



Working Together for the Neighborhood

A Health Impact Assessment of the Gossler Park Neighborhood

Final Report April 2016

*Funded through a Grant from the New
Hampshire Charitable Foundation*



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SNHPC

Acknowledgements

This Health Impact Assessment (HIA) was completed in 2016 working in collaboration with the City of Manchester Health Department, key stakeholders and a dedicated Steering Committee.

Funding for this study was provided through a grant from the New Hampshire Charitable Foundation

The Southern New Hampshire Planning Commission (SNHPC) appreciates the valuable time, energy and assistance the following individuals provided in developing this HIA.

Lori Upham, Principal, Gossler Park School
Mandi Tappin, Assistant Principal, Gossler Park School
Kamal Basnet, Manchester Community Health Center
Forrest Randsell, Principal, Parkside Middle School
Jeff Hebert, Assistant Principal, Parkside Middle School
Jaime Hoebeke, City Health Department
Amy Petrie, City Health Department
Bruce Thomas, Engineer, City Public Works Department
Chris Sullivan, City Parks and Recreation Division
Randy Knowles, Landscape Architect
Nadia Doty, PTG, President, Gossler Park School
Dr. John Avard, Manchester School District, School Board, Ward 10
Lt. James Soucy, Community Policing Division, Manchester Police Department
Alex Hewitt, Rimmon Heights Community Group

SNHPC Staff

Sylvia von Aulock, Deputy Executive Director
Jack Munn, Chief Planner
Bart McDonough, Planning Intern
Cameron Prolman, Planning Intern

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I. Introduction

Purpose of Study

The purpose of this Health Impact Assessment (HIA) is to (1) examine the overall social and physical conditions and infrastructure of the Gossler Park Neighborhood and the Gossler Park Elementary School and Parkside Middle School campuses to increase opportunities for physical activity and recreation and improving public safety and (2) assist the Manchester Health Department in implementing the City's Neighborhood Health Improvement Strategy.¹ The Neighborhood Health Improvement Strategy is an action program designed to promote public health by focusing on distressed neighborhoods within the City of Manchester, NH.

The Gossler Neighborhood, the Gossler Park Elementary School and the Parkside Middle School campuses are the primary focus areas of this HIA (see following Study Area Map). As both schools are designated Community Schools under the Manchester Community School Project, this HIA helps implement the Community School Project by transforming the city's public schools into neighborhood hubs to expand community resources and programming for improved public health and social connectedness.

Funding for this HIA was provided by the New Hampshire Charitable Foundation (NHCF) through a Community Planning Grant to the Southern New Hampshire Planning Commission (SNHPC). The primary goal of the HIA is to implement the Strategy by (1) developing an improvement project that will directly benefit the Gossler Park Neighborhood and the Gossler Park Elementary and Parkside Middle Schools; and (2) presenting this project and recommendations to appropriate decision-makers and funders for implementation.

The Recommendations for Action included in the Manchester Neighborhood Health Improvement Strategy which directly relate to this HIA are contained within the Supportive Living Environments Section of the Strategy.² These action recommendations focus on:

- ***Improved Neighborhood Walkability and Livability; and***
- ***Enhanced Places for Physical Activity***

Improved Neighborhood Walkability and Livability: There is strong evidence that improvements to streetscape design increase physical activity, particularly when implemented as part of a multi-component intervention. Living in neighborhoods with greater street connectivity, more streetlights and bikeways, and related environmental characteristics is associated with higher levels of walking and lower rates of overweight and obesity. Moreover, connected sidewalks, street crossing safety features, and bicycle lanes can reduce risk to pedestrians and cyclists.³

¹ Neighborhood Health Improvement Strategy, 2014, Manchester Health Department.

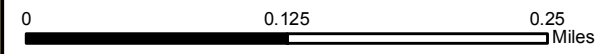
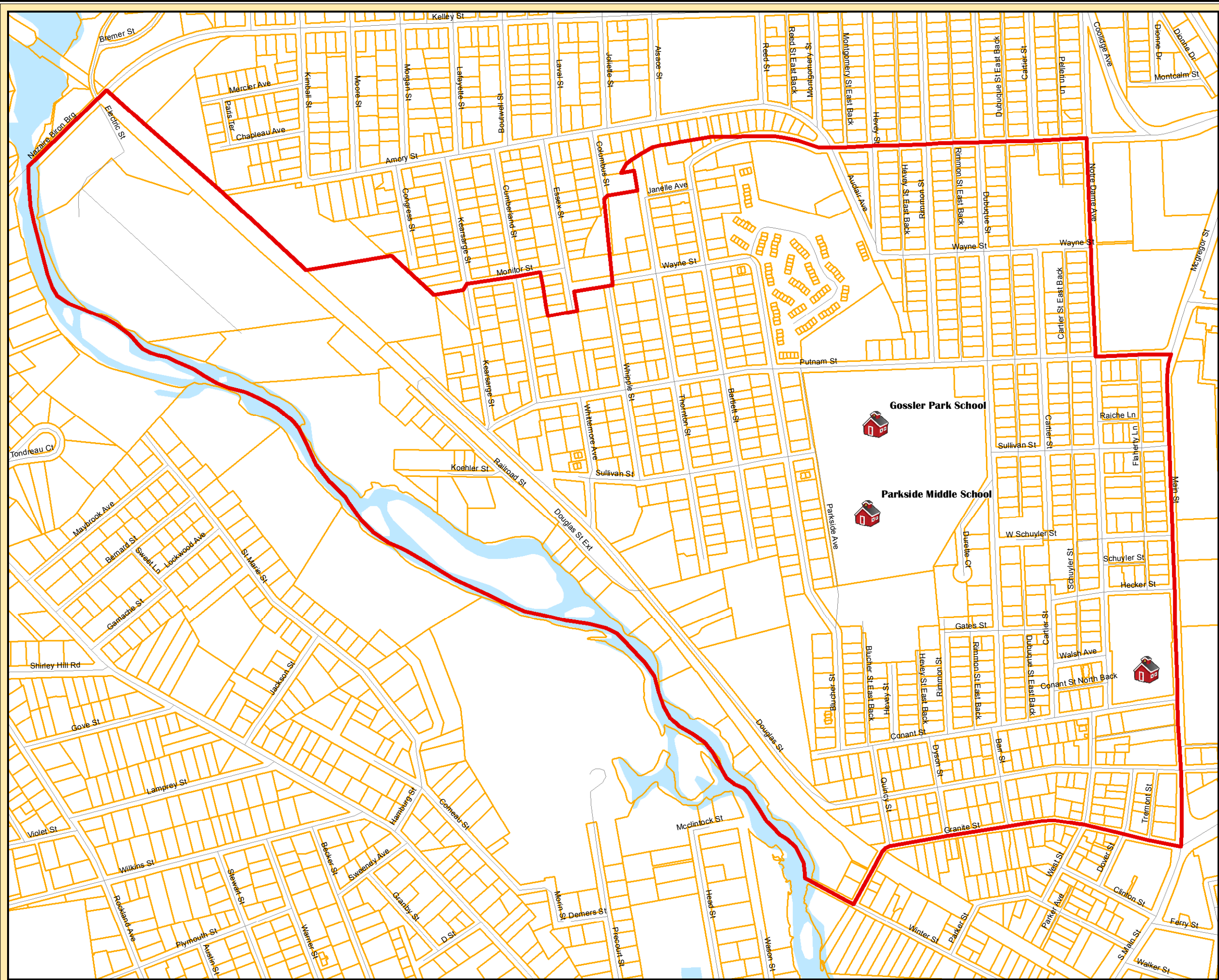
² Ibid., page 48.

³ Ibidl, page 48.

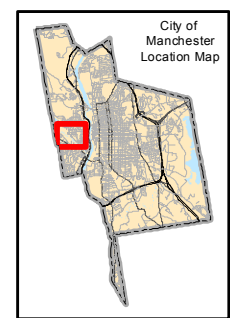
GOSSLAR PARK AREA HEALTH IMPACT ASSESSMENT

STUDY AREA

-  SCHOOLS
-  STUDY AREA
- ROADS**
-  INTERSTATE AND TURNPIKES
-  US AND STATE ROUTES
-  LOCAL ROADS
-  PARCELS
-  WATER



Data Sources:
 Granit Digital Data (1:24,000)
 NH Department of Transportation
 City of Manchester



The individual municipalities represented on this map and the SNHPC make no representations or guarantees to the accuracy of the features and designations of this map.

This map is prepared for planning purposes only and is not to be used for legal boundary determinations or for regulatory purposes.

Map Produced by GIS Service SNHPC 2015.
 Contact: SNHPC, gis@snhpc.org or (603) 669-4664

Enhanced Places for Physical Activity: Enhancing access to places for physical activity involves changes to local environments such as creating walking trails, building exercise facilities, providing access to existing nearby facilities, and reducing or eliminating costs for physical activity opportunities. Moreover, increasing access in conjunction with efforts to address the quality, safety, and security of those facilities/sites over the long term may be even more effective at increasing physical activity levels than increasing access alone.⁴



Recent Plans Developed for Beech Street Playground, Manchester, NH

Project Steering Committee

The success of this project was due in part to the involvement of individuals representing various agencies, city departments, and schools to create a vibrant steering committee. These included: Lori Upham, Principal, and Mandi Tappin, Assistant Principal for Gossler Park School; Forrest Randsell, Principal, and Jeff Hebert, Assistant Principal for Parkside Middle School; Jaime Hoebeke, City Health Department; Bruce Thomas, City Public Works Department; Lt. James Soucy, Community Policing Division, Manchester Police Department; Chris Sullivan, City Parks and Recreation Division; Randy Knowles, Landscape Architect; as well as SNHPC staff Jack Munn and Sylvia von Aulock.

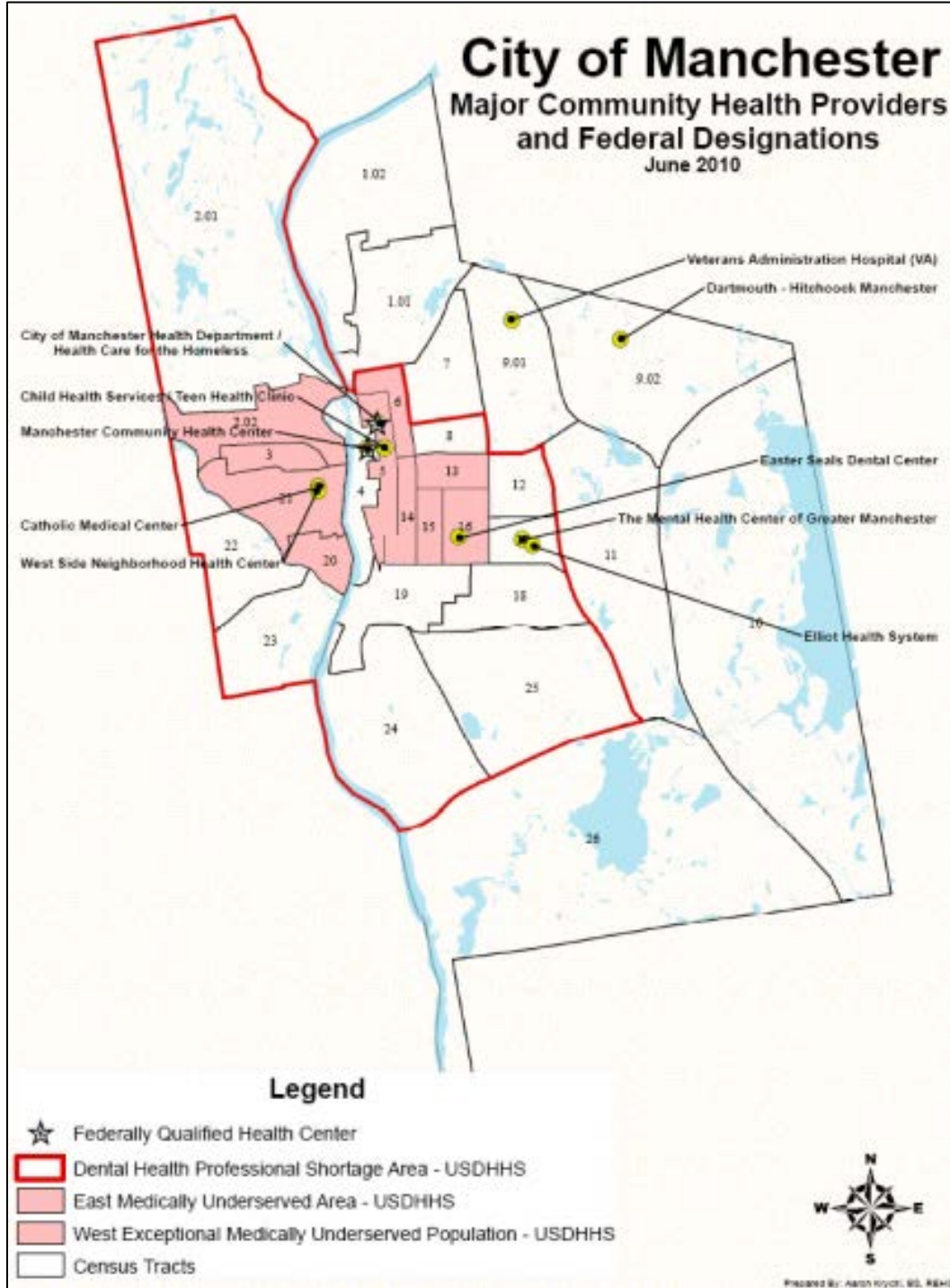
Statement of Need

The Gossler Park Neighborhood, located in Manchester's West Side, has one of the highest poverty rates in the City, and is one of eight neighborhoods in Manchester that meets the definition of a "Federal Poverty Area" (defined as having 20% or more of resident population living below poverty, see following map). Moreover, four census tracts on the West Side have been designated by the U.S. Health Resources and Services Administration as "Exceptional Medically Underserved" Populations, including the Gossler Park Neighborhood.

Census Tracts 2.02, 3, 20, and 21 (Gossler) have higher rates of coronary heart disease mortality, violent crime, expectant mothers with no prenatal care, adolescent pregnancies, lead poisonings, childhood obesity, pedestrian accidents and fatalities, uncontrolled asthma, and substandard housing than in other parts of the City (Bazos et al. 2014).

⁴ Ibid., see page 48.

Figure 1: Major Community Health Providers and Federal Designations; from Manchester's Health Improvement Strategy

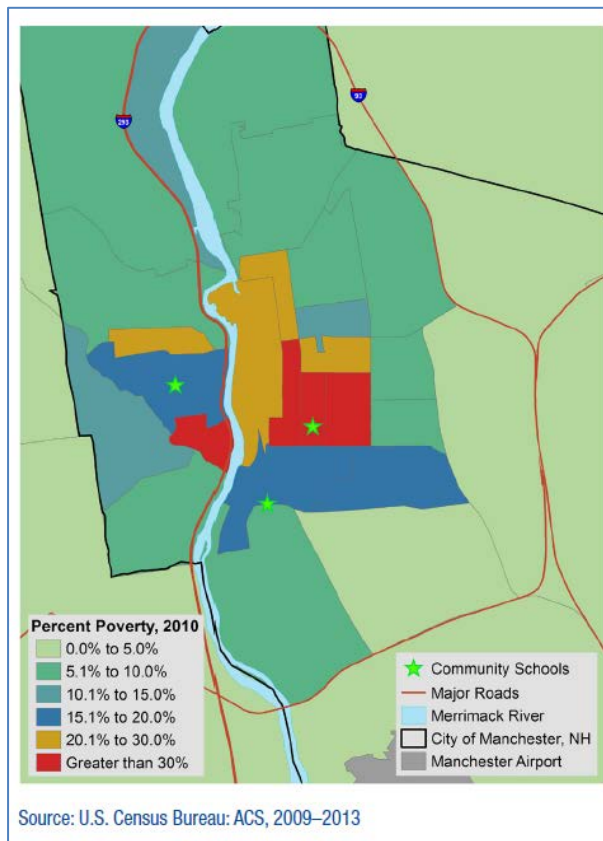


Project Background

This HIA is also consistent with and an outgrowth of the City of Manchester's Healthy Eating Active Living (HEAL) Project. This project began in 2010 through grant funding support to the Manchester Health Department from the NH Charitable Foundation and the Healthy NH (HNH) Foundation. The New Hampshire Charitable Foundation's mission is to improve opportunities for children and youth and to strengthen poverty-stricken neighborhoods.

