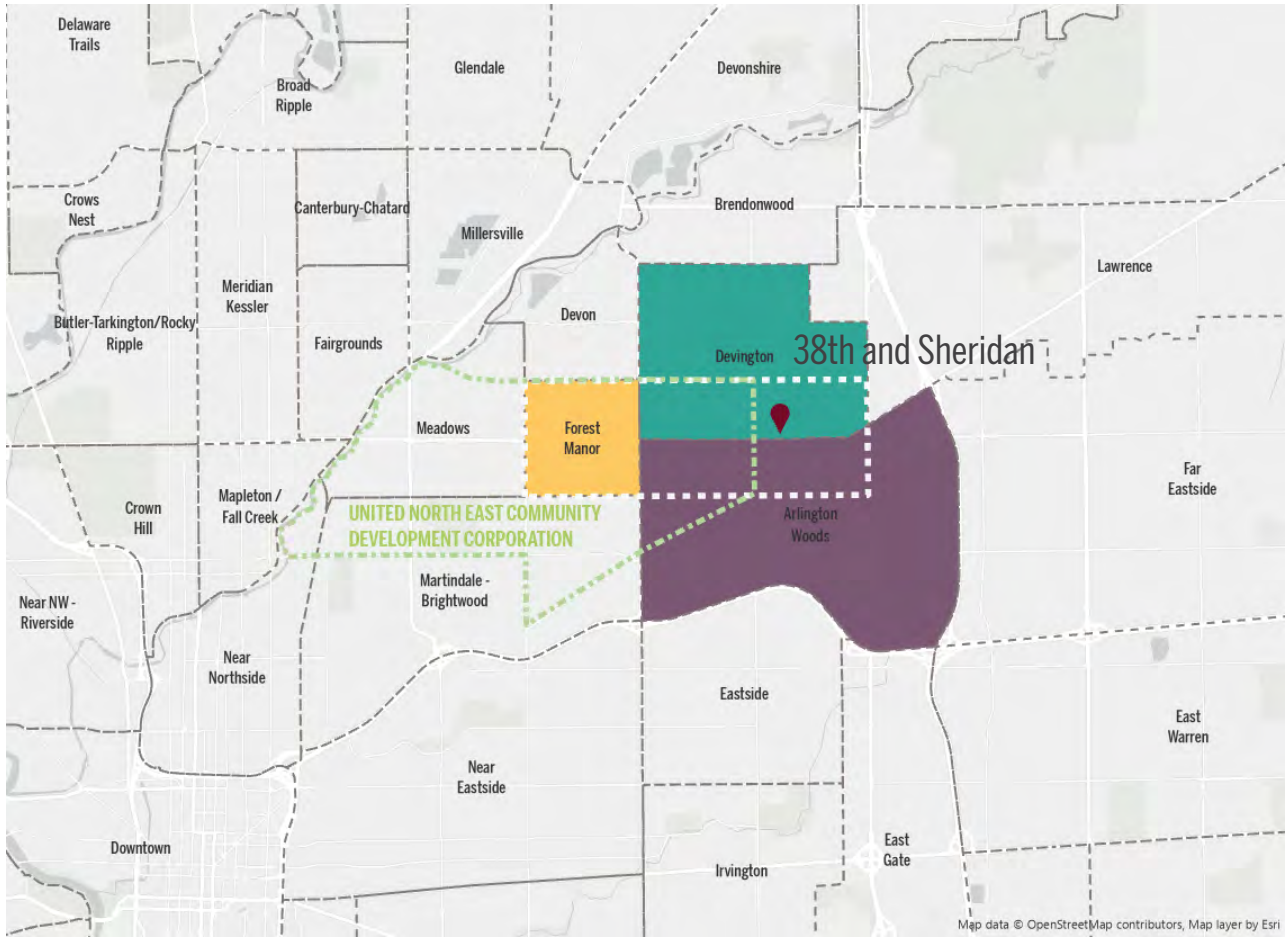


The 38th and Sheridan project area overlaps with portions of three Northeast Indianapolis neighborhoods: Devington, Forest Manor, and Arlington Woods (Figure 2).

## HISTORY

The northeast side is home to some of Indianapolis' earliest suburbs, which flourished with working class residents in the early to mid-20th century. The Martindale-Brightwood neighborhood, adjacent to Forest Manor and Arlington Woods, is one of Indianapolis' oldest neighborhoods. This historically Black community emerged in the 1800s and, by the end of the 19th century, had grown into a thriving, stable, and racially diverse environment.<sup>3</sup>

**FIGURE 2. 38th and Sheridan project focus area with overlapping neighborhood boundaries**

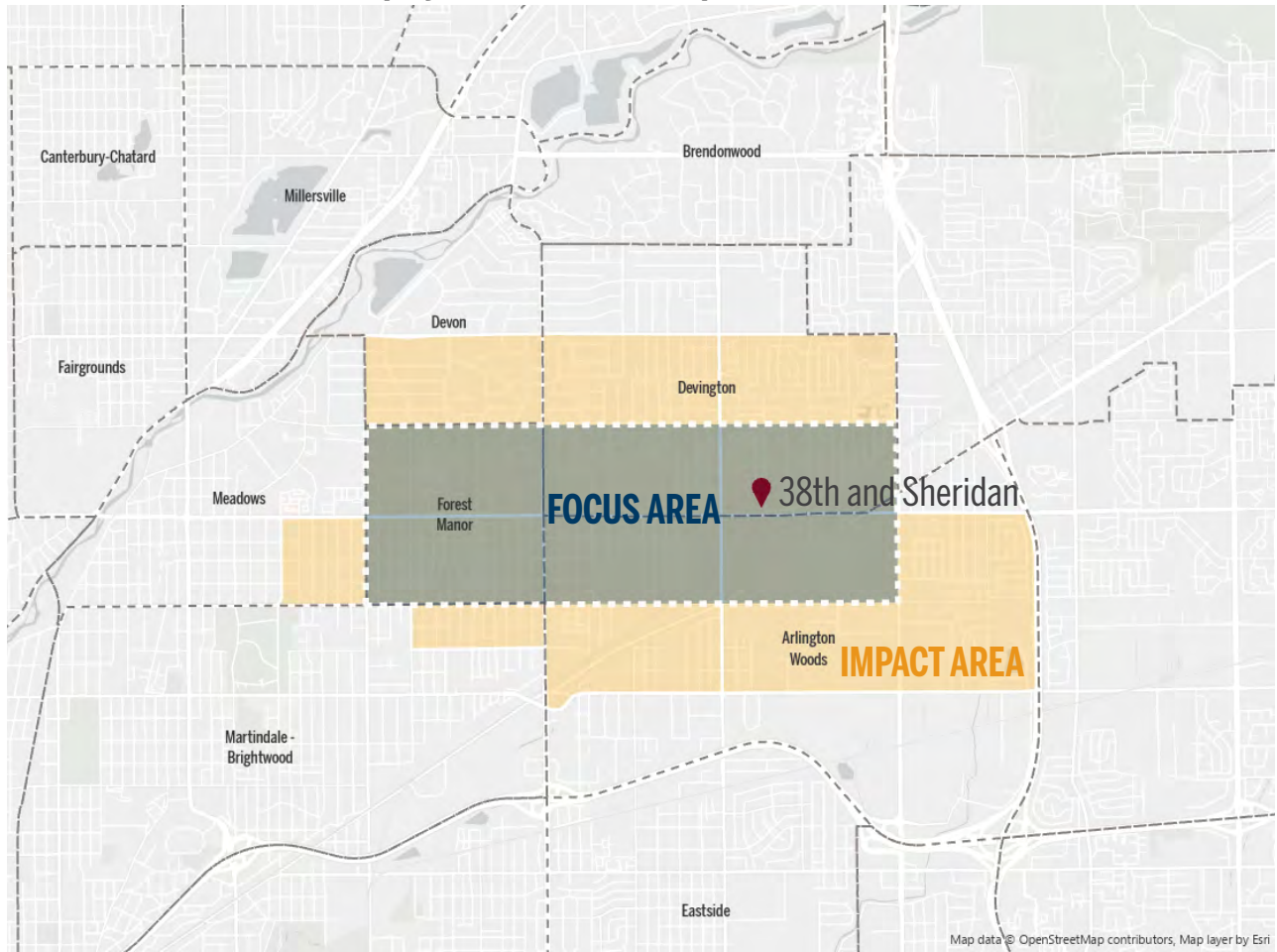


The mid-20th century brought major changes to the area. Consistent with national suburbanization trends, middle-class white families began leaving places like Martindale-Brightwood and Northeast Indianapolis. Their departure was facilitated by the construction of Interstates 65 and 70. As the I-65/70 project tore through urban residential communities, it eliminated homes and businesses, and made commuting to downtown from the new and expanding Indianapolis suburbs easier for people who could afford to move there. This population shift—known as white flight—left in its wake a tremendous surplus in housing stock that was eventually occupied by lower income families, who were predominantly people of color. From the 1960s to the 1990s, the area’s Black population increased from 50% to more than 90%.<sup>4</sup> The exodus of residents also had the effect of eroding the tax base, prompting commercial and public disinvestment, and general decline. These factors have combined, trapping these areas in a pernicious cycle of poverty, loss, and crime.<sup>5</sup>

## IMPACT AREA DEFINED FOR ANALYSIS

Although the boundaries of the 38th and Sheridan project area are outlined above, a similar but slightly larger area was defined to serve as the project impact area for the purposes of data collection and analysis. This impact area is comprised of six census tracts that contain the 38th and Sheridan project area (Figure 3). Census tracts are defined as county subdivisions with approximately 4,000 people each.<sup>6</sup> They provide a standardized way to gather and compare data across multiple measures and across time. The demographic profiles that follow are based on this census tract-based impact area.

**FIGURE 3. 38th and Sheridan project focus area vs. impact area**

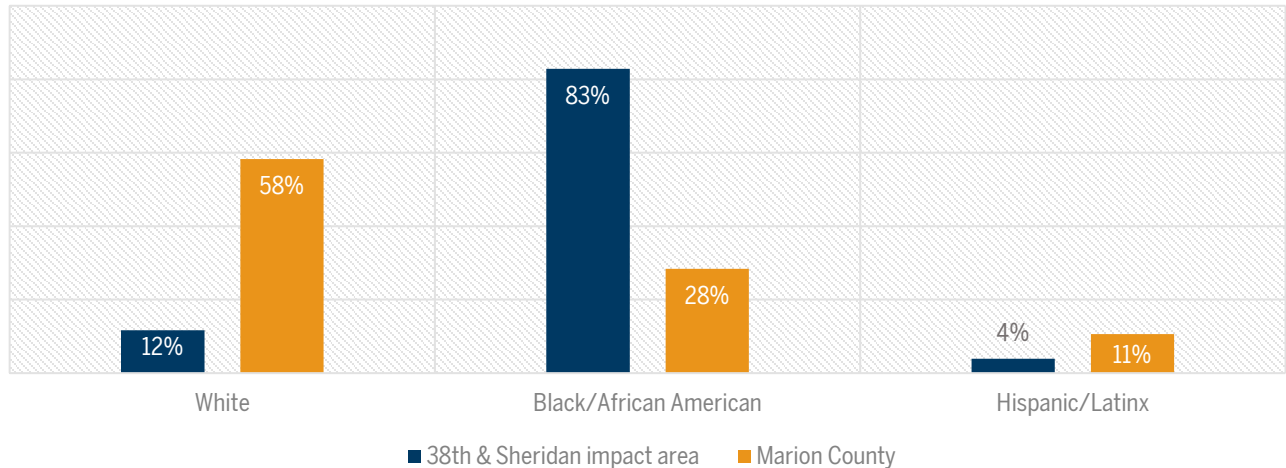


# DEMOGRAPHICS

## RACE AND ETHNICITY

The 38th and Sheridan impact area is home to 23,885 residents. This portion of the northeast side is less racially diverse than Marion County as a whole. Approximately 83% of the residents are Black/African American while Hispanic/Latinx residents make up only 4% of the population and white residents make up 12% of the population.

