

Livability:

The sum of things that add up to quality of life: economic prosperity, social stability, educational opportunity, environment, and more.

Lab:

A place for research and development, for innovation and risk-taking, and to learn and grow.

Audacious:

Showing a willingness to take surprisingly bold risks.

The Story of Livability Lab: One Audacious Vision
Creating a system that ensures livability for all Muskegon County residents.

LIVABILITY LAB
MUSKEGON COUNTY, MICHIGAN

Creating a system that ensures livability for all Muskegon County residents.

That's **big**. That's **audacious...** creating a system that ensures livability...

We're going to address the system.

We're going to review, rethink, and rework... the system.

What does this say about our residents, when asked to help build the community challenge vision, that they would push for something this audacious?

... welcome to Muskegon County.

If we understand the history, the people, the mindset, it might help us see how it all comes together.

A little Muskegon County history

The name "Muskegon" is derived from an indigenous name meaning "marshy river" or "swamp."

The natural resources of Muskegon County are vast, with deep inland lakes adjacent to Lake Michigan, coastal dunes, rich soil for farming, and dense forested land. Nomadic Paleo-Indian hunters passed through the area thousands of years ago, then came the Hopewellians, and more recently bands of Odawa and Potawatomi (Anishinaabe) tribes. French explorers were here in the 17th century, and settlement began around 1837. In 1859, Muskegon County was formed. East Coast businessmen and others came seeking their fortunes, joined by immigrants from Canada and Northern Europe. The turn of the century and industrialization brought Southern Europeans, and the War Years produced the Great Migration,

with large numbers of Southern African Americans moving northward, joined by Mexican Americans and Appalachians. The result is a rich, diverse culture through this influx of forward-thinking entrepreneurs, investors, and working-class folks looking for better opportunities for themselves and their families.

This imagination for potential has endured in a place that at any given time in history ranges from once having more millionaires per capita than anywhere else in the USA; to an important manufacturing and shipping center on the Great Lakes; to struggling with post-industrial transitions common in the Midwest; to many phases in between, including the recent trajectory of growth and investment. There's always reason to celebrate and always room for improvement.

Maybe that's exactly why Muskegon County remains confident yet humble about its unique culture and perspective. Existing through time, carried forward by generations, it seems a deep appreciation for a better quality of life permeated the community and became embedded in the DNA, remaining

through the years of boom and bust and rebirth. Muskegon County is known for its entrepreneurial grit, commitment to community investment, and down-to-earth, blue-collar roots. The determination helped create a genuine combination of unpretentious sophistication that likely fuels our ongoing spirit of pushing boundaries from within.



From the Collection of the Lakeshore Museum Center.

So you can see, in Muskegon County, we've proven we have the perseverance, the know-how, the work ethic, the diversity, the resources, the heart, and the audacity to adapt and achieve.

Historical information compiled from: "History of Muskegon" by Daniel J. Yakes, Muskegon Community College and the Muskegon County Museum, www.co.muskegon.mi.us; "From Lumber to Foundries to Revitalization: The Muskegon Lake Story" by Kathy Evans, West Michigan Shoreline Regional Development Commission; Paul Isely, Grand Valley State University; and Al Steinman, Grand Valley State University.

CHIR History

Let's bring this around now. To look at how Livability Lab came to be, we need to do a little background history for this one too.

In 2015, the State of Michigan received a multi-year federal grant to implement innovative healthcare system enhancements that benefit families and improve the health of communities.

Muskegon County is one of five regions that were selected to participate. This includes the development of the Community Health Innovation Region, or the CHIR. The other regions are Genesee County, Jackson County, Livingston/Washtenaw Counties, and a ten-county cluster in Northern Michigan.

The Muskegon CHIR is a broad partnership coming together to identify and implement strategies that address community health and well-being, as prioritized by the community. Muskegon Community Health Project serves as the backbone organization, or BBO. Active members are from across all sectors including education, businesses, government, healthcare, and community services and support.



CHIR is made up of committees, a governance board, and a panel. One of the recent activities of the Muskegon CHIR was implementing enhanced/expanded processes and procedures to improve the clinical-community linkages (CCL) system in Muskegon County and streamline the referral and follow-up processes. CCLs help to connect health care providers, community organizations, and public health agencies so they can improve patients' access to preventive and chronic care services.

Muskegon CHIR Steering Council:

- Jane Clingman-Scott
- Jeff Fortenbacher
- Tracey French
- Linda Juarez
- Cindy Kendall
- Donata Kidd
- Lauren Meldrum
- Kathy Moore
- Shaun Raleigh
- Sarah Rinsema-Sybenga
- Christine Robere
- Kathy Rohlman
- Julia Rupp
- David Van Winkle
- Shannon Wilson
- Backbone Organization (BBO)*
- Danielle Culey
- Tess Kittridge
- Michael Ramsey
- Stevi Riel
- Katherine Weessies

Muskegon CHIR

To learn more about the Muskegon CHIR, including the CCLs, visit CHIRMuskegon.com. To learn more about the State of Michigan grant, visit michirlearning.com.

ABLE Change & The Resilience Zone

Part of the work of the CHIR includes a Collective Impact Model, which simply says that all aspects of a community have a role in its health and well-being. The ABLe Change Framework, developed by Drs. Pennie Foster-Fishman and Erin Watson at Michigan State University, is a dynamic model of change that is adaptive to local conditions.

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Six guiding principles, or "Simple Rules" of ABLe Change

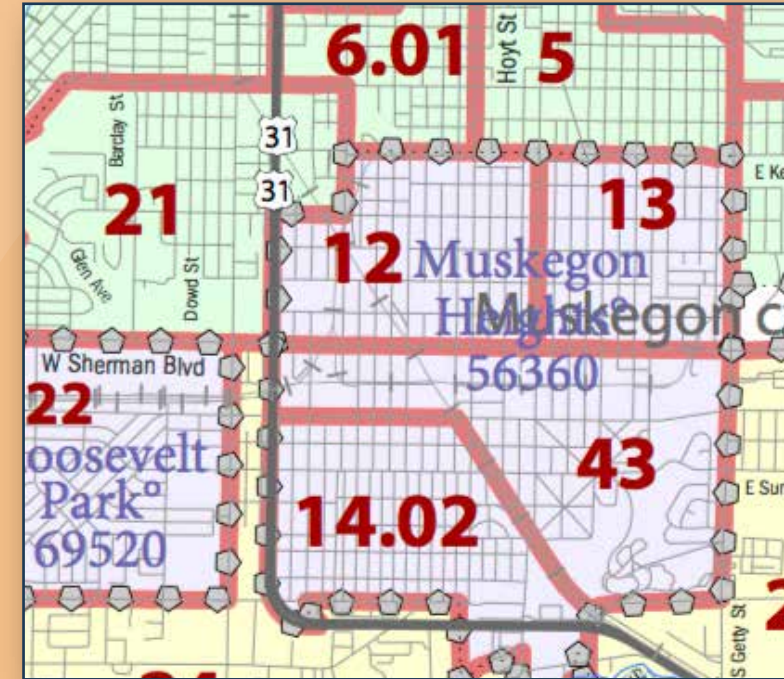
1. Engage Diverse Perspectives
2. Think Systemically
3. Incubate Change
4. Implement Change Effectively
5. Adapt Quickly
6. Pursue Social Justice

Muskegon CHIR Director Mary McDonald, with implementation support by Vondie Woodbury, organized a series of local ABLe Change workshops. Eventually, a decision was made to identify a focus location for increased resident engagement efforts. After considering several areas across the county, the Steering Council decided on a census tract located in the south side of the City of Muskegon Heights.