The purpose of the HEAL project is to create multidisciplinary partnerships in support of the implementation of health policies and environmental change strategies within the City's most impoverished neighborhoods. HEAL's aim has been to improve neighborhood walkability and safe places for recreation, and increase access to healthy, affordable foods. The SNHPC has served as a member of the Manchester HEAL Policy Committee since its inception. The Gossler Park Neighborhood HIA will be an extension of the HEAL work previously conducted in the Granite Street Neighborhood just east of Gossler Park.

Figure 2: Percent Below Poverty in Manchester by Census Tract, 2010; Young, J. 2014



Anticipated Outcomes

It is anticipated the Gossler Park HIA will include a variety of recommendations for both Gossler and Parkside School campuses including infrastructure improvements within the neighborhood. It is envisioned the HIA will provide recommendations that address safety, recreation, transportation and services. As an example, city supported streetscape designs will provide safe alternatives for pedestrians and bicyclists, reducing conflicts with vehicles and enhancing the neighborhood.

These recommendations will guide the Department of Public Works, Division of Parks and Recreation, and School District in creating beneficial projects to be submitted as part of the City of Manchester's Capital Improvement Program (CIP). Specifically, a CIP project has been developed, submitted, and will be presented to the Manchester School District and the City's Capital Improvement Program Committee for funding consideration and implementation. Furthermore, team members collaborating on these recommendations will also provide the City Staff with alternative grant and funding sources needed to implement the recommended improvements.

HIA Methodology

The HIA involves an assessment of existing conditions and the overall assets, strengths, and limitations associated with the infrastructure of the Gossler Park Neighborhood and school campuses. The specific focus areas include public health, transportation, recreation, walkability, bicycling and livability conditions. A Community Profile of the socio-economic characteristics of the neighborhood is also included. Neighborhood surveys were conducted, including a neighborhood design charrette which involved residents, school officials and city staff in identifying issues and developing recommendations.

The major work tasks and project timeline involved:

- Forming an HIA Steering Committee, conducting surveys and collecting data.
Timeline: January to March 2015
- Facilitating the HIA Steering Committee and stakeholder meetings, conducting a Neighborhood Design Charrette with residents and stakeholders, and participating in other outreach events. Timeline: April to September 2015
- Presenting the Final HIA Report and CIP Plan to the School District; City Departments, and the City's CIP Committee. Timeline: October 2015 to March 2016

The methodology also provided an opportunity for stakeholders to reach informed decisions with respect to important health, equity, and quality of life factors. By focusing on physical conditions and infrastructure needs, a new Capital Improvement Program Plan and project for the schools was successfully developed as part of this study (See section on Health Improvement Strategies and Recommendations and CIP Plan). The next step in the HIA process involves finding funding to implement this plan.

II. Community Profile

Manchester's Gossler Park Neighborhood

As the largest municipality in New Hampshire and in northern New England, the City of Manchester is home to an estimated population of 109,942, representing more than 8% of the state's total population of 1,316,470 residents. Otherwise referred to as the "Queen City", Manchester is also known for its rich diversity and culture as well as being a critical economic center for the state and region.

Although Manchester is a vital economic center, there are significant socioeconomic issues and barriers confronting the City's population growth. As described in the Manchester Neighborhood Health Improvement Strategy, 29% or over 32,000 Manchester residents live at some level of poverty (Bazos et al. 2014). More than half of these residents live within areas known as the

City's Neighborhood Revitalization Strategy Area (NRSA), a designated area based on socioeconomic indicators prioritized for Community Block Grant Funding.⁵

Children under the age of 18 years are the City's fastest growing "poor" population. Roughly one in four children are living at or below the poverty threshold.⁶ Based on data from the American Community Survey (2013), about 2,500 children under the age of 18 in Manchester are considered "very poor" or living below 50% of the poverty threshold. Many of these children live and go to school in the Gossler Park Neighborhood.

The Gossler Park Neighborhood (as shown on Map #1) virtually mirrors the Gossler Park School Catchment Area. The boundaries of the Gossler Park Neighborhood also include the boundaries of Census Tract 21 which is designated as a neighborhood with an "Exceptional Medically Underserved Population".⁷

According to the US Census, a neighborhood designated as containing a Medically Underserved Population is determined by four variables – a low ratio of primary medical care physicians per 1,000 population, a high infant mortality rate, a high percentage of the population with incomes below the poverty level, and high percentage of the population age 65 or over.

Located on the West Side, Gossler Park is in many ways a "forgotten neighborhood" within the City. While the neighborhood contains two very important public schools Gossler Park Elementary and Parkside Middle School; visually and topographically -- it is located primarily within a large bowl like area -- sitting at elevations lower than the rest of the City and the West Side (see following photo).

⁵ Bazos et al., "Manchester Neighborhood Health Improvement Strategy" (2014). Manchester Health Department.

⁶ The US Census Bureau sets annual income levels, (poverty thresholds), slightly different than the federal poverty guidelines, which estimate the point below which a household of a given size has pre-tax cash income insufficient to meet minimal food and other basic needs.

⁷ The US Census designates Exceptionally Medically Underserved Populations where the Index of Medically Underservice (IMU) scale is from 0 to 100, where 0 represents completely underserved and 100 represents best served or least underserved. Under the established criteria, each service area found to have an IMU of 62.0 or less qualifies for designation as an IMU.



View of Gossler Park School from Putnum Street, 2016

As shown on the Study Area Map, the primary means of access to the Gossler Park Neighborhood is from Amory and Granite Street from the east, Dubuque Street from the west, and Main Street from the south. There is also defined pedestrian/bicycle access to the neighborhood from the City's Rail Trail to the south, but access from the Rail Trail to the surrounding street network is limited and needs to be improved (see discussion on this in the Neighborhood Assessment section of this study).

The Gossler Park Elementary and Parkside Middle School were constructed in 1956 and 50.1% of the structures and houses in the neighborhood were built prior to 1939 (ACS, 2013). According to the American Community Survey, it's estimated that 49.9% of the homes in Gossler Park Neighborhood were built between 1940 and 2009. Additionally, the ACS estimates that no new homes were built in the past 7 years.⁸

As shown on the following Figure 3, prepared by the City of Manchester, the Gossler Park Neighborhood has the highest concentration of childhood elevated blood levels due to lead poisoning and large number of occupied housing built before 1950 located on the West Side.

⁸ Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 2010-2014 American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates

Figure 3: Elevated Blood Lead Levels and Occupied Housing Units, Manchester Health Improvement Strategy

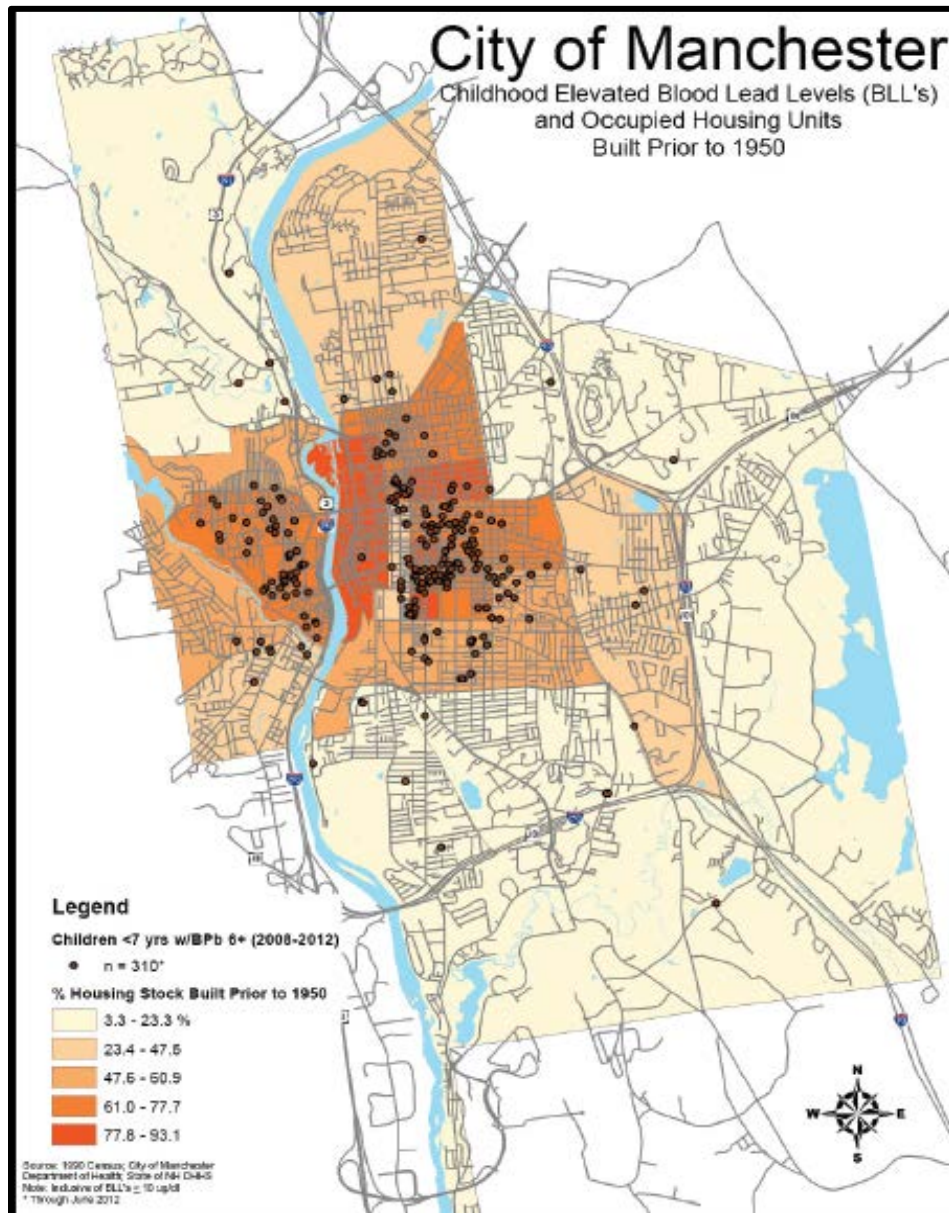
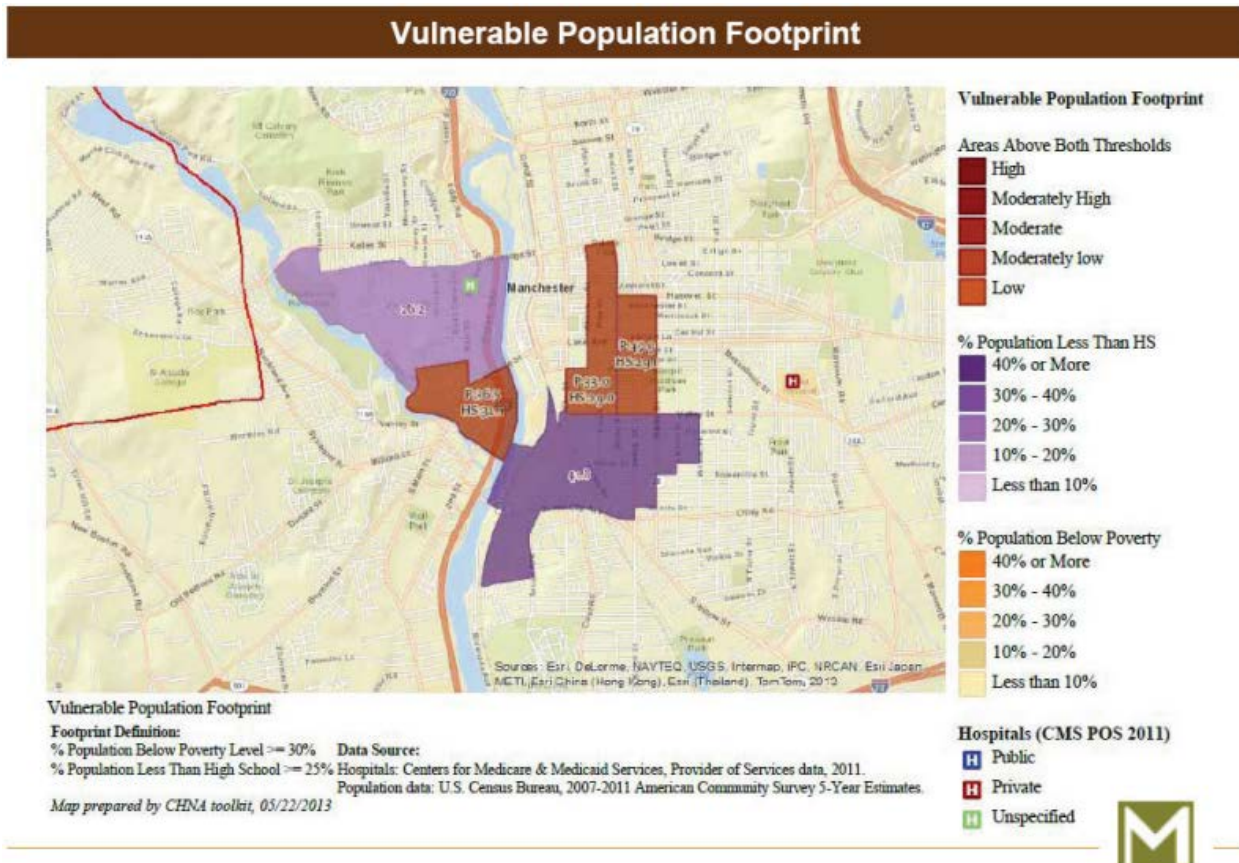


Figure 4: Vulnerable Population Footprint; Manchester Health Improvement Strategy



Socio-Economic Characteristics

Much of the following socio-economic data about the Gossler Park Neighborhood has been obtained from the University of New Hampshire's Carsey School for Public Policy's publication "A Community Schools Approach to Accessing Services and Improving Neighborhood Outcomes in Manchester, NH" and the American Community Survey (ACS), Five Year Estimates (2009-2013) at the Census Level (Tract 21).

Despite being a predominately a white neighborhood, minorities currently make up about a fifth of the Gossler Park Neighborhood. With a total of 4,782 residents, Gossler Park's general population characteristics and ethnicity mirror that of the City of Manchester as whole. The White population makes up 84% of the neighborhood; Black or Africans account for 4.4%; Hispanic or Latino 9.1%; Asians 3.8%; American Indian and Alaska native make up 0.7%; and Native Hawaiian and other Pacific Islanders make up 0.1% of the population.

Table 1: POPULATION, RACE or Ethnicity	Gossler	Percentage of Population	Manchester	Percentage of Population
White	4,025	84.2%	97157	88.4%
Hispanic or Latino (of any race)	435	9.1%	8,738	7.9%
Black or African American	211	4.4%	6,398	5.8%
American Indian and Alaska Native	32	0.7%	875	0.8%
Asian alone	184	3.8%	5,457	5.0%
Native Hawaiian and Other Pacific Islander	7	0.1%	85	0.1%
Some Other Race alone	136	2.8%	2,747	2.5%
Two or More Races	187	3.9%	2,583	2.3%
Total Population	4,782		109,942	

(American Community Survey (ACS), Five Year Estimates (2009-2013) at the Census Level Tract 21)

As shown in Table 2, the median household income is \$37,887 which is \$23,468 lower than that of the City as a whole. Similarly, median family income of \$42,424 in the Gossler Park Neighborhood is \$16,609 lower than the City.

Table 2: Gossler Annual Income (Inflation Adjusted Dollars)	Gossler	Manchester
Median Household Income	\$37,887	\$54,496
Median Family Income	\$42,424	\$65,892

(American Community Survey (ACS), Five Year Estimates (2009-2013) at the Census Level Tract 21)

A study published by the University of New Hampshire's Carsey School of Public Policy, highlighted the indicators of socioeconomic barriers to well-being in the Gossler Park Neighborhood (Young, 2015). With a poverty rate of 26.4%; 12.3% higher than the rest of the City, the Gossler Park Neighborhood is at a significant disadvantaged compared to other Manchester neighborhoods.