**FIGURE 4. Population by race/ethnicity (2020)**



## AGE

Compared to Marion County, the area has a lower share of working-age residents and a higher share of adults age 65 and older. The area's unemployment rate of 6% is slightly higher than the county's rate of 4%. These numbers are not reflective of the COVID-19 pandemic's impact on employment. Rather, they reflect systemic deficiencies in the area's socioeconomic environment, which has not attracted or retained working-age adults, partially due to the area's inadequate access to quality jobs. The unemployment rate for the impact area is not far off from the county's rate. However, there are lower levels of educational attainment and very low household incomes.

**TABLE 1. Percentage of population by age group, impact area compared to Marion County (2020)**

| CATEGORY                     | 38TH AND SHERIDAN IMPACT AREA | MARION COUNTY |
|------------------------------|-------------------------------|---------------|
| Working age (25 to 64 years) | 49%                           | 54%           |
| 65+ years                    | 18%                           | 13%           |

## EDUCATION

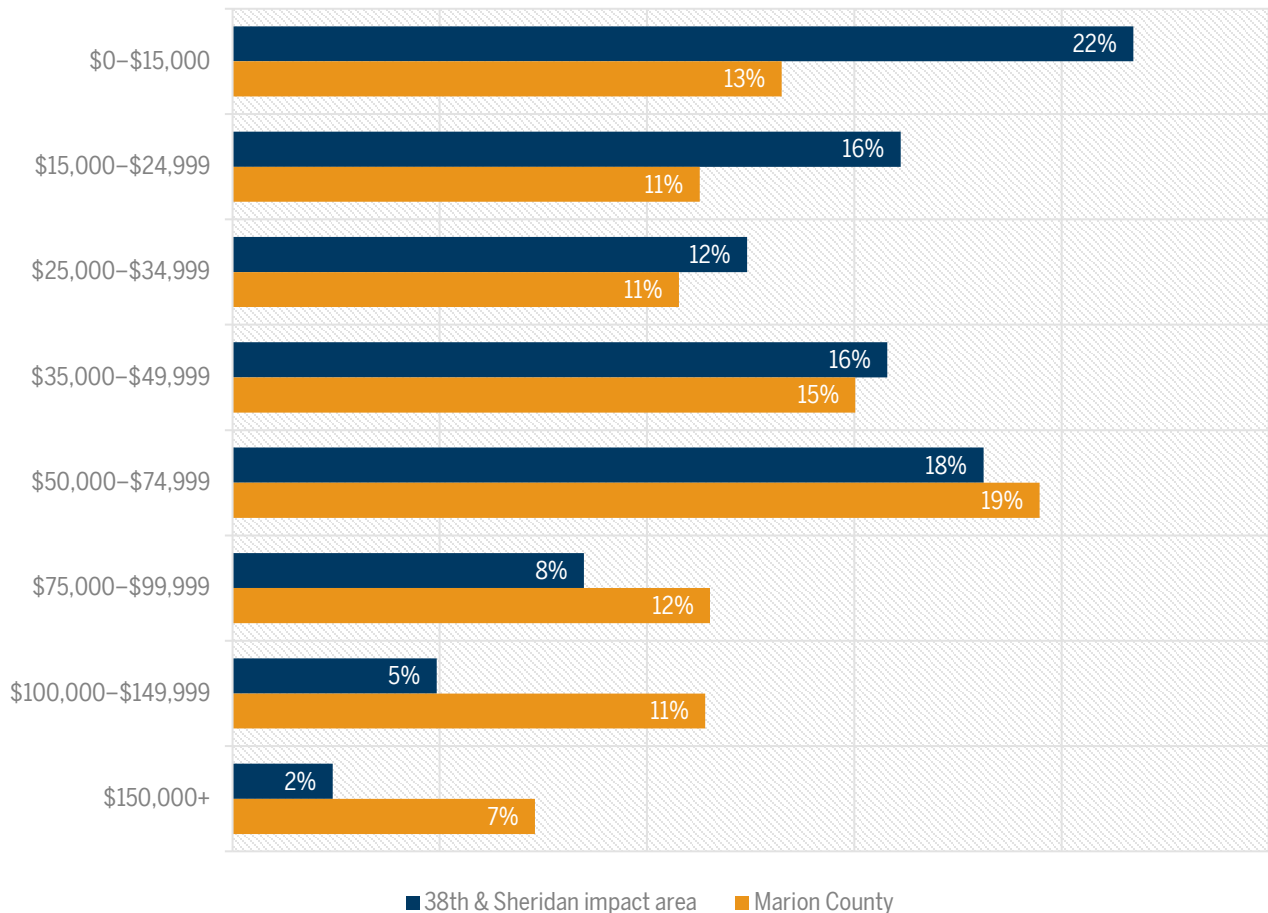
Educational attainment is often a key factor in predicting economic well-being.<sup>7</sup> In the 38th and Sheridan project impact area, adults have lower educational attainment levels in comparison to the rest of the county, with roughly 18% of adults in the area lacking a high school (equivalency) education. Only 13% of adults in the 38th and Sheridan project impact area have at least a bachelor's degree, which is less than half the rate of the entire county. Although income disparities exist among all education levels, net worth tends to increase as levels of educational attainment rise, indicating that levels of net worth among the population of residents in the impact area is likely low.

**TABLE 2. Educational attainment for population ages 25+**

| CATEGORY                                    | 38TH AND SHERIDAN IMPACT AREA | MARION COUNTY |
|---|-------------------------------|---------------|
| Without high school (equivalency) education | 18%                           | 13%           |
| With bachelor's degree or higher            | 13%                           | 30%           |

## ECONOMIC CONDITIONS

The median household income in the 38th and Sheridan project impact area is about \$19,000 per year, which is more than \$15,000 less than the county's median of \$34,792. The area includes high rates of low-income and impoverished residents, and more than one-fifth of households have incomes less than \$15,000 per year. This very low-income group comprises the largest income group in the area. Interestingly, households earning \$50,000 to \$75,000 per year make up the second largest income group in the area, comprising 18% of the population, which is similar to the county's 19% rate at this income level. Still, half of the area's households earn less than \$35,000 per year, resulting in concentrated economic disadvantage within the community.

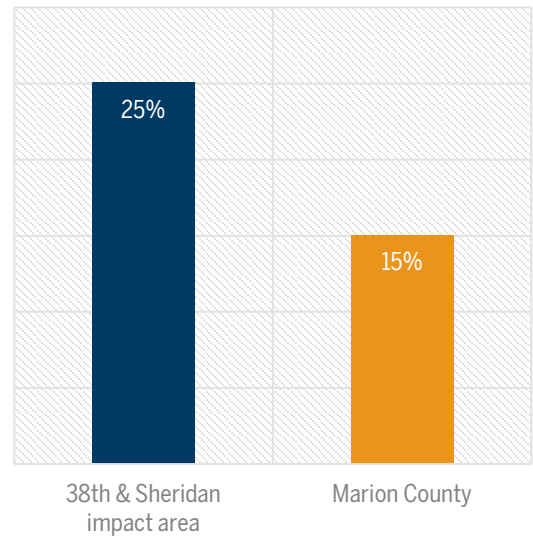
**FIGURE 5. Income distribution in project impact area compared to Marion County**



## Poverty

According to the federal poverty guidelines, individuals without a family who make \$12,760 per year or less are classified as living below the poverty line.<sup>8</sup> The poverty line increases as the number of people in a family increases. Households living below the poverty line face a wide range of unique challenges, with many struggling to afford basic needs, such as food, housing, transportation, child care, and health care. The 38th and Sheridan project impact area has seen increasing poverty rates for the past 40 years, since the mid-century white flight and suburbanization that eroded the tax base led to disinvestment. These changes ultimately created a growing lack of economic opportunity that has never been fully remediated.<sup>9</sup> Currently, 1 in 4 residents in the project impact area live in poverty, compared to nearly 1 in 7 in the county. Persistent neighborhood poverty can create long-term social and economic impacts, limiting children's and adults' chances to move up the economic ladder.

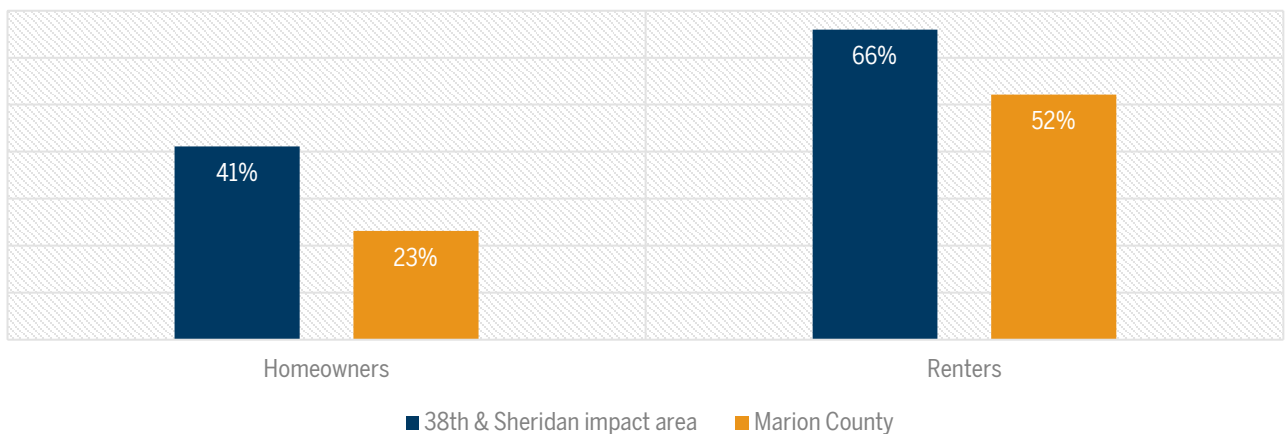
**FIGURE 6. Poverty rate in project impact area compared to Marion County**



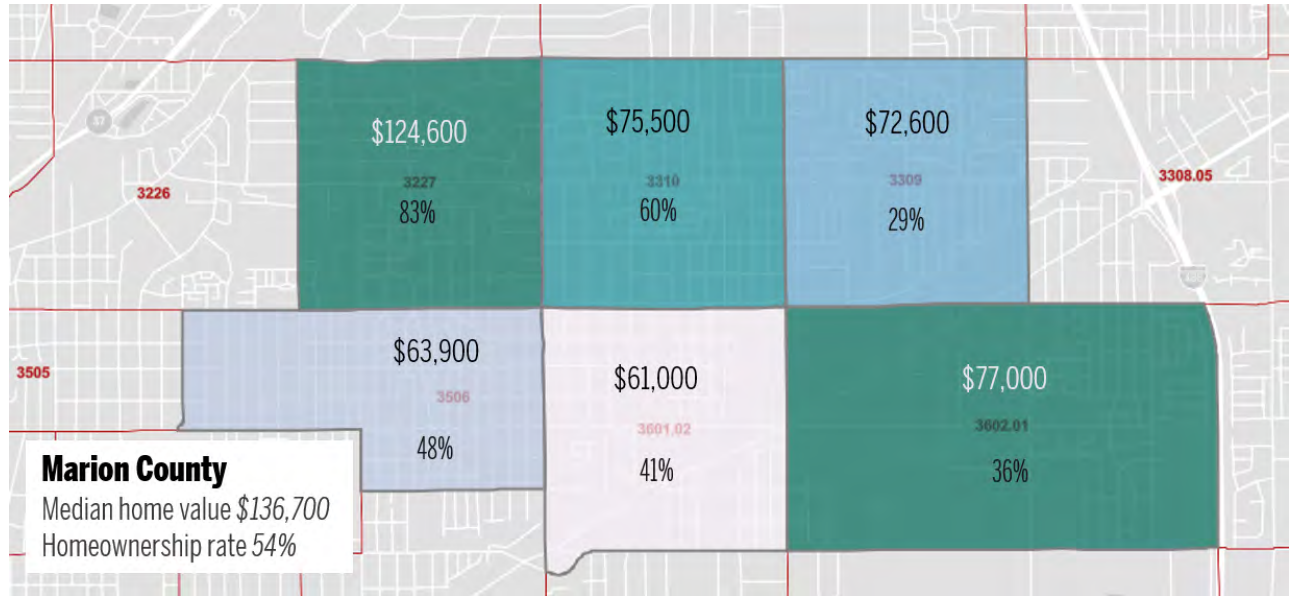
## HOUSING

Homeownership is often considered a significant pathway to building wealth.<sup>10</sup> However, in addition to a high proportion of low-income and high-poverty households, this area also exhibits lower median home values and homeownership rates compared to the rest of Marion County. While the 51% homeownership rate in the 38th and Sheridan project area is not significantly lower than the 54% homeownership rate for the county, larger disparities exist between individual census tracts. The census tract in the northeast corner of the impact area exhibits the lowest homeownership rate at 29%. Homes in the southern and southwestern sections of the impact area have the lowest median values, at \$61,000 and \$63,900 respectively, less than half the Marion County median home value of \$136,700.