The Muskegon CHIR brought on board a consultant and resident of the area, Marquis Childers, Jr., and partnered with a local grassroots non-profit organization based in Muskegon Heights, the Coalition for Community Development (CCD), for additional support with the engagement efforts. The executive director of CCD is Kerri VanderHoff, who also teaches film theory at Grand Valley State University - a skill that was put to good use before too long.

The focus area is called the Resilience Zone. The engagement efforts included surveys, community meetings, and a Photovoice initiative.

Work cited: Foster-Fishman, P.G., & Watson, E.R. (2018). *The ABLe Change participant manual.*



2010 Census Tract Reference Map, www2.census.gov



MICHIGAN STATE
UNIVERSITY

Photovoice

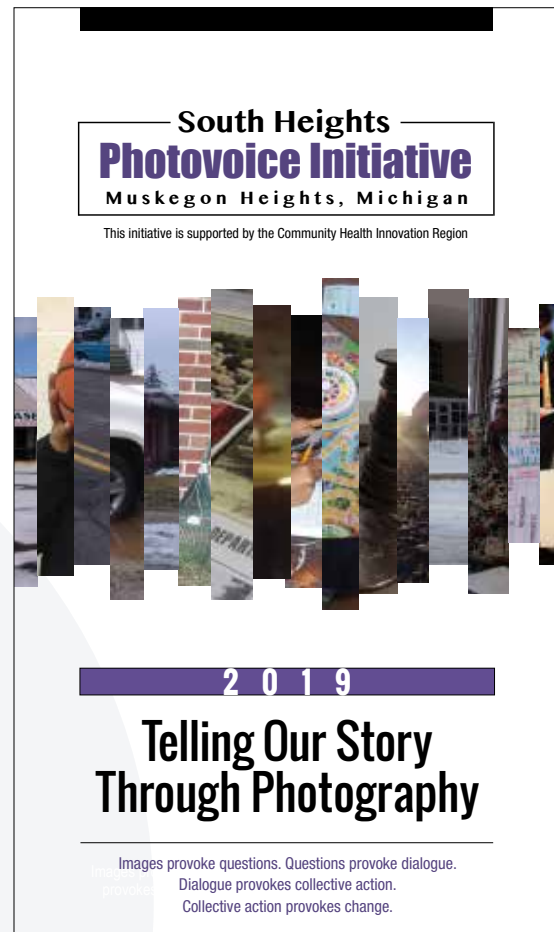
Photovoice is a participatory research methodology that recognizes people are the experts of their own lives and lived experiences.

The Photovoice process—part documentary, part art, part storytelling—provides a way to hear residents' unmediated point-of-view and to learn from their expertise. Participants receive a camera and training in basic photography skills, and then set out to capture images from their everyday lives and surroundings. Pictures and stories provide residents a way to reflect on their community and to talk together for several weeks about what they want to preserve and celebrate, and what they want to address and make better. After this period of critical analysis, the Resilience Zone/South Heights group chose their images, wrote their accompanying narratives, and presented a public exhibition of their work.

Ultimately, Photovoice is a catalyst for conversation. It's a process to communicate knowledge and concerns from grassroots level to organizations, government officials, and others that form public policy and make decisions that affect the community's well-being.

A dynamic and sincere connection happened once the South Heights Photovoice Initiative exhibition was unveiled and the conversations began. Attendees had a chance to talk to the resident photographers about their work. The insight was deeply informative, with nuanced and compelling reasons for areas of strength and areas of concern. Coming through most clearly in the narrative was an appreciation for their neighbors and a pride of place. The residents love their community and wouldn't want to live anywhere else, they're looking to make sure the future of their city grows in a positive way. Since the South Heights Photovoice Initiative premiere in early 2019, the exhibition has continued to appear in venues across Muskegon County and elsewhere, including the Neighborhood Associations of Michigan (NAM) Annual Meeting at the Amway Grand Hotel in Grand Rapids.

The full South Heights Photovoice Initiative booklet, with images and narratives, can be viewed online at LivabilityLab.com. While there, you can also view a ten-minute mini-documentary about the participants, their work, and the Photovoice experience.



**South Heights
Photovoice Initiative**
Muskegon Heights, Michigan

This initiative is supported by the Community Health Innovation Region

2019
**Telling Our Story
Through Photography**

Images provoke questions. Questions provoke dialogue.
Dialogue provokes collective action.
Collective action provokes change.



Work cited: Wang, Caroline, and Mary Ann Burris. "Photovoice: Concept, Methodology, and Use for Participatory Needs Assessment." *Health Education & Behavior*, vol. 24, no. 3, June 1997, pp. 369–387



A Turning Point

The work done in the Resilience Zone, including the South Heights Photovoice Initiative, was a real turning point in the trajectory of the Muskegon CHIR. It was probably the biggest catalyst for developing the 100-Day Challenge, which came to be known as the Livability Lab.

The idea with the Zone work was to more deeply engage residents, to have a process where residents could reflect and discuss their lived experiences, and then bring that valuable knowledge to the table. The residents responded, putting the work in to develop and document the information. They were ready to thoughtfully engage for further discussion, but that was only one side of the conversation.

The other side consists of the organizations and agencies within the system; they also were provided tools to help them reflect on their standard policies and practices, and then come to the table for a new kind of conversation that melds lived experience with industry experience. There just wasn't the same level of engagement happening within the organizations yet.

The question was, how to motivate and inspire all parties to come to the table, to consider doing things differently, and to be open to innovation?

The 100-Day Challenge and Livability Lab Beginnings

That's when Dr. Pennie Foster-Fishman suggested a 100-Day Challenge. Challenges have been implemented successfully, in various places across the country, to inspire collective action toward a common vision. The intent is to create the kinds of systemic changes needed in communities. Dr. Foster-Fishman thought it might work here.

