

**SAFEGROWTH PLAN FOR:
WEST END'S TOT LOT
LINN & LIVINGSTON
CORRIDOR**

8.24.2022

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BACKGROUND

a. Neighborhood profile

The West End Community of Cincinnati has a rich history and a strong legacy of family for African Americans born and raised in the City. At one point in time, the West End was the only neighborhood that Black people were legally allowed to live. The West End was a vibrant, boisterous, successful, diverse community where residents owned businesses, made music and art, fought for civil rights and raised their families. The West End once had a population of over 60,000 residents. Highway construction ravaged this neighborhood in the 1950s and 1960s: the construction of I-75 eliminated over 1,000 housing units and structures and displaced between 20,000 and 30,000 residents, mostly African American. The community once encompassed Queensgate, Lower Price Hill, and a portion of the riverfront. It was home to Crosley Field, the Regal Theater, the Union Terminal (now Cincinnati Museum Center), the Cotton Club, numerous churches, businesses, and homes.

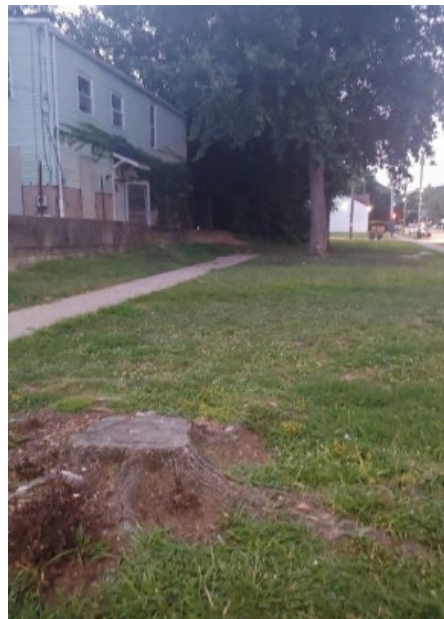
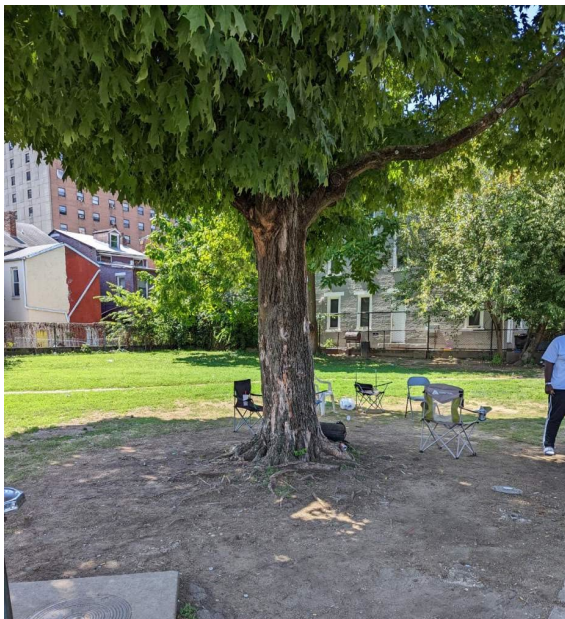
(source: http://citybeat.com/cincinnati/article33474-that_which_divides_us.html?src=longreads).

Today, the community is made up of nearly 80% renters and 20% homeowners. The West End has one of the densest populations in the City. It is home to one of the oldest large public housing structures still standing (Stanley Row Towers), located a block over from the Tot Lot. The Tot Lot (seen below prior to the removal of the playground and benches) received its name from the toddler playground that used to exist in the narrow lot (see below). Today, the only thing that remains on this area is the walkway, a tree or two, and the plaque.



b. Project site profile

The Tot Lot (Linn St. & Livingston St. Corridor) was once home to a Cincinnati Recreation Center (CRC) toddler playground that was used for drug transactions and stashing. The area was known for violent activity as well. The area was deemed unsafe and CRC decided to remove the playground equipment. This decision was supported by the City and the West End Community Council.



c. Rationale for selecting this project

This location in the neighborhood has been a source of frustration for decades ... The Tot Lots offer a semi-well-maintained area by CRC for social gatherings however illicit activity (drugs, prostitution, shootings) have dominated the area. Not all gatherings in the area have been illicit in nature but the illicit activity dominates most of the time. It has been a challenge for some time to get the correct amount of attention/resources to achieve a more dominant positive atmosphere in the location. This project is one of a series of current attempts working to achieve this goal. Positive changes are coming soon around the area (housing rehabs, area Wi-Fi, and West End Bar and Grill). The transformation of this area is key to spark long-term transformation in this area.