As shown in Table 3, the unemployment rate in Gossler Park is nearly double that of the City. The percentage of residents 25 and older with less than a high school education is almost 12% higher in Gossler Park than in the rest of Manchester. Additionally, 77% of the students at Gossler Park Elementary School are enrolled in free-or-reduced meal program; 26% higher than

the City as a whole. Lastly, 12% of the students at Gossler Park Elementary School have reported being homeless at any point in time during the 2012-2013 school year. (All of data illustrate significant disparities between the physically and economically isolated Gossler Park Neighborhood, and the rest of the City of Manchester.⁹)

Table 3: Indicators of Socioeconomic Disadvantages	Gossler	Manchester	Difference
UNEMPLOYMENT RATE	12.10%	5.60%	6.50%
PERCENTAGE OF RESIDENTS 25 AND OLDER WITH LESS THAN A HIGH SCHOOL EDUCATION	25.10%	13.40%	11.70%
POVERTY RATE	26.40%	14.10%	12.30%
PERCENTAGE OF ELEMENTARY-SCHOOL STUDENTS ENROLLED IN FREE-OR-REDUCED MEAL PROGRAM	77.20%	51.10%	26.10%
PERCENTAGE OF ELEMENTARY-SCHOOL STUDENTS WHO REPORTED BEING HOMELESS AT ANY POINT IN TIME DURING THE 2012-2013 SCHOOL YEAR	12%	5%	7.00%

(Source: *Young, 2015*: Unemployment, education, and poverty figures are derived from the American Community Survey (ACS), Five-Year Estimates (2008–2012); data on free and reduced meal enrollment are provided by the New Hampshire Department of Education (2013); data on homelessness, also from the State Department of Education, are through March 2013.)

⁹ Young, Justin R., "A Community Schools Approach to Accessing Services and Improving Neighborhood Outcomes in Manchester, NH" (2015). The Carsey School of Public Policy at the Scholars' Repository. Paper 240

III. Neighborhood Assessment

This section of the HIA describes existing conditions and identifies specific strengths and limitations related to accessing the various public facilities, services and infrastructure located within or near the Gossler Park Neighborhood. The public facilities, services and infrastructure evaluated in this section include:

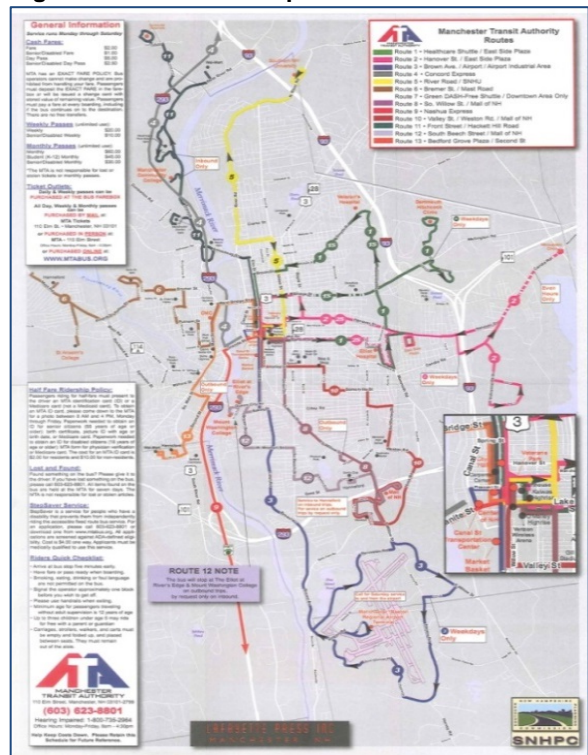
- Transportation and Public Transit
- Walking and Pedestrian Safety
- Biking Options
- Land Use and Zoning
- Access to Healthy Food
- Access to Health Care & Social Services
- Social Connectedness
- Recreation and Nearby Amenities
- School Campus

Transportation and Public Transit

Currently, a majority of Gossler Park residents have access to a personal motor vehicle. Specifically 42.5% of resident’s have access to 1 vehicle; 31.5% have access to 2 vehicles; and 11.0% have access to 3 or more vehicles.¹⁰ In total, 85% of Gossler Park residents have access to automotive transportation. Automobiles are a critical component for residents in New Hampshire because, in general, points of interest (shopping centers, job sites, recreation locations etc.) are located at far distances from residential districts. Thus, having an automobile readily accessible is an essential component to daily life. However, residents, who live in and around Manchester and do not have accessible to them automotive transportation, are not limited to the extent they are able physically travel due to the services provided by the Manchester Transit Authority (MTA).

The MTA provides bus services throughout the city

Figure 5: MTA Route Map



¹⁰United States Census Bureau, American Community Survey (ACS), Five-Year Estimates (2014), *Means of Transportation to Work By Vehicles Available*, New Hampshire, Hillsborough County, Census tract 21

in addition to stops in Goffstown, Bedford and Hooksett. As it exists today, there are two bus routes that serve Gossler Park (6 & 13). These routes primarily transport people to various shopping centers located in Goffstown and Bedford as well as the central business district (CBD) in downtown Manchester. Upon arrive in the CBD, passengers are able to transfer, for an additional fee, onto another line to access other points of interest within Manchester and certain neighboring communities. The additional fee may be avoided if the passenger purchases a daily pass.

Overall the cost of using the MTA services is reasonable. However, cost is a relative variable, and the ticket prices affect persons of different economic standings dissimilarly. Nevertheless, the MTA offers a monthly pass for those who rely on its service on a daily bases or a daily pass for \$5.00. Currently for adults, a monthly pass costs \$60.00.¹¹ If a person were to ride the bus twice a day (traveling to and from a location) six days a week for one month, the cost would be \$1.25 per day, which is a daily savings of \$3.37 and would become cheaper with an increase in usage.

The MTA also has in place strong pricing structures and additional services that accommodate elderly and disabled residents. Both populations receive a 50% discount off the daily (\$2.50) and monthly (\$30.00) pass.¹² Using the previous formula from the monthly adult price (\$60.00), elderly and disabled residents would only pay 0.62 cents a day. The MTA also provides an additional service, StepSaver (a service in which is required under the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) of 1990¹³) that specifically enables people with disabilities the ability to travel to locations three quarters of a mile from a bus route at a fixed, low-cost price.

As of November, 2015, ridership on Bus 6 and Bus 13 were among the highest bus lines used in the city. At that point in time, Bus 6 serviced a total of 20,585 passengers and Bus 13 serviced 19,434 passengers.¹⁴ These figures evidently elucidate the dependence people have on MTA service. During the morning and afternoon hours, the service provided by the MTA is adequate. Bus 6 during the weekday first arrives in Gossler Park approximately around 5:35am and departs on its last run around 6:20pm. On Saturday, service is reduced to which the first bus arrives at CMC around 9:30am and departs on its final run at 5:20pm. Likewise, bus 13 first arrives on the weekday around 7:00am and departs for the evening at 5:40pm. On Saturday, bus 13 reaches Gossler Park at 10:00am and makes its last stop at 4:40pm. All MTA services are suspended on Sundays and all federal holidays.

According to the bus schedule, the average time for the bus to travel in between stops is 8 minutes (Bus 6) and 10.3 minutes (Bus 13). However, during commuting hours from 7:30 to 9:00 AM and 4:30 to 6:00 PM, the frequency of bus service is generally slower, which may

¹¹ Manchester Transit Authority (MTA) (2016). Purchase Tickets. Manchester, NH

¹² Ibid

¹³ Americans With Disabilities Act of 1990, Pub. L. No. 101-336, 104 Stat. 328 (1990).

¹⁴ Manchester Transit Authority (MTA) (2015) Transit Ridership Report- November 2015. Manchester, NH

present as problematic for some passengers who abide by a tight schedule in their daily activities.

As mentioned earlier, daily service for Gossler Park neighborhood ends at 6:20 PM (Bus 6) and 5:20 PM (Bus 13). The early 'last run' of could have a serious effect on commuters reliant on bus service during their return trip to their residence. Furthermore, commuters could potentially be waiting for long periods of time during evening commuting hours due to increased road congestion compounded with limited scheduled stops.

Presently, the MTA has only one designated stop in Gossler Park, Catholic Medical Center (CMC). A designated stop is here defined as a location that is on the official route schedule of the MTA. The CMC stop both provides protection from poor weather conditions and an adequate seating area. Only at designated stops do these types of structures exist. In between the designated stops is signage that identifies itself as an alternative stop. This signage is not identified on the official MTA route map, making it impossible for passengers to know where every stop is located.

Unlike at designated locations, the signage stops fail to provide similar protective structures and seating accommodations. Furthermore, during the winter months, snow banks impede riders, who wait at signage stops, from transitioning safely from the sidewalk onto the bus, forcing riders to either stand on the street as they wait for the bus or climb over the snow banks onto the street to gain access to service.

Currently, there is no designated bus stop near Gossler Park Elementary and Parkside Middle school, however, irregularly placed bus stop signage does exist. For example, two blocks to the west of Gossler Park Elementary on the intersection of Putnam and Bartlett Streets is a bus stop sign for route 6. The bus stops for passengers who are traveling towards Goffstown but fails to drop them off at the same location because there is no stop on the in-bound route. To further complicate matters, the MTA fails to post an arrival schedule on its signage. There is a rational behind the absence of a schedule at each stop in that the MTA has a flag down policy, which requires bus drivers to stop for service when a passenger singles them down. However, this policy is not clearly stated at any of the stops along the routes, defeating the purpose of not posting an arrival schedule. Information on the flag down policy is only attainable on the MTA's website.¹⁵

Not having both an in-bound and out-bound bus stop and readily available information of MTA policy (in multiple languages) could have the potentiality to confuse passengers who are unfamiliar with the routes or the policies the MTA abides by. Furthermore, the absence of a schedule at these stops makes it impossible for passengers to know when the bus passes though.

¹⁵ Manchester Transit Authority (MTA), (2016). Frequently Asked Questions, Manchester, NH

An additional resource passengers can use to coordinate their schedules with the MTA's is an online bus tracker interface offered on the MTA website. This is a great resource for people planning their daily schedules as it reduces time wasted waiting a bus stop. This tool is especially useful during the winter months when standing on the street for longer periods of time becomes a health hazard. However, the bus tracking tool is only available for those customers that have access to computers, smart phones or other hand held devices.

Gossler Park and other city residents who use and rely on the MTA bus system are entirely dependent upon the City of Manchester's ability to fund public transit services. The MTA in FY 2013 was appropriated \$1,078,095 by the City¹⁶. Through subsidy-matching programs granted by Federal Transit Authority (FTA), the City was able to secure an additional \$1,657,836 to supplement the MTA budget. Federal funding is a critical component in the operation of the MTA. Without it, the City would be placed under considerable financial pressure to maintain the current rate of service.

The City possesses the option to secure additional FTA subsidies to augment the MTA's budget. However, the increase in federal subsidies is predicated on whether the City appropriates additional funds into the MTA's budget. The current percentage the City appropriates out of the general fund to the MTA has a significant impact not only on the amount of federal grants the MTA can possibly receive but on the extent to which service routes are provided.

Findings

- The majority (85%) of Gossler Park residents use personal automobiles for transportation within the city and to surrounding communities. However, this leaves 15 % of the neighborhood's population reliant on public transportation or other non-vehicular modes of transportation.
- Residents, who have limited expendable income, must allot more resources to travel to different locations throughout the city. A larger burden is placed onto low-income generation residents who cannot afford automotive transportation. Therefore, these residents must rely on public transportation, walking or bicycling to gain access to essential locations, which require more time and energy.
- An in-bound bus stop should be installed on the corner of Putnam and Bartlett Streets to accommodate passengers travelling into the city.
- The frequency of public transit service for Gossler Park residents during commuting hours is not adequate. An additional two hours of service is recommended during the evening hours in order to accommodate commuters traveling home from their work place.

¹⁶ Calculations of Federal, State, and Local Shares—Fiscal Year 2013 Transit Budget; Manchester Transit Authority

- City government should appropriate additional resources into the MTA budget in order to obtain additional federal matching funds in order to maintain its fleet and extend service hours.

Walking and Pedestrian Safety

Caring for and maintaining safe and friendly streets, sidewalks, pedestrian crossings and walking paths is an important element within the Manchester Health and Improvement Strategy. It is also an important aspect of this HIA study and should be a major consideration within the Gossler Park neighborhood.

As part of this study, SNHPC conducted several walking surveys of the Gossler Park neighborhood specifically looking for areas of high pedestrian activity and evaluating existing street and sidewalk conditions for pedestrian safety, mobility and walkability. SNHPC also requested the City of Manchester Public Works Department conduct a similar survey which is included as part of this analysis.

In conducting these surveys, there are a number of walkability factors and infrastructure considerations which are generally used in identifying pedestrian concerns and existing hazards. While a formal pedestrian safety audit was not conducted or prepared for this HIA, the following walkability and infrastructure considerations were evaluated.

Table 4. Walkability and Infrastructure Considerations

<i>INTERSECTION</i>	<i>STREET SEGMENT</i>			
Intersection Safety	Traffic	Street Design	Land Use	Perceived Safety
Crosswalk	Number of lanes	Sidewalk width	Public art/historical sites/unique buildings	Graffiti
ADA Ramps	Two-way traffic	Sidewalk impediments/obstructions		Litter
Pedestrian signal		Neighborhood Signs/location		Pedestrian scale lighting
		Presence of curb		Construction sites
		Trees		Abandoned buildings
		Planters/gardens/greenery		
		Public and/or Private seating		
		Presence of buffer		

- **Crosswalks:** The absence of marked crosswalks at intersections or mid-block crossings presents a barrier for pedestrian access and mobility and often results in pedestrian and motor vehicle conflicts.

- **ADA Ramps and Pedestrian Signals:** The absence of ADA Ramps and pedestrian signals at intersections also presents a barrier for pedestrian access and mobility, especially for the handicapped and mobility impaired.
- **Vehicle Lanes and Two-Way Traffic:** Generally more pedestrian injuries occur when crossing multi-lane roads and highways. Reducing the number of travel lanes generally improves pedestrian safety, access and mobility.
- **Sidewalk Width.** The minimum sidewalk width in the City of Manchester is 6 feet. Maintaining wide sidewalks increases pedestrian safety for all ages and motilities.
- **Sidewalk Impediments and Obstructions.** Bumps, cracks, broken pavement and out of place signs, utility poles, parked cars, trash cans, etc. often present obstructions to pedestrians and discourage walking, especially for the mobility impaired.
- **Sidewalk Connectivity.** Stops and gaps between existing sidewalks create unsafe conditions for pedestrians and discourage walking and mobility between blocks and streets, particularly for the handicapped and mobility impaired.
- **Curbs and gutter.** Curbs and gutter are important for drainage, but also provide a physical separation between motorists and pedestrians.
- **Landscaping/gardens.** Natural landscaping and gardens help to enhance the overall pedestrian experience and can provide an effective buffer between pedestrians and the street.
- **Public seating.** Public seating and benches enhance the walking experience, especially for the elderly and disabled. Walkable Communities (2004) recommends public benches and seating every 200 feet along sidewalks.
- **Proximity of Buildings to the Street.** Neighborhoods with businesses and mixed uses within close proximity can enhance walkability and reduce vehicle trips between home, business and shopping.
- **Public Art/Historical sites.** Local art and cultural amenities also enhance walkability and the pedestrian experience.
- **Graffiti and Litter.** Graffiti and litter can negatively impact whether people feel comfortable or safe walking in an area or not.
- **Street and Sidewalk Scale Lighting.** Street and sidewalk lighting can help to create safe walking environments.
- **Abandoned buildings.** Abandoned or boarded-up buildings portray neglect and result in pedestrian discomfort, including fears of crime or delinquency.¹⁷

Overall while much of the Gossler Park neighborhood has adequate and passable sidewalks as well as safe pedestrian street crossings and pedestrian signage, there are many missing pedestrian and related street and sidewalk infrastructure which could be improved upon to enhance the walkability of the neighborhood and provide for positive pedestrian experiences. Along Putnam Street for example there are essentially no striped or marked pedestrian cross walks at any of the intersections between Dubuque Street and Cumberland Street. This is also true along Conant Street west of Main Street.

¹⁷ [The Pedestrian Environmental Quality Index \(PEQI\)](#)

Generally, most of all the streets within the neighborhood contain two travel lanes, except for one way and dead end streets. Streets located near the schools have a posted speed limit of 20 miles per hour in designated school zones. However, there are very few if any streets posted with any speed limit signs at all outside of the school zones. School guards are very active in and around the schools monitoring traffic and ensuring safe pedestrian and student access and mobility. However, the worst pedestrian and traffic conditions in the neighborhood generally occur during the morning (during student drop off) and in the late afternoon (during student pick up) when many students and parents walk between the school and home.

It is positive that many of the streets in the neighborhood have curb and gutter for drainage purposes and attached concrete sidewalks. The streets without curb and gutter however generally lack sidewalk facilities. There are several streets which are one way only. These streets are Parkside Avenue adjacent to the Gossler Park Elementary School; Cartier Street; and Notre Dame Avenue located adjacent to West High School (see Map #2). None of these one way streets pose unsafe pedestrian conditions or prevent pedestrian access and mobility.