A 100-Day Challenge is action-oriented and time-specific, designed to focus on a series of smaller 'wins' that build toward a larger vision of impact; teams are formed through the process and each work toward achieving an ambitious and concrete result within 100 days. The MSU ABL Change model offers a step-by-step guide.

A fundamental goal of a Community Health Innovation Region is the engagement of all sectors of a community to identify ways to improve local health and well-being. The CHIR Steering Council approved this new tactic, and a Design Team was formed to develop and implement the 100-Day Challenge.

The 100-Day Challenge Design Team

The original 100-Day Challenge Design Team consisted of (in alphabetical order):

Marquis Childers, Jr.
Resident engagement lead

Logan Jensen
Support for Challenge coaches

Mary McDonald
Director of the Muskegon CHIR

Michael Ramsey
Community outreach lead, CCL

Kerri VanderHoff
Communications lead

Katherine Weessies
Support for Design Team

Kim Wood
Logistics and assistance with database management

Vondie Woodbury
Challenge process and ABL Change Management, Design Team oversight

Also supporting the Design Team:
Alicia Cox, Tess Kittridge, Kharisma Kitchen

The Design Team worked closely with partners from Michigan State University/ ABL Change: Dr. Pennie Foster-Fishman, Dr. Erin Watson, Jennifer Nottingham, Abby Wattenberg, and several graduate students who helped compile the data. Additional partners: Foster What Matters and Public Sector Consultants.

**LIVABILITY LAB
beginnings**

**THE
DESIGN
TEAM**

Designing the 100-Day Challenge

Planning and implementing the 100-Day Challenge took several months. The first objective of the team was to create a vision that would frame the work of the Challenge. Using community-based information gathered through local surveys, focus groups, presentations, and other feedback, the vision eventually came to light. This feedback was a critical part of planning, as the vision needed to be one that all community members could embrace and where they could see a role for themselves.

One of the first things learned through the feedback process is that language matters. Concepts from the CHIR's roots in the health and human services sector, like Social Determinants of Health (SDOH) or sometimes called Influencers of Health (SIOH), weren't all that familiar to people from other sectors.

Once these things became a little clearer through discussion, when people outside the industry understood the social determinants are just different aspects of our lives, like where we live, work, educational opportunities, social connections, et cetera--and how those have an impact, positive or negative, on our overall health and well-being--we could get on the same page as a community and find that common vision. After several drafts and feedback sessions, the vision was formed:

Creating a system that ensures livability for all Muskegon County residents.

Implementing the vision through the 100-Day Challenge meant that, as a community, we would be learning new skills by using the processes from the ABLe Change method. That is different than creating a new program or a new coalition at the end of the Challenge. It's a transformation, it's the knowledge gained and the intent to apply those new skills going forward that helps change the system.

Muskegon County's 100-Day Challenge: Similar yet different

While the 100-Day Challenge model has been used in other cities, such a broad and inclusive vision like the one formed for Muskegon County has not been attempted. It raised a little concern with MSU colleagues, that's a lot of moving parts to pull together and a lot of information for the community to take in and stay on track. Other communities would typically tackle a certain sector or one specific issue, for example: a focus on high school graduation rates. The residents of Muskegon County asked for something more.

As the survey information and feedback kept revealing, the people of Muskegon County were not going to settle for a narrow goal. History shows that we know how to roll up our sleeves and take on the hard work that pushes past the boundaries. On behalf of the community, the Design Team advocated to keep the vision. Business, education, neighborhoods, health, and more all needed to be included in this effort. This was about true, large-scale, systemic change. If we're going to do this, let's do this.

Defining the 100-Day Challenge - what is it, exactly?

While putting together all the pieces, the Team had to figure out how to communicate the message clearly. The name and identity had to be more than just "100-Day Challenge." While the academic world may be aware of this model for community change, it just wasn't clear enough to a general audience what it was being applied to here. This was important because the Challenge needed to attract that cross-sector participation if this was going to work.

The communications team member came across a Chamber of Commerce magazine highlighting Muskegon County - enticing people to move here, businesses to invest here, tourists to vacation here. The magazine talked about the 'livability' of the area that helped make Muskegon so attractive. A light bulb went off. That's it, all these social determinants of health - these areas of economic and educational opportunity, of well-being, of social and entertainment options, and friendly neighborhoods - together, this is what people just generally call 'livability.' To improve equity - to identify and remove interconnected, systemic barriers that exist - is to improve livability, which affects the entire community in a positive way.

Furthermore, the 100-Day Challenge is about innovation. It's about a defined temporal space that allows for different perspectives to help shape the action plans, and taking on root cause analysis of barriers and strategies to mitigate or remove them. It's similar to the role of laboratories - a place to experiment and try new things, a place that encourages documented risk-taking and reflection.

As the vision emerged from community feedback, the unique branding of Muskegon's 100-Day Challenge was born: *Livability Lab*

The Design Team, along with colleagues at MSU, pulled together the data to provide the community with information needed to launch the Challenge.

The CHIR Director formed a cross-sector Core Team that convened once a month during this planning stage. Representing key leaders from throughout the county, the Core Team not only provided advisory support but also mobilized endorsement from Muskegon County businesses, government, neighborhoods and numerous health, education, and human services organizations.

The Muskegon Livability Lab Core Team and Community Partners:

Gary Allore –
President, Mercy Health

Troy Bell –
City Manager, City of Muskegon Heights

Jane Clingman-Scott –
Chair, Community Health Innovation Region

Mark Eisenbarth –
Administrator, Muskegon County

Mark Glover –
Treasurer/Secretary, Bethlehem Park Neighborhood Association and former educator

Brad Hilleary –
CEO, Webb Chemical/Heights Business

Todd Jacobs –
President and CEO, Community Foundation for Muskegon County

Erin Kuhn –
Executive Director, West Michigan Shoreline Regional Development Commission/Chair, Regional Prosperity Group

Cindy Larsen –
President, Muskegon Lakeshore Chamber of Commerce

Kathy Moore –
Director, Muskegon County Health Department

Dr. Dale Nesbary –
President, Muskegon Community College

Mimi Rankin –
Small Business Owner, Muskegon Heights

Christine Robere –
President and CEO, United Way of the Lakeshore

Antonette Robinson –
Chair, Crescent Neighborhood Association

Lisa Sabourin –
President and CEO, Employers Association of West Michigan

Dr. John Severson –
Superintendent, Muskegon Area Intermediate School District

Kim Sims –
Former Mayor, City of Muskegon Heights (2015–2019)

Walter Watt, Jr. –
Mayor, City of Muskegon Heights (2019 -)

Jonathan Wilson –
Regional Manager, DTE Energy



Livability Lab Framework and Process

Our interconnected approach meant our framework for the data needed to allow for those interconnected overlaps. We tried several established linear and vertical graphs, but ultimately realized we needed to create a circular, layered design.