**FIGURE 7. Percent housing cost-burden**



**FIGURE 8. Median home values and homeownership rates in impact area by census tract**



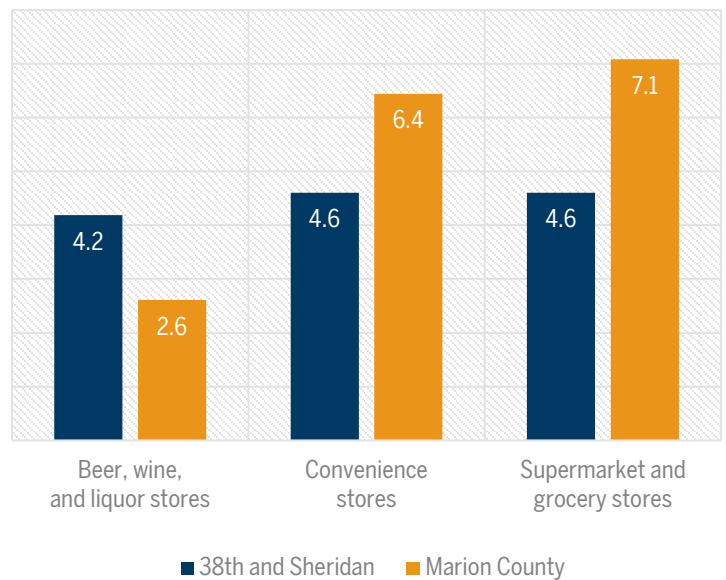
**RETAIL OUTLETS**

The link between geographic concentrations of poverty and food availability has been well documented.<sup>11</sup> Food supermarkets are less likely to locate in low-income neighborhoods for many reasons, including the perception that residents’ spending power is low, perceived or actual high crime rates, availability of land or high cost of redeveloping urban sites, and access to financing.<sup>12</sup>

In poor, majority-minority communities, ready access to liquor stores and convenience stores that provide nutrient-poor—yet relatively inexpensive—shelf-stable items pose a problem. Research has shown a connection between liquor stores and higher violent crime rates.<sup>13</sup>

There is an abundance of liquor stores relative to grocery stores in the 38th and Sheridan project area. There are at least four liquor stores per 100,000 residents in the impact area. There are also fewer supermarkets and grocery stores in the area, limiting quality food options. Though there is a decent number of convenience stores, the availability and affordability of healthy food options and other basic need items is questionable.

**FIGURE 9. Organization density per 100,000 people<sup>c</sup>**



<sup>c</sup> Note: There are some limitations to this analysis. This is based on business directory information based on NAICS codes, which may classify outlets incorrectly—those listed as convenience may, in fact, be small grocery stores or vice versa.

A nighttime photograph of a cityscape featuring a canal and a walkway. The canal is illuminated with colorful lights (yellow, green, blue, red) that reflect on the water. The walkway is paved and lined with small, glowing lights. In the background, several skyscrapers are visible, including one with a prominent spire and another with a flag on top. The sky is a deep blue, suggesting dusk or dawn.

**PART 2.**  
**FINDINGS &**  
**RECOMMENDATIONS**  
**FOR ONGOING**  
**ENGAGEMENT**

# APPROACH

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To inform a different model of corporate social responsibility and begin understanding what the area's needs are—as defined by community members themselves—Cook and its partners developed a close working relationship with United Northeast Area Community Development Corporation. To build on the initial understanding that was developed through that relationship, PPI sought further insights from community members who are active in Northeast Indianapolis. PPI worked with UNEC to identify an initial list of potential interviewees, then used social networks to expand the list. Researchers scheduled and conducted one-on-one interviews with 13 participants. Six participants were residents, six were community liaisons with governmental, nonprofit, and for-profit partners and service providers, and one was both a resident and a nonprofit service provider. Residents lived in the following Northeast Indianapolis neighborhoods: Arlington Woods, Devington, Forest Manor, Keystone-Millersville, Oxford, and Sheridan Heights.

PPI researchers asked interviewees how long they had lived, worked, or served in the area, what it was like when they first moved into or became engaged with the Northeast Indianapolis communities, how the area has changed, what the area's strengths and challenges are, and what the community needs. Interviewers also talked with participants about the project that Cook and its partners are developing at 38th Street and Sheridan Avenue to understand community members' perceptions of the project and the benefits they hope the project will bring to nearby neighborhoods and residents.

# FINDINGS

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Northeast Indianapolis community members with whom interviewers spoke indicated that they are well connected with one another, dedicated to their communities, and actively engaged in civic life, especially through UNEC and their respective neighborhood associations. They are spirited advocates for the good of the area. However, historic, complex, and systemic barriers and exclusions have created persistent challenges for residents as they work to enhance well-being in their communities. They have clear visions for what they want to see in their communities, and, while they welcome investment from individuals and entities who are interested in bringing resources to the area, they want to be engaged and have their voices and concerns heard.

The below section summarizes findings from researchers' conversations with community members. Appendix A contains an expanded narrative describing these findings with short- and long-form quotes from the community interviews.

## STRENGTHS

### **Community connectedness**

The community members interviewed described the community surrounding 38th Street and Sheridan Avenue as a well-established community of engaged and connected longtime residents. The pride in and commitment to the neighborhood consistently shone through in each interview as community members recounted the numerous life events that have taken place there. For current residents, the essence of the community has not changed, despite waning commercial and infrastructural investment. For instance, residents described how neighbors watch out for each other and share cordial conversations. Community members demonstrated a deep sense of belonging and connectedness to their neighborhood by choosing to raise their children there, invest in their homes, and look out for one another.

Community members also demonstrated spirited civic engagement. A few interviewees pointed to a situation about five years ago when community members rallied against and were successful in stopping a chain box retailer that wanted to sell alcohol in their local store. Community members described how their activism motivated another retailer entering the community to go to residents for input on what to offer in their location. Residents were able to get the retailer to offer fresh produce and healthy prepared food options. Several interviewees indicated that community members continue their attempts to vet the retailers who locate in their community. They seemed to see their participation in collective civic engagement and activism as vital to shaping their communities according to their perceived needs and desires for the future of the area.

## CHALLENGES

### Organizational density

Chief among the challenges mentioned by community members is the lack of organizational density in the area, including both for-profit businesses and nonprofit social service providers. A theme that surfaced as residents and community liaisons described the area in its heyday was the presence of several key types of businesses, such as grocery stores and banks, as well as service providers, namely Forest Manor Multi-Service Center, which closed in 2017 after 44 years in operation. For community members, the biggest hit to the area during the past half-century has been the change in the quantity and quality of neighborhood organizations and offerings. Even community members' activism has not been able to prevent critical losses.

Declining organizational density is associated with several issues, including decline in gainful employment. The connection between organizational density and employment is described in a 2015 study that found “organizational density represents the array of institutionalized social capital-producing activities available to neighborhood residents that researchers argue matter for employment.”<sup>14</sup> As such activities break down, they can leave critical gaps in networks and services, which can then inhibit opportunities for people to hear about and obtain good jobs, if such jobs are even available in the area and accessible to residents.

A lack of jobs was a focal point for many interviewees. Specifically, interviewees identified a need for quality jobs that had been available in the past. These were the types of jobs, as one interviewee described, “where you didn't have to have, you know, a college degree or even a high school education. You could work there, and you could make 30 bucks, 35 bucks an hour.” They were jobs that came with benefits and afforded people the opportunity to have a career, buy a house, raise their family, and send their kids to college.

The loss of local organizations and establishments led to the hemorrhaging of good jobs. More recently, development projects that promised to bring jobs never materialized such opportunities. In addition to the loss of employment, the long-term lack of organizational density has meant greater property vacancy and blight, middle-class flight—which has had a profound long-term impact on local homeownership rates—and overall diminished economic opportunity. While community members indicated they were hopeful the Cook/Goodwill facility would bring jobs to the area, they also expressed some apprehension after experiencing the failures of similar types of developments where promised and hoped-for jobs did not pan out.

In addition to a relative lack of organizations, interviewees expressed a concern that the quality of organizations and offerings in the area is sorely lacking. As several recent neighborhood studies suggest, vice stores—fast food restaurants and liquor stores—are highly clustered in urban Black neighborhoods. Interviews suggest that these types of establishments are also overrepresented in this area—a concern that was demonstrated by community members' protest of a box retailers' sale of alcohol. Community members asserted that the area did not need more fast food restaurants, gas stations, liquor stores, or tattoo parlors.

## Infrastructure

Residents commented on the sorely neglected infrastructure of the area, specifically talking about the lack of streetlights, the lack of sidewalks and sidewalks in poor condition, and the poor condition of roadways, especially along 38th Street east of Keystone Avenue. Some interviewees talked about how the poor public infrastructure, as well as poorly maintained businesses along major thoroughfares, gives passers-by inaccurate perceptions of the area's communities, possibly leading to economic impacts due to businessowners thinking the area would not be a good place to locate.

Interviewees connected the neglected infrastructure to the quality of city-level political representation and a low level of interest among city leaders to distribute resources to address area needs. This implied to residents that their voices and concerns do not matter to public officials outside of election times. It also bolstered their sense that their own collective civic engagement and activism is key to getting things done in their communities.

## OPTIMISM ABOUT THE AREA'S FUTURE

### Investment in the community

While interviewees acknowledged their area's complex and systemic challenges—which have left too many needs unmet—they also conveyed a sense of sincere optimism about the area's future. Community members mentioned changes, such as new businesses and community-based, grassroots efforts, that signaled to them that meaningful investments were being made in the area. Interviewees expressed their perspective that the area is “on a come-up,” to borrow a phrase one resident used to refer to the Meadows area at 38th Street and Keystone Avenue. Efforts from nonprofit organizations, area churches, community gardeners, and a new bank were among the investments highlighted by interviewees as positive contributions toward enhancing the area. Community members perceived incremental investments to be critical components of a larger effort leading to overall community well-being, and interviewees conveyed that they were working toward building momentum that would create opportunities for residents to thrive. They welcomed investment and partnership from individuals and entities who were interested in collaborating with them in their efforts.

## OPPORTUNITY AT 38TH AND SHERIDAN

Overwhelmingly, interviewees expressed enthusiasm about the manufacturing facility that Cook and its partners are bringing to the area, even though some interviewees acknowledge that they were not as familiar as they would like to be with the details of the project. Still, community members saw it as a meaningful contribution to their efforts to build momentum toward enhanced community well-being. The well-paying jobs, wraparound services, and training and professional development opportunities that will be available to employees at the facility were critical and oft cited components of the development that interviewees saw as potentially leading to opportunities for people in their communities to thrive.

Some interviewees said Cook's prior history of supporting the communities in which they work boosted their optimism about what the new manufacturing facility and Cook's partnership with Goodwill may be able to bring to the northeast side. Community members perceived that project partners' investment into the area was shaping up to be different from investments other large businesses have made in the area, but their sense of optimism was tempered by a wait-and-see perspective, which likely will only be eased as the facility comes online and if project partners follow through on the promises made in conjunction with the development.

## COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

Interviewees conveyed that community members are eager to engage and develop close collaborations with entities and individuals interested in investing in their communities. Several interviewees said, however, that such investors do not always work alongside residents and community members to address the area's needs and challenges, which creates a lose-lose situation for all.

