

PUBLIC HEALTH AND SAFETY PRIORITIES

Throughout the early stages of the planning process, the project team found a number of common themes related to public health and safety listed below:

1. Demographics of the neighborhood, including the prevalence of seniors and more women than men, need to be considered explicitly for successful public health and safety improvements.
2. Mothers in the community in particular fear about the safety of their black sons.
3. Some community members feel the neighborhood is safer than it was 20 years ago, but drug use is still a relevant concern.
4. Drug use is impacting seniors too even though it is less visible. Drug use is an intergenerational issue.
5. Liquor licenses for Homewood businesses are often perceived to be associated to crime rates.

While not every detail of the core themes is able to be addressed within this section, the themes above directly influenced the selection of the existing conditions chapter outlined by top priorities.

PERCEPTION OF SAFETY

The perception of safety has been a common theme among all stakeholders. Both inside and outside of Homewood, the perception is often that Homewood is not safe. While each individual has different needs to feel safe, this common perception has tangible consequences for the community. The perception creates a barrier for residential and commercial development. It also creates a barrier for potential new residents. The perception is strengthened by any incidence of crime and by media coverage of Homewood.

Key questions that influenced recommendations:

- How does the negative perception of Homewood affect the community?
- What are opportunities to expand the perception of Homewood?
- Which media entities produce Homewood stories about more than crime?
- What makes you feel safe?