The official Livability Lab Framework is a useful tool that helps us do the work needed. It looks simple, but is loaded with information. The online version is interactive, each section is clickable and leads to data compiled from hundreds of community surveys, focus groups, and local and national reports. The Vision is in the center, and the five Livability Elements surrounding it are areas that the community listed as necessary for a healthy and thriving life. Click on those and you will see the definition and status of each. The orange Community Conditions help us take action; these are things that need to be addressed to improve Livability and reach our Vision. Find the interactive Framework at LivabilityLab.com

While the Livability Lab Framework helps identify root causes that affect Community Conditions, it's the Lab's 100-Day Challenge Process that helps take action on that information.

The Process to work through those conditions is based in the ABLe Change model. It includes action steps of Define, Design, Do, and Learn.

With the Framework and Process coming together, it was also important to ensure the community would see the value in attending and participating in the launch event for the 100-Day Challenge. Resident engagement, fundamental to the Lab's success, continued through extensive outreach. From Muskegon Heights to Montague, North Muskegon to Ravenna, the Design Team and other members of the Muskegon CHIR gave presentations at every possible opportunity - from church congregations to neighborhood and business groups. Area media also helped get the word out.

And finally, to create the structure necessary to support the Challenge Teams and guide them through the Process, local Coaches were recruited. Many dedicated individuals signed on to serve, and these Coaches were trained with the help of our partners at Michigan State University.



DEFINE

Reveal and deeply understand local issues
Review the Framework for additional data
Conduct a thorough root cause analysis
Refine and define challenge goal

DESIGN

Develop innovative methods to pursue the goal
Design powerful strategies
Outline an action plan

Muskegon's 100-Day Challenge Process STAGES

DO

Implement strategies
Initiate action and track implementation
Reflect on progress
Adjust and adapt plan as needed

LEARN

Reflect on Team's impact
Discoveries and expanded knowledge
Empowerment
Aligning intentions

Foster-Fishman, P. G., & Watson, E. R. (2018). The ABLe Change participant manual. East Lansing: Michigan State University.

Livability Lab: 100-Day Challenge Launch Day - September 10, 2019

In planning for launch day, the Design Team held strong to the belief in keeping the tone and message aspirational. Muskegon County has great strengths to leverage, and is also not afraid to call out what needs to be fixed when necessary. That's how things get done.

There is plenty to be aspirational about - Muskegon County is seeing renewed growth and investment and we have a real opportunity to make sure all move forward together.

On the morning of September 10, during a continental breakfast, jazz music opened the event at the Folkert Community Center. This backdrop provided the metaphor that jazz is an improvisational form that depends on different instruments working together, trusting the knowledge and talent each person brings, just as our cross-sector, resident-driven approach would do.

Over 300 people were in attendance, and the prior outreach, engagement initiatives, and cross-sector collaboration helped bring a diverse mix. Members of the Core Team welcomed the crowd, followed by guest speakers - presented via video segments or live on stage - who shared personal stories that provided insight into different lived experiences in our community. Seating arrangement ensured each table had a good cross-sector mix of perspectives as well, as there were activities planned for later in the morning where the MSU team would hand out data packets that allowed each table to review and work through root cause analysis together.

By lunchtime, the energy in the room was high, the motivation to take action on the data encountered was strong, and over 150

individuals stepped forward to participate in 19 Challenge Teams proposed by attendees. This number of teams was unprecedented, and showed that Muskegon County was already there - ready to take bold steps forward, build off the existing energy and momentum, and accelerate it all to do something amazing together.

- TEAM 1 & 2** Neighborhood Association Council & Partnership Charter
- TEAM 3** Muskegon Heights Youth Initiative
- TEAM 4** Aligning Economic Opportunity Resources and Supports
- TEAM 5** Coordinating Local Food Advocacy and Access Efforts
- TEAM 6** Strengthening Childcare Opportunities
- TEAM 7** Improving Intergenerational Literacy
- TEAM 8** Assess Housing Stock/Needs to Identify and Address Gaps
- TEAM 9** Increase Financial Literacy to Promote Homeownership
- TEAM 10** Identify, Promote, and Support Minority-Owned Businesses
- TEAM 11** Foster Unity and Literacy with a New Reading Buddy Program
- TEAM 12** Understand and Address Local Workforce Development Gaps
- TEAM 13** Create Affordable Transit with Wheels to Work program
- TEAM 14** Prenatal Support
- TEAM 15** Create a Safe Space for Youth in Muskegon Heights
- TEAM 16** Increase Employment Opportunities via Expungement
- TEAM 17** Align Efforts and Increase Access to Local Resource Information
- TEAM 18** Discharge Procedures to Reduce Release into Homelessness
- TEAM 19** Reduce Inequities in the Distribution of K-12 Funding



That afternoon, those 19 Teams were tasked with immediate action. With the community data in hand, they outlined the goal they intended to reach by the 100-day mark, the root causes that needed to be addressed in order to get to that goal, and the first steps needed to start the process. A support system was in place to help guide the teams and provide resources to get where they wanted to be.



Visitors from the State of Michigan's SIM (State Innovation Model) team were also in attendance, and the buzz about Muskegon made its way back to the Capitol. To share both statewide and beyond the good work of Livability Lab, a film crew from Public Sector Consultants in Lansing created a short documentary highlighting Challenge Team progress.

[View the video at LivabilityLab.com.](https://www.livabilitylab.com)



Livability Lab: 100-Day Challenge Celebration - January 23, 2020

The 100-Day Celebration was held on January 23, 2020, and there was much to be celebrated. We heard lively shout-outs from every team on their greatest accomplishment. Several teams took the stage to present their 'wins' and where those accomplishments fit into the define, design, do or learn stage; and panel discussions helped share what was learned through the cross-sector teamwork. For the remainder of the event, attendees could mingle among the expo-style setup that allowed each team to highlight their accomplishments and talk about where to take things next.



You can learn much more about the 19 teams by visiting LivabilityLab.com and downloading the report booklet. The documentary by Public Sector Consultants, available on the website, also includes footage and interviews from the Celebration.



Livability Lab 2.0 was announced at the conclusion of the Celebration. Renewed support from the State of Michigan would help the teams and the community take the next steps forward.

Michael Ramsey moved into the role of CHIR Director, and solidified the merging of the Resilience Zone, Community-Clinical Linkages, and Challenge efforts under the Muskegon CHIR/Livability Lab umbrella. The work continued, as the teams began to coalesce into five Livability Element groups to create a cohort, with support from key organizations known as Community Conveners.

The Design Team conducted a post-event survey. We learned that the Framework and Process was understood and embraced by the community, that the focus on inviting a cross section to the table was noticed and appreciated, and that the community thought it was worth doing again.

