WARRENDALE COMMUNITY INTEGRATION PROJECT

Special Thanks to Our Funding Partner
The Kresge Foundation

Presented By
International Institute of Metro Detroit (IIMD) & Islamic Center of Detroit (ICD)

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Islamic Center of Detroit
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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The International Institute of Metropolitan Detroit (IIMD) is a long-standing, Detroit based nonprofit agency founded in 1919. The Institute transforms the lives of low-income immigrants, refugees, asylum seekers and native-born residents by providing critical services which lead to integration, economic stability and growth. The International Institute envisions a more inclusive, equitable and just society for immigrants and non-immigrants alike in the City of Detroit and greater Metropolitan area.


The Islamic Center of Detroit (ICD) is a faith-based nonprofit community organization which began offering services in 2000. ICD aims to serve the most vulnerable, Muslim and non-Muslim immigrants and native residents, throughout the greater metropolitan Detroit area. ICD offers several services such as teaching the Quran; after-school activities; youth and female empowerment workshops; mental health services; food pantry; and community related projects, such as neighborhood clean-ups and diversity and inclusion engagement activities.

In September 2018, IIMD and ICD, initiated an inclusive, community driven plan, the Warrendale Community Integration Project (WCIP). This project took place on the city’s west side in the Warrendale neighborhood. The focus of the project was not meant to be led by outside consultants or government officials, nor by those unfamiliar with the city and its nuances, but one which was grassroots in nature and led and developed by new community members and lifelong Warrendale residents.

The WCIP team worked to advance this by facilitating an environment of equitable integration, awareness and education. In doing so, the WCIP team convened a group of diverse stakeholders, consisting of community organizations and block club members, immigrant and refugee community members, elected representatives, business owners, youth, law enforcement, non-profit leaders, and Detroit Public Schools Community District (DPSCD) administrators. In order to ensure equity in the planning process, the team utilized several approaches, which included a broad set of methodologies.

Thus, within a 12-month period, the process consisted of facilitating four internal planning sessions, six community integration sessions, two final review sessions, 100 one-on-one meetings, and attending 34 community meetings and eight community events. This process and the results will be explained in the following pages.

The goal of the WCIP is to bring diverse members of the community together to devise a plan, which would improve the quality of life for all residents.
GEOGRAPHY & COMMUNITY CHARACTERISTICS

Warrendale, located on the city’s westside in District 7, is rich in culture and is one of the most ethnically diverse areas in southeast Michigan. Originally founded as a farming community by Scottish settlers in the 19th century, Warrendale was formerly a township of Dearborn. However, in 1925, the township integrated and officially became part of the City of Detroit.

With a total population of 29,059, Warrendale borders Dearborn and Dearborn Heights and is bounded by Joy Road to the north, Greenfield Road to the east, Ford/Paul Road to the south, and Rouge Park to the west. The following census tracts make up Warrendale: 5454, 5455, 5456, 5457, 5458, 5459, 5460, 5461.

The community is also part of the larger Cody Rouge neighborhood and has contributed to district-wide projects, most recently, the City of Detroit’s Strategic Framework.

COMMUNITY CHARACTERISTICS: HOUSING & NEIGHBORHOOD

A vibrant community, comprised of a majority of single-family homes built in the 1940’s and early 20th century, Warrendale has a stable business corridor, comprised of local, minority owned businesses. The neighborhood also has well organized community groups, block clubs, citizen radio patrols and faith-based institutions. These aspects, in part, reveal the strength and resiliency of this community.

This, in large part, is demonstrated through the work of Barb Matney and her husband Joe, President of the Warrendale Community Organization, both lifelong Warrendale residents. As they have worked to transform their neighborhood, through their persistence, hard work and the support of city officials and the community, they have spearheaded a community development method that involves renovating vacant lots and blighted property and turning them into safe places to play.