CHAPTER 1 VISIONING

1.1 Vision statement

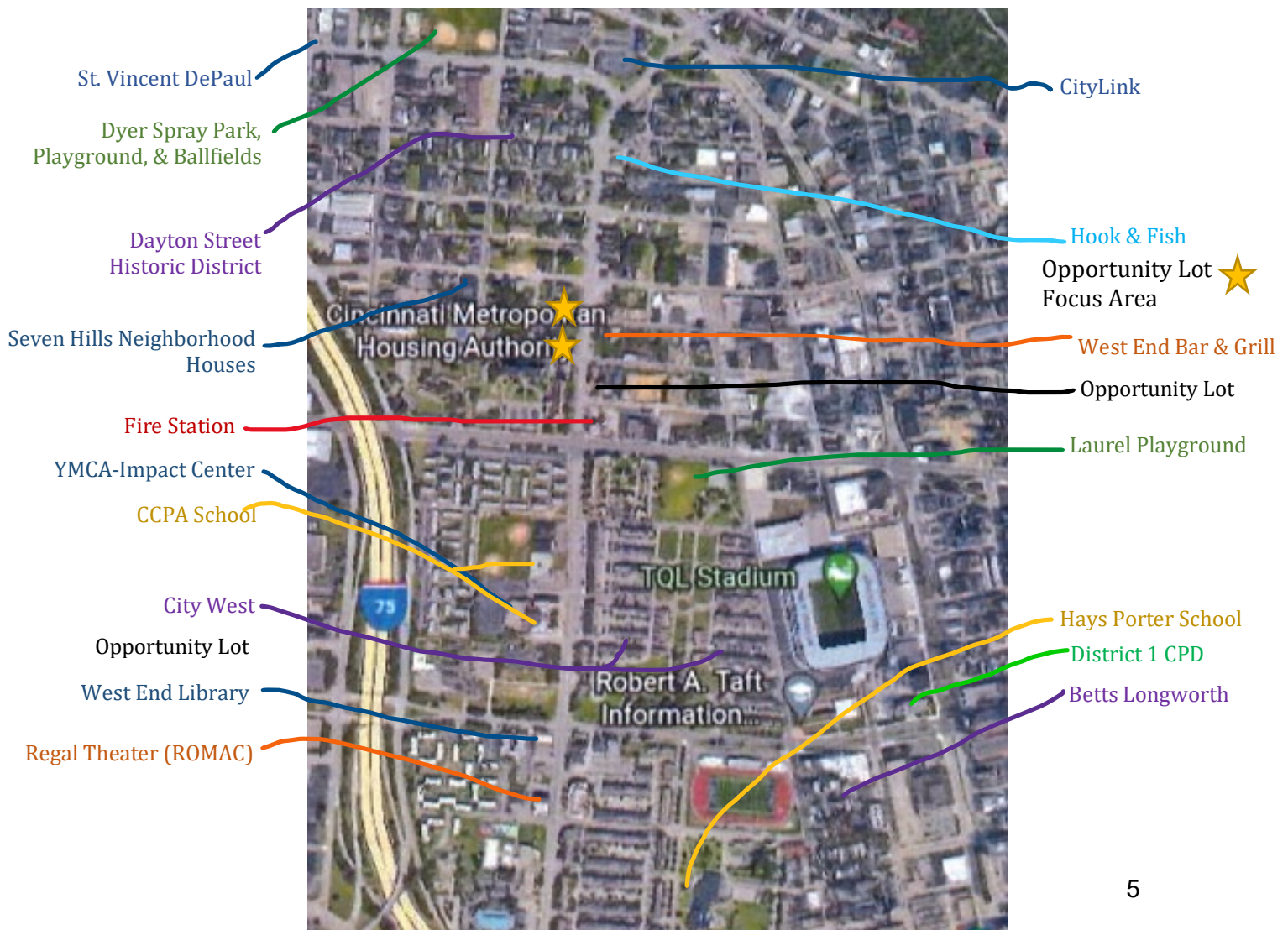
The Tot Lot (under its new name) is a safe and welcoming gathering spot for families and individuals that live, love, and lounge in the West End. Through the park’s redesign and new mixed-use development, additional housing, service, and engagement needs are being met!