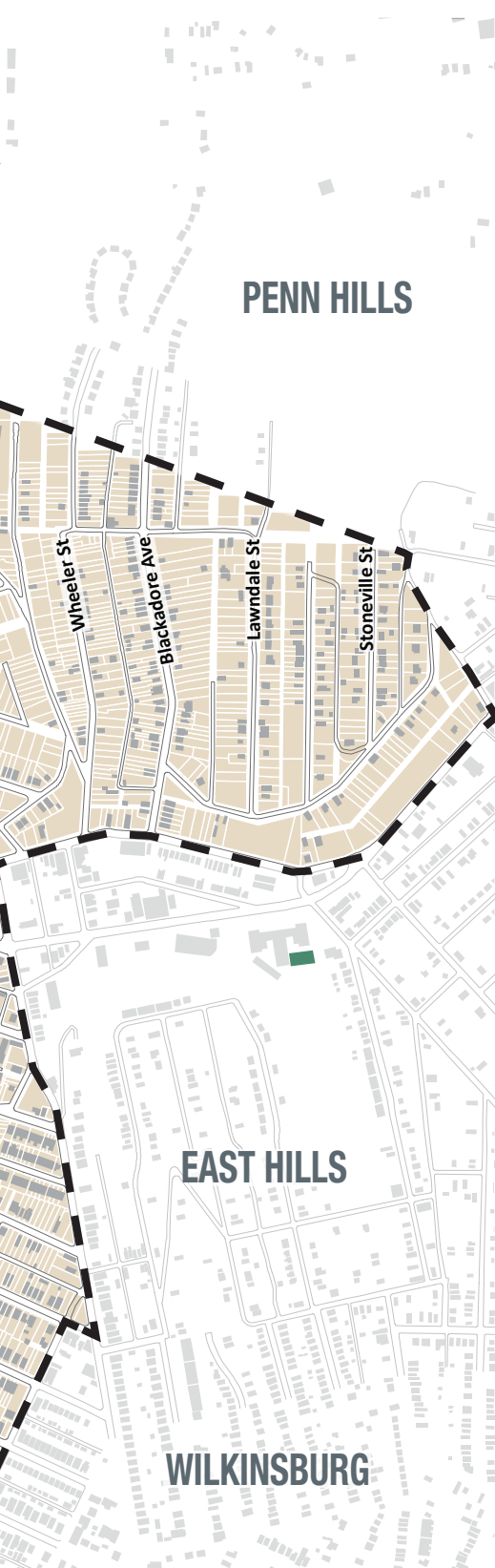
— Project Boundary

● Green Space

● Places you avoid

● Neighborhood Destinations

● Public Transit



GUN VIOLENCE

While the perception of violence is an issue to be combated, there is also the reality of gun violence. Approximately 6,500 people live in Homewood - two percent of Pittsburgh's population. In 2014, 11 homicides (15% of all of Pittsburgh's homicides) took place in Homewood. That went down to 7 homicides (12%) in 2015¹. Since 2014, over half of criminal offenses reported are not violent crimes, but are property crimes (i.e. theft, vandalism, burglary) and simple assaults ("...the use of threatening words and/or other conduct, but without displaying a weapon or subjecting the victim to actual physical attack.")².

The Pittsburgh Black Elected Officials Coalition and the City of Pittsburgh are prioritizing gun violence. Shot Spotter, a system to detect gunshots, was installed in Homewood in 2015.

1. City of Pittsburgh Department of Public Safety Bureau of Police Annual Report 2015

2. City of Pittsburgh Department of Public Safety Bureau of Police Violence Dashboards

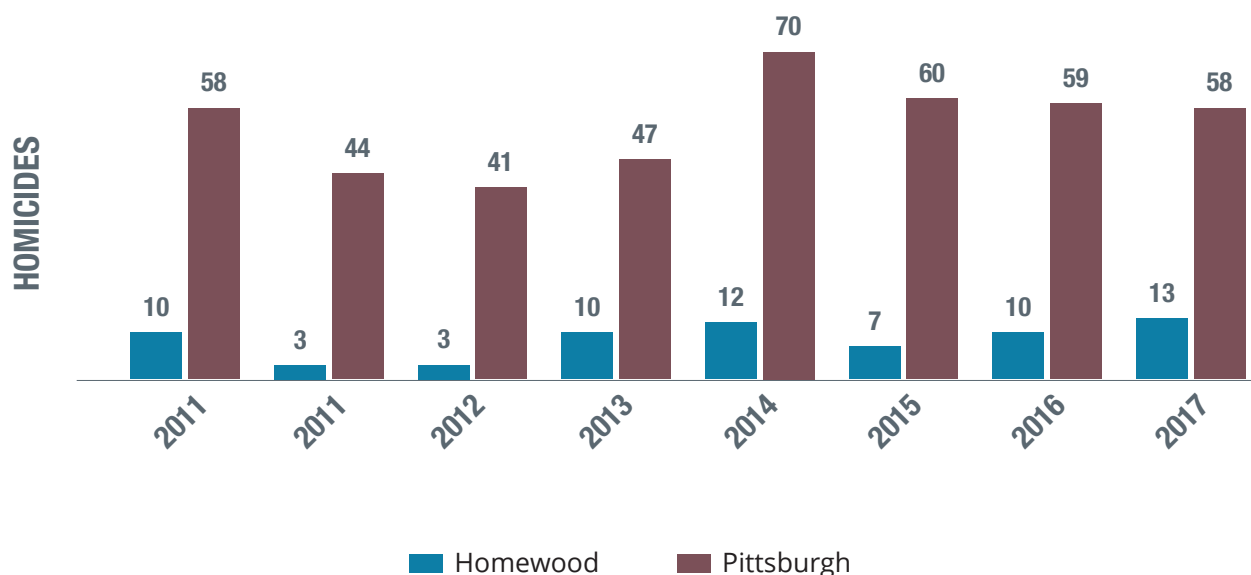
Key questions that influenced recommendations:

- Is the local community aware of efforts such as Shot Spotter in Homewood?
- What other crime reduction efforts have taken place?
- Which efforts are most successful for the holistic health and safety of the community?
- What are origins and disputes that result in violence?
- How can community members intervene before violence becomes an option?