Since implementation began, they have built parks, playscapes, an organic community garden, and an orchard. They continue to work to improve their neighborhood and plan on installing an outdoor fitness area, walking path and small picnic pavilion.
According to Data Driven Detroit, 60% of Warrendale’s current residents are African American, 28% are White and 8% are Latinx. Warrendale has also seen an influx of immigrants, a majority from the Middle East, who began resettling in the area after the Persian Gulf War in 1990 and again in 2003 after the second Iraq War.

Today, 14% of the residents are foreign born. This is roughly one-third the rate in Wayne County, which is 8%, and two-fifths the rate of both the State of Michigan, which is 7% and the City of Detroit, whose foreign-born population is 6%.

Moreover, in Warrendale, 27% of children, 5 to 17 years of age, and 14% of adults speak a language other than English in their home.

Furthermore, Warrendale’s median household income is $23,149, one-third the median household income in the State of Michigan at $52,668, and two-fifths of Wayne County which is $43,702. It is also four-fifths the annual median household income in the City of Detroit, which is $27,838.

Warrendale’s unemployment rate is also higher than its surrounding areas. Warrendale’s current unemployment rate is 21%. This is 11% higher than the average unemployment rate in Wayne County at 12% and more than double in the State of Michigan at 7%. It is also more than double that of the City of Detroit which, according to the Bureau of Labor Statistics, has an average unemployment rate of 9%.

These numbers present a clear need for enhanced resources. Warrendale continues to be burdened by decades of economic decline and divestment which has led to persistent blight, crime and lack of city services.

Despite this, the steadfast commitment from lifelong residents, strong neighborhood affiliations, community organizations, and business leaders, Warrendale has upheld its existing business corridor, historic landmarks and natural characteristics. It has also achieved successful neighborhood redevelopment, with very little financial resources, and has improved the quality of life at a grassroots level.
THE GLOBAL REFUGEE CRISIS

The WCIP project started with IIMD and ICD’s work with refugees; however, the team quickly recognized the strong investment from Warrendale’s lifelong residents. Moving forward, IIMD and its partners, will continue to work with the community to bring valuable resources, advocacy, awareness and the assurance that equitable services are in place. Therefore, any resources brought forth through this project will be available for all Warrendale residents.

Thus, this project originally stemmed from the global refugee crisis in 2015. During 2012 to 2015, the number of forcibly displaced people throughout the world grew at an alarming rate. As of December 2015, 911,000 refugees and migrants arrived in Europe, and 3,550 lost their lives while attempting the journey.15

The UNHCR’s Global Trends Forced Displacement in 2016 sheds light on the magnitude of this crisis. The report explains: “Over the past two decades, the global population of forcibly displaced people has grown substantially from 33.9 million in 1997 to 65.6 million in 2016 and remains at a record high. Section 101(a)(42) of the Immigration and Nationality Act (INA) define a refugee as a person who is outside of her/his country of origin and is unable to return or avail herself or himself the protection of that country, due to a well-founded fear of persecution on account of race, religion, nationality, or membership in a particular social group or political opinion.16

In 2016, Mayor Duggan responded to the global refugee crisis by initiating Detroit’s first refugee resettlement program. At that time, Mayor Duggan committed to resettling fifty families. “Detroit is a welcoming community, and it’s welcoming refugees, whether they come from Africa or Iraq or Syria,” explained Mayor Duggan.17 This was unprecedented, as prior to 2015, no city official had previously spearheaded a refugee resettlement program in the City of Detroit.
Ayrouz Saad, former Executive Director of the Mayoral Office of Immigrant Affairs and the current Executive Director of the Office of Global Michigan, was charged with leading the effort. In doing so, Director Saad convened a group of stakeholders consisting of refugee resettlement agencies, local nonprofit agencies, Detroit Public Schools Community District (DPSCD) administrators, and city officials. These stakeholders, i.e., The U.S. Committee for Refugees and Immigrants (USCRI), Samaritas, International Institute of Metropolitan Detroit (IIMD), Catholic Charities, and the Arab Community Center for Economic and Social Services (ACCESS), etc., developed a comprehensive resettlement strategy. Throughout the process, seven key areas were identified: housing, public health, education, transportation, workforce development, public safety and community engagement.