1.2 Objectives

- A. Activate of space for community activities with movie night, farmers market, social activities, etc.
- B. Reduce criminal activity in the area and make it more family friendly
- C. Develop the larger portion of the lot

1.3 Neighborhood assets and vision-based asset map

Partners and places to spurn activation



2.1 Identified problems

Drug trafficking and usage, shootings, homelessness, and victimization are illegal activities that we witnessed directly or heard about from individuals hanging out in the area. The area has a potential for robberies and residents have expressed fear being harmed. There is heavy odor of urine and visual uncleanliness trash bottles etc. Clearly there are no restroom facilities nearby. Individuals relieve themselves on the wall. Community members spoke concerning the lack of positive activity and the need for more businesses and housing. Community shared concern for youth gun violence and the fact that most crimes are over common misunderstandings. It was also mentioned that the individuals doing the shooting are younger than before (12 to 14 yr olds). More positive activities and opportunities are needed for youth in the neighborhood. They talked about how there once was a community bond amongst the residents and more black owned family businesses.

Two huge cement barriers are located near the middle of Livingston that is a result of the work the Livingston Taskforce began. These barriers prevent traffic to move from Linn St. to Findlay St. It is not clear if these barriers are reducing or deterring crime in the area. It is not a long-term solution for a thriving and safe community.

2.2 Actions and Activities

We conducted interviews with residents that live at Stanley Row Towers during our listening session to determine why they do not utilize the space (nearly 80 residents in attendance). The majority of residents sited that the area is deemed unsafe due to the shootings and violence that occurs in the area. When asked what would make them feel safe enough to attend events in this area a few themes emerged. Police presence, senior focused activities, absence of young people, specific activities that may occur, and size of crowd. Some residents expressed that they did not believe anything could be done to make them feel safe enough to hang out in that area. They expressed taking longer routes to avoid the area altogether.

In addition to these interviews, we conducted interviews with individuals that hang out in the area or were passing by. These conversations gave us ideas for space utilization that we had not considered. These ideas are expressed in the strategies in section 4. They ranged from game tables, distinguishing spaces and activities in the areas for adults and youth, building housing for single mothers with clear stipulations, and create businesses that serve residents.

Ties to the community run deep. There are individuals (young and old) who grew up in the area or had family ties to the area that return to hang out and connect with other. Some may see this as an issue, but another way of looking at it is some people still feel safe and at home

CHAPTER 3: PROBLEM ANALYSIS

3.1 Site visits & CPTED review

Our team conducted 2 day and 2 night sessions of safety audits as well as independent observations of the Linn and Livingston Corridor. During these audits, we conducted observations, interviews, and the incorporation of background information we received through other engagements. The area is heavily used, but feels very different during the day. During these observations, we received feedback from property owners, residents, individuals that hang out in the area, and individuals that participate in criminal activity.

Daytime Observations:

Our first daytime observations happened to fall on a day where an individual was murdered the night before (in the Tot Lot). The day of our observation, a man was murdered a few blocks up from the Tot Lot and was connected to the murder the night before.

1. First Day General Impression:

Even in the wake of a murder, the area was relaxed, popular, children were at play, positive, litter, active.