LIVABILITY LAB MUSKEGON'S 100-DAY CHALLENGE

**LAUNCH: September 10, 2019 -
CELEBRATION: January 23, 2020**

1000+
PARTICIPATING
RESIDENTS

1. Attendees reviewed community conditions/data
2. 19 teams formed, coaches guided through 100-day process
3. Cross-sector teams implemented actions for community change

VISION
Creating a system that ensures livability
for all Muskegon County residents.



POST EVENT SURVEY

250 people responded to survey - included launch and/or celebration attendees and non-attendees
Diverse demographics, including 25% respondents identifying as People of Color
Favorite Part of Livability Lab:

74% said work done by Action Teams. Respondents pointed to the diversity of people involved; liked the 'framework' including the vision, livability elements, and community conditions; and found the community and root cause data helpful.

Livability Elements listed as most important to respondents:

Over half chose Education, Economic Opportunity, and Health as the most important, while the other two came in very high as well at 45% for Social Connection and Trust and 38% selected Safety and Security. The results validate interest in the community for all these areas.

92% indicated the event was successful, and 86% agreed that the Muskegon CHIR is impacting the community
94% encouraged the community to 'do it again.' A large number of respondents left their contact information to become involved in Livability Lab 2.0.

Design Team Executive Summary: Driving and Restraining Forces

Moving the status quo takes persistence, negotiation skills, creative thinking, and commitment.

The Design Team waded into a fair amount of uncharted territory during the planning and implementation of Livability Lab. In addition to the groundbreaking vision that emerged, it was necessary to allow for some fluidity and organic design development due to ongoing community feedback and direction. Once the Challenge concluded, the opportunity to reflect on the process and on how the Design Team and others played a part in this transformative experience could occur.

Mary McDonald polled the Team for feedback and noticed a resemblance to Lewin's Force Field Analysis models. Force Field Analysis, introduced in the 1940s by Kurt Lewin, is the idea that the status quo, or the way we do things currently, is maintained by an equilibrium between forces that drive change and others that resist change. Innovation and persistence in building consensus for driving forces and mitigating restraining forces is necessary to reach a desired goal, or future vision. With the Livability Lab vision, this means systems change.

The components are the Leadership of the CHIR Steering Council and Core Team; the Framework includes the Vision, Livability Elements, and Community Conditions as well as the process for creating the Framework and vetting it; the partnerships with MSU and MDHHS (Michigan Department of Health and Human Services); and the Design Team. As you can see from the graph, these components contain both driving and restraining forces within.

The Design Team showed fortitude, creativity, and a passionate belief in the vision while navigating the work through forces both propelling and preventing change. This included identifying and onboarding stakeholders, conducting informational sessions, scheduling problem-solving workshop meetings to move through complex processes, assessing risk and assuming responsibility, raising additional funds for timely pivots and momentum, building trust with community members, maintaining a fierce adherence to ideals, and more.

For change to happen, the Design Team needed to find ways to increase the drivers, reduce the restraints, or both. There are many reasons for being on either side of change. Driving forces may desire pushing toward a vision or goal, while a restraining force is in place because of

issues such as miscommunication of intention or lack of information about the goal. Restraining forces might also be attributed to layers of bureaucracy, uneasiness with change, or more consideration of cause and effect (unintended consequences) needs to happen before people and institutions are compelled to help drive change.

In any event, for there to be a transformation to a new desired state, the balance of the driving forces needs to shift. That means mitigating and lessening the resisting forces while building support and consensus of the driving forces -- enough to move the status quo. As you can imagine, this takes persistence, negotiation skills, creative thinking, and commitment.

DESIGN TEAM DRIVING AND RESTRAINING FORCES



LIVABILITY LAB 2.0

With all the feedback, learned lessons, and momentum towards continuing the work, we were on our way and ready to apply it all to 2.0.

COVID-19

And then, COVID-19 hit. Health concerns were a priority. The schools closed. Businesses closed, jobs were lost. Healthcare workers were furloughed, just when the community needed them most.

The Design Team, as with so many organizations, paused and pivoted to address the crisis.

Determining that the cross-sector communications network created during Livability Lab 1.0 could be useful here, together

with the information flow through the CCL that could identify community resources and relief help, the Team began disseminating vital information.

At the same time, the needs of the community were changing quickly. As a champion for including the resident voice in the decision-making process, the Team began surveying the community and sharing the new data with our cross-sector partners so relevant needs could be met.

SYSTEMIC RACISM

Then came the murder of George Floyd. The world reacted immediately and forcefully. Systemic racism was now widely acknowledged as a public health crisis.

The disparities affecting the African American community are profound, this needs to be called out for what it is.

CHECKING IN



PUBLIC HEALTH CRISIS

As the days and weeks passed, the residents of Muskegon County organized, we pushed to get through difficult times, to care for our loved ones, to support our community, to speak for a better way forward.

As summer approached, we checked in on the Challenge Teams. We wanted to know how they were doing, personally, as well as understand how they felt about moving forward. Was there work still to be done, were they wanting to continue in some way?

For many, the answer was yes.

It would look a little different, it would need new data reflecting the changes in the community, but the Muskegon County grit was coming through.

We needed to get to work, now more than ever.

LIVABILITY LAB 2.0 FRAMEWORK, PROCESS, AND LAUNCH

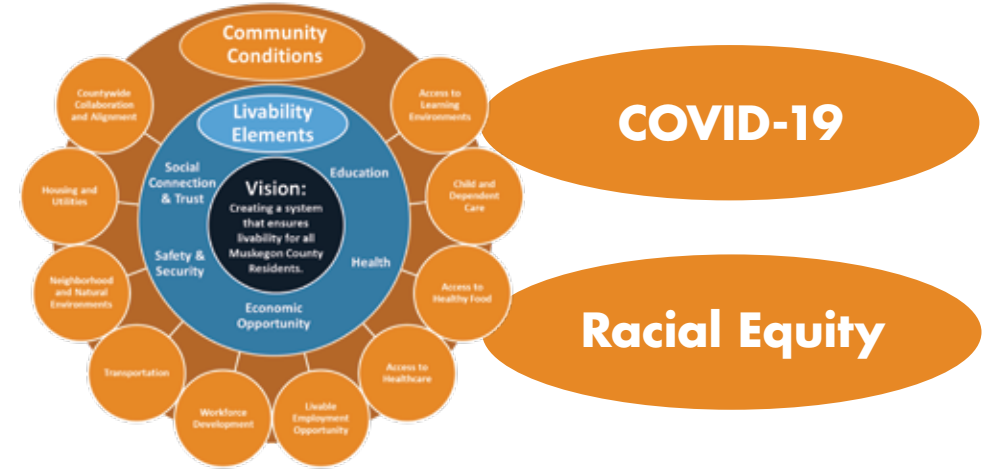
The launch day for a 45-Day Challenge was set. We needed to take that first step, get back to action, and build a bridge to recovery. Due to COVID-19, we needed to do much of it virtually.