When resettlement began in 2016, a total of 62 families and 283 individuals resettled into Warrendale. Many of the displaced families arrived from Syria, Iraq and Afghanistan. According to Samaritas’ agency statistics, in 2016, Warrendale’s refugee arrivals were from the following countries: 60% Syria, 24% Iraq, 8% Afghanistan, 5% Democratic Republic of Congo, 2% Eritrea and 2% Sudan. Since this time, refugee resettlement agencies have continued to resettle refugees in the Warrendale neighborhood. According to USCRI Detroit’s Executive Director, Tawfik Alazem, 25% of all new refugee arrivals to Detroit in 2019 were resettled in Warrendale.

Once resettlement took place, the International Institute of Metropolitan Detroit (IIMD) was asked by the Mayoral Office of Immigrant Affairs to provide English as a Second Language (ESL) classes to the newly arrived refugees. IIMD accepted and, in collaboration with the Islamic Center of Detroit (ICD), began teaching ESL. It was at this time that a rewarding new partnership formed between IIMD and ICD. The ESL classes existed, in part, due to a grant-funded program from the former Michigan Office for New Americans (MONA), currently named the Office of Global Michigan.

As resettlement agencies are only able to provide refugees with support for a maximum of ninety days, Warrendale’s new arrivals have had to rely on continued services from ICD and IIMD. And although a majority of Warrendale residents have welcomed the new families, their resettlement has not come without challenges. This is due to several reasons: a lack of prior community engagement, educational opportunities, transportation, employment, and community awareness.

Thus, IIMD and ICD sought to address this situation by implementing a program that would address the community’s challenges, raise awareness, and bridge the gap between the newly arrived refugees and lifelong residents. This goal would be brought about through the Kresge Innovative Projects: Detroit (KIP:D) initiative. Through KIP:D, IIMD and ICD formed the Warrendale Community Integration Project (WCIP), with the goal of bringing diverse members of the community together to devise a plan, which would improve the quality of life for all Warrendale residents.
IMD and ICD established an effective, collaborative partnership, beginning in 2016. Since then, each agency has brought their unique skills, experience and expertise to several grant funded projects. As described in the KIP: D MOU, both agencies have had an important role to play in implementing the WCIP.

As a longstanding, Detroit based nonprofit agency, IIMD has a history of providing evidence-based services to immigrants and non-immigrants alike. They have done so through leadership and staff that have both the personal and professional expertise, as well as cultural sensitivity, necessary to transform the lives of immigrants, refugees, and native-born residents throughout the metropolitan Detroit area. Additionally, IIMD, given its in-depth experience in successfully managing federal, state and local grant funded programs and their well-established relationships within immigrant and native Detroit communities, is well poised to continue servicing people in need.

In fulfilling the WCIP objectives, IIMD played a critical role. In accordance with the MOU, IIMD was responsible for hiring staff, designing the program, monitoring its progress, designing reporting templates, assisting with stakeholder engagement, facilitating internal and community wide planning sessions, designing and distributing marketing materials, assisting with outreach and volunteer recruitment, assisting with data collection, submitting reports to the funder, issuing payroll, assisting with supervision, and writing and disseminating a final report.

ICD, on the other hand, is a faith-based nonprofit community organization which offers critical programs to Muslim and non-Muslim members of the community. ICD is the only nonprofit agency that serves the following underserved communities: Brooks, Fiskhorn, Warrendale, and Cody Rouge. ICD has been in operation for twenty years and is highly respected among Muslims and non-Muslims alike. Through their extensive work, they have provided valued services for all those in need. They are also well versed in providing culturally competent services that help to create pathways for new immigrants and refugees and are tasked with helping build positive relationships between immigrants, refugees and native-born residents of Detroit. As IIMD and ICD offer unique and complementary skills and experience, it was understood that ICD would play an imperative role in implementing the WCIP. ICD’s well-established relationships provided an opportunity for seamless engagement. Through these relationships, ICD was able to effortlessly identify and engage key stakeholders.