Police, coroner's office, and emergency workers were present three blocks up as they prepared to remove the body from behind a restaurant. The signage was poor and full of areas that could create entrapment (wall, bushes, doorways, and corridors). The sidewalks were uneven and pathways were not clear. Individuals were involved with various positive activities. Open air drug trafficking and gambling were occurring as well. Brush was overgrown and the grass was in need of cutting.

2. Second Day General Impression:

During our second daytime observation, the area was again, active, engaging, some litter, and smelled of urine around the half wall. Individuals shared their views and thoughts of

Nighttime Observations:

Our team decided not to go out the night of the shooting incase there was further retaliation or violence. We waited a week before we returned as a group. We learned that on the night of our second observation that one of the people we interviewed was shot after we left that night.

1. First Night General Impression:

The area was extremely dark with yellowish lighting shining from the streetlights. Drug sales were frequently occurring. We felt less safe than we did during the daytime observation. The weeds were overgrown and you could not see 25ft in front of you. There was a clothing store

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open. There was a mixture of young and old, homeless, etc. The lack of lighting, overgrown brush, walls, dark doorways, and abandoned buildings

2. Second Night General Impression:

The second night seemed calmer but still not completely safe. Individuals at the location engaged more this second time. The biggest transformation was the improved lighting in the area. Seven Hills was awarded a safety and beautification grant that made it possible to change out the yellow lighting for LED lighting. They also changed the location of the light to sit over Livingston rather than Linn St. This increased the visibility in the park. Additional lighting (lamp posts) within the park would be beneficial. There were a number of vacant buildings still surrounding these lots on both sides of the street. All of the unsafe observations were still true during the second night of observations.

First Generation CPTED

CPTED principle	Indicators (description of CPTED principle)	Findings from site visit	
		Daytime	Night-time
Territoriality	There is one sign, there are walkways that have no clear destination. Boundaries for the space and hours are not clear. Fences and walls do divide the properties the sit next to both lots.	People bring their own chairs to sit under trees. Others sit along the wall or on stoops on Livingston. Large cement road blocks are located on Livingston to prevent traffic from driving through	Lighting was poor during our first visit, but was improved with the installation of LED lighting and relocation of street lights on our second visit.
Access Control	No access controls are present. There are areas of warn grass.	There are walkways that seem to have no real destination other than providing a shortcut through the lots.	There are no park hours listed so people remain in these areas long through the night
Natural Surveillance	There is a clear difference during the day and night. Sightlines are clear during the day, but very difficult at night.	There is a great deal of activity and a number of people present during the day. The concern is that the surveillance that is occurring does a better job of protecting and looking out for illegal activity verses the opposite.	Most of the surround properties are vacant. There are cameras present, but they do not deter the illegal activity that occurs in these areas. You cannot see 25ft in front of you at night. Trimming trees and bushes and lighting in

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			the park would be helpful.
Maintenance/Image	CRC does provide a level of maintenance to the area.	Litter is an issue in the West End. Trash can be found and the smell of urine is present. Grass has been worn away in one section of the park where many people sit. There are overgrown trees and bushes that create visibility issues. A trashcan was placed there by a resident that seems to help prevent greater levels of litter.	The same conditions exist at night. The areas around the Lots are not as well maintained. A lot across the street (an opportunity area) has overgrown weeds that have reached 4ft or more. Grass along the curbs is just as high.

Second Generation CPTED

<i>CPTED principle</i>	<i>Indicators (description of CPTED principle)</i>	<i>Findings from site visit</i>
Social cohesion	The goal is to build cohesion amongst residents to build a sense of ownership and safety in the area.	Cohesion does not truly exist for many residents, but there are groups of individuals that feel a sense of connection to these places and spaces.
Culture	Relationships and interactions are necessary and could be the missing element to turn the tide and redefine the space.	People desire cultural engagement! The lack of activation and consistency of positive usage.
Capacity	Social, physical and economic balance are needed to bring about the balance.	The lack of clear purpose in these lots and surrounding conditions are major contributing factors to the current conditions. With new development on and around the area, updated landscaping, and creative placemaking, balance can be achieved.
Connectivity	Connectivity could be helpful to build comraderies, gain strategies, resource, and support for effort to make improvements in the neighborhood.	The West End seems to work in a silo, but could benefit from working with other neighborhoods to share resources and support in addressing unsafe conditions.

