

City of CHAMPAIGN

Northeast End Neighborhood Plan

Engagement Report


E EUREKA ST
DOUGLASS PARK
NELSON CT
E TREMONT ST
St. Luke CME Church
Macedonia Baptist Church
Douglass Park
MLK
FOXWELL CT
Douglass Center Annex
Champaign Public Library
Douglass Center
Booker T. Washington Elementary School
GROVE ST
New Hope Church Of God
Grove Street Church Of God
New Free Will Baptist Church
MLK SUBDIVISION
(REGISTERED NEIGHBORHOOD GROUP)
HOLTS DR
PHILLIPS DR
Connect Trail to Douglass Park/Library/School
E VINE ST
Apostolic Overcoming Holy
Anchor Church
E COLUMBIA AVE

Summary of Engagement

"When you look at a city, it's like reading the hopes, aspirations and pride of everyone who built it."
- Hugh Newell Jacobson

Community engagement is the foundation upon which effective neighborhood plans are built. Residents, property owners and stakeholders know the Northeast End best. This is Champaign's first neighborhood, predating the incorporation of the City. Many residents have roots in the neighborhood that go back multiple generations.

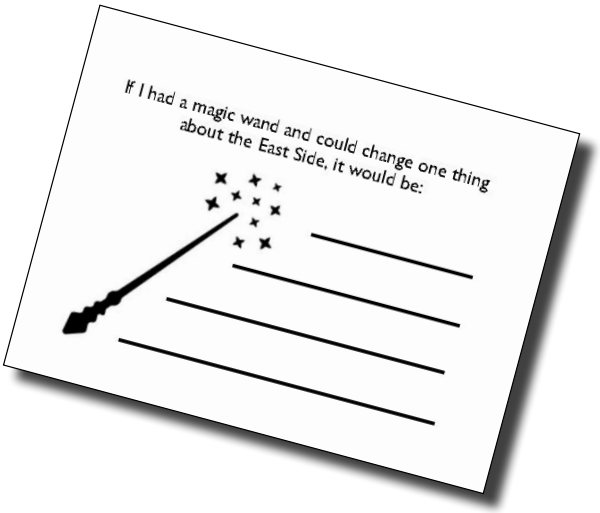
Following project initiation, outreach began with a neighborhood kick-off meeting held at the Douglass Annex. The process continued with stakeholder interviews, lunch and coffee chats, tours, and booths at community events. These forward-facing outreach activities progressed as the Existing Conditions analysis and preliminary design analysis for the Boneyard Creek were being completed internally.

The following summary reflects the deep care and affection that participants have for the neighborhood. Residents and stakeholders shared input on a wide variety of topics. In the interest of transparency, a summary of all input received is shared here. Topics that are directed to other units of government or agencies will be shared with them. For example, participants shared interest in renovations to the Douglass Center and Annex (Champaign Park District) facilities and interest in establishing Kids Plus after school care at Booker T. Washington Elementary (Unit 4 Schools). All feedback is welcome and will be directed to the responsible agency.



Stakeholder Interviews

Thea Green, Douglass Branch Library Manager
Sarah Sandquist, Executive Director, Champaign Park District
Jarrod Scheunemann, Deputy Executive Director, Champaign Park District
Cessily Thomas, Principal, Booker T. Washington Elementary
Claudia Lenhoff, Executive Director, Champaign County Healthcare Consumers
Adani Sanchez, Client Services Coordinator, Champaign County Healthcare Consumers
Davion Williams, City Council, District 1
Will Kyles, City Council, Deputy Mayor,
Lt. Katherine Thompson, Champaign Police Department
Darren Majatkowsk
Damon Majatkowski
Douglass Senior Center attendees and staff
Rev. Dr. Evelyn Underwood
Eldress Melinda Carr
Martel Miller
Rev. James Wright, Sheriff Temple
Terry Townsend
Joseph Wilson, Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. Sub.
Andrea Newman, Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. Sub
Henry Ross, HMR Productions, Carver Park Sub.
Phillip Fiscella, Sr.
Phillip Fiscella, Jr.
Pastor Hannah Brzozowski, Anchor Church
Father Creegan, Priest, St. Mary's Catholic Church
Juana Juan Pedro, Office Manager, St. Mary's Catholic Church





Meetings and Events

Neighborhood Plan Kick-Off Meeting
February 16, 2026

Carver Park Neighborhood Meeting
April 23, 2026

Juneteenth
June 13, 2026

Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. Association Meeting
April 30, 2026

