



Better Family Life  
**Community Impact  
Measurement Findings**

# Executive Summary

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# Executive Summary

## Overview

The Housing and Asset Development Department's Community Stabilization seeks to rebuild disinvested neighborhoods in the Better Family Life (BFL) handprint and surrounding neighborhood through direct services to individuals and families and advocacy. They work collaboratively with community leaders and stakeholders to advocate and advance initiatives that will increase housing opportunities and equitable investment in infrastructure and services in the urban core. Programs aim to address concentrated and intergenerational poverty and to increase and preserve the supply of affordable housing in the handprint. They work closely with individuals and families to increase awareness about related services and benefits and access to benefits and services.

## Evaluation Approach

BFL's Housing and Asset Development Department worked with NeighborWorks America to complete a Community Impact Measurement (CIM) assessment, which examined multiple aspects of housing and neighborhood residents' perceptions in BFL's handprint and an extended geographical area that is part of a broader BFL led effort the Page Redevelopment Initiative (PRI).

BFL and NeighborWorks partnered with the Brown School Evaluation Center to tailor the data collection instruments and perform analyses.

Due to the COVID-19 pandemic in 2020, data collection for resident surveys could not be conducted in person. BFL used several strategies to increase community awareness and participation in the 2019/2020 CIM Assessment.

The following questions were selected from NeighborWorks' CIM Research Framework to guide the analysis of BFL's CIM data:

1. What does the physical environment (e.g., houses, parks, common areas) within the BFL project area look like?
2. How confident are people in the future of the neighborhood?
3. Overall, how satisfied are residents with community services and opportunities?

4. How connected are neighbors to each other, and how willing and able to manage day-to-day issues in the neighborhood?

A prior assessment of BFL's handprint was completed in 2016. In addition to repeating an assessment of BFL's handprint in 2019/2020, the first assessment of the PRI extended geographical area is also included in the current evaluation. By repeating the CIM assessment every three years, a picture can be developed of how BFL's programs impact the neighborhood over time. The data will be used to develop and refine BFL's programs to maximize impact on the community in ways that allow families to remain, mature, and serve meaningful roles in the future evolution of their neighborhoods, the city, and the region.

It is important to acknowledge that in 2016 CIM Assessment BFL uplifted its handprint and the surrounding area, as an example of a community where more than 50 years of systematic and calculated disinvestment had taken place. The resilience and optimism of community members, most who have familial roots over generations in the community matters and informed their priorities and ideas about ways to foster change.

## Key Findings

1. Perceived attractiveness and maintenance of blocks and parcels have improved since 2016. However, the observed exterior conditions of buildings remained unchanged.
2. The number and maintenance of vacant lots is an issue that has persisted over time.
3. While only about 1/3 thought the community improved over the last three years, half of the respondents (50%) thought the community would improve over the next three years.
4. Addressing barriers that impede resident ability to maximize access to parks and other amenities (e.g. crime, loitering, stray dogs) would improve resident confidence in the future of the neighborhood.
5. Most respondents felt both their actions and the efforts of community leaders and politicians as critical to future change.
6. Feeling safe was an issue for respondents. They were not satisfied with police response to community need.
7. Improving job opportunities was the highest priority for residents followed by higher quality grocery stores.
8. Many residents in the handprint have strong feelings of connectedness and connection to the community. This has remained consistent over the past three years in the CIM area strengthening over time.
9. Forty-three percent (43%) of respondents indicated the issue(s) they saw as community priorities were not reflected in the current CIM assessment.
10. There was an increase in the percentage of respondents likely to help their neighbors in every area assessed by the Resident Survey.

The issues impacting the exterior conditions and the level of resident confidence and satisfaction in the community are interconnected. For example, improving the walkability of the neighborhood and access to parks is reliant on addressing issues of trash, loitering, crime and safety. The community's top priority of improving access to job opportunities is also impacted by crime and safety issues. Building on the advocacy efforts in the community and “neighborliness” that already exist between residents will be helpful to guide future community development strategies and engagement of the residents.

Better Family Life’s Page Redevelopment Initiative acknowledges both the slow pace of

change and the need to address piecemeal solutions to improving the physical condition, infrastructure, and quality and access to opportunity for its residents. There are many programs already being implemented by Better Family Life. Aligning the PRI with existing programs Building on the advocacy efforts in the community and “neighborliness” that already exist between residents would be important to inform understanding, program implementation, and development, as well as a future community engagement strategy, could also have a more broad-reaching impact and improve the reinvestment approach that respondents saw taking place block by block in both 2016 and 2019/2020.