Bartlett and Putnam Street Intersection – Missing Pedestrian Cross Walks

Sidewalk widths vary throughout the neighborhood, but in most cases the existing sidewalks in the neighborhood meet the City’s minimum six foot width requirement. Every street has a street name sign in the neighborhood and generally there are very few traffic signs (except in or near intersections) or where traffic warning signs, no litter signs, and dog fouling signs exist. Many of the streets in the neighborhood are also posted with “no parking signs” primarily on one side of the street. Except during the morning and afternoon peak hours these streets are generally not heavily used nor do they contain high volumes of traffic.

There is basically no public art and very few if any historic sites located within the neighborhood. Graffiti exists on several buildings and signs throughout the neighborhood, but overall graffiti is not a major problem on every street (see following photos). Currently, the City of Manchester’s Highway Department sponsors a graffiti removal program, which cleans graffiti from private and public property. These buildings and walls could be cleaned up and murals and other wall painting could be established to



Examples of Graffiti on Existing Buildings

help beautiful the streets. Litter is a common problem, however particularly within or near vacant lots and wooded sites.

Street lights can be found at or near some of the larger intersections and streets (such as Putnam, Sullivan, Dubuque, Conant and Main Streets) within the neighborhood. These lights are mostly hung on existing utility and telephone poles, but they are spaced unevenly along some of the streets at distances roughly 500 and 1,000 feet apart. There is no specific or special sidewalk lighting.

In addition, none of the streets or sidewalks within the neighborhood are landscaped. There are no flower boxes and other streetscape improvements to help beautify the neighborhood. Some streets have older street trees which help to shade or make these streets look attractive. But overall, there is no landscaping or special street or sidewalk elements, seats or benches, etc. which could enhance the walkability, attractiveness and safety of the neighborhood.

Most of all the utility and telephone poles, fire hydrants and sign posts in the neighborhood are located at or near the edge of the street or at the curb and gutter line thus not presenting major obstructions or barriers to pedestrian access and mobility. There are several sidewalks however where specific utility poles, existing trees and tree stumps present obstacles to walking. These poles or trees in the sidewalk are shown on the Current Conditions Map# 2 and can be found:

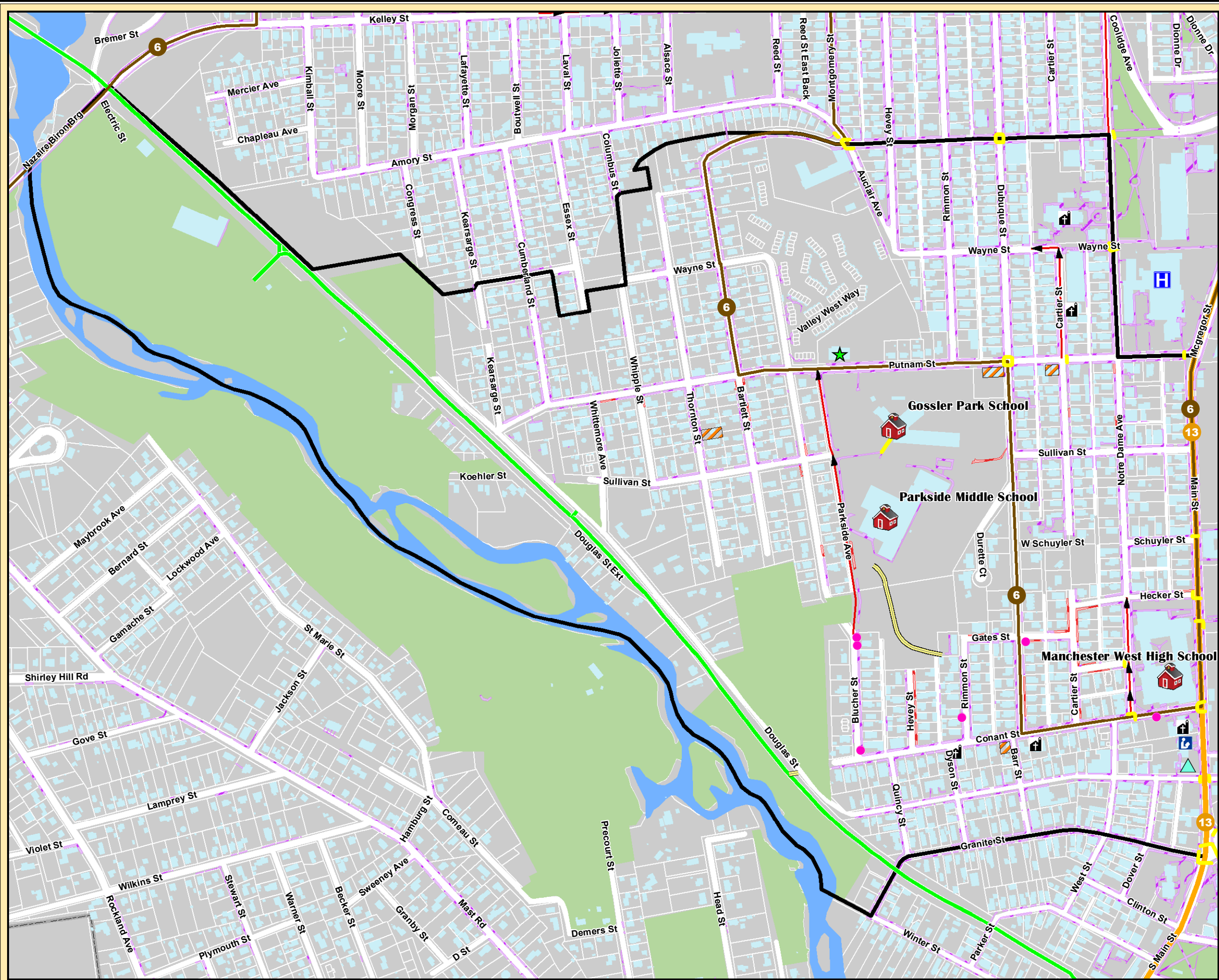
- On Blucher Street and at intersection of Blucher and Parkside Avenue north of Conant Street;
- Along the west side of Rimmon Street and south of Gates Street;
- On the south side of Gates Street east of Dubuque Street; and
- Along the south side of Conant Street between West Street and Main Street.

Generally it appears that most of the housing and buildings in the neighborhood are occupied. However, there are several abandoned and boarded up buildings identified and shown as "Buildings in Need of Repair" on the Current Conditions Map# 2 . Specific locations include the intersection of Conant Street and Barr Street; the east side of Thornton Street north of Sullivan Street; and the south side of Putnam Street at the Dubuque and Cartier Street intersections. These buildings do not appear to be threatening to pedestrians or pose unsafe pedestrian conditions.

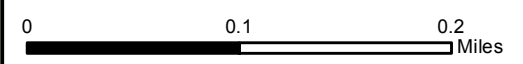
Areas with the highest pedestrian traffic exist primarily along Parkside Avenue, Putnam Street and Dubuque Street adjacent to and surrounding the Gossler Park Elementary School and Parkside Middle School. Many students also utilize an existing off road pedestrian path which connects Parkside Middle School to Rimmon Street through an existing vacant lot (see location on Map# 2). High pedestrian traffic also exists along Conant Street and Main Street and along the side streets surrounding West High School as many students park on these side streets and walk to school. The City's Rail Trail located along the Piscataquog River is also heavily used by city residents and there are several access points onto the trail from Douglas Street.

GOSSLAR PARK AREA HEALTH IMPACT ASSESSMENT

EXISTING CONDITIONS



- POLES OR TREES IN SIDWALK
- CHURCH
- CLUB
- COMMUNITY CENTER
- LIBRARY
- HOSPITAL
- SCHOOLS
- PEDCROSSING
- MTA BUS ROUTE 13
- MTA BUS ROUTE 6
- OFF ROAD PATHS
- PISCATAQUOG RIVER TRAIL
- BUILDINGS IN NEED OF REPAIR
- BUILDINGS
- EXISTING SIDWALK
- SIDWALK WITH POTENTIAL PROBLEMS
- STUDY AREA
- ONE WAY STREETS
- PARCEL BOUNDARIES
- PARK LANDS
- WATER



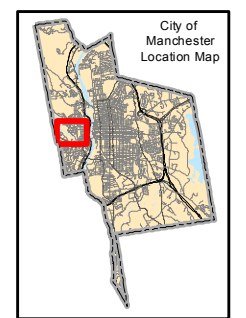
Data Sources:
 Granit Digital Data (1:24,000)
 NH Department of Transportation
 City of Manchester



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Existing sidewalks within the neighborhood which are considered unsafe and need improvement are identified as “Sidewalks with Potential Problems” on the following Current Conditions Map# 2. Specifically, these sidewalks are located along the following street segments:

- Putnam Street south side between Whittemore Avenue and Whipple Street
- Whipple Street east side south of intersection with Putnam Street
- Bartlett Street east side south of Putnam Street
- Blucher Street east side south of Sullivan Street
- Parkside Avenue east side south of Sullivan Street adjacent to Parkside Middle School
- Hevey Street east side south of Parkside Middle School
- Gates Street north and south sides between Rimmon and Cartier Street
- Cartier Street east and west sides between Walsh Avenue and Hecker Street
- Notre Dame Avenue east and west sides between Sullivan and Putnam Street

In addition to the above sidewalk locations, the Manchester Public Works Department has identified several street intersections and pedestrian crossings which need improvement. These intersections are shown in **Figures 6-8** and are identified as Parkside Avenue and Sullivan Street; Sullivan Street and Blucher Street; and Montgomery Street and Bartlett Street. The primary issues of concern at these intersections include the following:

- Sidewalk connectivity: sidewalks which end and need to be extended and lack of ADA accessible curb ramps;
- Limited striped crosswalks and ADA accessible routes;
- No bicycle facilities or accommodations;
- Lack of travel lane and stop bar striping;
- Parking and pedestrian travel conflicts;
- No marking of School Zones and speed limit signs;
- Lack of clear zones at bottom of ADA ramps;
- Lack of detectable warning strips;
- Poor sight distances; and
- A catch basin within the cross walk.

Street intersections, road and pedestrian infrastructure problems and concerns are the responsibility of the City of Manchester and are addressed by the Public Works Department as specific public works, utility and street projects. These projects must be scheduled and approved by the City’s Capital Improvement Program Committee and Traffic Committee before infrastructure and road improvements are made. The Manchester Department of Public works is responsible for maintaining the sidewalks in the Gossler Park neighborhood. (Waiting for review from Manchester Department of Public Works)

In 2014, the Manchester Health Department (MHD) determined between 2008-2012, the Gossler Park neighborhood experienced on average a nonfatal pedestrian injury rate of 4.1 to 10.0 persons out of 10,000 annually. This rate is 2-5 times higher than Manchester Health

Department's goal of achieving a pedestrian injury rate of 2.0 persons out of 10,000 people per year by 2020.

Providing and maintaining safe and adequate pedestrian facilities and sidewalks is an absolute necessity in all parts of the city. This is especially true in the Gossler Park neighborhood as many young students and children walk to and from the Gossler Park Elementary School, Parkside Middle School and West High School. According to the Gossler Park Elementary School Principal approximately 300 students must annually walk to and from their home to the school within the neighborhood as the school is designated a walking school within the city.

Figure 6: Intersection of Parkside Ave. & Sullivan Street



Figure 7: Sullivan Street and Blucher Street

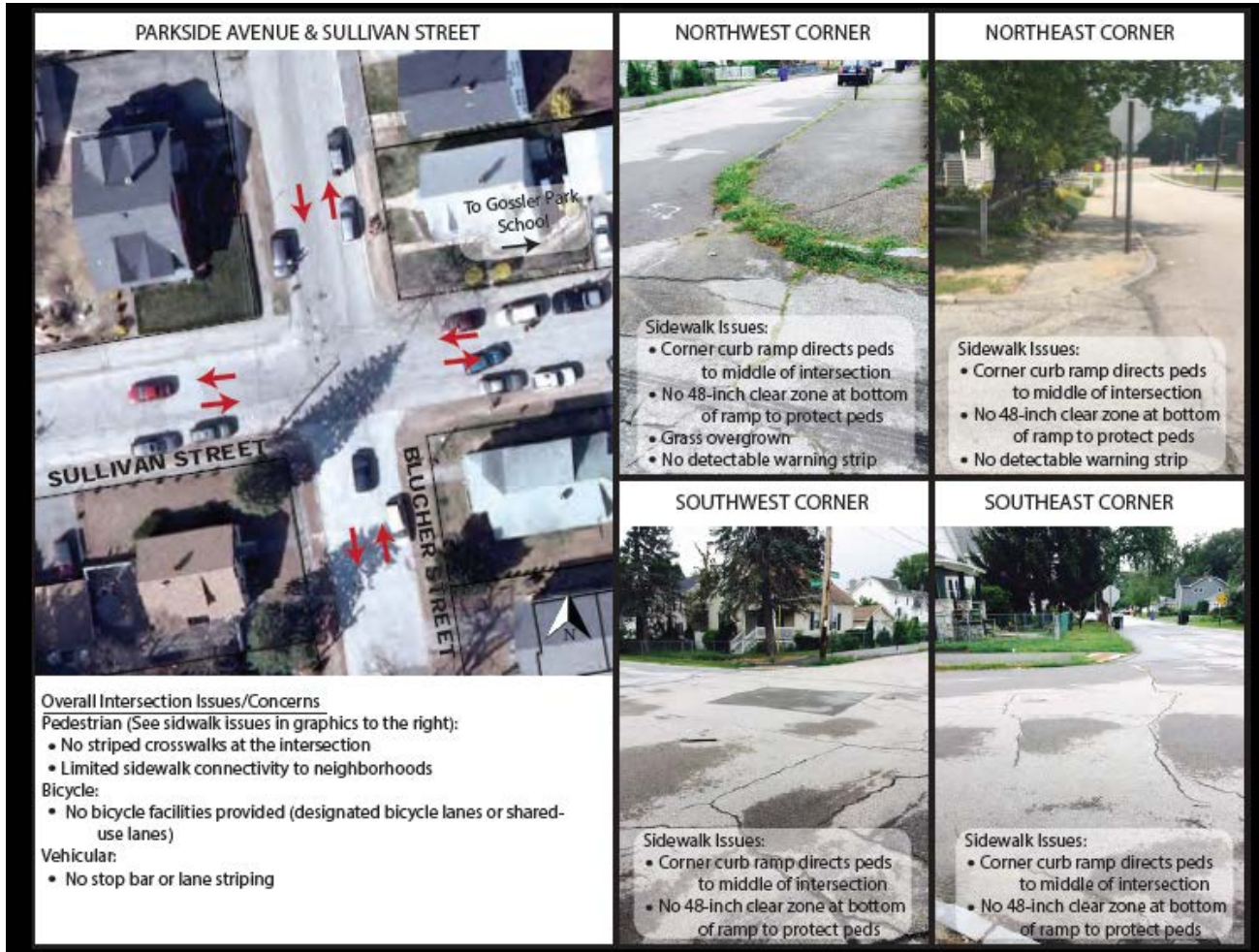


Figure 8: Montgomery Street & Bartlett Street



Based upon this analysis, the following findings and recommendations are offered to help improve walkability and pedestrian safety within the neighborhood.

Findings

- Much of the Gossler Park Neighborhood has adequate sidewalks and safe pedestrian streets and street crossings. However, as seen in Figures 6, 7, and 8, there are **nine sidewalk locations** which have been identified with potential problems and **three intersections** with unsafe pedestrian conditions which need improvements. There are also a number of intersections along Putnam and Conant Street which could be improved with marked and striped pedestrian crosswalks.
- Sidewalks and intersection improvements within the neighborhood are the responsibility of the City of Manchester. Currently, the City has no sidewalk or intersection improvement projects scheduled within the neighborhood..The rate of pedestrian injuries within the neighborhood is higher than other parts of the city. The Manchester Health Department has set a goal of reducing the neighborhood pedestrian injury rate from 4.1 to 2.0 injuries per 10,000 persons to be achieved by 2020;
- Because Gossler Park Elementary School is designated a walking school by the Manchester School District, the City should assign and make the pedestrian improvements a high priority to the Parkside and Sullivan Street and Parkside and Blucher Street intersections as identified in the HIA.
- Efforts should also be pursued by both the City and local residents to enhance the neighborhood's existing street trees, encourage and promote landscaping, improve existing street and pedestrian lighting, remove graffiti and promote wall murals and paintings; and provide opportunities for public seating and benches to enhance the neighborhood's overall pedestrian experience and environment.
- Infrastructure, lighting and natural landscaping and streetscape improvements made along the neighborhood's streets and sidewalks will help to promote a sense of place, enhance public safety and security, and promote a greater sense of neighborhood pride and ownership.