3.2 Site interviews

We conducted over a dozen site interviews. These interviews were conducted with residents, users of the space, a local clothing business, a resident led groups, families, etc. The majority of people utilizing the area are not using it for illegal activities, but as a gather place for socialization and connection. Even individuals involved in illegal activities expressed a desire to see the space used more and the need to bring in legitimate businesses that support local entrepreneurs.

3.3 Safety audits

Officer Eubanks led the safety audit and provided the statistical information for the project. Vacant and blighted properties are a key concern feeding the current unsafe conditions that exist in the area. Poor lighting was another issue that further cultivated unsafe conditions. New LED street lighting and flower pots were new elements that were added since we began this project. Additional park lights would further improve visibility and feelings of safety.

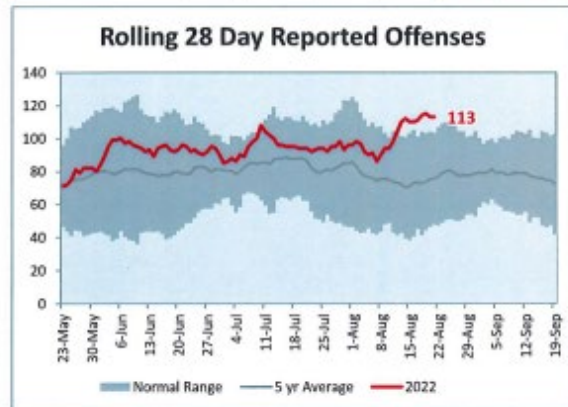
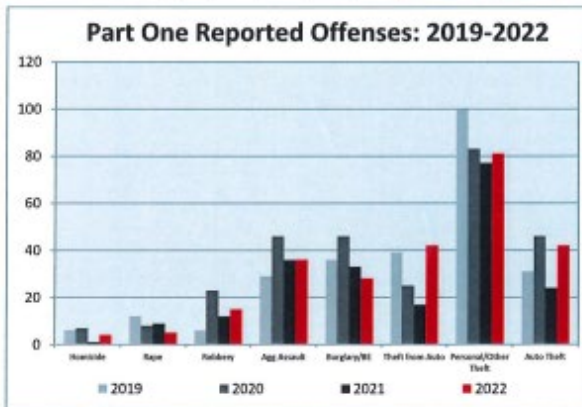
3.4 Perception of safety (findings – GIS analysis, statistical analysis...)

Shootings and violent activities are occurring at all hours and are no longer just a night issue. As shared below, there is an uptick in burglaries, shootings, homicides, and rape. These events are happening in this location and within a 2 block radius. We utilized the CPD statistics report and Cincy Insights to gather this data.

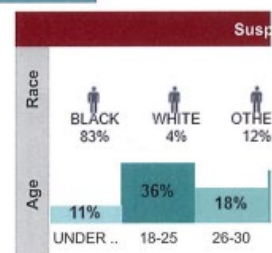
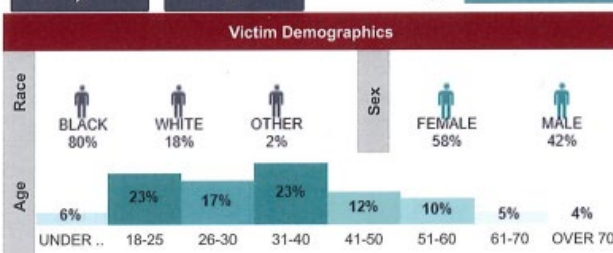
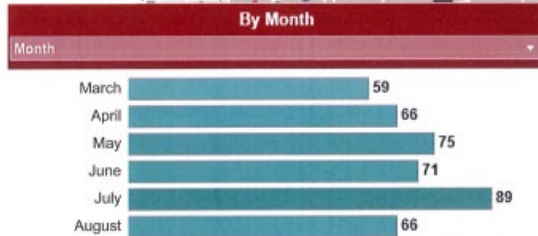
West End Neighborhood Report