Carver Park Neighborhood Celebration
Jun 21, 2026

Stormwater Facilities Tour
Jun 11, 2026

CU-Days
August 8, 2026

Don Moyer Boys and Girls Club Board Meeting
October 8, 2026

Neighborhood Update Meeting
October 15, 2026

City Council Study Session
October 25, 2026

Upcoming:
Plan Commission Study Session
November 17, 2026

Goals/Objectives Workshop
November 9, 2026 (morning & evening)

Goals/Objectives Workshop
December 14, 2026 (morning & evening)

Strategies/Actions Workshop
January 25, 2027 (morning & evening)

Draft Plan Review Workshop
March 8, 2027(morning & evening)




PRESERVATION POND



Stormwater Facilities Tour

The final phase of the Boneyard Creek, from Bradley Avenue to University Avenue, is scheduled for construction. Preliminary design has been completed for the segment from Bradley Avenue to Washington Street and is beginning for the segment from Washington Street to University Avenue. The design elements, like stone, railing, and light pole choices, will mimic those in completed stormwater facilities elsewhere in Champaign.

Tours were held to showcase existing facilities and discuss preferences with residents. The event yielded productive conversations about all aspects of the Boneyard Creek Greenway design, from amenities to plantings to security considerations. The tour visited Bristol Park, Hedge Park, Glenn Park, Preservation Pond and the Boneyard Creek 2nd Street Basin.

PREFERENCES:

- Stone columns and outcroppings
- Stainless railings like those in Bristol Park
- Waterfall and pond feature similar to Bristol Park
- Native plantings with blooming flowers
- Areas with shade, like the shade sail at Hedge Park and Douglass splash play area.
- Fitness stations with moveable elements, similar to Hedge Park and updated versions of the equipment at Douglass Park
- The neighborhood has excellent active recreation, like playgrounds, splash play and sports facilities. Greenway should include intergenerational recreation options and those less available to the neighborhood. For example, the faux turf area in Hedge Park is an inspiration. This could be a multi-use area, rather than a soccer wall, perhaps a putting green.
- Areas with shade, like the shade sail at Hedge Park and Douglass splash play area.
- Use the multi--use path as an education walk. On the upper route, share historical signage and the lower walk, share nature signage.
- Events are held on the level area overlooking the wetland/future boardwalk
- Include dark-sky compliant lighting
- Trailhead at Holt's Drive with name of neighborhood, like the bridge entrances in Hedge Park
- Seating, but without open area underneath where items can be stored
- Clear out undergrowth along railroad to discourage loitering/camping
- Overlook for bird watching
- Sculpture and art

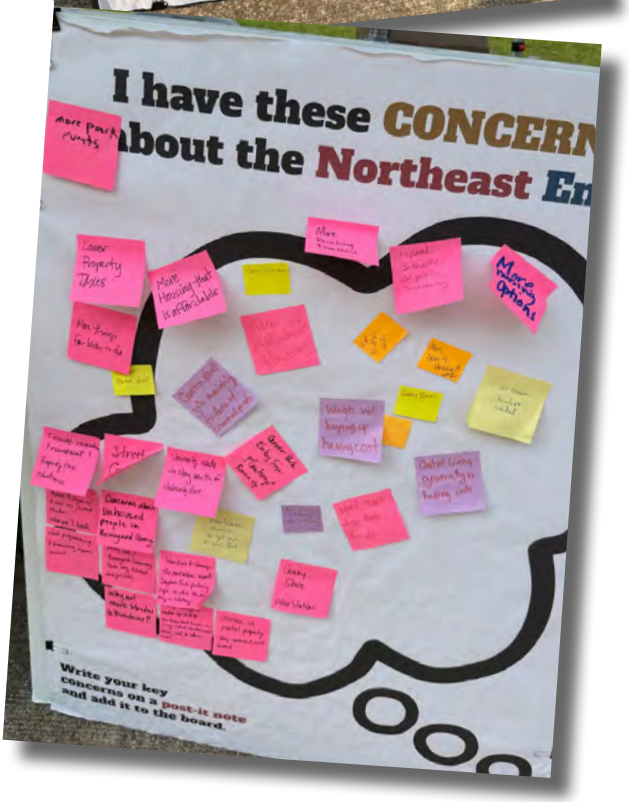
Likes, Concerns, Aspirations:

Participants were asked to share what they love about the neighborhood, their concerns for the neighborhood and their aspirations for what the Northeast End should be like in the future. That feedback is summarized here.