Bicycling Safety

Similar to the rights of pedestrians to use the city's streets and sidewalks for walking, city residents equally have legal rights to use the city's streets and paths for biking. Sidewalks in the city while often used for biking legally are only meant for pedestrians. Thus, the selection and use of the city's streets for bicycling is required and this is not always a clear and easy choice. Existing street conditions, traffic volumes and on-street parking as well as the lack of adequate and safe biking infrastructure often discourages bicycling for both recreation and transportation purposes.

A study published from the Journal of Public Health concluded that bicycling for transportation helps adults meet daily recommendations for physical activity.¹⁸ The provision of bicycle infrastructure (designated on and off-road facilities and appropriate bicycling signage and pavement markings) has been shown and found to encourage and support increased bicycling for everyday travel, including improving public health and achieving active living goals¹⁹.

In addition to improving public health and providing recreation, the provision of safe bicycle infrastructure has a positive impact on the local economy. Smart Growth America claims communities that invest in bicycle infrastructure can stimulate far greater private investment, especially in retail districts and downtowns where pedestrians and cyclists feel unwelcome. Similarly pedestrian and bicycle-friendly environments and designated bicycle facilities can have a positive impact in increasing property values and improving neighborhoods (Smart Growth America, 2012)²⁰.

Overall, the Gossler Park neighborhood has a relatively bike-conducive environment as many of the streets have relatively low speed limits and lower traffic volumes compared to the rest of the city. Additionally, Gossler's close proximity to the Piscataquog Rail Trail allows residents the ability to access the rest of the City without the use of a motor vehicle or biking on more heavily congested city roads. However, there are many children that use the streets and sidewalks in the neighborhood when they walk and bike to school. According to the principal of the Gossler Elementary School, on average 300 students walk and bike to school during the school year.

As in other parts of the City, biking options within the neighborhood however can be limiting to both children and adults when faced with having to share the road with all types and sizes of vehicles and trucks. This sharing of the road in urban environments often creates a dangerous environment for cyclists resulting in higher level of stress, potential negative threats and injuries, and ultimately discouraging bicycling activity in general.

¹⁸ Dill, 2009. Bicycling for Transportation and Health: The Role of Infrastructure. Journal of Public Health Policy (2009) 30, S95–S110. doi:10.1057/jphp.2008.56

¹⁹ Ibid

²⁰ National Complete Streets Coalition (2012). Complete Streets Stimulate the Local Economy. Smart Growth America. Retrieved from <http://www.smartgrowthamerica.org/documents/cs/factsheets/cs-economic.pdf>

In September of 2014, SNHPC and the New Hampshire Department of Transportation (NHDOT) and the City of Manchester conducted a Bicycle Street Stress Mapping Study of the City. The purpose of this study was to classify various road segments in the city according to levels of bike stress as set forth in the “*Low-Stress Bicycling and Network Connectivity*” study prepared by the Mineta Transportation Institute.²¹

Data was collected on how suitable the city’s streets are for cycling among all ages and abilities. Four levels of stress (see below) were identified, color-coded and mapped. This information has helped the Manchester Public Works Department and city residents as an important resource in planning various types of cycling routes.

- LTS 1: Most children cyclists can tolerate
- LTS 2: Mainstream adult cyclists can tolerate
- LTS 3: “Enthusied and confident” cyclists can tolerate
- LTS 4: “Strong and fearless” cyclists can tolerate

A DRAFT Bike Stress Map was prepared in September 2014 (see following Map# 3) based upon this analysis. In creating this map, eleven data points were collected for each roadway segment in the city:

1. Bike Lane Presence – Right
2. Bike Lane Width – Right
3. Bike Lane Presence – Left
4. Bike Lane Width – Left
5. Speed Limit
6. Parking Presence – Right
7. Parking Width – Right
8. Parking Presence – Left
9. Parking Width – Left
10. Residential Indicator
11. Midblock Crossing

The results of the stress mapping show that while there are many pockets of low stress cycling opportunities citywide, many of these opportunities are disconnected, separated by higher stress areas that most cyclists likely would not be comfortable navigating. These higher-stress thoroughfares include Kelley St, Queen City Ave, South Willow St, Bridge St, Webster St, and Mammoth Road.

²¹ Mekuria, M., Furth, P., Nixon, H. (2012). *Low-Stress Bicycling and Network Connectivity*. Mineta Transportation Institute. San Jose State University. CA-MTI-12-1005

GOSSLAR PARK AREA HEALTH IMPACT ASSESSMENT

DRAFT BIKE STRESS MAPPING RESULTS SEPTEMBER 2014

LEVEL OF BIKE STRESS LEFT SIDE OF STREET, RIGHT SIDE OF STREET

	1, 1		2, 4
	1, 3		3, 2
	2, 1		3, 3
	2, 2		4, 2
	2, 3		4, 4



SCHOOLS



STUDY AREA

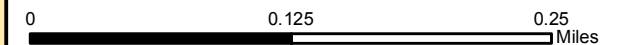


WATER



PARK LANDS

LTS 1: MOST CHILDREN CYCLISTS
CAN TOLERATE
LTS 2: THE MAINSTREAM ADULT
CYCLISTS CAN TOLERATE
LTS 3: "ENTHUSED AND CONFIDENT"
CYCLISTS CAN TOLERATE
LTS 4: "STRONG AND FEARLESS"
CYCLISTS CAN TOLERATE



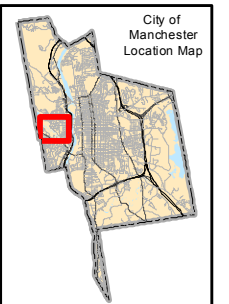
Data Sources:
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Within the Gossler Park neighborhood, the results of the stress mapping study found that many of the existing streets in the neighborhood are Level LTS-2: Mainstreet Adults Can Tolerate. In general, while these streets have relative low stress levels for adults they are not stress free for children. The streets designated as Level LTS-1: Most children cyclists can tolerate are primarily the smaller side and dead end residential streets located within the neighborhood (see Map# 3). All of the streets surrounding and providing direct access to Gossler Park Elementary, Parkside Middle School and West High School are designated as LTS-2 streets which have a higher stress level for children.

In view of the results of this Stress Mapping work and the need for safe bicycle facilities and routes within the neighborhood, especially for children, the Manchester Public Works Department is recommending that the City’s DRAFT Bicycle Master Plan include a proposed “**Shared Travel Lane**” bicycle facility to be established within the neighborhood.

This proposed “Shared Travel Lane” would consist of bicycle sharrow markings on both sides of the street pavement and installation of “share the road” and bicycle route signs (see following sign details). These improvements will help to create a safer biking route for both children and adults bicycling within the neighborhood. The Shared Travel Lane would also raise awareness among bicyclists and motorists sharing the street and help to decrease the level of stress felt by children when biking to and from the Gossler Park Elementary and Parkside Middle School.

The route of the proposed Shared Travel Lane would be located along Putnam Street between Main and McGregory Streets to the east and Parkside and Blucher Streets to the west. The travel lane would also provide for a loop north and south along Parkside and Blucher Streets and extend west along Sullivan Street to Whittemore Avenue and thus connecting to the Piscataquog Rail Trail at Douglas Street (see following Multi-Modal Infrastructure Map# 4).



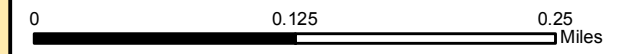
Examples of Bicycle and Pedestrian Signage; 2009 MUTCD - Manual on Uniform Traffic Control Devices

GOSSLAR PARK AREA HEALTH IMPACT ASSESSMENT

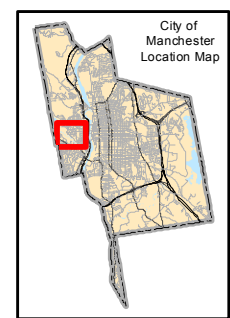
MULTI-MODAL INFRASTRUCTURE

-  SCHOOLS
-  PISCATAQUOG RIVER TRAIL
-  PROPOSED SHARED TRAVEL LANES**
-  PROPOSED BICYCLE LANE**
-  INTERSTATE AND TURNPIKES
-  US AND STATE ROUTES
-  LOCAL ROADS
-  STUDY AREA
-  WATER
-  PARK LANDS

PROPOSED BICYCLE LANES AND SHARED TRAVEL LANES ARE PART OF THE **DRAFT MANCHESTER BICYCLE MASTER PLAN.



Data Sources:
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 NH Department of Transportation
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The Manchester Public Works Department has also conducted some initial research in providing for a formal connection from the proposed Shared Travel Lane from Putnam Street and Whittemore Avenue to Douglas Street and to the Piscataquog Raid Trail. An existing trail connection is currently located near the Whittemore and Douglas Street intersection and is located directly off Douglas Street as shown on Map# 4 and in the photos below. As part of the Shared Travel Lane proposal, appropriate biking signage would be needed in this area.



Existing Connection to Rail Trail from Douglas Street



Douglas Street looking back towards Whittemore Avenue



Whittemore Avenue and turn onto Douglas Street

Based upon this analysis, the following findings and recommendations are offered to help improve bicycling safety within the neighborhood.

Findings

- While many of the existing streets in the neighborhood have low traffic volumes and are suitable for bicycling primarily among adult cyclists, special bicycle enhancements are needed for children within the neighborhood who bike and walk to school to ensure safety.
- The marking and signage of **Shared Travel Lanes** as proposed in the Manchester DRAFT Bike Plan would decrease the level of stress felt by cyclists and improve bicycle safety for children, as well as increase physical activity and improve public health, including property values within the neighborhood.
- The cost to develop and install this Shared Travel Lane is minimal compared to the overall benefits it would provide. These benefits also include showing the residents that the City cares about their neighborhood and that their health and welfare are important.

Land Use

The purpose of this section is to identify the type of land use that exists in Gossler Park today and elucidate where opportunities exist to improve property tax revenue and utilization of the land in a manner that attracts new development opportunities while maintaining the neighborhood's historical characteristics and social fabric.

To help cultivate neighborhood viability, economic vitality and a sense of place, it is important to have an accommodating and complementary regulatory framework-- in this case flexible zoning ordinances. The modern application of zoning ordinances derived from early 20th century municipal governing practices. Zoning, at the time, was thought to be the municipal panacea in protecting both residents' health and property values by segregating different types of land uses while controlling both the scale of development and where it could occur.²² These newly applied zoning mechanisms were implemented with good intentions, for the most part, to protect its citizens and their property values. And yet, they also produced unexpected consequences, which linger to this day.

Coupled with the rise of affordable automotive transportation and encouragement from state and federal policies, municipal planning seized the opportunity to develop commercial and industrial zones further away from residential areas. These key events along with other occurrences reduced the need for neighborhood businesses. Subsequently, land use within neighborhoods became increasingly homogenized. Unfortunately, Gossler Park neighborhood was not an exception to the zoning trends of the 20th century and consequently experienced the negative ramifications of suburban sprawl.²³ However, with the future incorporation of sensible non-restrictive zoning amendments by the City's legislator, such as mixed use development, Gossler Park will become a more attractive place for future development.

As it exists today, Gossler Park is approximately 288.9 acres in size as shown on the Study Area Map. Land use within the neighborhood consist primarily of residential housing and open space, representing 202.6 acres, totaling 70.1% of the neighborhood's existing space. The other 29.9% comprises the following uses: transportation infrastructure (33.5 ac), educational (17.2 ac), recreation (10.8 ac), institutional (5.8 ac), mixed use (5.2 ac), commercial (5.2), water bodies (7.7ac) and government property (0.4 ac). Currently, 0.5 acres is vacant and underutilized.

















²² SpencerFane (2010) *Why Government Policies Encourage Urban Sprawl and the Alternative Offered*

²³ Ibid

GOSSLAR PARK AREA HEALTH IMPACT ASSESSMENT

EXISTING LAND USE - 2010

EXISTING LAND USE*

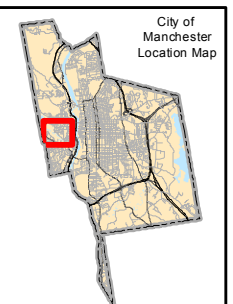
-  OPEN SPACE; 69.4 ACRES, 24%
-  RESIDENTIAL; 133.2 ACRES, 46.1%
-  MIXED USES; 5.2 ACRES, 1.8%
-  COMMERCIAL; 5.2 ACRES, 1.8%
-  GOVERNMENT; 0.4 ACRES, 0.1%
-  EDUCATIONAL; 17.2 ACRES, 6 %
-  INSTITUTIONAL; 5.8 ACRES, 2 %
-  VACANT; 0.5 ACRES, 0.2%
-  RECREATION; 10.8 ACRES, 3.7%
-  TRANSPORTATION; 33.5 ACRES, 11.6%
-  WATER; 7.7 ACRES, 2.7%
-  UTILITIES; NOT WITHIN STUDY AREA
-  WETLAND; NOT WITHIN STUDY AREA
-  STUDY AREA
-  SCHOOLS
-  TOWN BOUNDARY

* EXISTING LAND USE BASED ON 2010 AERIAL IMAGERY. ACRES AND PERCENT OF AREA IS CALCULATED BASED ON THE STUDY AREA.



0 0.125 0.25 Miles

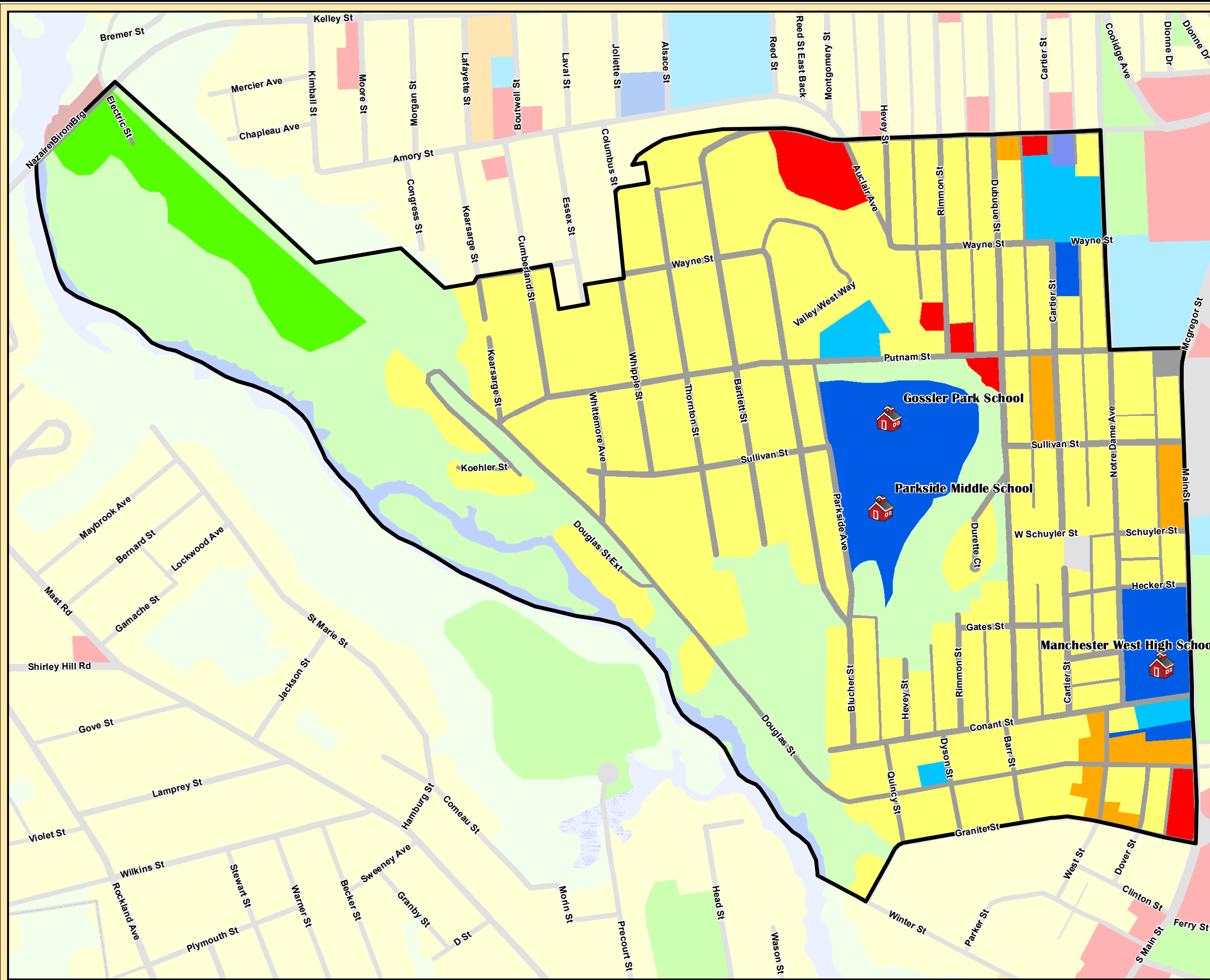
Data Sources:
Granit Digital Data (1:24,000)
NH Department of Transportation
City of Manchester



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Map Produced by GIS Service SNHPC 2015.
Contact: SNHPC, gis@snhpc.org or (603) 669-4664



Gossler Park's zoning primarily consists of three residential districts: two-family (R-2) consisting of 143.3 acres at 50.3%; one family-high density (R-1B) 11.5 acres at 4.0%; and urban multifamily (R-3) 73.8 acres at 25.5%. In addition to these districts, there are also small pockets of land zoned general business (B-2) 3.5 acres at 1.2%; neighborhood business district (B-1) 3.5 at 1.2% and civic hospital (C-2) 0.6 acres at 0.2%. The remaining land is devoted to a conservation district (CV) 42.7 acres at 14.8% and occupied by the Piscataquog River 7.7 acres at 2.7%.