Prior to launch, the Design Team reviewed the 1.0 Framework and Community Conditions, and added two lenses and datasets through which to filter the 2.0 work: COVID-19 and Racial Equity. Some of this information was gathered locally through earlier community surveys and questionnaires, other data was

pulled from local, state, and national reports. Gathering more local data is crucial, and the work of the Teams may help make inroads in this area. Full datasets can be found at LivabilityLab.com.

The Design Team also reviewed the action step Process from Livability Lab 1.0, and expanded it to accommodate rapidly changing conditions, and strengthen the feedback loop. It also provides prompts to advance systemic change.

This is the 5Rs Process.



COVID-19

Racial Equity

45-Day Challenge Process: The Five Rs

RELIEF

Immediate help for rapidly changing community conditions
Identify and prioritize ongoing process of define, design, do, learn

RECOVERY

Combine original process (pre COVID) with specific filters (COVID + Racial Equity) to implement expanded process loop

REFLECT

Pause after each stage to Reflect. Reflection includes Review and/or Report actions.

Review

Analyze the 2020 Relief/Recovery input against 2019 data; and Retool/Reform efforts through feedback and outcomes. All facets of integrated Muskegon CHIR are involved in analysis (Steering Council, Livability Lab, Clinical Community Linkages, Resilience Zone). Determine progress and direction of continued process loop.

Report

Document progress/process analysis and loop stage

RETOOL

Determine areas and strategy for capacity-building
Assumptions made a year ago may not be valid based on recent revelations
Adjust to real time, innovate, and acknowledge structural weaknesses

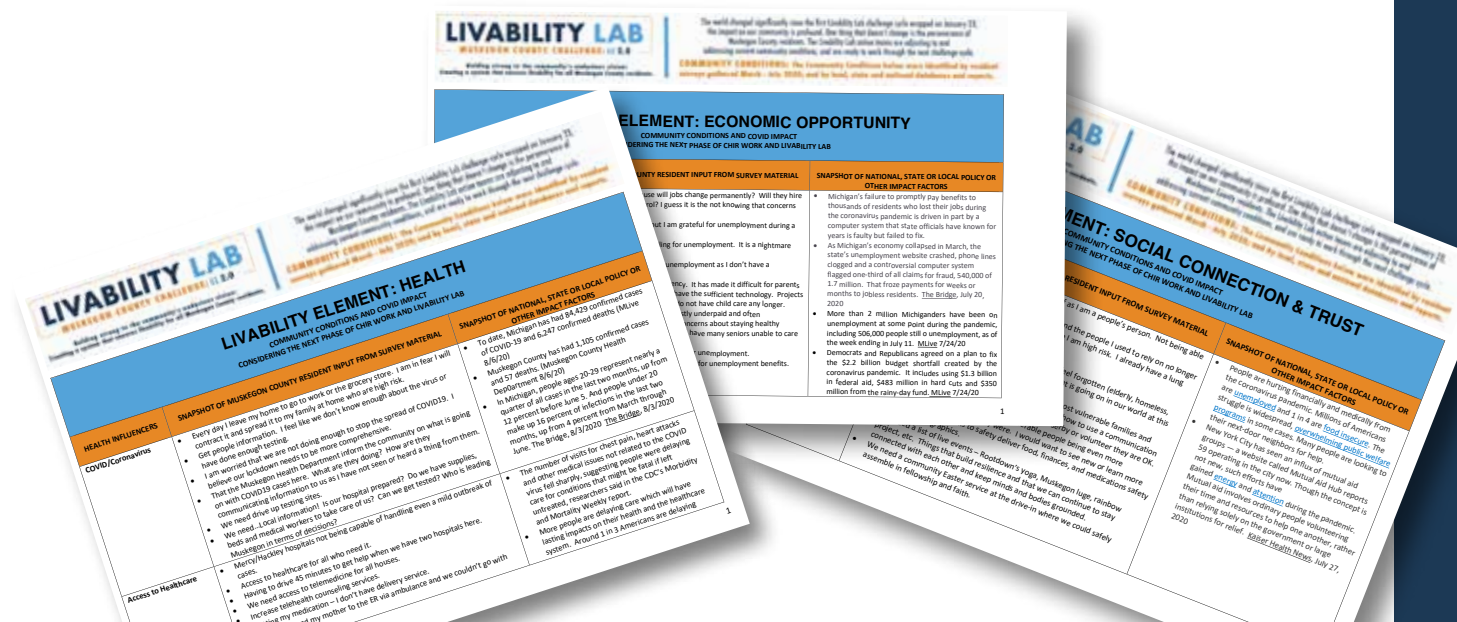
REFORM

Implement strategic changes to the system, target norms that don't meet the needs of the community
Ensure efforts are aligned system-wide and grounded in community-informed decisions and feedback

August 11, 2020, Livability Lab 2.0 launched, and we had over 85 attendees in the virtual session. We heard from members of the Core Leadership Team, as they reflected on Livability Lab past, present, and future. They gave examples of how cross-sector networks and innovation influenced the actions of their organizations during this time of crisis (see the short video of the Core Team on the Livability Lab website). We heard from special guest speakers about how COVID-19 and Systemic Racism affect the community (see the

Lt. Governor's message on the website). We reviewed the new data for the Framework along with the expanded Process, and then the Teams began the work.

Breakout sessions gave the merged teams a chance to discuss and align common goals, and to develop action steps. They were encouraged to focus on at least one significant step forward together in the 45-day timeframe. The following pages list the Livability Element Teams along with their final Team Reports.



LIVABILITY 2.0 : ELEMENT TEAMS

The original 19 Teams from Livability Lab 1.0 coalesced into the 5 Livability Element groups. The idea is to share resources, networks, and ideas across teams that are closely connected to a specific Livability Element, so they might find ways to intersect and work together toward the Vision.

A Community Convener is an established organization in the community that can provide guidance and advice, meeting space, and/or other means of support. Adding the support of the local Convener is a step towards sustainability.

The role of the Coach carries forward from Livability Lab 1.0. Coaches help organize meetings and guide Teams through the Livability Lab Framework and Process.