LIKES:

- The neighborhood has plentiful parks and green spaces.
- Active recreation in Douglass Park. It is a great asset to the neighborhood.
- Community institutions in Douglass Park, including the Douglass Branch Library, BTW Elementary, Douglass Center and Annex as well as the sports facilities. It is the heart of the neighborhood.
- North First Street historic business district and the new businesses reinvesting in University Avenue near First Street.
- Mature trees and street tree canopy on historic streets, especially Park Street.
- Historic buildings.
- Churches, especially historic churches.
- Community, neighbors, knowing that neighbors look out for one another.
- Housing stock in Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr, Taylor Thomas, Douglass Square and other contemporary subdivisions, as well as maintained historic homes.
- Proximity to nearby shopping and services, including Nieman's (County Market grocery story), healthcare, shopping, restaurants.
- Ease of using MTD to get from place to place.
- Proximity to recreation amenities not far from neighborhood, including Marten Center, Crystal Lake Park and pool.
- Proximity to Downtown, Midtown, Campustown, though it has displacement risk downsides.
- Community institutions like Boys and Girls Club, Daily Bread Soup Kitchen, BTW Elementary School, Empty Tomb, churches and others.
- North First Street Cultural Heritage District.
- Rich, multi-cultural history of immigration and resiliency.





CONCERNS:

- Gun violence/fights.
- Displacement of existing residents for more affluent residents or students.
- Loss of homeownership from tax sales, investor land acquisition, loss of ownership opportunities.
- Housing and utility affordability.
- Concentration of affordable housing in this neighborhood.
- Food insecurity, especially amongst children.
- Homelessness increasing, encampments along railroad, behaviors of unhoused residents is disruptive and creates bio-hazards (needles, defecation).
- Vacant parcels.
- Property condition in some areas, both building condition and nuisances in outdoor areas on certain properties.
- Overgrown alleys, yards, railroad-adjacent land.
- Lacking outdoor lighting - not enough lights.
- Lack of accessibility, programming support and investment in Douglass Center and Annex.
- No Kids Plus after school program at Booker T. Washington Elementary. The Park District has a program for teens a couple of days a week and the Library has a small program.
- Disparities in health and justice.
- Low literacy levels.
- Sense of geographic and socioeconomic divide between the North End and rest of the City.
- Want police presence, but as community policing where officers are wearing regular clothes and get to know residents.
- Canadian National trains blocks Bradley Avenue excessively. Trains blow horns at all hours of the night/ early morning.



ASPIRATIONS:

- Safe, secure neighborhood.
- Housing for all, at a variety of styles, price points and meeting variety of needs - seniors, families, work force housing.
- Homeownership opportunities.
- Actively programmed community center/fitness center for seniors and families.
- Safe mobility connections to parks, schools, community institutions, businesses.
- Thriving business district with long-time businesses preserved.
- Resource-rich environment.
- Well-maintained neighborhood that exudes pride.
- Historic buildings are protected.
- History is known, showcased and celebrated.
- Boneyard Greenway is complete sooner rather than later.
- Gathering places for events.
- Disruption of the legacy of socioeconomic segregation.
- Children have a sense of optimism, pride and something to strive for.
- History walk along the Boneyard that tells the history of immigration and resiliency of the North End.
- The area north of University Avenue remains residential, not high density.
- Bradley Avenue is no longer blocked by rail cars being moved - rail cars are moved on railroad land, not blocking the public street.
- A network of bike lanes, pedestrian amenities, trails to connect destinations and parks.
- The Douglass Center and Annex are rebuilt into a community center with an emphasis on seniors and a heated pool.



Advantages and Opportunities:

The Northeast End has many strengths and opportunities to capitalize on. These are as follows:

ADVANTAGES:

- Abundant access to park space with excellent active recreation amenities.
- Presence of community institutions, including: Douglass Annex and Center, Douglass Branch Library, Booker T. Washington Elementary, Boys & Girls Club Teen Center, Empty Tomb and more.
- Numerous churches provide programming, services, pride and draw people to the neighborhood.
- Rich history as Champaign's FIRST neighborhood!
- Historic buildings, especially churches.
- Successful housing developments, including historic Carver Park and Crispus Attucks, Douglass Square, Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr subdivision, Taylor Thomas subdivision. These provide a model for the future.
- Deep-rooted neighborhood kinship.
- Northeast End is centrally located near all major amenities, making it easy to walk and bike.

OPPORTUNITIES:

- Proximity to demand centers, including Downtown, Midtown, University of Illinois campus.
- Proximity to resources just beyond study area boundaries, including Niemann's (County Market) grocery store, healthcare, Marten Center, and employers.
- Boneyard Creek improvements will connect completed segments north of Bradley and south of University, creating a greenway with off-street recreation.
- Vacant lots are an opportunity for redevelopment.
- The North First Street Cultural District can raise the profile of the historic business district.




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