Currently, Gossler Park comprises primarily residential zones along with scattered enclaves of commercial and mixed use zones. Since Gossler Park has in place a small proportion of its land use designated for business activity, opportunities for commercial expansion are limited. Businesses that do exist within the neighborhood are not diverse, consisting only of convenient stores, restaurants and specialty stores. As stated previously, opportunities for new business growth within Gossler Park is significantly finite. The shortage of commercial businesses in Gossler Park forces residents to seek markets and services in different locations throughout the city or into different communities. This places a substantial financial affliction onto residents in that they must expend a larger percent of their income and time to access storefronts. Furthermore, a small population of commercial outlets in the neighborhood reduces the opportunity for capital to be reinvested into the community and the absence of investment into the community perpetuates the failure to create a sense of place.
















A promising aspect of land use in the neighborhood is the incorporation of mixed use development. Mixed usage, a permitted use in a redevelopment district (RDV) according to the City's Zoning Ordinances, is found within the neighborhood, albeit on a limiting basis. Achieving a healthy balance between commercial and residential zones is the ideal solution in maintaining and increasing the neighborhood's ad valorem, local economy and access to goods and services.

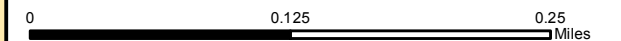
The incorporation of more mixed use zones is the most realistic course of action to expand and promote development in Gossler Park because the current zoning regulations prohibit the establishment of large and intensive retail and industrial related uses. This is a good application of zoning and the exclusion of large scale development from the community should continue because their encroachment into Gossler Park would displace segments of the population, adulterate existing neighborhood characteristics and potentially induce negative traffic impacts. Instead, emphasis should be placed on improving and maintaining residential property values through residential zoning while allowing for an expansion of low-intensity mixed use and neighborhood-oriented businesses, including personal, hospitality, financial and medical services. Furthermore, increasing property values in some of the lower end and marginalized areas of the neighborhood while maintaining existing values within more established areas will be critical in helping the long term stability of the neighborhood.

GOSSLAR PARK AREA HEALTH IMPACT ASSESSMENT

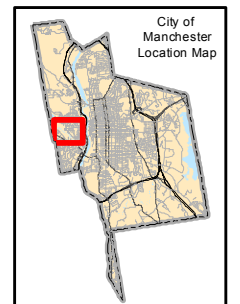
EXISTING ZONING

ZONING DISTRICT

-  CIVIC-HOSPITAL DISTRICT; 0.6 ACRES, 0.2%
-  CONSERVATION DISTRICT; 42.7 ACRES, 14.8%
-  GENERAL BUSINESS DISTRICT; 3.5 ACRES, 1.2%
-  NEIGHBORHOOD BUSINESS DISTRICT; 3.5 ACRES, 1.2%
-  RESIDENTIAL ONE FAMILY DISTRICT - HIGH DENSITY; 11.5 ACRES, 4.0%
-  RESIDENTIAL TWO FAMILY DISTRICT; 145.3 ACRES, 50.3%
-  URBAN MULTIFAMILY DISTRICT; 73.8 ACRES, 25.5%
-  WATER; 7.8 ACRES, 2.7%
-  AMOSKEAG MILLYARD MIXED USE DISTRICT; NOT WITHIN STUDY AREA
-  RESIDENTIAL-SUBURBAN MULTIFAMILY DISTRICT; NOT WITHIN STUDY AREA
-  STUDY AREA
-  INTERSTATE AND TURNPIKES
-  US AND STATE ROUTES
-  LOCAL ROADS
-  TOWN BOUNDARY



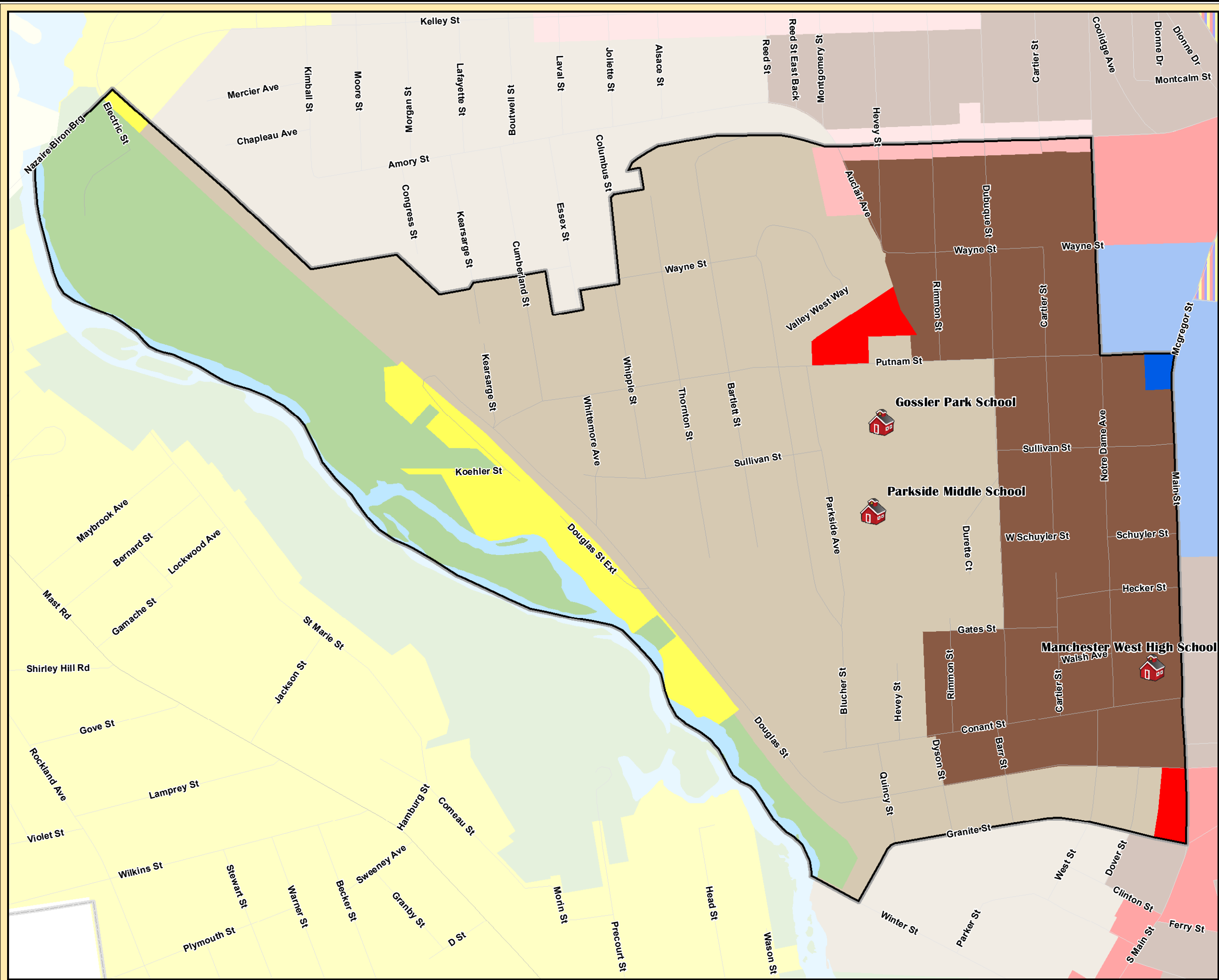
Data Sources:
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Along with the expansion of mixed usage, the incorporation of more inclusive residential uses should be enacted into the City's Zoning Ordinances. According to the 2014 ACS, there is a concentration of elderly persons above 60 years within the neighborhood (13.6%).²⁴ As such, it is important that the City's land use and zoning ordinance provide opportunities for elderly residents to "age in place". This also includes allowing opportunities for families and households to create and accessory dwelling units for elderly residents.

Currently, the City's Zoning Ordinance permits the construction of a single accessory dwelling unit per household for related elderly persons above the age of 62 as a special exception.²⁵ These zoning provisions should be evaluated to identify ways to promote and improve the accessory unit ordinance, especially since demographic trends suggest there will be a significant increase in the elderly population in New Hampshire. At the same time, safeguards need to be put into place to protect existing property values. There is new legislation being proposed (Senate Bill 146)²⁶ which could require all municipalities in NH to permit accessory dwelling units in all zoning districts as a matter of right or by special exemption that permit single family dwellings.

In addition to accessory dwelling units, the City's Zoning Ordinance permits home occupation as a permissible use in all residential zones. As defined in the City's Zoning Ordinance, home occupation is, "a lawful accessory use of a dwelling unit for commercial or non-residential uses by a resident thereof which is subordinate to the use of the dwelling as a residence."²⁷ These provisions are important as they encourage home-based occupation while preserving the character, safety and property values of existing residential areas.

In short, the increase of permitted land uses will allow developers and entrepreneurs an opportunity to increase economic activity into the neighborhood based upon market demand. The diversification of the neighborhood's ad valorem catalyzed by inclusive land usage will increase revenue into the city's general fund, which can be reinvested into the neighborhood for future improvements.

Findings

- Expand mixed use zoning to encourage development that would increase economic activity and expand residential and affordable housing opportunities
- Incorporate more inclusive permitted residential uses, especially age friendly zoning.
- Encourage local entrepreneurs to establish storefronts that offer healthy food options and financial services.
- Neighborhood identification markers (like Rimmon Heights); signage etc.

²⁴ American Community Survey (ACS), Five-Year Estimates (2014), Age and Sex, Census tract 21

²⁵ City of Manchester Planning and Community Development Department (2014). *Zoning Ordinance*. Manchester, NH

²⁶ Senate Bill 146, An Act Relative to Accessory Dwelling Units, New Hampshire State Senate, 2015

²⁷ City of Manchester Planning and Community Development Department (2014). *Zoning Ordinance*. Manchester, NH

Access to Healthy Food

The purpose of this section is to identify the various food retail outlets Gossler Park residents have access to and whether these retail outlets provide healthy options.

The majority of Gossler Park residents have access to both food retail outlets that provide healthy foods and unhealthy alternatives. According to the Food and Drug Administration (FDA) a healthy food from a regulatory perspective is defined as, “ a product that must meet certain criteria that limit the amounts of fat, saturated fat, cholesterol, and sodium, and require specific minimum amounts of vitamins, minerals, or other beneficial nutrients.”²⁸ Based on this specific definition, there are only a limited number of retail outlets close to Gossler Park residents that provide such products.

This analysis has determined that Gossler Park neighborhood does not reside within a food desert. According to the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA), a food desert is an urban environment that has a high concentration of low-income residents whom have low levels of access to a grocery store or healthy, affordable food retail outlet. To qualify as a ‘low-income’ and ‘low-access’ community, the area must have:

1. A poverty rate of at least 20 percent or a median family income at or below 80 percent of the area median family income;
2. At least 500 persons and/or at least 33 percent of the census tract’s population live more than one mile from a supermarket or large grocery store.

According to the USDA definition, Gossler Park fails to meet the requirements to be designated as a food desert. However, this analysis establishes the possibility that there does exist underserved communities such as immigrant, elderly and low-income standing populations within the neighborhood that do have restricted access to healthy foods. Although identifying these at risk populations is out of the scope of this analysis, it is recommended that further research be conducted to both identify the key causations that prohibit healthy food obtainment and to develop solutions thereafter in order to reduce those impediments and give vulnerable segments of the population better chance to access healthy food products.

While there aren’t any major supermarkets or grocery stores directly within the neighborhood limits, these businesses are found in close proximity to the study area. Specifically, there are 6 major supermarkets and retail outlet that are accessible by personal vehicle, public transportation and ambulation. To control for distance discrepancy—the exact mileage to these storefronts is subject to variation, depending on the geographic location of a dwelling unit within the neighborhood—the analysis selected Gossler Park School as the origin point to determine the amount of miles between the neighborhood and the surrounding supermarkets in that the school lies relatively close to the study area’s center.

²⁸ United States Food and Drug Administration (2015). Food Label Helps Consumers Make Healthier Choices. Washington, D.C.

There are 5 specific supermarkets (Hannaford--Bedford, Hannaford--Goffstown/Pinardville, Market Basket--Elm St., Market Basket--Bedford and Walmart--Bedford) that provide residents with the opportunity to purchase healthy products, such as fruit and vegetables, at affordable prices. This is especially beneficial for low to moderate income residents, who can purchase more food at lower costs and allocate money saved on groceries towards paying for other necessities such as rent/mortgage, child care, utilities and other bills.

Table 5. Grocery Stores outside Gossler Park

Grocery Store	Distance from Gossler Park School (mi)
Hannaford (Bedford)	2.3
Hannaford (Goffstown)	2.3
Market Basket (Elm St., Manchester)	1.6
Market Basket (Bedford)	2.7
Walmart (Bedford)	2.3

Although distance is relatively short between Gossler Park households and the aforementioned supermarkets, populated in between residents and these food outlets are numerous convenient stores and restaurants that either sell an inadequate supply of healthy foods or outright fail to provide any healthy alternatives for consumers to purchase.

Table 6. Health Consequences of Obesity; CDC

Health Consequences of Obesity ²⁹
Coronary heart disease
Type 2 diabetes
Cancers (endometrial, breast, and colon)
High blood pressure
Lipid disorders, e.g., high total cholesterol
Stroke
Liver and Gallbladder disease
Sleep apnea and respiratory problems
Osteoarthritis
Gynecological problems

Access to healthy foods is fundamental element to sustain a salubrious lifestyle. Proximity to healthy food outlets is one of the indicators used to determine the general health and well-being of a population in a specific geographic location.³⁰ Over the past decade, there have been a number analyses conducted by researchers that sought to determine whether the proximity of households to grocery stores, which sold healthy food products, was correlated to an increase in purchasing thereof. The results had varying outcomes that were dependent on demographic

²⁹ Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. (2015) Disability and Obesity. Atlanta, GA: U.S. Department of Health and Human Services

³⁰ Robert Wood Johnson Foundation, Commission to Build a Healthier America (2008). Where We Live Matters for Our Health: Neighborhoods and Health. *Issue Brief 3: Neighborhoods and Health*, September 2008

characteristics, but in general, researchers observed that peoples' purchasing of healthy foods increased if:

1. Access to a store selling healthy products was nearby and;
2. Whether the fresh fruits and produce were clearly visible and accessible in the stores themselves.³¹

Conversely, research has also shown that a person (one to whom lives in an urban environment) residing in close proximity to a convenient store, which primarily offers an unhealthy variety of products, has a higher risk of becoming more obese to which may increase the risk of contracting other adverse side effects.³²

Currently, the study area of this analysis has 3 convenient stores and 1 pharmacy that do not offer healthy food alternatives or little thereof. Moreover, there are an additional 4 convenient stores immediately to the north and west of the study area on Kelley Street, Bartlett Street, Amory Street and Bremer Street. These storefronts correspond to the other convenient stores in the area by not offering any healthy food products.