*“A lot of times, investors and development companies will come in and say ‘I’m gonna put this in here’ and ‘You need this,’ without talking to us to see what it is we need, you know? And so, even if we need it, if you don’t involve us, we’re not going to participate in it. You know, we’re not gonna shop there. We’re not . . . you know, we’re gonna go somewhere else.”*  
—Keystone-Millersville resident

Interviewees noted that trust is a critical component of a successful venture in the area and building trust with community members is vital. Interviewees said they thought Cook and its partners have made “a good start” at engaging with community members and building trust so far, but they wanted to see it continue and even expand through continuous, regular engagement and project updates to community members throughout the area.

## RECOMMENDATIONS

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The manufacturing jobs that the 38th and Sheridan project are bringing to Northeast Indianapolis directly respond to what community members identified as a critical need: good jobs—that is, the kinds that offer opportunities for personal and professional advancement and stability. Goodwill’s wraparound services also will help fill important service gaps that community members identified. There remains, however, a significant need to address the systemic barriers and exclusions that have created the symptoms of socioeconomic disparity that community members described. These wraparound services are an important complement to the initial wage and benefit level. Though wage levels may not yet match those of manufacturers that may have been in the area many years ago, wraparound services will offer a means for residents to develop skills that provide a pathway to greater increases in income and quality of life.

Additionally, as the project site is redeveloped and improved, it may attract nearby development investments from other outside entities seeking to capitalize on low property values and potentially high returns from their investments. Such investments could snowball into widespread economic growth throughout the area. While this growth may help densify and enhance the area’s businesses, services, opportunities, and amenities—changes which community members described as welcome—there is also a risk of gentrification and displacement if the benefits of economic growth do not reach existing residents.

Based on findings from interviews with area residents and community liaisons, PPI has identified three recommendations. These recommendations can guide the 38th and Sheridan project efforts in developing a good community partnership in the eyes of community members by helping to address existing community challenges and mitigate possible negative effects of their development.

### **Hire a dedicated community liaison to complement the relationship with UNEC, maintain relationships throughout the community, and share information with community members**

The 38th and Sheridan project should make a long-term investment into maintaining their established relationships with community leaders by appointing at least one dedicated community liaison of their own who will become an embedded member of northeast area communities, attending neighborhood association meetings and community events, and ensuring trusting relationships with community members in public, for-profit, and nonprofit sectors. This role can serve three purposes: (1) it can create a direct information and feedback loop between 38th and Sheridan project partners and community members about the development and operation of the manufacturing facility and the outcomes it produces in surrounding communities,

(2) it can show community members that project partners are seriously committed to developing ideas and making plans with—rather than for—northeast area communities, and (3) it can give project partners ongoing first-hand access to venues where residents have conversations and convey their perceptions about neighborhood changes, unmet community needs, and systemic challenges so that the project can respond to residents' needs and desires for their communities.

### **Expand and deepen community engagement networks to reach all residents**

Project partners should expand and deepen their relationships in the area through intentional and multifaceted engagement strategies that seek to reach even the most civically disengaged residents. The individuals who already are active participants in neighborhood associations and other civic activities in the area should be seen as entry points into the community's deep and diverse networks. Even these highly engaged community members struggle to meaningfully connect with residents whose ties to the community may not be strong or who are simply too consumed in their own lives to civically engage—they may be cost-burdened renters, single parents, or individuals working multiple jobs to make ends meet. Strategies can include working with local churches, apartment complexes, and local service providers. A social network analysis tracked over time can show the extent to which Cook's and Goodwill's efforts to expand and deepen their relationships in the area are effective.

### **Conduct an annual or biannual area-wide survey to track high-level changes in perception over time**

To complement what can be learned and accomplished from having an embedded community liaison dedicated to working closely with community partners, 38th and Sheridan project partners should work with UNEC to conduct an area-wide survey on an annual or biannual basis. The survey will allow project partners to gather high-level, community-wide perceptions of neighborhood changes, unmet needs, and systemic challenges across the area's neighborhoods and populations. Survey questions should identify where real and perceived challenges may exist across a breadth of topics, including mobility and transportation access; housing, public spaces, and perceptions of safety; economic development and opportunity; educational and professional development and opportunity; health, wellness, and food access; and, community engagement, initiatives, and representation. Conducting the survey on an annual or biannual basis can enable tracking of responses over time to identify ways in which the area may be changing—for better or worse—in the eyes of community members. See Appendix B for a potential sample survey.





**PART 3.**  
**STAKEHOLDER**  
**GOALS**

# APPROACH

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To capture the origins and evolution of the project thus far and to frame the evaluation, PPI interviewed eight individuals from the project's partner organizations, including Cook, Goodwill, CICF, UNEC, and Darden Group. Interviewees were identified using snowball sampling, meaning that initial interviewees suggested other potential individuals to participate in interviews. Using a structured questionnaire, interviewees were asked about their desired outcomes of the project and how they define project success. These questions help inform what measures should be used to provide effective feedback and evaluate long-term project impacts.

## STAKEHOLDER INTERVIEW FINDINGS

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### PROJECT ORIGINS AND ESTABLISHMENT OF PARTNERSHIPS

Cook and Goodwill have a history of partnering to benefit the communities in which they operate. Previously, the two organizations partnered on a manufacturing facility project in Bloomington in 2019, during which Goodwill provided contract manufacturing and packaging services to Cook. The majority of employees at this Bloomington facility experienced some kind of employment barrier, such as a substance use disorder, low education level, or criminal history. For these employees, Goodwill provided program services to support these employees and mitigate barriers that might increase risk of relapse and/or employment loss.

The two organizations had been in discussion to do a similar type of manufacturing partnership within a prison system. Individuals who were incarcerated could learn the skills for medical device manufacturing and have a pathway to employment and support from Goodwill upon reentry. Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, however, this project had to be halted. Around the same time, the United States was experiencing a racial reckoning prompted by the murders of Black citizens, which sparked protests and calls for addressing systemic racism across the country.<sup>15</sup> Within these contexts, Cook and Goodwill began discussing the possibility of opening a manufacturing facility in a majority-Black community in which there were barriers to upward mobility, with the goal of providing access to jobs and education to local residents. From there, Cook and Goodwill started a listening tour in Indianapolis, sharing this idea with community leaders to hear their perspectives on the project. During this listening tour, Cook and Goodwill connected with UNEC, a community development corporation serving Northeast Indianapolis.

It was through the relationship with UNEC that the site for the new manufacturing facility was determined. One Cook stakeholder stated they wanted to partner with UNEC because they “really got us to understand that this only works if the community trusts it and it’s done in partnership with them.” A stakeholder with UNEC shared that they were interested in the partnership on the 38th and Sheridan project because of Cook and Goodwill representatives’ “simple acknowledgement that they want to be able to do this within an urban context, [but] that they don’t know how.” This stakeholder then shared how they were “connecting the dots” between the issues the community was facing and discussing and the impacts that the project’s resources could provide.

## PROJECT ASPECTS THAT HAVE EVOLVED SINCE CONCEPTION

Project stakeholders were asked what aspects of the project, if any, had to evolve as the project progressed. Although one stakeholder shared that, “the core elements of the project from the beginning really have not changed,” others referenced two specific aspects that have evolved as the project began to take shape.

### Physical location of the plant

In the beginning, Cook and Goodwill intended to find an existing manufacturing facility to lease in the area. As they toured available properties, however, they found that these facilities were located primarily in industrial complexes. Although these facilities could have been operational immediately, they felt that industrial parks were removed from the community and would have less of an impact on surrounding neighborhoods and their residents. Cook and Goodwill therefore worked with UNEC to find the current plant location, which is surrounded by housing and seems more embedded in the community.

### Development of a community fund

As the 38th and Sheridan project began to take shape and the organizations started to interface with the community about the project, one question they heard from community members was around community ownership and stake in the project. A Cook stakeholder said community members were grateful for the job opportunities that the plant would provide, but they wanted to ensure they could be invested in the long-term success of the project. As a result, through a mutual contact in the philanthropic community, Cook and Goodwill connected with CICF to discuss how the community could invest in the project. Through these discussions, it was determined that CICF and its affiliate The Indianapolis Foundation would establish a 501(c)(2) entity to own the facility and lease the space to Goodwill. After expenses, funds from Goodwill’s lease payments will be distributed into a community fund for use in future community investment projects.

## EXPERIENCED CHALLENGES TO DATE

In addition to sharing information on how the project originated and evolved, stakeholders also shared challenges they have experienced and those they anticipate.

### Technical challenges

Some stakeholders identified technical challenges that have arisen during project implementation, primarily around establishing the 501(c)(2) organization and leveraging New Market Tax Credits, as these financial tools can involve complex processes. Additionally, one stakeholder shared a challenge they faced when the Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO) filed an objection to their rezoning request for the property. In this instance, the stakeholder was able to leverage relationships and have discussions with MPO leaders to hear their concerns and talk through them, so that the objection was eventually withdrawn.

### Fulfilling 100% minority-owned business commitment for contractor

The 38th and Sheridan project made a commitment to hire only minority-owned businesses for construction of the facility. Challenges arose, however, on a few fronts during this process, including around signatory relationships between unions and contractors. One stakeholder shared that even though they had found some very good minority-owned general contractors, these businesses were unable to partner with other minority-owned contractors due to existing union agreements requiring use of specific contractors.

Another stakeholder expressed frustration in how businesses often “game” the minority-owned business requirement. For example, some businesses are minority-owned “in name only,” while the workers doing the actual construction are white. This stakeholder also shared that many contractors will claim they employ a certain percentage of minorities when in reality the

proportion is much smaller. To assist with meeting the 100% minority-owned business commitment, the 38th and Sheridan project partnered with Darden Group, an executive construction management company that prioritizes empowering, guiding, and contracting with minority businesses.<sup>16</sup>

## POTENTIAL FUTURE AREAS OF CONCERN

### Gentrification

Multiple stakeholders expressed the desire to provide resources to the community without inviting gentrification and displacement. One stakeholder said, “You don’t want this to just be an investment opportunity for outside people to come in fast and change the neighborhood.” Another interviewee emphasized this same sentiment, sharing that there have been many well-intended affordable housing projects that have caused gentrification. This stakeholder said they have thought about ways to get ahead of this issue, such as possibly acquiring land around the plant to ensure that it “remains in the hands of the community,” rather than being purchased by outsiders trying to charge high rents.

### Maintaining community trust

Like the concerns about gentrification, stakeholders also expressed the importance of maintaining community trust as the project continues. One stakeholder recognized that this community has been disappointed by investments in the area before and said they are cautious “that we don’t give the impression that we’re not taking the community into consideration at any point in time.” Another interviewee said that one way community trust should be maintained is by “ensuring the community sees the benefit from the dollars going back. We don’t want to just sprinkle money into the community and hopefully do some good things.”

## SUGGESTIONS FOR OTHER BUSINESSES PURSUING A SIMILAR INVESTMENT MODEL

### Positive community impact as core business model

Some stakeholders felt that what made this project unique from traditional corporate social responsibility models was using the business itself to make an impact on communities, rather than just a philanthropy or grantmaking arm.

*“But this issue of corporate social responsibility almost is, to me, is the wrong direction. Because it allows companies to check the box, and say, ‘We’re doing this’ without really getting to the heart of the matter of what’s going on. So, I worry about that discussion on corporate social responsibility. Companies want money—it’s the easiest thing to do with the money. And so it’s important. I’m not saying it’s not important. I’m just saying that it sort-of lets people off the hook, to think about what the bigger impact they could be having.”*

—Corporate executive

### Partnerships

Project stakeholders also identified the importance of partnerships in carrying out the project successfully—not only partnerships between businesses, nonprofits, and government entities, but also with the community itself. One interviewee identified the importance of working with the community.