Figure 3.44

INCIDENCE OF HOMICIDES: HOMEWOOD VS. PITTSBURGH

Source: Allegheny County Department of Human Services



SUPPORT WOMEN AND SENIORS

Homewood residents represent all age groups, but the majority are women and a significant portion are 60 years or older. As of 2015, 60% are female, and 37% are 60 or over. These characteristics are important, and are higher than average in Pittsburgh. Older populations have unique needs across all areas, but especially health. Additionally, as the total population is majority female, there are targeted resources, information, and screenings needed to support women's health.

Key questions that influenced recommendations:

- What physical health services are needed?
- What behavioral health services are needed?
- Where do you currently seek health services?
- Do the local services need larger capacity or resources? If so, what specific service areas are in most need and have the opportunity for growth?

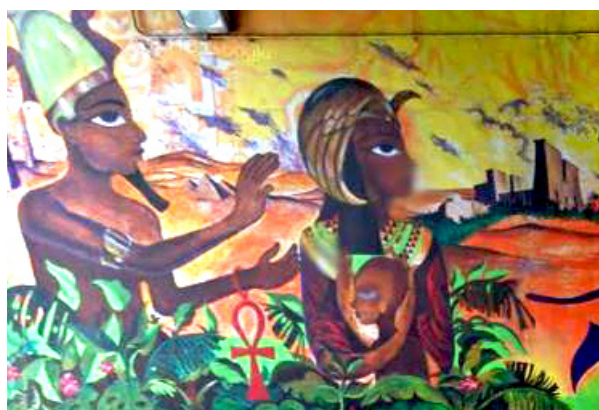


Figure 3.45 Public art celebrating African American women throughout the Homewood community



DRUG ACTIVITY

In the public meeting, a common public safety concern was drug activity, including both usage and dealing. Arrest reports show that there are a variety of substances involved in drug-related arrests in the area. Heroin has been the most prominent substance in Zone 5's weekly Community Crime Update.

Key questions that influenced recommendations:

- How is drug dealing affecting Homewood?
- What are proven methods to reduce the inflow of drugs such as heroin and crack to neighborhoods?
- What resources or options do dealers need in order to stop dealing those drugs?
- How is drug usage affecting Homewood?
- What are proven methods to address usage of narcotics such as heroin?
- As substances like heroin are highly addictive, what are methods to reduce the harm inflicted on the user and the community?
- If resources such as methadone clinics were available, what would it take to ensure their being fully utilized?

PEOPLE RETURNING FROM PRISON

A commonly expressed concern is that a significant number of Homewood residents were jailed following the War on Drugs escalation in the early 1990s. Formerly-incarcerated individuals often experience discrimination in job seeking, housing, and social stigma. This discrimination can easily encourage people to return to illegal activity as a means of survival. As prisons generally do very little in terms of rehabilitation, it's not uncommon for formerly-incarcerated individuals to increase their knowledge of illegal activities. What would it look like for a community to do this necessary rehabilitation work and re-introduce people back into the community?

Key questions that influenced recommendations:

- What resources and opportunities are available to people returning from prison?
- What resources and opportunities are needed when someone returns to Homewood from prison?
- Does any organization or individual focus on re-introducing formerly-incarcerated people into their neighborhood?
- Are the organizations or individuals supported by the neighborhood or other organizations?

Figure 3.46

PART 1 VS. PART 2 CRIMES IN HOMEWOOD 2015

Sources: American Community Survey 2015, City of Pittsburgh Police 2015 Annual Report