Table 7: Convenient stores within/outside Gossler Park

Convenient Stores within Study Area	Distance from Gossler Park School (mi)
A & R West Convenience	0.6
Bartlett Street Superette	0.2
Crosstown Variety Store	0.5
Rite Aid Pharmacy	0.6
Convenient Stores outside Study Area	--
Crosstown Market	0.6
El Aztecke	0.5
S & R West Side Market	0.6
Uncle Bob's Superette	0.8

In addition, there are 7 restaurants within the neighborhood that do offer both healthy and unhealthy foods, but their prices are prohibitive and purchasing food from these businesses on a regular basis would become financially burdensome and unsustainable. Immediately outside the study area, there are an additional 10 restaurants and fast-food businesses that correspond on most aspects, e.g., high costs and many unhealthy options.

³¹ Zenk , N. Shannon, Lachance, L. Laurie; Schulz J. Amy; Mentz, Graciela; Kannan Srimathi; and Ridella, William (2009) Neighborhood Retail Food Environment and Fruit and Vegetable Intake in a Multiethnic Urban Population. *American Journal of Health Promotion*: March/April 2009, Vol. 23, No. 4, pp. 255-264.

³² Ruff, Ryan Richard Akhund, Ali, and Adjoian, Tamar (2016) Small Convenience Stores and the Local Food Environment: An Analysis of Resident Shopping Behavior Using Multilevel Modeling. *American Journal of Health Promotion*: January/February 2016, Vol. 30, No. 3, pp. 172-180.

Table 8: Restaurants within/outside Gossler Park

Restaurants/Fast-Food within Study Area	Distance from Gossler Park School
Alperini	0.5
Domino's Pizza	0.5
Elite Pizza	0.5
Great Wall	0.5
Skinny's Pizza	0.5
Restaurants/Fast-Food outside Study Area	--
Bakeshop	0.6
Canton Garden	0.6
Cakes & Such	0.7
Chez Vachon	0.6
Dunkin' Donuts (CMC)	0.5
Dunkin' Donuts (Granite St.)	0.8
Golden Tao	0.5
Jimmy;s House of Pizza	0.8
Tano's House of Pizza	0.8
Subway	0.8

Although Gossler Park residents are primarily surrounded by convenient stores and restaurants, during the summer months, there is a farmer's market in Lafayette Park near St. Marie Church on Norte Dame Avenue. Residents of Gossler Park are able buy fresh produce and fruits there at affordable prices. Unfortunately, this particular farmer's market is not an year round operation and shuts-down in the late autumn.

Having this option to shop at the farmer's market provides Gossler Park residents with another venue to purchase healthy foods. To improve access to healthy foods and produce, the City government should expand their mixed-use zones further into the neighborhood in order to attract small scale grocers into Gossler Park. Furthermore, the City should identify under-utilized municipal land in or around Gossler Park and designated it as a community garden. A community garden will have three positive effects:

1. Promote healthy eating,
2. Increase educational opportunities and physical activity
3. Facilitate community interaction and solidarity

In short, Gossler Park is surrounded by enough supermarkets and grocery stores, which are in close enough proximity to the neighborhood, not to be considered in a food desert. Yet, no matter the location of a household in the neighborhood, the first store a resident will encounter is a convenient store or a restaurant that serves primarily unhealthy food options. Given the current circumstances, the probability of Gossler Park residents becoming obese is higher and higher obesity rates will yield a probable increase of adverse side effects.

Findings

- According to the USDA, Gossler Park is not in a food desert. However, certain sections of the neighborhood are largely surrounded by retail stores and food vendors that primarily sell unhealthy products and fail to provide fresh fruits and produce.
- Gossler Park is susceptible to high rates of obesity which may increase the likelihood of adverse side effects.
- Mixed use zoning should be expanded or a zoning overlay should be enacted to permit small scale grocers to establish businesses across the neighborhood.
- Under-utilized parcels of municipal land should be considered for conversion to community gardens.

Social Connectedness

Social connectedness can be described as social support or social networks. Strong social networks have a strong positive impact on health³³ and having network members living in close proximity are positively associated with perceived social connectedness³⁴. Studies suggest that higher levels of perceived social connectedness are linked with lower blood pressure rates, better immune response, and lower levels of stress hormones³⁵. Similarly, higher levels of trust between community members have shown to be related to lower mortality rates³⁶.

Gossler Park Elementary and Parkside Middle School are located in the center of the study area. As seen in **Table 9**, Gossler Park Elementary average grade size is 75 students. Compared to the district and the state, the grade size for Gossler is relatively small. A study published in the peer-reviewed journal *Learning and Instruction* suggests that a smaller classroom environment increases student-teacher interactions.³⁷ These interactions build a sense of community between students and teachers, which largely help facilitate relationships between schools and their surrounding communities.

³³ Ferris, M. 2012. *Social Connectedness and Health*. Wilder Research Group. Amherst H. Wilder Foundation. Pages 2-3.

³⁴ Ashida, S., Heaney, C. 2008. Differential Associations of Social Support and Social Connectedness With Structural Features of Social Networks and the Health Status of Older Adults. *J Aging Health* October 20: 872-893

³⁵ Uchino, B., Cacioppo, J., & Kiecolt-Glaser, J. (1996). The relationship between social support and physiological processes: A review with emphasis on underlying mechanisms and implications for health. *Psychological Bulletin*, 119 (3), 488-531.

³⁶ Lochner, K.A., Kawachi, I., Brennan, R.T., Buka, S.L. (2003) Social capital and neighborhood mortality rates in Chicago. *Social Science and Medicine* 56, 1797-1806.

³⁷ Blatchford, et al. 2010. *Examining the effect of class size on classroom engagement and teacher-pupil interaction: Differences in relation to pupil prior attainment and primary vs. secondary schools*. *Learning and Instruction: Volume 21, Issue 6*. Pages 715-730.

Table 9: Gossler Park Enrollment			
	October 1 Enrollment		
Grade(s)	School	District	State
Kindergarten	89	1,069	11,570
Grade 1	75	1,171	13,157
Grade 2	73	1,167	13,408
Grade 3	66	1,087	13,553
Grade 4	62	1,075	13,558
Grade 5	84	1,067	13,978
Total Enrollment	449	14,718	183,604
Average Grade Class Size	75	1106	13204

(Source: New Hampshire Department of Education. Student Information 2014-15: Student Enrollment for Gossler Park Elementary)

The Gossler Park neighborhood is unique in that the public elementary and middle schools can be utilized as a vehicle for building social connectedness. Due to their central location within the catchment area, the schools are a physical central hub for residents who pick their children up from school and attend school and community events. Additionally, because of their central location, residents walk around and through the school grounds as a way to connect with neighbors and access different recreation opportunities within the neighborhood and throughout the City of Manchester. Communities can aid in establishing social networks which help residents integrate into various social structures³⁸ such as hosting events like a farmers market or a community day at the neighborhood's schools. These events would physically connect community members as well as help build relationships within the community.

Although the schools can be pivotal in supporting strong social networks, the community should embrace existing support structures, as well as look for new opportunities to enhance and build community building networks. As seen in **Table 10**, and illustrated on Map, there are five churches, a social club, a library and an adult center within the Gossler neighborhood. While these social organizations provide different services, each has formed a respective relationship with the community which can be viewed as a framework for building social connectedness.

Table 10: Social Structures within the Gossler Neighborhood		
Organization	Description	Location
William B. Cashin Senior Activity	Senior Citizen Center	151 Douglas St
West Manchester	Library (currently closed)	76 Main St, Manchester

³⁸ Stronegger, W. J., Titze, S., & Oja, P. (2010). Perceived characteristics of the neighborhood and its association with physical activity behavior and self-rated health. *Health & Place*, 16(4), 736–743. doi:10.1016/j.healthplace.2010.03.005

Community Library		
Alpine Club	Social Club	175 Putnam Street
Revival Church for the Nations	Church	188 Conant St
St Andrews Episcopal Church	Church	102 Main St
New Beginnings Assembly of God Church	Church	130 Conant Street
Joseph Housen Retreat Center	Church	279 Cartier Street
Saint Marie Roman Catholic Church	Church	378 Notre Dame Ave

(Source: Young, J. 2014. Social Connections, Safety, and Local Environment in Three Manchester, New Hampshire Neighborhoods. Carsey Research, University of New Hampshire.)

Table 11. Gossler Park Neighborhood Survey Results	
GOSSLER PARK	
NEIGHBORHOOD SAFETY	AGREE
I feel safe walking in my neighborhood during the day	94
I feel safe walking in my neighborhood at night	33
I feel comfortable calling the police to report suspicious or criminal behavior	81
There is little I can do to prevent or reduce crime in my neighborhood	39
Violence is not a problem in this neighborhood	36
Crime is not a problem in this neighborhood	19
TRUST & SOCIAL CONNECTEDNESS	AGREE
If a child got hurt or scared while playing outside, there are adults nearby I trust would help	84
People in this neighborhood help each other out	58
People in this neighborhood can be trusted	48
People in this neighborhood are treated respectfully	57
Peoples in this neighborhood are discriminated against	38
LOCAL ENVIRONMENT	AGREE
There is a lot of trash and/or litter on the streets	76
Graffiti is an issue in this neighborhood	53
Homes and other buildings are well-maintained	65
Parks and playgrounds are well-maintained and safe	77
It is pleasant to walk or run in this neighborhood	72

(Source: Young, J. 2014. Social Connections, Safety, and Local Environment in Three Manchester, New Hampshire Neighborhoods. Carsey Research, University of New Hampshire.)

In 2013, the Manchester Health Department conducted a door-to-door survey of the Gossler neighborhood covering neighborhood safety, trust and social connectedness, and local environment. The table above accounts for responders from the Gossler neighborhood. As seen above, responders felt that their neighbors could be trusted to help their children in the event of an injury, however only 48% of responders agreed that their neighbors could be trusted. While there are many factors that contribute to trust in a neighborhood, or lack thereof, helping to foster social connectedness is instrumental in building trust within a community.

In an attempt to foster community input, staff from the Southern NH Planning Commission hosted a community charrette which found that the sense of community in Gossler Park has faded away in recent years. When residents were asked during the charrette how they might like to improve community dynamics, a common response was the construction of a community center or the improvement of the existing infrastructure at the school yard. Residents envision that these improvements will generate more neighborhood interaction by creating a place for their children to play and parents to interact. A community center would also increase the opportunity for social events to take place, which will help to reinforce community togetherness and instill a sense of social investment.

While creating a public community center for the Gossler neighborhood would improve social connectedness and in turn provide positive health benefits to the community, utilizing existing space to establish a social hub could be a huge benefit to the neighborhood. As an example, an organization in Denver, CO works alongside schools and residents to create a community garden space for the entire community. The Denver Urban Gardens supports school-based community gardens that create a bridge between the school and the surrounding community by offering gardening space to students, parents, teachers and neighbors (DUG, 2016)³⁹. Community gardens encourage residents to connect, have access to healthier food options, and can ultimately create a sense-of-place within the neighborhood.

Findings

- Gossler's relatively small school environment reinforces the idea of transforming the city's public schools into neighborhood hubs to expand community resources and programming for improved public health and social connectedness.
- Gossler is home to multiple social structures like churches, a library and social clubs which help further build community networks. The relationships these organizations form with the neighborhood is crucial to building trust, and increasing social connectedness. The neighborhood could build on these relationships by forming something similar to a neighborhood association that would facilitate communication between existing social organizations and the community.

³⁹ <http://dug.org/starting-a-school-garden/>

- Gossler residents found that the neighborhood lacks a common public space. By utilizing the schools as a central community space, it would allow a low-cost alternative to building a community center, and would improve social connectedness and in turn provide positive health benefits to the community. Similarly, Gossler Park Elementary could host community events or other social opportunities like hosting a community garden on the school's campus.

Recreation and Nearby Amenities

Access to physical exercise and recreation opportunities is also critical for public health. This section identifies the number of places for physical activity located near people's homes in the Gossler Park Neighborhood. Locations for physical activity include parks and recreational facilities as well as areas where outdoor physical exercise and activities can take place. Parks include: local, state, national parks. Recreation includes both public and privately owned facilities:

- Gyms,
- Community centers
- YMCAs
- Dance studios
- Pools

Individuals who reside in a census block within a half mile of a park or within one mile of a recreational facility in urban areas are considered to have adequate access to opportunities for physical activity. (CDC, 2014)⁴⁰

A major asset in the Gossler Park Neighborhood is its close proximity to public parks. Residents are within a quarter mile of public parks which provide the community with natural aesthetics as well as recreation space. Lafayette Park, a 2-acre park located on Notre Dame Avenue, contributes not only green space to the West Side, but is also a showcase for culture as there are sculptures illustrating the Franco-American history which played a significant role in influencing the culture of the area.



Lafayette Park; Manchester DPW

⁴⁰ Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. State Indicator Report on Physical Activity, 2014. Atlanta, GA: U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, 2014.



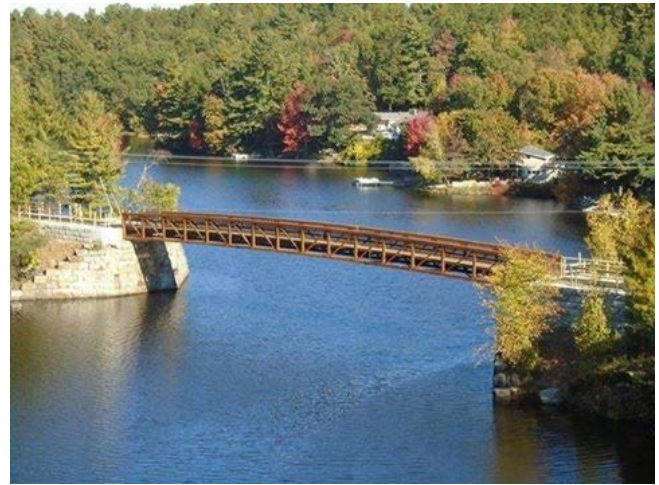
Sweeney Park; Manchester DPW

Thibalt Field, located on Douglas Street, hosts a large recreational area including a football field as well as access to the “rail trail”.

Sweeney Park, in the southeastern corner of the catchment area, located on South Main Street, features a number of different recreation activities. With amenities including memorial, a children’s playground, a baseball diamond, as well as a basketball court, Sweeney Park offers residents a safe place to play in their community.

Additionally, residents within the Gossler catchment area have access to the West Side Ice Arena. Located on Electric Street, this arena is open from August through April, hosting Manchester West High School, community “Stick & Puck”, as well as the Over 40 Hockey League and the Industrial Hockey League.

Lastly, Gossler community members have access to the newly completed Piscataquog Rail Bridge which connects the 5.5-mile Goffstown Rail Trail with Manchester's Piscataquog Trail, allowing trail users access to Fisher Cats Stadium and downtown Manchester. This form of alternative transportation enables a better means of healthy transportation options, where community members can walk, run, or bike to areas once isolated from the Gossler community.

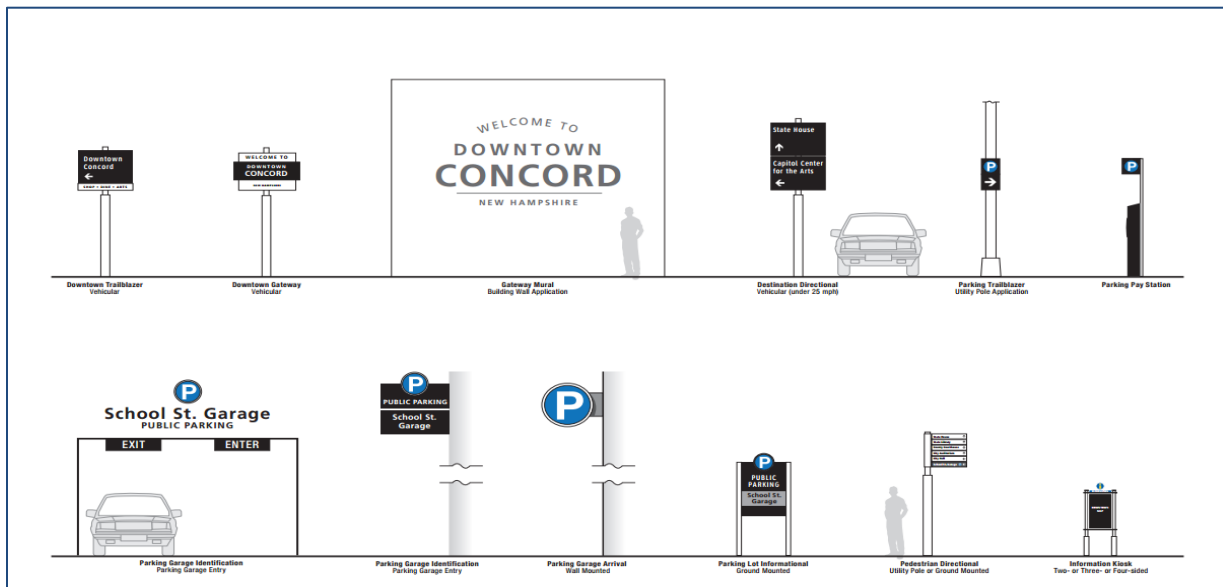


Piscataquog River Rail Trail Bridge

The Piscataquog Trail serves as a safe accessible link to businesses, parks, rivers and other assets to the City of Manchester, its citizens and the surrounding communities. The following is a list of locations that have become accessible for pedestrians and bicyclists via the Piscataquog Trail.