Livability Element: EDUCATION

Community Convener: *Read Muskegon*
Coach: Brennan Gorman

Merged Teams:

Team 6 Strengthening Childcare Opportunities
Team 7 Improving Intergenerational Literacy
Team 11 Foster Unity and Literacy with a New Reading Buddy Program
Team 15 Create a Safe Space for Youth in Muskegon Heights
Team 19 Reduce Inequities in the Distribution of K-12 Funding

Livability Element: HEALTH

Community Convener: Health Project
Coach: Doug Wood

Merged Teams:

Team 5 Coordinating Local Food Advocacy and Access Efforts
Team 14 Prenatal Support
Team 17 Align Efforts and Increase Access to Local Resource Information

Livability Element: SAFETY & SECURITY

Community Convener: Mediation & Restorative Services
Coach: Carla Flanders

Merged Teams:

Team 8 Assess Housing Stock/Needs to Identify and Address Gaps
Team 16 Increase Employment Opportunities via Expungement
Team 18 Discharge Procedures to Reduce Release into Homelessness

Livability Element: ECONOMIC OPPORTUNITY

Community Convener: Muskegon Heights Business Association
Coach: Brad Hastings

Merged Teams:

Team 4 Aligning Economic Opportunity Resources and Supports
Team 9 Increase Financial Literacy to Promote Homeownership
Team 10 Identify, Promote, and Support Minority-Owned Businesses
Team 12 Understand and Address Local Workforce Development Gaps
Team 13 Create Affordable Transit with Wheels to Work Program

Livability Element: SOCIAL CONNECTION & TRUST

Community Convener: Access Health
Coach: Steven Winston

Merged Teams:

Team 1 + 2 Neighborhood Associations Council + Charter
Team 3 Muskegon Heights Youth Initiative

Please note: Above listing is the assignment of the 19 Livability Lab 1.0 Teams at the time of the 2.0 Launch; all 1.0 Teams may not have carried forward and some adjusted focus after merging.

The following pages contain the Livability Lab: 45-Day Challenge Team Reports.

LIVABILITY ELEMENT: EDUCATION

What is your Community Commitment, and what did you accomplish during this 45-Day Challenge?

Our commitment is to support the Read Muskegon Literacy Collaborative in a project they are seeking to launch: gathering information about the services available in Muskegon County to identify where there are gaps in services or additional needs.

Written action plan including resources available, eventually added to a website. Building the collaborative that is sensitive to the diversity voice within the 45 days.

Our goal is using the broad outreach and network of Livability Lab to ensure that the information gathered is holistic and representative of the needs and services in Muskegon County.

What are key data points (with the addition of Covid and Racial Equity lens) from the Livability Lab 2.0 Launch that are related to your Livability Element?

- Stark difference between issues facing communities – fear of death more predominant in some.
- People had to make choices between going to work or taking care of the kids instead of school.
- Many key data points not a surprise given the health outcome disparities.
- There are over 23,000 illiterate adults.

What are some root causes that might be a barrier to your goal?

- This is a long-term effort – quality of education
- Lack of resources
- How to do education remotely – how will lack of resources affect those students?
- Parents need to work, so school acts as child care
- Rapid turnover of teachers, historically
- Loss of support at home to help assist/teach children. How can we assist families?
- Technology disparity
- Sacrificing wages for child's education
- Addressing race in the curriculum. Children seeing themselves in the books they're reading.

What have you learned since beginning the 45-Day Challenge process?

Our commitment is the process of gathering local information on community resources for a community condition. Most of the learning will take place after this Challenge as the information learned will be compiled and made accessible for the public to assist in addressing the community condition.

What organizations/groups are partners/potential partners?

Read Muskegon is our main partner organization. They in turn, partner with many others.

What community assets are you drawing from?

We are drawing from the experience of our education community, and from as many diverse community sources as possible to gather the most information.

What will be different because of the work your group is doing?

Ultimately, literacy will increase in Muskegon County, which impacts livability in a positive way all around. To get there, Read Muskegon will aggregate the information and create a resource map for the community. They will have an interactive portion of their website dedicated to the resource map that can be linked through other non-profits and businesses in the community to extend the outreach to those in need of literacy support across the County.

LIVABILITY ELEMENT: HEALTH

What is your Community Commitment, and what did you accomplish during this 45-Day Challenge?

Our goal is to improve community health by working towards creating a program that places community members (liaisons) to assist people with telehealth. Need to address current restrictions on community health workers, ensure training and security on HIPPA, and development of a digital wellness platform

The goal to establish a program is proving to be an extended effort. We have more work to do in establishing the Community Champion for our challenge of creating a program that places community members in home to assist with telehealth sessions for senior citizens and those lacking technology background and resources. There is a desire to get the right leadership to the table before embarking on the larger community team effort. Arranging this has been a significant struggle.

What are key data points (with the addition of Covid and Racial Equity lens) from the Livability Lab 2.0 Launch that are related to your Livability Element?

- Lack of trust in the health care system.
- Data shows that low-income people and people of color get a different level of care.
- Lack of health care has an increase in young people under 30.
- Need data on why there is a lack of trust.
- Access to health care

What are some root causes that might be a barrier to your goal?

- Lack of trust in the community health care system.
 - Historical and generational beliefs of some communities.

- Misinformation on COVID-19 that is still spreading in community.
 - Mixed messages people are receiving.
 - Need for trusted sources of communication.
- We do not have a lot of local data.
- The desire for equity is not enough without changing systems
- People's attitudes about social gathering.
 - Evidence of misinformation.
- Literacy levels
- Access to healthy food

What have you learned since beginning the 45-Day Challenge process?

There are established structures that create opportunities for community residents to get assistance in their homes. The pandemic has disrupted these structures through layoffs and loss of personnel. These staff have yet to be called back. Any effort to establish a new cadre of workers must take into account the existing structure.

What organizations/groups are partners/potential partners?

Hackley Community Care, Mercy Health, Senior Resources, Community Health Workers at Health Project, Health Department, Life-up Studios, Libraries.

What community assets are you drawing from?

Resident group connections made through the Livability Lab, and a team that has members of the local health organizations.

What will be different because of the work your group is doing?

Improved health for residents of this community. The concept has merit and, if implemented, will increase the number of people served as well as the effectiveness of in-home, online, telehealth efforts in the community.

LIVABILITY ELEMENT: SAFETY & SECURITY

What is your Community Commitment, and what did you accomplish during this 45-Day Challenge?

Goal: To decrease disparities in incarceration, homelessness, expungements to increase safety & security, and equity which would work toward decreasing racism. First steps for this group are through increased employment opportunities.

45-Day Action: To identify businesses willing to hire those with a criminal history and work towards creating a business to business network and mentor program where those that have had experience with similar employees can help counsel and guide others as to the benefits of hiring from within this employee pool. Complete the preliminary list within 45 days.

What are key data points (with the addition of Covid and Racial Equity lens) from the Livability Lab 2.0 Launch that are related to your Livability Element?

- What resources are already out there and what companies are already involved in hiring criminal history.

What are some root causes that might be a barrier to your goal?

- Racism.
- Level of expungement and how it involves everything (transportation, housing, employment).
- Youth growing up with incarceration and activities of survival.