West End		Year-to-Date: 22-Aug					
Part 1 Crime	2019	2020	2021	Avg: 2019-21	2022	% Change: Avg / 22	% Change: 2021 / 2022
Homicide	6	7	1	4.7	4	-14.3%	300.0%
Rape	12	8	9	9.7	5	-48.3%	-44.4%
Robbery	6	23	12	13.7	15	9.8%	25.0%
Agg Assault	29	46	36	37.0	36	-2.7%	N/C
Total P1 Violent Crime	53	84	58	65.0	60	-7.7%	3.4%
Burglary/BE	36	46	33	38.3	28	-27.0%	-15.2%
Theft from Auto	39	25	17	27.0	42	55.6%	147.1%
Personal/Other Theft	100	83	77	86.7	81	-6.5%	5.2%
Auto Theft	31	46	24	33.7	42	24.8%	75.0%
Total P1 Property Crime	206	200	151	185.7	193	3.9%	27.8%
Total P1 Crime	259	284	209	250.7	253	0.9%	21.1%

West End		Rolling 28 ending: 8/22/2022					
Part 1 Crime	Period 4	Period 3	Period 2	Period 1	% Change:		
	05/03/22 - 5/30/22	05/31/22 - 6/27/22	06/28/22 - 7/25/22	07/26/22 - 8/22/22	P3-P1	P2-P1	
Homicide	1	0	2	1	↑ 1	-50.0%	
Rape	1	0	1	3	↑ 3	200.0%	
Robbery	3	0	2	4	↑ 4	100.0%	
Agg Assault	5	10	6	5	-50.0%	-16.7%	
Total P1 Violent Crime	10	10	11	13	30.0%	18.2%	
Burglary/BE	1	7	2	5	-28.6%	150.0%	
Theft from Auto	6	7	4	7	N/C	75.0%	
Personal/Other Theft	10	8	17	14	75.0%	-17.6%	
Auto Theft	4	9	10	8	-11.1%	-20.0%	
Total P1 Property Crime	21	31	33	34	9.7%	3.0%	
Total P1 Crime	31	41	44	47	14.6%	6.8%	



By Neighborhood	
SNA Neighborhood	
OVER-THE-RHINE	646
PENDLETON	81
PLEASANT RIDGE	116
QUEENSGATE	101
RIVERSIDE	73
ROSELAWN	306
SAYLER PARK	51
SEDAMSVILLE	31
SOUTH CUMMINSVILLE	45
SOUTH FAIRMOUNT	117
SPRING GROVE VILLAGE	98
VILLAGES AT ROLL HILL	115
WALNUT HILLS	357
WEST END	426
WEST PRICE HILL	482
WESTWOOD	1,319
WINTON HILLS	257