*“Let’s do this with the neighborhood, let’s not do it to them. Let’s do it with the community, not do it to the community. Because that’s all they’ve ever seen from large companies that come in and try to do stuff. They do it to them.”*

—Corporate executive

# RECOMMENDATIONS FOR MEASURING PROJECT SUCCESS

Interviewed stakeholders were asked how, over time, they will know this project has been a success. Several stakeholders identified some traditional, quantitative metrics that could help measure success of the project at the employee and neighborhood levels, such as:

- Educational attainment rate
- Crime rate
- Economic measures, such as median income and employment rate
- Housing measures, such as vacancy rate and number of affordable housing units in the area
- Employee measures, such as employee tenure and number of individuals trained within the plant
- Financial measures, such as less reliance on state subsidies, increased disposable income, increased savings, increased community wealth, and less worry about meeting basic needs
- Cook/Goodwill sponsorship of community events (partnership in neighborhood)

Stakeholders, however, also identified some project success measures that are either more qualitative in nature or are less likely to be captured in community demographic measures, such as:


- Employee perceptions, such as perceptions of job stability and upward mobility in their jobs
- Health-related measures, such as access to good health care and healthy, affordable food
- Community-level perceptions, such as more confidence, pride, and hope in the community, more neighborhood-owned shops in the area (i.e., organizational density), and general perceptions of the Cook project

One stakeholder also emphasized that project success should be however the community defines it.

*“What success will be defined as is probably what that community defines as success. So, we talked to a lot of people. And the reason—one of the reasons—we picked that location was because of the foundations that were there already. It was already a very actively engaged community, right? There were a lot of people doing a lot of work. Some people we talked to, there was maybe one group that was doing something, but this is a community that had neighborhood presidents who were very engaged—they had tons of meetings already in place, they had lots of resources. And so I think that’s the idea, that if we can just come alongside that, and help create additional headwind or a tailwind, try to come alongside and be additional energy into that system. I don’t know that we can just, I don’t think we can just define what success will be. I think that it’s just we want to be a positive element that the community can use on their behalf.”*

—Corporate executive



An aerial photograph of a city skyline at dusk. The sky is a mix of blue, purple, and orange. In the foreground, there's a large, modern building with a flat roof and a smaller, circular structure. A road with several cars is visible. The background shows a dense urban area with various buildings, including one with a sign that says 'CONRAD' and another with 'THE W. H. BLOCK CO'.

**PART 4.  
ECONOMIC  
IMPACT OF  
38TH AND  
SHERIDAN  
PROJECT**

# APPROACH

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Historically, the justification for some traditional public-private partnership-based economic development projects has been challenged by a mismatch between a relatively narrow project area and the much broader dispersion of benefits throughout the region and state. While this creates a dichotomy between who pays and who benefits, in most cases, the broader the area of measurement the bigger and more pleasing the impact. This occurs because economic modeling tools account for how money flows from a project through a network of suppliers, plus workers who have disposable income. In most cases, indirect benefits (i.e., expenditure of funds on supplies and related services) can't be controlled the way direct expenditures—and to a certain extent induced effects—can. The focus of traditional economic development is on total jobs, wages and investment, wherever they occur, without regard to a small and specific geographic location.

As Cook strives to build a focused corporate-community form of economic development, directing benefits into the neighborhoods surrounding the project area is a priority. This can be accomplished through intentional efforts to drive construction and operations investments into nearby neighborhoods, particularly by identifying neighborhood residents who may be struggling economically and/or professionally and hiring those individuals—if they are interested—for both construction and operations, providing professional growth and development as needed.

Because of the intentional focus on directing and measuring economic benefits locally to the greatest extent possible, the estimated economic impact will be smaller than it might be without these objectives. The initial estimate of economic activity is focused on Marion County. However, it is very likely that some economic benefits will occur in places outside of Marion County and will not be captured. Nevertheless, as data on construction and operations contracts and hiring becomes available, PPI will prepare an estimate of neighborhood impacts so that project stakeholders will have a clear understanding of how the construction and operation of this manufacturing facility benefits community members.

## ESTIMATING ECONOMIC IMPACTS

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The 38th and Sheridan project seeks to use local neighborhood-based companies and workers to the greatest extent possible to ensure maximum economic benefits accrue within the immediate area of the manufacturing facility, rather than being diffused to the region or state. While the intentional focus on the impact area to the neighborhood and the surrounding county will limit the economic benefit measures, it should ensure maximum benefits within the project area. The preliminary estimates of construction and operations impacts will be based on a county-wide multiplier. Eventually, however, as contractor and employee data is collected, a unique neighborhood impact analysis will be possible. That is, as contractors are hired for construction projects, employees are hired to work in the facility, and as the project's purchases of goods and services to support annual operation are documented, a second set of neighborhood and county-wide economic impact estimates will be produced.

The 38th and Sheridan construction project will provide short-term, one-time economic benefits and long-term annual benefits associated with operations. While the project partners will endeavor to direct spending and hiring to the project impact area, the economic benefits will, nevertheless, spread beyond the neighborhood to the rest of Marion County, the state of Indiana, and beyond. The economic contribution estimates are based on construction costs provided by Cook Indy of \$15,554,791. The annual operations economic contribution is based on Goodwill's intention to hire 100 employees, with an expected initial



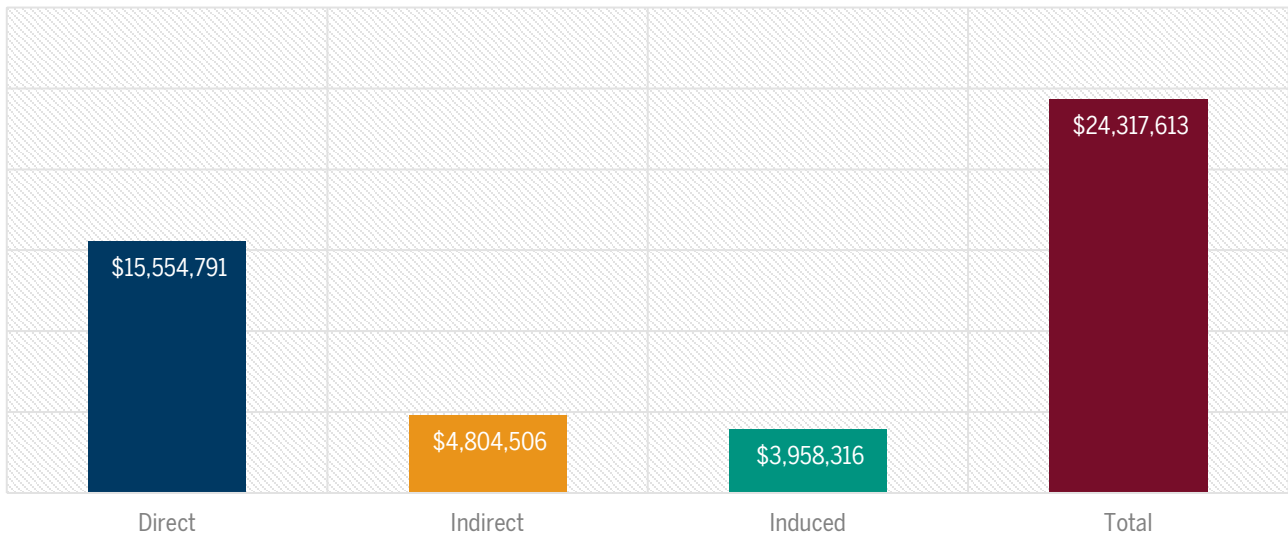
total employee compensation of \$3,074,411. PPI uses IMPLAN, one of the two most used input/output models, to estimate the economic contribution. Input/output models use the direct outputs—such as construction cost, sales, or total employment—to estimate the indirect and induced economic activity associated with initial direct investment or employment. For example, the project will hire contractors to perform tasks associated with rehab and construction. The investment the project makes in those contractors represents a direct investment. When those direct contractors buy supplies or hire subcontractors, those expenditures stimulate additional activity and produce the indirect and induced impacts that, in the aggregate, represent the total economic contribution of the 38th and Sheridan project’s initial investment as it works its way through the local economy.

Similarly, once the facility becomes operational, Goodwill will hire and pay employees, and buy raw material and support services from other companies. The employees will then spend their earnings on groceries, housing, transportation, entertainment, education, and many other items. The purchasing of those goods creates new demand that other manufacturers must meet by hiring employees and buying materials. The employees producing those goods also buy other goods. The business investment generated by the project and employee spending creates indirect and induced economic activity, respectively, and the input/output model estimates the total economic value of that spending as it works its way through the local economy.

## CONSTRUCTION IMPACT

An initial investment of nearly \$15.6 million in construction and design is estimated to produce approximately \$8.8 million of indirect and induced economic activity in Marion County. Thus, the one-time total construction-related economic contribution is estimated to be more than \$24.3 million.

**FIGURE 10. Economic impact of 38th and Sheridan plant construction**



A critical component of the project’s economic impact is the jobs the new demand creates and its associated employee contributions. In total, the work is estimated to create 137 full-time equivalent jobs with slightly more than \$10 million of labor income (i.e., wages and benefits).

**TABLE 3. Detailed indirect economic impacts**

| CATEGORY   | IMPACT    |
|--|-----------|
| Other real estate  | \$494,816 |
| Wholesale—other durable goods, merchant wholesalers                  | \$392,255 |
| Owner-occupied dwellings   | \$378,815 |
| Wholesale—machinery, equipment, and supplies                         | \$371,864 |
| Hospitals  | \$326,214 |
| Truck transportation   | \$301,948 |
| Legal services   | \$274,991 |
| Commercial and industrial machinery and equipment rental and leasing | \$224,433 |
| Employment services  | \$201,283 |
| Wholesale—household appliances and electrical and electronic goods   | \$198,993 |
| Architectural, engineering, and related services                     | \$196,424 |
| Ready-mix concrete manufacturing                                     | \$190,991 |

The following list displays the 12 Marion County industry sectors that enjoy the most economic benefits generated by construction and employee-related spending in the local economy.

**TABLE 4. Marion County industry sectors with most economic benefits generated by 38th and Sheridan project construction and employee-related spending**

| CATEGORY   | IMPACT    |
|--|-----------|
| Wholesale—other durable goods merchant wholesalers                   | \$385,300 |
| Owner-occupied dwellings   | \$372,099 |
| Wholesale—machinery, equipment, and supplies                         | \$365,271 |
| Hospitals  | \$320,431 |
| Truck transportation   | \$296,594 |
| Legal services   | \$270,115 |
| Commercial and industrial machinery and equipment rental and leasing | \$220,454 |
| Employment services  | \$197,715 |
| Wholesale—household appliances and electrical and electronic goods   | \$195,465 |
| Architectural, engineering, and related services                     | \$192,942 |
| Ready-mix concrete manufacturing                                     | \$187,605 |
| Offices of physicians  | \$176,758 |

## OPERATIONS IMPACT

The 38th and Sheridan project anticipates employing 100 full-time employees, with initial aggregate wages and benefits of \$4,233,600. Based on these expected employee and payroll inputs, this project is expected to add nearly \$35.7 million per year to the Marion County economy from direct, indirect, and induced spending. This amount is based on initial wage and employment levels. Additional or reduced spending would occur based on changes in real aggregate wages—that is, after wage levels are adjusted for inflation.

**FIGURE 11. Economic impact of 38th and Sheridan plant operations**




In addition to the 100 employees, operations spending on business goods and services (e.g., utilities, raw materials, and services) and employee spending (e.g., groceries and housing) is expected to generate an additional 72 full-time equivalent jobs and \$5.7 million in wages and benefits each year of operations.

The following list displays the 12 economic sectors that enjoy the largest economic benefits from operations and employee spending.

**TABLE 5. Marion County industry sectors with most economic benefits generated by project operations and employee-related spending**

| CATEGORY   | IMPACT      |
|--|-------------|
| Wholesale—professional and commercial equipment and supplies       | \$1,914,600 |
| Other real estate  | \$501,727   |
| Management of companies and enterprises                            | \$462,416   |
| Legal services   | \$432,187   |
| Wholesale—other nondurable goods merchant wholesalers              | \$357,494   |
| Owner-occupied dwellings   | \$337,682   |
| Management consulting services                                     | \$324,356   |
| Truck transportation   | \$316,024   |
| Wholesale—household appliances and electrical and electronic goods | \$308,492   |
| Hospitals  | \$290,870   |
| Securities and commodity contracts intermediation and brokerage    | \$271,400   |
| Employment services  | \$268,366   |



An aerial photograph of downtown Indianapolis, Indiana, featuring a mix of modern glass skyscrapers and older brick buildings. The Indiana State Capitol building is visible in the lower-left corner. The text 'PART 5. EMPLOYEE SURVEY RECOMMENDATIONS' is overlaid in large, bold, white letters with a black outline. The background shows a clear blue sky and a dense urban landscape with green trees and streets.