The skills and expertise of each agency brought about a mutually respected and productive relationship which generated much needed renewal, excitement and enthusiasm in the Warrendale community. As the project progressed, this partnership grew to include the Warrendale Community Organization (WCO), the Warren Avenue Community Organization (WACO) and the Mayoral Office of Immigrant Affairs and Economic Inclusion.
PLANNING

PROCESS
PLANNING PROCESS IN 3 PHASES

In preparing for project implementation, the WCIP team fully understood that the residents of the Warrendale community were the best equipped to design a planning strategy, as they had the most experience and were most familiar with its distinctive characteristics, as well as its needs and assets. And indeed, those community members have demonstrated that they are well capable of creating positive change in their neighborhood through grass-roots revitalization efforts. Thus, IIMD and ICD sought to enhance those qualities and support a strategy that was entirely driven by the community.

In doing so, a seven-step process was implemented. This process rolled out in three phases: Phase I (Planning), Phase II (Data Collection), and Phase III (Final Review).

**PHASE 1: PLANNING**

Phase I consisted of developing program materials. This included hiring, training and supervising a project manager. It also involved creating reporting templates and methods for data collection, designing a planning strategy, marketing materials and a marketing strategy, volunteer recruitment, compiling a list of stakeholders, meeting with stakeholders, scheduling meetings, and identifying meeting locations.

**PHASE 2: ENGAGEMENT**

Phase II consisted of engagement. To ensure the planning process would reach diverse members of the community, the team utilized a broad set of data collection methods. These involved the following, as illustrated on the next page.

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PLANNING SESSIONS

As part of Phase 2, the WCIP team focused heavily on implementing a series of eight planning sessions, each involving seven steps.

1. **EXISTING PROJECTS**
   Identify existing Warrendale projects.

2. **NEEDS ASSESSMENT**
   Identify the needs of the Warrendale community.

3. **CATEGORIZATION**
   Members grouped their needs into category buckets.

4. **PRIORITIZATION**
   Members voted their categorical needs into varying priority levels.

5. **STRATEGIC ALIGNMENT**
   Members then voted for each categorical timeline.

6. **CATEGORIZATION MAP**
   Members identified where they would like each category to be located.

7. **FINAL VOTING**
   The last step is to have all members vote on one focus category.

The first planning session consisted of identifying existing Warrendale projects. Eight current projects were identified as follows:

1. City of Detroit’s Strategic Framework (encompassing the larger Cody Rouge area)
2. Community Garden
3. Pocket Parks
4. Community Orchard
5. Build Playscape
6. Bio-retention Project within the Warrendale Community
7. Rouge Park Master Plan
8. Development of new parking lot
NEEDS ASSESSMENT

STEP 2 OF THE PLANNING PROCESS

The second meeting was devoted to identifying the needs of the community. A total of thirty-two needs were identified:

- Increase homeownership
- Offer English as a Second Language classes
- Social services
- Brand Warrendale/identify the community/install signage
- Increase parental involvement in schools
- Stop population decline
- Increase occupancy on Warren Ave. business corridor to 100%
- Increase population
- Assign a community business liaison
- Increase the number of streetlights and their efficiency
- Increase youth involvement/empowerment
- Create a space for a community center
- Implement strategic investment
- Install community parks/pocket parks
- Increase employment opportunities
- Initiate community recreation projects
- Increase education and training opportunities
- Increase the number of healthcare facilities
- Address barriers to employment
- Inspire people to become more involved in community related issues
- Increase economic development opportunities
- Increase safety
- Improve Street lighting
- Provide educational opportunities for minority entrepreneurs
- Address garbage cans left in the streets
- Implement a dog rescue services
- Enforce city ordinances
- Create a Western Market
- Beautify and clean the community
- Clean the streets
- Connect across cultures/understanding cultures
- Implement policies that will positively affect climate change
At the third meeting members grouped the 32 needs into nine categories. The categories were as follows in the diagram above.