What have you learned since beginning the 45-Day Challenge process?

People in the group are very familiar with the project we are working on, especially with the carryover on expungement work from Livability Lab 1.0. We have discovered that there are a lot of regional resources for this project but limited local resources.

What organizations/groups are partners/potential partners?

Beyond the affiliations with the members of this group, we have also reached out to Goodwill, GoodTemps, and Fresh Coast.

What community assets are you drawing from?

Goodwill, GoodTemps, Fresh Coast, EXIT program, W. MI Works, Muskegon Chamber of Commerce, Safe & Just Michigan, Talent 2025, Orchard View, Muskegon District and Circuit Courts, MI Dept. of Correction, State Probation and State Parole, WMSRDC.

What will be different because of the work your group is doing?

Ultimately, increased employment opportunities in the community, which will affect livability in so many ways. Within the 45-days, we will have a comprehensive LOCAL (Muskegon County) list of businesses that hire people with a criminal history and then move towards building the network to mentor others. This will benefit those that are seeking jobs that otherwise might run into road blocks. Additionally, the trickle effect of this program also impacts families of those getting hired, businesses doing the hiring and the local economy in a positive way.

LIVABILITY ELEMENT: ECONOMIC OPPORTUNITY

What is your Community Commitment, and what did you accomplish during this 45-Day Challenge?

We are working with a 3-pronged approach:

1. The City of Muskegon Heights is undergoing a visioning process to see what the city wants and needs for successful business and community development.
2. Working toward the creation of a microloan/microgrant and business mentorship program to help people start new businesses and learn essential skills.
3. Continued development of the Minority-owned business list from the Muskegon Lakeshore Chamber of Commerce.

What are key data points (with the addition of Covid and Racial Equity lens) from the Livability Lab 2.0 Launch that are related to your Livability Element?

- Unemployment levels now at an all-time high.
- How many of our local businesses are closed?
- How many are minority-owned.

What are some root causes that might be a barrier to your goal?

- People who live in Muskegon Heights don't work in the Heights (only 5% of people do).
- Individuals without internet connectivity.
- Not enough funding to support local & minority-owned businesses (or to entice more people to start-up)

What have you learned since beginning the 45-Day Challenge process?

This group and City of Muskegon Heights are continuously seeking to learn what the residents want, as well as what will work for sustainable development. We are learning what sort of supports might be needed.

What organizations/groups are partners/potential partners?

The Muskegon Heights Business Association, Young Black Professionals, and Black Wall Street groups will be working on these things alongside the group and the City of Muskegon Heights. Also working with Grand Rapids Area Black Businesses (GRABB).

What community assets are you drawing from?

A strong presence of manufacturing. Existing resources for fostering Entrepreneurship. Existing local businesses.

What will be different because of the work your group is doing?

The work of this group will result in the creation of the proper infrastructure to support economic development in the Heights. There will be increased access to capital, access to educational opportunities, and access to mentorship opportunities; there will be resources that allow the City's residents more opportunities for economic growth, as well as creating and finding jobs with livable wages.

LIVABILITY ELEMENT: SOCIAL CONNECTION & TRUST

What is your Community Commitment, and what did you accomplish during this 45-Day Challenge?

Goal: Build capacity with Neighborhood Associations and youth through trust and transparent communication, allow youth to have a seat at table to create new leaders in community

45-Day Action: Launch an informational website for the newly formed Neighborhood Association Council where all Neighborhood Associations of Muskegon Heights have representation. Determine responsibilities for ongoing site content management.

- Continue to build the youth initiative so young voices can contribute to the discussion/input, pair adults with youth for building leadership
- Begin building e-mail database for newsletters.

What are key data points (with the addition of Covid and Racial Equity lens) from the Livability Lab 2.0 Launch that are related to your Livability Element?

- The issue of trusted sources of information outside the community.
- Communication issues fragmented within community.
- Transparency, the community needs to feel that decisions are made publicly and fairly.
- The communication and trust issues have gotten in the way of effective COVID-19 messaging.
- Racial/ethnic inequities - Muskegon County has a chance to be an outlier, to work together to address systemic racism affecting livability.

What are some root causes that might be a barrier to your goal?

- Lack of organized, local source for information, lack of representation/participation with organizational decisions at local and regional level.
- Not local, outside organizations come in, mine data, leave and use it for their own purpose not necessarily for the benefit of the community.
- Lack of youth involvement in issues that affect the community, need to invite youth to the conversation, to participate, to build leadership

What have you learned since beginning the 45-Day Challenge process?

We are learning from new partners best ways for allowing youth to help guide the process of forming initiatives, we have learned best practices for website design that opens content-building process to neighborhood groups.

What organizations/groups are partners/potential partners?

Pathfinders, Boys & Girls Club, Access Health, Coalition for Community Development, Muskegon Heights Neighborhood Association Council and Neighborhood Associations.

What community assets are you drawing from?

The structure of the Muskegon Heights Neighborhood Association Council, connections to the City of Muskegon Heights, leaders in the community who serve as mentors to youth

What will be different because of the work your group is doing?

An empowered community with strong, local communication channels that increases shared knowledge about issues that affect residents and greater participation in the decision-making process affecting the community and region. A future where decisions are done with the community, not to the community. This empowerment will extend through generations with a local mentorship structure in place to nurture new leadership.

Livability Lab 2.0: 45-Day Challenge Celebration - September 29, 2020

On September 29, attendees at the virtual session were warmly welcomed back by longtime Livability Lab Challenge host Mickey Wallace. The session began with a few words from the CHIR Steering Council Chair and Muskegon County Health Department Director Kathy Moore, followed by a brief excerpt of the Livability Lab Story video (see the full video via a link at LivabilityLab.com).

Reports from the Livability Element Teams were the main event of the day, though. One after another, Team Coaches and Champions shared the efforts and accomplishments of each group. The passion and dedication to serving the community permeated the conversation, lifted spirits, and provided a welcome confirmation that, despite the ongoing public health crises, Muskegon County is and will be strong, resilient, and determined to move forward.

What's next?

The accomplishments achieved during Livability Lab 1.0 and 2.0 have established a solid foundation and a collective step forward. This community has shown a willingness to take bold risks and has recognized and embraced a new process that moves away from the status quo and toward the audacious vision: creating a system that ensures livability for all Muskegon County residents.

As the work continues, stay involved and informed by visiting the Livability Lab website and signing up for the e-newsletter.

Keep thinking big, Muskegon County. We'll reach that Vision, because it's in our DNA to do so.

LIVABILITY LAB
MUSKEGON COUNTY, MICHIGAN

LIVABILITY LAB

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The story of Livability Lab through September 30, 2020.

Booklet content

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The story continues at
LivabilityLab.com

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