**PART 5.**  
**EMPLOYEE SURVEY**  
**RECOMMENDATIONS**

# MEASURING PROJECT IMPACTS ON EMPLOYEES

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The 38th and Sheridan project is focused on lifting a disadvantaged community by identifying and hiring interested individuals who live in the neighborhoods surrounding the facility and who may be struggling economically and/or professionally. These employees will also receive professional growth and development opportunities. Intentional efforts will ensure that the project creates improved economic stability and results in personal and professional growth opportunities for employees and their households. Additionally, by hiring neighborhood residents, the hope is that those employees and their households will contribute to a higher quality of life to their respective neighborhoods without inducing the type of gentrification and displacement that often accompanies an increased quality of life in historically disinvested urban neighborhoods.

The Cook Group and Goodwill already use surveys to routinely collect key data and provide insights into employees' economic and career progress, and occasionally that of employees' households as well. Existing surveys include an employment application (Goodwill) that collects demographic, household, health insurance, transportation, and public assistance data. Additionally, Cook surveys new hires, undertakes an annual employee engagement survey, and an exit interview. Finally, Cook's personnel department data enables the tracking of annual wages, job changes, attendance, and some performance measures.

Below, PPI outlines key data currently collected in each survey and recommends additional data be collected, both through survey instruments and potentially also through interviews and/or facilitated group discussions.

Finally, because these workers will be Goodwill employees working in the Cook Indy facility, close collaboration between Goodwill and Cook will be necessary to track changes and measure project successes. Goodwill will need to permit employees at the new facility to participate in employee surveys in order to collect important employee welfare and engagement data. Additionally, data collected from employees at the new facility can be compared with data collected among employees working at similar Cook facilities to provide further insights about the 38th and Sheridan project's impacts on employees.

## GOODWILL APPLICATION FORM

The Goodwill employment application form contains much of the key, objective employee and household data that PPI recommends tracking over time, including the following:

- Current address
- Gender
- Race/ethnicity
- Marital status
- Forms of possible public assistance
- Educational attainment of applicant
- Household size and ages
- Household income
- Housing status
- Form of transport
- Health insurance status

While the application form collects several meaningful employee-specific data, it does not capture insights into a potential new employee's perspectives and hopes for the future. It also does not collect baseline data about the rest of the new employee's household, which can be an important supplemental measure of well-being and positive impact from employment on the community.

To collect this data, PPI recommends a facilitated one-on-one interview or group discussion for new employees. This will help capture the employee's perspectives on the quantity and quality of their neighborhood, schools, safety, and other quality-of-life indicators. The conversation also may inquire about household conditions, including educational attainment and future aspirations. Finally, the conversation can inquire about the level of long-term optimism or pessimism the employees have for themselves and their households.

## COOK GROUP NEW HIRE SURVEY

The Cook Group's new hire survey asks new employees for information concerning their previous job, initial experience at Cook, and their outlook on their work at Cook. Among the key data items already collected in the survey are:

- Tenure at their previous job
- Reasons for accepting a new position, including benefits, career opportunities, and work life balance
- An open-ended question asking for details about why the employee accepted their new job
- Questions regarding the effectiveness of the new employee orientation process, including an understanding of Cook's mission and vision, support for that mission and vision, and how the employee's role may contribute to the mission and goals
- Questions regarding the new employee's initial impressions, feelings, and overall engagement regarding both their role and the company, including whether they feel valued, are motivated to go beyond basic expectations, and how connected they feel to fellow employees and the company

In addition to the data already collected, PPI suggests the addition of the following questions to collect further baseline data:

- How connected the employee feels they and their employer are to the neighborhood
- Cook's reputation for contributing to the local community
- Whether the employee perceives they have opportunities and feels encouraged to contribute to their local community
- The employee's understanding of Cook's effort to invest in and improve the quality of life in the neighborhood surrounding the facility
- If Cook's reputation for being a good neighborhood employer or business influenced their decision to work for Cook

Each of these questions can use the same response scale currently used in the Cook survey.

## ANNUAL EMPLOYEE ENGAGEMENT SURVEY

The annual engagement survey enables Cook to track how its wide range of benefits and support programs impact employees and their households. This survey also provides the opportunity to track measures of career progress and job satisfaction. Among the data collected in this survey are:

- Identical questions within the new hire survey regarding the employee's ongoing impressions and feelings about their role and the company, as well as their overall engagement in their role and in the company, including whether they feel valued, are motivated to go beyond basic expectations, and how connected they feel to fellow employees and the company
- The employee's intentions to stay with the company for the next 12 months
- The employee's perceptions of psychological safety (i.e., inclusion, respect, ethics of the company and employees)
- How the benefits meet the employee's needs

- The employee's feelings regarding management and company leadership
- The employee's beliefs regarding career progression
- The employee's experiences with communication and collaboration
- The employee's feelings of autonomy and empowerment
- The employee's perceptions of fairness (i.e., promotion opportunities and accountability)
- The employee's access to resources and training to perform effectively
- The employee's perceptions about pay and compensation
- The employee's impression of Cook's mission, goals, and values

Significantly, at the end of the survey the employee is asked about how socially responsible they feel Cook is and whether they believe Cook does a good job of contributing to the communities in which employees live and work. PPI recommends adding three questions that can use the current Cook response scale:

- Do you feel you are encouraged to and have opportunities to contribute to the local community?
- How impactful do you feel your contribution to these efforts has been?
- An open-ended question asking for ideas about how to provide greater benefits to the neighborhood and its residents.

## **ADDITIONAL RECOMMENDATIONS AND IDEAS**

PPI recommends that new community impact questions developed for employees at the 38th and Shadeland site be added to Cook's survey, thus providing the ability to compare, contrast, and evaluate programs and performance across the organization.


Additionally, PPI recommends that Cook and Goodwill track their spending in the local neighborhoods. For example, does Cook purchase catered lunches from the grocery store that will be built in the immediate neighborhood? If there are business lunches, are they in the neighborhood? And while not appropriate for the employee satisfaction survey, tracking employee spending in the neighborhood (e.g., on meals, groceries, retail, etc.) would be useful, albeit potentially the most difficult data to acquire. If Cook does not feel it appropriate to ask such questions in the current survey, one option would be to ask employees to spend a month keeping a neighborhood spending diary. Another approach would be to have a separate neighborhood impact survey with questions addressing both spending and volunteering.

PPI expects that Goodwill—or Cook's—personnel department can track employee wage change, career progress, and benefits utilization. Other items that should be tracked are attendance, tenure, and some measure of productivity.

Whenever possible and appropriate, the performance and satisfaction measures at the facility should be compared to similar facilities that do not have the type of intentional neighborhood connection that is being fostered here.

Lastly, PPI recommends convening a group of neighborhood resident employees for an annual facilitated group discussion around the neighborhood's quality of life and the project's impact in the neighborhood. This input can then be compared and contrasted with the prescriptions of non-Cook neighborhood residents.



A photograph of a large, classical-style building with a portico supported by columns. In the foreground, a large bronze statue of a man in a long coat stands on a high, tiered stone pedestal. The name "MORTON" is inscribed on the side of the pedestal. A smaller bronze figure of a soldier with a rifle stands on a lower part of the pedestal. The sky is blue with scattered white clouds. In the bottom foreground, there are out-of-focus purple and yellow flowers. The text "PART 6. CONCLUSION" is overlaid in the center-right of the image.

**PART 6.**  
**CONCLUSION**

# MODELING COMMUNITY-ENGAGED DEVELOPMENT

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Economic development has traditionally been viewed as worthy of public support and resources when it brings additional jobs and increased economic activity to a place. Too often, however, these projects fail to take into account community needs and perspectives. For economically distressed areas, projects intended to enhance an area's quality of life can significantly increase the risk of displacement, loss of cultural identity, or other adverse externalities. While the 38th and Sheridan project is anticipated to bring economic development benefits to Marion County, the core mission of the project is community-engaged development through a close collaboration between the community and corporate partners—one that seeks to invest equitably and contribute to growing social capital and the quality of life in the surrounding area.

PPI has been engaged by 38th and Sheridan project partners to examine baseline data, propose recommendations for mitigating project risks, and to improve collaboration with neighborhood residents. The measures and actions recommended in this report create a playbook on developing a long-term evaluation of project outcomes that can inform others who are interested in building more impactful, mutually beneficial corporate/community partnerships.

Based on interviews, project partners have prioritized the overall goal of supporting the community and have adjusted project aspects accordingly in response to community input. Cook and its partners recognize the importance of collaboration with residents and are sensitive to the possibility that this development could introduce gentrification and displacement in the area. Therefore, they are committed to working with community members to both mitigate possible negative outcomes and ensure that project benefits reach community members. Community members are optimistic about the jobs and neighborhood impacts this project offers. They want to ensure the project operates with continual community conversation, involvement, and prioritization.

Using the current demographic profile of the neighborhood, as well as feedback from stakeholders and community members about desired project outcomes, PPI has provided a series of recommendations intended to ensure a full and meaningful set of data and surveys aimed at enabling an open-sourced approach to project evaluation. These recommendations include:

- An annual or biannual survey conducted among neighborhood residents to gather community-wide perceptions of neighborhood changes, unmet needs, and systemic challenges in the following categories:
  - Infrastructure
  - Community life
  - Economy
  - Education
  - Health and well-being
- Additions to current Cook and Goodwill employee surveys to capture:
  - Employees' engagement with and perceptions of the community over time
  - Employees' perceptions of Cook's and Goodwill's impact in the area

In combination with annual analyses of quantitative economic, housing, and education measures, these data collection efforts will help capture change over time in the 38th and Sheridan impact area to show whether close collaborations between residents, community leaders, corporations, nonprofits, and community foundations can restore opportunities to communities in need by inclusively creating equitably accessible channels by which people in those areas can realize their full potential.



**PART 7.**  
**APPENDICES**

# APPENDIX A.

## FINDINGS FROM COMMUNITY INTERVIEWS—EXPANDED NARRATIVE

This section contains a more detailed account of what community members said in interviews, including short- and long-form quotes that illustrate interviewees' perceptions and evidence this report's findings.

### STRENGTHS

#### Community connectedness and engagement

The community members interviewed described the community surrounding 38th Street and Sheridan Avenue as a well-established community of engaged and connected longtime residents. The pride in and commitment to the neighborhood consistently shone through in each interview as community members recounted the numerous life events that have taken place there. It is clear that—for current residents—the essence of the community has not changed, despite waning commercial and infrastructural investment. One long-time resident said that she has lived in the Forest Manor area for more than 50 years.

*"This is the only house I've ever lived in, that I've ever owned, since I left school . . . and this is where, you know, I was married and had a child and raised my child and, you know, got her through school, through college. And I still live here. My first husband is deceased. And I am now—after being a single mom for many, many, many years—I remarried, again . . . 20 years ago, almost 20 years ago. And, we're still in the area."*

—Forest Manor resident

Like many other residents, this woman grew her family in the area. To meet the needs of her growing family, she chose to stay in place and invest in building out her home, rather than moving out of the community.

*"You know, we've added on to our property—to the property we have. We just . . . we wanted to. We thought maybe we would move out of the area. And, we had . . . actually we were able to do that financially, but, because, you know, we were relatively younger-older people at the time, we decided, 'You know, our neighborhood is safe,' and we were established here, and we thought we would just, you know . . . and, there's crime everywhere, so, we thought we would just stay. So, we added on to the existing house that we live in, and we've just tried to make it work."*

—Forest Manor resident

However, as this woman noted, many of her neighbors chose to leave Forest Manor over the years. Still, the resident noted that there is a great deal of fellowship on her block, with new generations assuming heads of households after parents have moved on.

*"We're kind of respected in this block, and, you know, those who do live here, we kind-of watch out for each other. We don't share tea and crumpets, but we do . . . you know, we are cordial, we do speak."*

—Forest Manor resident

These community members demonstrated a deep sense of belonging and connectedness to their neighborhood by choosing to raise their children there, invest in their homes, and look out for their neighbors. A longtime Keystone-Millersville resident described a strong sense of connectedness to her neighbors. She said that one thing she loved about her neighborhood was the people and that her neighbors looked out for one another.