**Community Beautification**

**Recommendations:**
- Remove trash from the streets & around residential properties
- Create a Western Market
- Enforce city ordinances
- Improve waste management by providing more trash receptacles
- Initiate a community policing program
- Police illegal dumping

**Increase Population**

**Recommendations:**
- Return current residents and provide opportunities for growth
- Increase homeownership

**Understanding Cultures**

**Recommendations:**
- Help to build cultural awareness and bridge cultures
- Offer ESL classes
- Provide educational opportunities to learn about different cultures and minorities

**Strategic Investment**

**Recommendations:**
- Design an assessment aimed at home ownership, rental properties, mixed use developments, property values, and vacancy rates
- Hold landlords accountable and enforce blight and/or neglected properties ordinance
- Increase density along the commercial corridor to 100% occupancy
- Design a plan for ‘capacity building’ that includes income of residents, residential inclusion, and increased educational institutions
- Initiate planning sessions: e.g., community wide meetings to gain input on community re-investment opportunities, municipal offices, community oversight, and nonprofits/NGOs’ role in the City of Detroit
- Establish relationships between members of the community and law enforcement
- Increase streetlights, sidewalks, and tree lighting
- Improve on safety and make the streets safer

**Youth Engagement**

**Recommendations:**
- Incorporate mentorship and self-awareness programs, teach youth entrepreneurship skills, i.e., how to start a small business. Also, offer job coaching, job readiness skills, employment skills (resume building, interviewing, etc.)
- Healthcare
- Employment
- Senior services
- Medical
- Mental health counseling
- Addiction and substance abuse treatment
- Optometry
- Audiology
- Clothes closet for professional attire
- Food Pantry

**Social Services**

**Recommendations:**
- Literacy classes (computer, financial, ESL, GED, etc.)
- Prepare Warrendale’s youth for the jobs of tomorrow, e.g., coding, IT, skilled trades, cybersecurity, and entrepreneurship
- Establish a Warrendale-wide program that would encourage local businesses to employ and mentor youth
- Teach youth financial literacy and skills, i.e., financial empowerment, and self-awareness
- Increase density along the commercial corridor to 100% occupancy
- Increase funding and incentivizing the overall success of the project
- Work with city council, state representatives and senators to draft legislation aimed at improving air quality throughout the city
- Plants trees and gardens
- Increase food pantry
- Clothes closet for professional attire
- Food Pantry

**Climate Change**

**Recommendations:**
- Work with city council, state representatives and senators to draft legislation aimed at improving air quality throughout the city
- Plants trees and gardens
- Increase food pantry
- Clothes closet for professional attire
- Food Pantry

**Engagement**

**Recommendations:**
- Incorporate mentorship and self-awareness programs, teach youth entrepreneurship skills, i.e., how to start a small business.
- Incorporate mentorship and self-awareness programs, teach youth entrepreneurship skills, i.e., how to start a small business.
- Establish a Warrendale-wide program that would encourage local businesses to employ and mentor youth
- Teach youth financial literacy and skills, i.e., financial empowerment, and self-awareness
PRIORITIZATION

STEP 4 OF THE PLANNING PROCESS

To ensure a fair process, step 4 utilized a voting method. Community members voted for prioritization levels for each of the 9 categories.

COMMUNITY MEMBERS WERE ASKED TO PARTICIPATE IN AN ACTIVITY.

They were provided with a set of numbers, 1 through 8 (1 signifying the highest priority and 8 the lowest). Each of the nine categories was printed on a large sticky note and displayed on a wall. Members were then asked to put a number on each category, according to its level of importance.

The results demonstrated that a majority of the categories (five in total) were identified as a high priority; no categories were identified as an intermediate priority; and three of the categories were deemed a low priority. The results are revealed in the infographic.

STRATEGIC ALIGNMENT

STEP 5 OF THE PLANNING PROCESS

COMMUNITY MEMBERS WERE THEN ASKED TO IDENTIFY GOALS FOR EACH CATEGORY.

Community members were then each provided with color coded sticky notes and asked to identify short-term (blue), intermediate (yellow) and long-term (red) goals. The results are shown in the diagram above. Six were judged ‘short-term’; one was thought ‘intermediate’, and one was deemed ‘long-term’.