3.5 Crime analysis

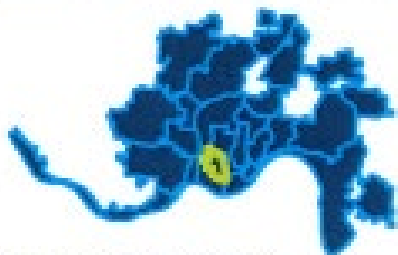
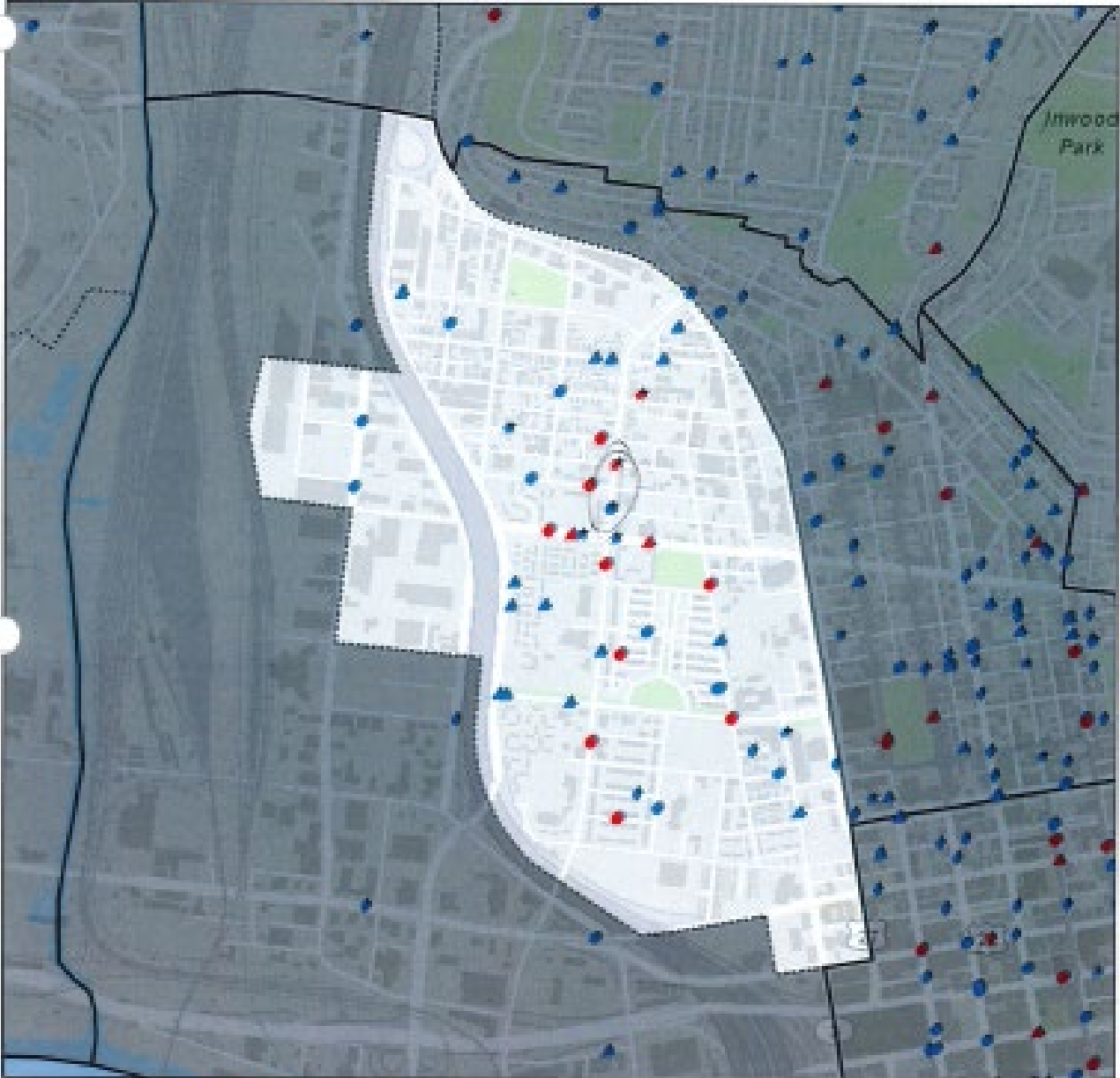
SAFEGROWTH REPORT

This map breaks down crime that has occurred by location. The circled area is our project area. The most violent crimes are happening within a few blocks of this location.

WEST END Neighborhood Crime Report: 28 DAY REPORTING PERIOD



**All information shown here are preliminary and subject to change*



	Violent Crimes	Property Crimes
Neighborhoods	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Homicide Rape Robbery Agg Assault 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Burglary/BE Theft from Auto Auto Theft Personal/Other Theft
Districts		
Neighborhoods		

Data prepared on: 7/26/2022

Prepared by: Crime Analysis & Problem Solving

CHAPTER 4: STRATEGY

4.1 Recommendations

As our vision states, the Tot Lot (under its new name) is a safe and welcoming gathering spot for families and individuals that live, love, and lounge in the West End. Through the park's redesign and new mixed-use development, additional housing, service, and engagement needs are being met!