*“The guys protect me. You know, they look out for me, you know? They see somebody hanging around, they’re like, ‘Are you okay?’ ‘Yeah, I’m fine.’”*  
—Keystone-Millersville resident

Community members interviewed also demonstrated spirited civic engagement. For example, an Oxford neighborhood resident said that community members “very much care and are willing to step outside the box to take care of the community.” She went on to describe how community members had fought to prevent a chain box retailer from selling alcohol in their local store about five years ago. The resident recounted:

*“So, the neighborhood got together, and we protested. We had signs. There were people in wheelchairs and walkers, and, we picketed—up to the owners! It was on television and the newspaper. And, they don’t serve alcohol!”*  
—Oxford resident

This woman went on to describe how their activism in this instance motivated another retailer entering the community to go to residents for input on what to offer in their location. When a large chain pharmacy moved into the area, it engaged community members early on to inquire what they hoped the retailer would offer in the store. She explained that residents were successful in getting the retailer to offer fresh produce and healthy prepared food options.

*“They listened to us! They don’t have the alcohol, but they do have the fruit and vegetables.”*  
—Oxford resident

Several interviewees indicated that community members continue their attempts to vet the retailers who move into their community. They seemed to see their participation in collective civic engagement and activism as vital to shaping their communities according to their perceived needs and desires for the future of the area.

## CHALLENGES

### Organizational density

Chief among the challenges mentioned by community members is the lack of organizational density in the area, and this is true across organizational types, including for-profit businesses and nonprofit social service providers. A theme that surfaced as residents and community liaisons described the area in its heyday was the presence of several key types of businesses—such as grocery stores and banks—as well as service providers, namely Forest Manor Multi-Service Center, which closed in 2017 after 44 years in operation. For community members, the biggest hit to the area during the past half-century has been the change in the quantity and quality of neighborhood organizations and offerings. Even community members’ impressive activism has not been able to prevent critical losses.

Declining organizational density is associated with several issues, including decline in gainful employment. A 2015 study described the connection between organizational density and employment, finding that “organizational density represents the array of institutionalized social capital-producing activities available to neighborhood residents that researchers argue matter for employment.”<sup>14</sup> As such activities break down, they can leave critical gaps in networks and services, which can then

inhibit opportunities for people to hear about and obtain good jobs, if such jobs are even available in the area and accessible to residents.

A lack of jobs was a focal point for many interviewees. A community liaison from a governmental entity described the need for the types of good jobs that had been available in the past.

*“[The] kinds of good paying jobs where you didn’t have to have, you know, a college degree or even a high school education. You could work there, and you could make 30 bucks . . . 35 bucks an hour. You know, well-paying jobs.”*

—Community liaison from a governmental entity

A Forest Manor neighborhood resident conveyed a similar description of “good jobs” in describing the jobs that were available to people in the area a few decades ago:

*“These were the jobs that adults went to where they actually felt like, ‘Hey, I finally made it. I landed a job where it’s a career. I can buy a house, car, raise my family, pay for my kids to go to college. They were those type of jobs. Insurance . . . stuff like that.”*

—Forest Manor resident

While community members indicated that they were hopeful that the 38th and Sheridan project would bring jobs to the area, they also expressed some apprehension after experiencing the failures of similar types of developments. The same Forest Manor resident who described the jobs that were available in the past explained:

*“You know, most people are unemployed or underemployed. I think they have a fear of outside people coming in. One of the reasons is . . . so—and this part pertains to jobs—I mean, I’m a blue-collar guy, I’m big on the job thing. . . . I can remember years ago, they were going to revamp the Meadows area, and they were supposed to get a bunch of stuff over there, like a Cubs grocery store, and a few other facilities that were going to open up jobs. And, that seemed like a very promising venture, and they did actually build the Cubs. The other places never really came, but people had hopes for employment when all this talking and building was going on . . . and, then it just kind-of . . . just like they started talking about it, it just kind-of slipped away, never happened.*

*“A lot of people, I felt like, were developers and investors [and they] were saying . . . ‘We’re going to hold back and see how well Cubs does, and, based upon how well they do, we’re going to follow through with our plan.’ They [Cubs] were over here, they worked for several months, then, all of a sudden, they declared some type of bankruptcy . . . they didn’t open for very long, and, like, once they failed, other people just didn’t appear to be interested in following through.”*

—Forest Manor resident

Not only were residents and community liaisons attuned to the employment challenges that stressed their communities, but they also demonstrated an acute awareness of the relationship between development and employment in their communities. The loss of local organizations and establishments led to the hemorrhaging of good jobs—defined partially by pay, but, more importantly, by the opportunities those jobs afforded for achieving personal and professional advancement and stability. More recently, development projects that promised to bring jobs never materialized such opportunities. In addition to the loss of employment, the long-term lack of organizational density has meant greater property vacancy and blight, middle-class flight—which, of course, has a profound long-term impact on local homeownership rates—and overall diminished economic opportunity.

In addition to a relative lack of organizations, residents and community liaisons expressed a concern that the quality of organizations and offerings in the area is sorely lacking. As several recent neighborhood studies suggest, vice stores—fast food and liquor stores—are highly clustered in urban Black neighborhoods. Interviews suggest that these types of establishments are also overrepresented in this area—a concern about that was demonstrated by community members’ protest of a box retailers’ sale of alcohol. Community members asserted that the area did not need more fast food restaurants, gas stations, liquor stores, or tattoo parlors.

## Infrastructure

Residents commented on the sorely neglected infrastructure of the area, specifically talking about the lack of streetlights, the lack of sidewalks or sidewalks that are in poor condition, and the poor condition of roadways, especially along 38th Street east of Keystone Avenue.

At least one resident was aware that maintenance on 38th Street was being deferred until the construction of IndyGo’s Bus Rapid Transit Purple Line. However, construction of that line will not happen for at least a couple of years, if it is not stopped entirely by the Republican-led state legislature which does not support the project. While the resident conveyed understanding about the financial rationale behind deferring the road maintenance until the future construction project would get underway, he also expressed frustration and a sense of injustice:

*“Of course, when you’re sitting in one seat and you’re going, ‘Well, we really have no reason to fix the road because, when they start working on the Purple Line, well, they’re going to fix it anyway.’ See, I understand that, but then I’m sitting in this seat over here, and I say, ‘Okay, but how far along is the Purple Line?’ It will be completed in, maybe, another two, two-and-a-half years. But I’m saying, I’m riding on a bad street now. You know, I’ve already busted a couple tires over here in the last two years. I’ve already cracked a windshield last year.*

*“I am happy that somebody’s trying to improve transit, transportation here in Indianapolis. Yes, I am. Yes. And am I happy that some of it’s coming through here? Yes, I am. Do I think the fact that we have to wait for it to start and be completed to fix that issue [of the neglected roadway]? No, I don’t. Because I live over here and now I have to avoid my main thoroughfare daily because it’s tearing up my vehicle.”*

—Forest Manor resident

Some interviewees talked about how the poor public infrastructure—as well as poorly maintained business properties along major thoroughfares—gives passers-by inaccurate perceptions of the area’s communities. A Devington neighborhood resident said she thought “people coming from the outside, that did not see [the neighborhoods] in their heyday, will say, ‘Well, this is a terrible neighborhood. We shouldn’t be over here.’” An Oxford neighborhood resident elaborated on the same idea and stressed that the way the area looks is not indicative of the way residents feel about it.

*“As a community, as a whole, we care what our community looks like. We care about the reputation of it. You know, we care about what—when people are driving along those main streets and just look over to the left and look over to the right—what are they seeing? What they see projects, really, what they think of us, you know what I mean? If you’re driving down the street, and you look into your left and you look into your right and all you see is houses that are boarded up and trash and, you know, trash going everywhere, then you’re gonna think, ‘Oh, well, I don’t. . . I wouldn’t want to live over there. That’s horrible.’”*

—Oxford resident

One resident speculated that the unmaintained infrastructure and the area's neglected appearance may be having economic impacts.

*“Other people ride through—they don't live over there, but they're riding through—and maybe they are prospective businesspeople, even on a smaller end. Maybe they're gonna open up a barber shop or something like that. So, they drive by and they be like, ‘Oh, man, I ain't trying to open up nothing over here; look at everything. It's tore up . . . looks bad, streets ain't fixed. . . . Those people ain't got no money. If I open up a store or a barber shop or something, they're gonna break in it.’ It's just the way people think, you know?”*  
—Forest Manor resident

Community members connected the neglected infrastructure to city-level political representation and a low level of interest in distributing resources to address area needs. One resident said, “We really wish we could be heard by politicians.” Another stated frankly that politicians “don't come over here unless it's time to get their vote,” implying that residents' voices and concerns do not matter to public officials outside of election times, bolstering residents' sense that their own collective civic engagement and activism is key to getting things done in their communities.

## OPTIMISM ABOUT THE AREA'S FUTURE

### Investment in the community

While interviewees acknowledged the area's complex and systemic challenges, which have left too many needs unmet, they also conveyed a sense of sincere optimism about the area's future. Community members mentioned changes such as new businesses and community-based, grassroots efforts that signaled to them that meaningful investments were being made in the area. Interviewees expressed their perspective that the area is “on a come-up,” to borrow a phrase one resident used to refer to the Meadows area. An Arlington Woods resident listed several of these kinds of signals, which gave her reasons to be optimistic about the area's future.

*“There are some things that are happening that are quite encouraging. The area along 38th Street . . . the little plaza that was developed that has the Goodwill store and the grocery store. . . . There's a food shortage because there's no grocery stores where people could walk to, or get to easily, and don't have transportation. There are, you know . . . I see some development with the grocery stores that are slowly, slowly, slowly, beginning to open or at least . . . more than grocery stores, there are gardens that I see in the area that are really conducive to people eating healthier and having fresh foods that they need, that are close that they can just, you know, go over and be a part of, and take whatever they want to, to prepare healthy meals. And that is very, very encouraging, and it's happening more and more. As a matter of fact, you know, there's personal gardens and there's community gardens that have popped up within the last two years that have been to an advantage for people in the area. I see that there's a bank, a new bank that just opened, a brand-new bank. . . . That's encouraging because there was a need for a financial institution in the community . . . and there's also the financial health credit union that is available for financial purposes as well.”*

—Arlington Woods resident

The bank this Arlington Woods resident referred to is a First Merchants Bank branch in the Meadows area. Several community members talked about this new bank branch with similar enthusiasm.



*“Chase was in here for years. And then they just left. And now we have First Merchants. . . . So they moved into the area, which is really good. And, you know, I can't wait to go over and start an account there.”*

*—Keystone-Millersville resident*

This resident interpreted the new bank branch as one of several signals that “we seem to be building up to things that we do need,” banking services being among those needs.

Community members perceived incremental investments to be critical components of a larger effort leading to overall community well-being. One resident explained how incremental investments in the community can work together to create big changes.

*“When people start doing better, a lot of people start thinking better, you know? It becomes contagious. . . . It makes people want to do better. It becomes a contagious atmosphere, and . . . just makes people want to do better. And not even just monetarily better. . . . It's kind-of like, when people are happy, they're just happy. So they act that way.”*

*—Forest Manor resident*

Many community members interviewed conveyed that they were working toward building momentum that would create opportunities for residents to thrive, and they welcomed investment and partnership from individuals and entities that were interested in collaborating with them in their efforts.

## **OPPORTUNITY AT 38TH STREET AND SHERIDAN AVENUE**

Overwhelmingly, interviewees expressed enthusiasm about the 38th and Sheridan facility coming to the area, even though some interviewees acknowledged that they were not as familiar as they would like to be with all the details of the project. Still, community members saw it as a meaningful contribution to their efforts to build momentum toward enhanced community well-being. The well-paying jobs and wraparound services that will be available to employees at the facility were critical and oft-cited components of the development that interviewees saw as potentially leading to opportunities for people in their communities to thrive.