Note: Climate Change was voted as its own category, later in the process, and therefore was not identified as a short, intermediate or long-term goal.
CATEGORIZATION MAP

STEP 6 OF THE PLANNING PROCESS

Step 6 involved another group activity. Members were provided with different color pins which represented each category (identified below).

Members were asked to identify areas on the map where they would like each category to be located. The targeted locations are attached on the following map.
WE VOTE FOR A COMMUNITY CENTER

FINAL VOTING

STEP 7 OF THE PLANNING PROCESS

To further guarantee a fair process and select a final project, step seven consisted of a final voting process.

In doing so, the facilitator reiterated the nine categories and explained that the WCIP team would only be able to focus on one of the nine categories. Thus, the facilitator asked the members for a final consensus.

After the voting process took place, the category that received the largest number of votes was a community center. The facilitator asked members if they believed that a community center would encompass each of the nine categories, and all the members agreed.
The multi-lingual, three-page survey consisted of six yes or no questions related to the planning process and its outcomes (the survey and results are attached below). A comments section was also provided so community members could provide written feedback. The survey was created in English, Arabic and Spanish and the results were collected, reviewed, analyzed, distributed and discussed at the final meeting. The results will also be used for program evaluation purposes.

Prior to COVID-19, the WCIP’s final review process was twofold. First, a final, in-person community meeting was scheduled for Tuesday, March 31, 2020. The second part of the process involved presenting the final plan to the members of the Warren Avenue Community Organization (WACO) and the Warrendale Community Organization (WCO).

However, due to the pandemic, the team had to revise this strategy. Thus, it determined that a four-pronged approach should be executed. This involved: 1. Creating a multi-lingual, three-page survey; 2. Distribution of survey through mailings, email and on-line platforms (Survey Monkey); 3. Follow-up 1:1 phone calls; and 4. Facilitation of a final virtual community-wide meeting.

The final virtual meeting was held on Wednesday, July 29, 2020. The meeting was facilitated by Anne Roth, IIMD Director of Grants Administration and Wojciech Żółnowski, IIMD Executive Director. The two provided a final review of the project, discussed the survey, encouraged final input and feedback, addressed any remaining questions from those present, and discussed next steps.

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The survey questions below was distributed using various mediums and in 3 different languages. Below is a representation of the responses and commentary provided by the 45 total surveys completed.

1. You first identified existing Warrendale projects, as previously outlined on page 13 (Phase 2, Step 1 of the Planning Process). Does the list reflect what was decided?

   Yes 93% 7%

2. You then composed a comprehensive list of 32 needs, as previously outlined on page 14 (Phase 2, Step 2 of the Planning Process). Does the list of needs reflect what was decided?

   Yes 98% 2%

3. You then grouped the 32 needs into 9 categories, as previously outlined on page 16 (Phase 2, Step 3 of the Planning Process). Does the list of needs below reflect what was decided?

   Yes 98% 2%

4. You then prioritized five categories as high priority, as previously outlined on page 18 (Phase 2, Step 4 of the Planning Process). Does the list of needs below reflect what was decided?

   Yes 93% 7%

5. You then prioritized the remaining categories as low priority, as previously outlined on page 18 (Phase 2, Step 4 of the Planning Process). Does the list of needs below reflect what was decided?

   Yes 89% 11%

6. Lastly, you participated in a final voting process which intended to encompass all of the above categories and would result in a ‘win win’ for everyone. Your final consensus determined that a community center would be most aligned with your identified priorities. Does this reflect what was decided?

   Yes 93% 7%

Progress bar shows response comparison in terms of “yes” or “no”. Percentage is taken from a total of 45 responses.

COMMUNITY RESPONSES

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Yes 93% 7%

Please let us know if you have any final feedback regarding the plan that you created. 12 responses were received and stated as follows on the next page:

I BELIEVE UNDERSTANDING DIFFERENT CULTURES SHOULD BE A HIGH PRIORITY.