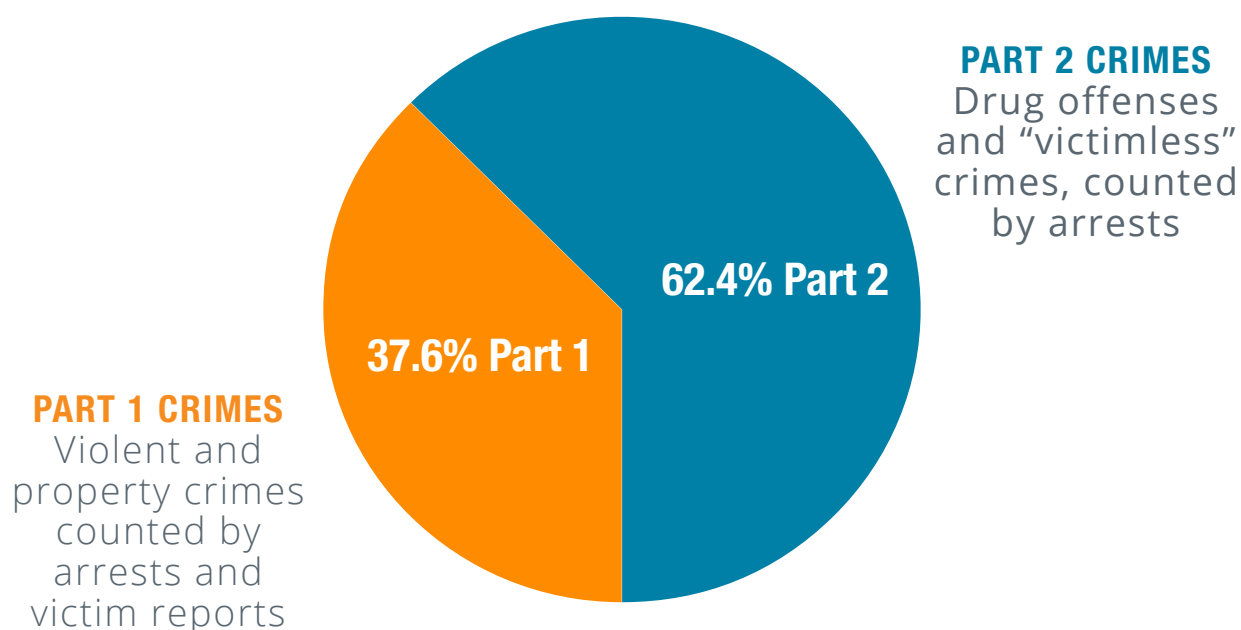


Figure 3.47 Steps at the Arthouse



TRAUMA

Trauma can be passed on through generations. Trauma can also be experienced daily at school, home, work, and in the community. Ignoring trauma comes with health risks and can lead to perpetuating traumatic behavior. Learning emotionally healthy methods to deal with difficult circumstances is paramount for community members who are facing financial or housing instability, have witnessed violence, have loved-ones incarcerated, and many other situations.

Key questions that influenced recommendations:

- What stigmas surround mental health in Homewood?
- What are ways to reduce stigma and increase support for community members in need of mental and behavioral health support?
- Who provides mental and behavioral health services and resources to Homewood residents?
- Are they located in the neighborhood?
- Do they partner or collaborate with each other?
- What would increase mental and behavioral health in Homewood?

COPING

There is evidence through Homewood of using art as a method for coping with trauma: "being at the Arthouse is where you realize you had wings the whole time" (left). Below, a mural in memoriam of Taylor Coles.

Figure 3.48 A mural in memoriam of Taylor Coles



FOOD ACCESS

There are no grocery stores in Homewood. This is a major health issue because in the absence of fresh produce, there are corner stores with limited capacity and a high concentration of unhealthy, processed, genetically modified products. This negatively impacts Homewood's health by eliminating easily accessible food options.

Also of significant note, many families have students who receive free or reduced lunches during the school year. During the summer, food options for these children may be more limited.

While transit accessible grocery stores are available nearby in East Liberty, it can be difficult to carry enough groceries for a family on transit, requiring more frequent shopping trips. This shopping option is most available to those who live within walking distance of a busway stop.

Key questions that influenced recommendations:

- Where do you get your groceries?
- Which groceries or food providers would be welcome in Homewood?
- How might we attract a grocery store to the area?
- Would a pop-up provider, such as a farmer's market, be useful to current and potential residents?
- Are there healthy food options for students during the summer?
- Other than a grocery store, what additional resources would encourage healthy eating habits?

Figure 3.49

FOOD ACCESS MAP

Source: City of Pittsburgh GIS