*“This [development] is one of those things that . . . it just came at the right time, because as [community members] were talking about food access and people in the neighborhood being food secure, what better way for that to happen than to have an organization such as this that provides a lot of wraparound services and provides a lot of assistance to their employees? Not only that, but they want to employ people within that very community of all educational levels at a livable wage. What better way for people to be able to work, be able to have adequate housing, be able to uplift their communities, than to provide jobs and opportunity to continue their educations and have medical care to be able to put their health first? You know, like, those opportunities need to be available to those communities, and so, that's why this was like, ‘Whoa!’ Like, we prayed for this!”*

*—Community liaison at a nonprofit community partner organization*

A community liaison from a governmental entity talked about the project aspects that he thought would be most impactful.

*“The thing that really stood out for me, was the fact that they're gonna pay them a living wage. I think, like, \$15 an hour. Then they had opportunity to jump into supervision, you know, those kind of things. That piece really sold me. But then the paid training, and they didn't have to stay at Cook.*

*You know, they weren't locked in [like what other companies do]: 'Well, we paid for training, you gotta stay for five years.' That wasn't the case of things. Like, no, if you find something else and you want to move on. . . move on."*

—Community liaison from a governmental entity

Some interviewees said that, after they first heard about the project in the fall of 2020, they did some research on Cook Medical to understand more about the company, because they were previously unfamiliar with it. They said that Cook's prior history of supporting the communities in which they work boosted their optimism about what the new manufacturing facility and Cook's partnership with Goodwill may be able to bring to the northeast area.

*"I didn't know anything about Cook Group. And when [someone from the United Northeast Community Development Corporation] called me and asked me to be a part of the orientation to who Cook Group is, I was very impressed with what they do, as far as...what they do community-wise, and how committed they are to the community as far as the high school programs and college programs, drug rehabilitation programs, and all those things that a lot of companies don't do. And it just seemed to me that they do more community-oriented programs than most other companies. And I was very impressed with that."*

—Sheridan Heights neighborhood resident

Community members perceived that the project's investment into the area was shaping up to be different from investments other large businesses have made in the area. A Devington neighborhood resident talked about a low-end chain box retailer and the limited impact she perceived it having in the area.

*"I don't see how that [box retailer] can affect a neighborhood. It can help you if you need bandages or alcohol or peroxide or something like that, but how many people does it actually employ in the neighborhood? Maybe four or five?"*

—Devington neighborhood resident

As the conversation with this resident shifted toward the new manufacturing facility at 38th and Sheridan, her tone changed as she stated, "I think it's a grave undertaking to come into a community and to desire—desire—to make it better." This resident, as well as other community members we interviewed, saw a marked difference in what project partners were undertaking with their development at 38th and Sheridan, compared to many other efforts from outsiders investing in the area. However, their sense of optimism was tempered by a "wait and see" perspective, which likely will only be assuaged as the facility comes online and if project partners are able to follow through on the promises being made in conjunction with the development.

## COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

Interviewees conveyed that community members are eager to engage and develop close collaborations with entities and individuals interested in investing in Northeast Indianapolis communities. However, several interviewees said that such investors do not always work alongside residents and community members to address the area's needs and challenges, which creates a lose-lose situation for all.

*"A lot of times investors and development companies will come in and say 'I'm gonna put this in here' and 'You need this,' without talking to us to see what it is we need, you know? And so, even if we need it, if you don't involve us, we're not going to participate in it. You know, we're not gonna shop there.*

*We're not . . . you know, we're gonna go somewhere else."*

—Keystone-Millersville resident

One resident who is also a service provider in the area said that a critical component to a successful venture in the area is in building “trust and relationships with people who have influence in that community, not just city councilors and executive directors of [area nonprofit organizations].” A resident who is a leader in her neighborhood association explained what happens when an individual or entity trying to build something in the area does not invest in building trust.

*“A lot of [businesses] come in the area instead of being invited . . . you know, the next thing you know, it's vacant land. And the next thing you know, you see, maybe, some activity, maybe somebody cleaning up the property, and then the next thing you know, you see construction, and then the next thing you know, it's a building. And so, you know, people call me and say, ‘Well, what's going on over there?’ And I'm like, ‘Well, I don't know.’ And it's frustrating, especially when you've been in a community as long as these [residents] have, and you've asked for certain things to come into the community, but yet, still, not what you're asking for comes. But people just come in and put what they want in the community. And the next thing you know, it doesn't last, and then you have another abandoned building.”*

*—Resident, leader in neighborhood association*

Interviewees said they thought the 38th and Sheridan project was doing a good job of building community trust so far, but they wanted to see it continue and even expand. A Devington neighborhood resident conveyed this idea saying, “I feel like they've done a good job so far with [engaging with community members], but just continuing to build.” An Oxford neighborhood resident elaborated on this same idea when saying, “With Cook, you know, with them reaching out to the community and talking to us one-on-one and inviting us out to the cleanup, that was a good start. That was a good start. But that has to continue.”

Residents offered guidance on how they would like to be engaged and what the 38th and Sheridan project could do to be good community partners. A Sheridan Heights resident said he and his neighbors wanted to “be on the forefront” of what is going on with activities in their community. The same Oxford resident who said Cook was making “a good start” advised:

*“Cook has to designate a person to come to the meetings. And, since this is a large group of associations [in the northeast area], you know, that should be one person or two people's job, to come into the community, to see what else is going on, to see how you can help, or just to know the information and to give the community information. So, you know, this area wants to know what our sisters and brothers are doing in other areas, because you're all part of the puzzle.”*

*—Oxford resident*

Interviewees emphasized that “the real experts are the people that live in the community . . . and we've got to be able to put them to work as community organizers.” Community members are eager to engage in new partnerships for the betterment of their areas.

Finally, a community liaison at a nonprofit community partner organization emphasized that the complexity of the area's needs and challenges means that community partners must embrace a long-term commitment in their engagement with northeast area communities:

*“There's legwork that has to be done, and it's not just on them, it's . . . a joint partnership with someone who has a stake in that community . . . it has to be done hand-in-hand, and be open to, and understand that, it's not going to be perfect immediately, but we're going to do the work to make sure that, as time goes on, the next generation doesn't have to feel like there's only one way to do*

*things. That there's actually another way, and the opportunities are here--opportunities have not been there."*

*—Community liaison at a nonprofit community partner organization*

Community members want to work with individuals and entities who are interested in bringing opportunities and resources to Northeast Indianapolis, but they are challenged by investors and developers whose solutions do not adequately meet the needs of their communities. They have seen too many projects fail because their facilitators did not invest the time into building close, trusting relationships with community members.

## **APPENDIX B. NORTHEAST AREA COMMUNITY SURVEY**

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To gather regular, community-wide perceptions of neighborhood changes, unmet needs, and systemic challenges across the area's neighborhoods and populations, it is recommended that 38th and Sheridan project partners work with UNEC to conduct an area-wide survey on a biannual or annual basis. Below is a sample of the survey that could be used. This survey was adapted from a Community Needs Assessment Survey created by the Illinois Housing Development Authority (IHDA).<sup>17</sup> The IHDA survey was selected as a model because it asks questions about important aspects of community life, including the following: mobility and transportation access; housing, public spaces, and perceptions of safety; economic development and opportunity; educational and professional development and opportunity; health, wellness, and food access; and community engagement, initiatives, and representation. All questions will be answered on a Likert scale, unless otherwise specified.

### **MOBILITY**

#### **My community...**

1. Has adequate lighting in public spaces.
2. Has emergency phones or call boxes in public spaces.
3. Allows for clear sight lines that provide safety in public spaces.
4. Has recreational paths and walking trails.
5. Is pedestrian friendly (i.e., well-maintained sidewalks, and sidewalks and crosswalks in key areas).
6. Is navigable for low-mobility individuals (e.g., people who use walkers, wheelchairs, strollers, etc.).

#### **I am able to...**

7. Easily access public transportation in my community.
8. Easily travel by bicycle in my community (i.e., there are bicycle trails and bike lanes).
9. Easily travel by car in my community (i.e., there are paved roads and regular road maintenance).
10. Easily access ride hail transportation in my community (e.g. Uber, Lyft, taxis).
11. Access other parts of the city by my transportation of choice.

## COMMUNITY LIFE

### Housing in my community...

12. Is in good condition.
13. Offers options that suit a variety of lifestyles and needs.
14. Is affordable to households making a variety of incomes.
15. Is available for older adults.
16. Is primarily owner-occupied.
17. Do you think there is need for more housing opportunities for residents in your community? [Yes/No/Unsure]

### Public spaces in my community...

18. Are available for community members to use (i.e., there are parks and community rooms).
19. Are adequately clean and maintained (e.g., streets, sidewalks, parks, city-owned properties).
20. Do you think that there are enough public spaces in your community (i.e., parks, community rooms)? [Yes/No/Unsure]

### My community...

21. Is a safe place to live.
22. Is a good place to raise a family.
23. Is a good place to age in place.
24. Includes many long-term residents.
25. Is an affordable place to live.
26. Is underserved.
27. Has changed for the better since I moved in.
28. Is a place where I feel a sense of belonging.

## ECONOMY

### My community has...

29. Adequate commercial and retail development.
30. A good variety of dining establishments.
31. Storefronts that look well-kept and attract shoppers.
32. A variety of employment opportunities that provide a living wage.
33. A variety of employment opportunities that offer long-term career growth.
34. Legal services available.
35. Homeownership opportunities.
36. Adequate financial services (i.e., banking).

### I am able to...

37. Run most of my daily errands without leaving my community.
38. Afford to run most of my daily errands without leaving my community.
39. Purchase most of my daily essentials without leaving my community.

## EDUCATION

### There are opportunities and services that meet the needs of my community for...

40. Child care (including pre-K and K–12 after-school programs).
41. K–12 education.
42. Postsecondary education (e.g., community college).
43. Vocational training and education.
44. Job training and education.

## HEALTH, WELLNESS, AND FOOD ACCESS

### There are opportunities and services that meet the needs of my community for...

45. Health services (e.g. hospitals, clinics, dentists).
46. Pharmacy care and services.
47. Mental health care and services.
48. Healthy food options (e.g., grocery stores and restaurants).
49. Physical fitness activities and facilities.

### I am able to...

50. Afford to care for my health and wellness.
51. Drive or get a ride to medical appointments.
52. Access desirable food options on a regular basis.
53. Afford to purchase healthy foods on a regular basis.
54. Prepare healthy meals at home on a regular basis.

## COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT AND INITIATIVES

### My community's leaders...

55. Make plans with residents' best interests in mind.
56. Work with local business owners to improve public and shared spaces to create a sense of community.
57. Are working to improve and beautify commercial and retail corridors.

### When it comes to my community...

58. I am excited by the changes and plans I feel are happening.
59. I am aware of opportunities to engage with my community leaders (e.g., public or town hall meetings).
60. I am interested in the opportunity to provide feedback to my community's leaders regarding local issues.
61. I feel connected to my neighbors.
62. I feel my community is well represented at city-level decision-making tables.
63. I feel that there are an adequate amount of community events (e.g., fairs/festivals, block parties).
64. I feel that the organizations (e.g., churches, community centers, non-profits) positively impact the community.
65. How do you learn about things happening in your community?

[Select all that apply: Television/Radio/Newspaper/City government website/Community newsletter/E-mail/Word-of-mouth/Social media (Facebook, Twitter, etc.)/Neighborhood meetings/Other (please specify)]

### Open-ended questions:

66. Please describe any new developments or efforts that you believe are benefitting your community.
67. What type(s) of developments or efforts do you believe would benefit your community?
68. Would you be interested in sitting down with us for an interview to talk about these topics in more depth? [Yes/No/Unsure]
  - a. If yes or unsure, please give us your contact information and we will get in touch with you soon to schedule an interview or answer your questions. [phone number/email address]

### Household and demographic Information:

69. What is your age? [use ACS ranges]
70. What is your race? [use ACS options]
71. What is your ethnicity? [use ACS options]
72. What is your employment status?

73. [Employed full-time; Employed part-time; Unemployed but looking for a job; Unemployed and not looking for a job; Student; Retired]
74. What is the size of your household?
75. [1 person/2-4 people/5+ people]
76. What is your household income?
77. [\$0-30,000/\$30,001-\$60,000/\$60,001-\$100,000/\$100,001+]
78. Do you rent or own your current home?
79. [Rent, Own]
80. Where do you currently reside?
81. [Street address/Nearest intersection/Neighborhood]

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