COMMUNITY CENTER IS A WINNER FOR THE COMMUNITY. IT WILL BE BEST FOR THE COMMUNITY AS A WHOLE TO ADDRESS THE CHALLENGES WE FACE. OTHER ISSUES WE FOCUSED MORE ON INCLUDING CLIMATE CHANGE, GREEN INFRASTRUCTURE, ETC.

MY RESPONSE TO QUESTION 5 ON INCREASE POPULATION, UNDERSTANDING CULTURES & SOCIAL SERVICES IS BASED ON THE FACT THAT THOSE PROBLEMS ARE REFLECTED IN THE SUCCESFUL ACCOMPLISHMENT OF THE AGREED UPON GOALS. HENCE, IT’S NOT A LOW PRIORITY AS MUCH AS IT’S A PRIORITY THAT WOULD BE ACHIEVED THROUGH THE TARGETED PROJECTS.

I WOULD LIKE TO SEE OUR YOUTH MOVE UP ON THE PRIORITY LIST.

CLIMATE CHANGE WAS BRING UP & NEEDS TO BE ADDRESSED. THE COMMUNITY CENTER NEEDS TO BE BUILT WITH GREEN INFRASTRUCTURE.

BEST WISHES WITH THE PROJECT.

PRESENT MORE PROJECTS, PROGRAMS & EVENTS THAT WILL ENCOURAGE THE COMMUNITY AS A WHOLE TO EMERGE RESULTING IN COMPLETE CIRCLE (I.E., COMMUNITY FESTIVAL).

YOU CAN’T DO EVERYTHING BUT MY RESPONSE TO QUESTION 5 ON INCREASE POPULATION, UNDERSTANDING CULTURES & SOCIAL SERVICES IS BASED ON THE FACT THAT THOSE PROBLEMS ARE REFLECTED IN THE SUCCESFUL ACCOMPLISHMENT OF THE AGREED UPON GOALS. HENCE, IT’S NOT A LOW PRIORITY AS MUCH AS IT’S A PRIORITY THAT WOULD BE ACHIEVED THROUGH THE TARGETED PROJECTS.

THANK YOU FOR GIVING ME THE OPPORTUNITY TO BE A PART OF THIS INITIATIVE.

I BELIEVE UNDERSTANDING DIFFERENT CULTURES SHOULD BE A HIGH PRIORITY.

I WOULD LIKE TO SEE OUR YOUTH MOVING UP ON THE PRIORITY LIST.

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THE WARRENDALE COMMUNITY INTEGRATION PROJECT WAS WELL RECEIVED BY MEMBERS OF THE COMMUNITY.

The stakeholders were eager to engage in a project which was one, community driven, and two, was specifically directed towards the development of Warrendale. This enthusiasm was demonstrated by the number of members involved in the process and the willingness to come together, despite racial, ethnic, or religious differences, to devise a plan that will enhance the quality of life for all residents of Warrendale.

Despite these efforts; however, Warrendale continues to face challenges. Increased resources are needed. Once obtained, they will help strengthen the community’s essence—an increasingly diverse and prosperous neighborhood that has the clear potential to thrive. Thus, IIMD, ICD and their partners commit to continued collaborations to achieve the goals identified in this report. This will require holding on-going meetings with community partners to identify a site for a community center. It will also require selecting one of the neighborhoods identified in the mapping exercise. Furthermore, the undertaking will entail purchasing the space needed, as well as developing renovation plans, if necessary.

The WCIP team will identify and seek seed-funding to initiate the programs and services identified by the community. Once funding partners are ascertained, the team will develop programing and services, staffing, sustainability, evaluation, and marketing plans.
LESSONS LEARNED

In starting the project, the team fully understood the essential aspect of obtaining investment on behalf of the receiving community, (i.e. native residents of Warrendale) and therefore, knew that without this, the project would not be successful. Therefore, with this in mind, several lessons were learned. Most importantly, this involved a strong need for inclusive community engagement and outreach to Warrendale’s native residents, as well as its diverse populations.

The team quickly realized building relationships among new immigrants and native-born community members would not be something that can be achieved within the timeframe of the project. It became clear that it would need to be an on-going effort which would consist of valuable partnerships, persistent engagement, hard work, and time.