1. Access Control & Movement Predictors-

Creating an environment that provides clear walkways, lighting, landscaping with paths that lead to safe areas. This would provide purpose for activities to engage families and how the space can be used for positive engagement which would provide safe access and movement.



2. Image, Territoriality and Maintenance

Work to build and create a welcoming clean space to distinguish between public and private property. We would provide a physical design to include visual cues and activities such as beautiful colors, game tables, planters a space for movie nights and community events. This reduces gun violence. (which is at a high in our area) A space that can be transformed daily for different activities based on holidays and community ideas and desires to bring inclusiveness and diversity.

(Long-term) Connect with CRC and the city to further develop that section of the lot to allow expansion for businesses and housing. This would decrease homelessness, employment, crime and more. This would enhance community engagement and holistic hope for families that are striving to thrive.



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3. Natural Surveillance (physical)

- Work with the city and property owners to increase light density
- Provide over head lights within the Park
- Signage for upcoming events, hours of operation, etc
- Provide open seating areas
- Provide clear views to entrances and exits.
- Low level bushing and fencing.
- Clear viewing access from living quarters.
- Residents that collaborate and engage with each other to be eyes on the street.



4. Cohesion

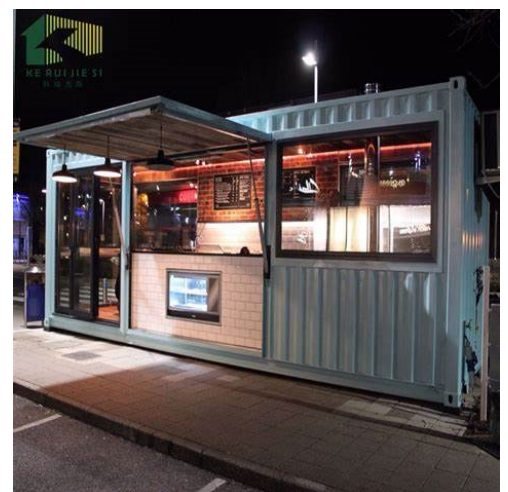
Seven Hills can be the catalyst but will rely on the energy and efforts of residents, stakeholders, and partners to create the synergy needed for lasting change.

- Communicate and engage with community members, business owners and landlords.
- Be inclusive with changes and decision making.
- Form teams and groups and allow positive leadership to create bonding and trust.
- Welcome diversity and allow all voices to be heard.
- Work together to strategize and reach our mission.
- Work under the umbrella....



4. Connectivity

Engage and network to be informed and connected with other communities and activities surrounding the areas. Connections to bordering neighborhoods, various City departments, LISC, CRC, Parks, CMHA, CPD, other social service agencies, business owners, schools, daycares, residents, and other community assets increases resources, knowledge base, and opportunities for communities.



4.2 Implementation plan

VISION: The Tot Lot (under its new name) is a safe and welcoming gathering spot for families and individuals that live, love, and lounge in the West End. Through the park’s redesign and new mixed-use development, additional housing, service, and engagement needs are being met!

Objectives	Owner(s)/Partners	Resources	Activities	Timeline
Activation	SHNH CMHA Schools Ambassadors My Why One Family Community Groups CityLink CRC CMHA West End Library Way Back West End West End SFL	-Keep Cincinnati Beautiful Safety and Beautification -Cincinnati Neighborhood Business Districts United -Place Matters	Flee market Family Parade Farmer’s Market Movie Nights Food Truck (Friday) Resource Fairs Give-a-ways Container Store Festivals Opportunity Fairs	Oct. 2022 - ongoing
Reduce Crime & Make Family Friendly	CPD Residents CRC Cincinnati Zoo UC DAAP West End Bar & Grill	-Place Matters -Asset Forfeiture Fund - City of Cincinnati	Sidewalk improvements Lighting in the park Landscape improvements Foot patrol (hotspot directed patrol)	Now-Summer 2023
Development	SHNH CRC City of Cincinnati	-City of Cincinnati -CNBDU-NBDIP - IFF -Cincinnati Development Fund -New Market Tax Credits	Develop a mixed-use building on one of the lots serve community needs	Summer 2024