In any integration and/or resettlement project, any resources, support services, etc. must be administered with an equitable approach. Thus, each resident, regardless of race, religion, ethnicity, age, or nationality, must procure the benefits of such services. This is necessary for the entire community and will better permit all those in Warrendale to grow and prosper.
Although there were very few differences of opinion, inherent cultural dynamics were a factor; yet they never hindered the project’s progress. In addition, the community’s steadfast engagement and forward thinking far exceeded the WCIP team’s expectations. Also, the community’s vision, unflinching dedication and on-going support superseded any differences of opinion and solidified the goal that bridging cultural divides is sustainable and remains at the forefront of this work. Lessons learned also consisted of understanding how Warrendale is defined. Through the process, the WCIP team learned that the initial boundaries identified were incorrect.

Thus, Warrendale is not bounded by Southfield Freeway to the east, as was once understood. It extends, in fact, beyond Southfield Freeway and ends at Greenfield Road.

LESSONS LEARNED
Continued

Lastly, the WCIP team gained an understanding that although the city has implemented planning projects in the area, and funding has been allocated, Warrendale is still in need. As Barb Matney rightfully explained at one of the meetings, “We can’t implement one of these projects until we resolve other issues. We can’t beautify the community until children have safe spaces to play.” Thus, as the city is experiencing growth and revitalization, Warrendale is one of many neighborhoods that remain in need of basic city services.
LETTER FROM THE DIRECTORS

When asked by the Mayoral Office of Immigrant Affairs to provide English as a Second Language classes to Warrendale’s refugees in 2016, I accepted the task with great humility. However, at the time, I did not fully understand the expansive work that was yet to come. As things progressed into what has now become the Warrendale Community Integration Project, I was struck by the heartfelt welcome and inclusive embrace of the Warrendale community. Their progress has been remarkable and far exceeded my expectations.

In embarking on the WCIP project, IIMD and its partners sought to ensure three critical priorities were met. One was to establish a welcoming project that would be inclusive to both newcomers and longtime residents. Secondly, we wanted to guarantee a planning project that was solely driven by the community. Thirdly, we wanted to ensure that the recommendations provided in this report would come from the residents themselves. This report is a testament to those efforts. Through a thoughtfully crafted framework, the planning process encompassed the goal of implementing a project which brought diverse residents together to improve the quality of life for everyone, regardless of race, age, ethnicity or religion.

In employing the WCIP, we sought to convene a group of stakeholders. Those stakeholders included community leaders, residents, immigrants, religious leaders, business leaders, law enforcement officers, educators and elected officials. The process unfolded over the course of a year and included one-on-one meetings, attendance at community meetings and events, and a series of planning sessions.

During this time, the needs of the community were first identified, then refined; then recommendations were formed, and categories were voted on. Finally, an implementation project was selected.

The recommendations and implementation project identified in this plan will not provide a solution to the challenges Warrendale residents continue to face. However, through continued effort and further collaboration, the needs identified in this report will eventually be addressed. This plan is a mere continuation of the immense work that has been led by lifelong Warrendale residents and will help channel further revitalization at the local level.

After witnessing the resilience of this community, I strongly believe that each member of the Warrendale neighborhood wants what all residents deserve and require, and that is to live in a clean, safe, stable, and economically viable environment, where growth transpires and takes the shape of similar areas within the city. I could not be more grateful for the opportunity to work on behalf of such a dedicated group of residents, and I wholeheartedly thank those who worked so hard to help us reach our goal. My colleagues and I sincerely look forward to continuing this work on behalf of the Warrendale community.

Sincerely,

Wojciech Zolnowski
Executive Director
International Institute of Metropolitan Detroit

Sufian Nabhan
Executive Director
Islamic Center of Detroit
REFERENCE LIST

3. Nemecek Frank, Warrendale’s Understated Cool (Model D, 2006)
5. Al-Hanooti Muthanna, Personal Communication, WCIP Director/Community Organizer (2019)