- Gossler Park and Parkside Schools
- Fisher Cats Stadium
- Merrimack River
- Sweeney Park
- Piscataquog River Park
- West Side Ice Arena
- Rock Rimmon Park
- Cullerot Park
- Connection to Town of Goffstown

Although residents are within close proximity to public parks, poor signage and inadequate pedestrian infrastructure act as a barrier to connecting the parks to community members. The nine sidewalk locations which have been identified in the Walking section of this document have potential problems and three intersections with unsafe pedestrian conditions which need improvements. The current condition of these sidewalks burdens pedestrians in finding a safe route to public recreation spaces. Similarly, the lack of signage on and around the Piscataquog Rail Trail leaves pedestrians without a sense of direction. Communities in and beyond New Hampshire have recently implemented wayfinding as a means to help their residents connect to different parts of their communities. Below is an example of Concord's proposed wayfinding signage.



Example of Concord, NH Main Street Wayfinding Signage

The 2012 Parks and Recreation Master Plan Update identifies the need to develop the park facilities as a system and to link the parks as an integrated network. The Plan states that these connections can be made through reclassifying certain streets as parkways, connecting with trails and other park systems⁴¹. Additionally, the Plan identified the Gossler and Parkside Schools capital improvements to be of high priority. The Plan proposed the following:

“A design and engineering study of the grounds are required to determine the details of the site rehabilitation and multi-use field. Consideration should be given to formalizing pedestrian access to the school grounds from the surrounding community, utilization or removal of the abandoned road section and general treescaping.”

During the community charrette, described in detail in the **Community Engagement** section of this document, Gossler residents expressed a need to improve the recreation opportunities in

⁴¹ Greening the City: City of Manchester, Parks and Recreation Master Plan Update, 2012.

and around Gossler Park Elementary and Parkside Middle School. Among other recommendations, residents suggested moving the existing playground to the front of the school, expanding green space, and other general landscaping improvements. Additionally, Gossler residents expressed a need for greater access to both schools as well as surrounding recreational amenities. While the Parks and Recreation Master Plan does identify the school grounds to be of high priority, residents still express a need to improve the physical conditions and access to the schools.

Findings

- Gossler residents are in close proximity to public recreation areas, such as the newly constructed rail trail, public parks, and an ice arena.
- The Piscataquog Rail Trail gives residents greater access to various community assets, including access to the Eastside, Center City area of Manchester.
- Inadequate signage discourages safe pedestrian transportation to recreation areas.
 - By implementing wayfinding signage, Gossler residents will be better equipped to navigate through their community
- Gossler residents expressed a need to improve access to Gossler and other recreational opportunities outside of the school to truly make Gossler a neighborhood destination for residents of all ages.

Neighborhood Crime

The purpose of this section is to identify major crime issues with the Gossler Park Neighborhood and city policing and other activities and programs are available to prevent crime and improve neighborhood safety.

Manchester Police Department provided SNHPC with 2015 crime data for the Gossler Park area. This data is located in Appendix E. While the majority of crimes that were committed in Gossler Park were related to theft, there was one instance of first degree murder, multiple cases of aggravated assaults, and other various crimes. To help reduce crime, there are multiple community tools that can be implemented such as: community design and neighborhood watch groups.

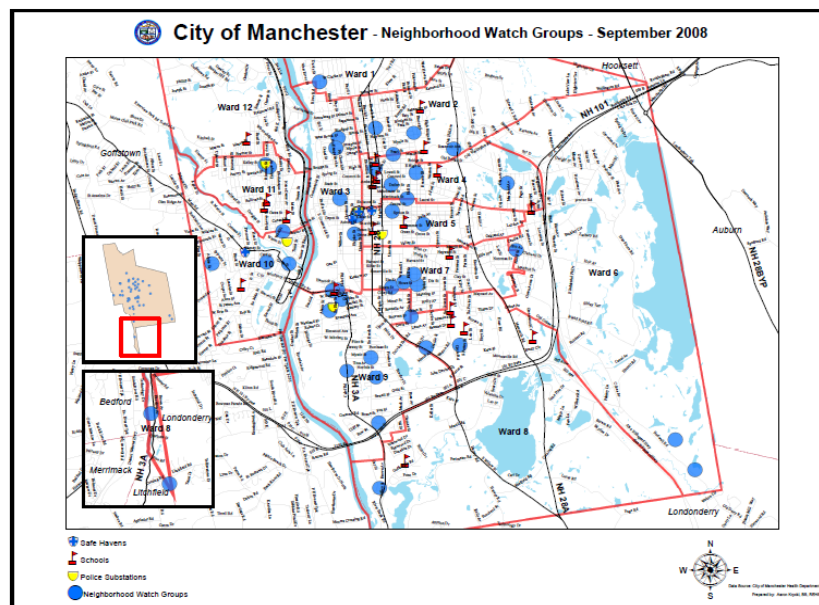
The physical environment of a community can have an effect on behavior. The built environment and design of a community can sometimes act as a tool for preventing crime. Crime prevention through community design (CPTED) is the practice of utilizing architecture and technology to provide alternatives to typical crime prevention efforts. Some examples of CPTED include “eyes on the street”, a practice of designing houses with large windows facing the street to act as a form of community surveillance (Office of Neighborhood Involvement Crime Prevention Program, Portland OR).

A study in 2009 showed that neighborhoods that were perceived to be unsafe revealed lower physical activity in children, leading to higher obesity and type 2 diabetes rates (Franzini et al., 2009). Similarly, there is a decrease in park safety due to lack of maintenance and a perceived increase in crime. By implementing design elements into a neighborhood that deters crime, communities can lower the level of perceived crime which may lead to an increase in physical activity. For example, dense residential housing and street connectivity is shown to reduce crime rates (Christian et al., 2013). Another way communities can design their neighborhoods to deter crime is to increase visibility by implementing adequate street lighting.

The Manchester Police Department operates a Neighborhood Watch Group within the City. Neighborhood Watch is a resident involvement program, where residents work with the Manchester Police Department and directly participate in the detection and prevention of crime within the community. The Watch Groups do not belong to the Police Department, they belong to the neighborhood. Both the Watch Groups and Police Department work together to prevent and fight crime and to improve the quality of life in the neighborhood.

According to the Manchester Police Department, there are currently 41 active Watch Groups in the city. As shown on the following map, the Gossler Park Neighborhood is located in Ward 11. According to the information on this map, there is currently no Neighborhood Watch Group within the Gossler Park Neighborhood. However, there is an existing Watch Group located along Granite Street within the Granite Street neighborhood directly south of West High School and Conant Street. Within Ward 11 and near the Gossler Park Neighborhood, there are two police substations – a new station on Kelly Street to the north and a station near Third Street south of Granite Street. Several police officers are also assigned to patrol the Gossler Park Neighborhood.

Figure 9: Neighborhood Crime Watch Groups in Manchester, 2008



Findings

- A Watch Group for the Gossler Park Neighborhood could be established, but it would require that residents agree to organize and participate in it. A typical Watch Group involves residents meeting and sharing their concerns about crime along side City and Community partners. The Manchester Police Department Community Policing Division can provide advice and guidance for all Neighborhood Watch Groups, as well as updates on neighborhood crime and prevention ideas.
- The established Watch Group could consider various crime prevention methods through community design, such as improving visibility through better street lighting, as well as organizing neighborhood activities to bring people together.

Gossler and Parkside School Campus

Gossler and Parkside School share a large 22 acre parcel. One of the most dominant features of the site is a wide, steep, vegetated buffer along Putnam Street to the north and Dubuque Street on the east, wrapping around the south edge of the parcel where it ends in a green field. The buffer consists primarily of dense, unmaintained deciduous trees and shrubs with the exception of the section behind Parkside where it is a mix of deciduous and evergreen trees. There is considerable concern from all stakeholders that the buffer invites undesirable drug and other criminal activities because it is partially concealed by the school buildings and difficult to access and therefore patrol. The buffer is not maintained so it can conceal anyone, including students.

The other dominating features on the site are the buildings, parking, and blacktop areas that create an immediate impression of hard, impervious surfaces. The buildings have little distinguishing features especially the entrance at Gossler, which makes it difficult to find for newcomers. Much of the play space is also impervious such as abandoned looking tennis courts, a much used basketball court, and organized play space such as “Four-Square” between the two schools and behind Gossler.

Recreation fields and green space are limited. The only options for team sports are an undersized baseball diamond to the rear of Gossler and a field just south of Parkside School’s main entrance, which serves as a soccer and activity field. Gossler also has a remote playground adjacent to the wooded buffer between the two schools. It is older and well worn, but the biggest concern is its lack of visibility from Parkside Ave. for patrolling police. There is an open green space (approximately .63 acres) in the front of the campus situated between Parkside School Cafeteria and Parkside Drive.

Table 12. Campus Physical Features

Total Parcel (Acres= Ac)	Wooded Buffer	Total Impervious	Open Space
22 ac	8 ac (36 %)	8.5 ac (39%)	5.5 ac (25%)

One of the most important synergies between the two schools is the traffic flow, access management, sidewalk system, and pedestrian access. For vehicles, the approach to the school is limited to Sullivan Street from the west and Parkside Avenue from the northwest. Traffic circulation is somewhat complicated but organized into bus drop-off and pickup areas, parent drop-off and pick up zones, and teacher parking. During conversations with school staff during the summer of 2015, an improved coordination strategy was outlined and put into place just prior to the school year. Improvements focused on bus drop off and pick up areas.

Access by foot is important especially for Gossler as it is a designated walking school, meaning most students walk unless dropped off by a parent. As discussed in [Walking and Pedestrian Safety](#), sidewalk conditions vary and some gaps exist, but for the most part, sidewalks are in place. The sidewalk system functions well but one of the challenges of the site is accessing the school campus from the north and east sides due to the extreme elevation differences with in the neighborhood. There are three pedestrian access points: a well utilized stairway down into the campus off of Putnum Street to the north (twenty foot difference in elevation), and a dangerously steep but well-worn path from Dubuque Street to the east (fifty-four foot elevation difference). An old paved road that at one time may have linked with Heavy Street East Back on the south side of the lot is another route that is likely utilized by some independent walkers. On the campus, walkways are indicated by a painted path on the blacktop.

Findings

After many discussions with staff and stakeholders the following was recommended as guidance during the project development stage of this effort:

- **Public Input:** the Steering Committee emphasized that any campus-wide improvement project should involve the community. Efforts to engage the public including students was a means to ensure community buy-in and thereby curtailing vandalism which had devastated past efforts.
- **Recreation and Community:** Steering Committee members all agreed that existing fields were vital and that the open green area in the front of the two schools is well-located for a much needed community/school playground and recreation area. The area is completely visible from Parkside Drive and accessible to both the schools and neighborhood.
- **School Identity and Safety:** Gossler School's entrance and walkways leading to entrance should be better emphasized to create a safer walking area and a more prominent entrance to the school. The campus is also quite stark with very few trees, with the

exception of the unmaintained perimeter buffer. Improved landscaping could also play an important role in creating sense of place, shade for parking, and a more vivid entryways. Both a safety concern as well as accessibility issue, stakeholders were adamant about improved lighting for recreation areas, walkways, parking, and on buildings.

- **Perimeter Buffer and Safety:** The perimeter wooded buffer provides considerable shade in the summer and somewhat of a nesting effect for the school campus, still the buffer has also drawn considerable concern from residents, school staff and other community stakeholders. An inventory of types and desirability of trees should be done so that a systematic, agreed upon approach for annual maintenance can be carried out. All dead and dying trees and shrubs as well as problematic trees should be removed. This would reduce the open invitation to hide and create mischief or worse while still maintaining the positive elements of the buffer.
- **Parking and Circulation:** The sentiment of the Steering Committee was that the campus was in need of a complete redesign of the parking, drop-off zones, circulation, sidewalks, and visitor parking areas. Fortunately, all involved believed there were numerous parking options for the campus. The old unused tennis courts could be utilized for parking for Gossler, while additional parking for Parkside could be realized in the back of the school on the east side or on the south end of the lot while maintaining and even enhancing school recreation and playground areas as well as entrance areas. As Gossler is a “walking school”, emphasis should be placed on improved access for pedestrians including access from adjacent streets that have severe elevation differences. School grounds should also be analyzed in regards to installing a perimeter fence in whole or in part to manage access appropriately.
- **Campus Coordination:** Both schools agreed continued coordination for all user drop-off and pick up zones would help to eliminate conflicts and ensure student safety. Manchester Police Department should be included in the discussion so that changes to drop-off can be coordinated with crosswalk guards.

IV. Community Engagement

Another important part of this project involved public participation and community engagement in order to identify issues and build consensus around solutions, recommendations and projects which would significantly impact and improve public health, recreation, safety and transportation within the neighborhood and at the Gossler and Parkside schools. As part of this HIA, three community engagement efforts were pursued.

Focus Discussion Groups

Focus group discussions were held over several months with school officials and the Gossler Park Parent Teacher Group. Interviews and discussions were held to identify what these stakeholders believed the principle problems and issues of greatest concern are within the Gossler Park Neighborhood and at the Gossler and Parkside schools. A summary of their concerns and recommendations are included in Table 13.

Table 13. Summary of Gossler/Parkside Focus Group Discussions

Identified Key Issues/Concerns and Potential Opportunities	Parent - Teacher-Group Input	School Officials Input
Community and Recreation		
No neighborhood playground like Livingston Park or Derryfield	X	
Improve school playground (visible and accessible, possibly utilizing greenspace in front of schools)	X	X
Improve sense of community		X
Keep and improve basketball courts	X	X
Walking track around campus or designated walking path in neighborhood	X	
Allow for multiple uses in parking areas and allowance to close parking areas off		X
Bike racks needed	X	
Campus-Wide Access, Traffic, and Parking and Site		

Issues		
Improve traffic patterns for all modes		X
Designated Drop-off and Pick-up area for all students, coordinate dismissal plans	X	X
Improve bus waiting area for pick-up routine and if possible keep off street or eliminate bus/car conflicts		X
Parking lot improvements including reorganize existing parking, create visitor parking, and repave parking lot as its condition is deteriorating	X	X
Improve communication efforts with Manchester PD including crosswalk staff.		X
Utilize old and unused tennis courts for parking		X
Improve waiting area for children especially Parkside School children waiting for Gossler School siblings (can be disruptive)		X
Ensure accessible dumpster and keep proximity to cafeteria		X
Safety		
Security and Safety Concerns for school grounds and wooded perimeter buffer including visibility, access, and drug use concerns	X	X
Consider a fence around the perimeter	X	X
Surrounding woods and fields need to be maintained especially for trash and needles	X	X
Crumbling pavement is being used as a weapon	X	
Improve communication efforts between schools		X
More lighting around school grounds	X	

National Night Out

A short one-page survey was prepared by SNHPC staff and distributed to neighborhood residents at the National Night Out event held at Gossler Park Elementary and Parkside Middle School on August 4, 2015. The specific purpose of this survey was to first obtain public feedback regarding resident concerns and second to confirm what was identified through the focus group discussions as well as previous public health surveys administered by the Manchester Health Department.

Top priorities resulted in three tiers. The top priority was to prune the wooded area. The second priority was a three-way tie between creating visible routes for all users, creating a community recreation area, and improving visibility for walkers. The third priority was a tie between the perimeter fence and a visible waiting area for students waiting at the end of the day for Gossler siblings.

Table 14. National Night Out Survey Results

Gossler Park and Park Street Schools Neighborhood Night Out Survey Results:

I. The following were rated for level of importance (5 = most important, 1 = least important). Eleven surveys were completed and the results were tabulated.

- A. 3.75 Improve designated drop off/pick up for buses.
- B. 3.6 Improve designated drop off / pick up for parents.
- C. 3.84 Create clear and visible routes for all users (buses, cars, bicyclists, and walkers).
- D. 3.58 Woods should have fence around the schools.
- E. 4.07 Woods around the schools should be pruned back and cleaned up to allow for visibility, reducing potential risks.
- F. 3.76 Create visible waiting area for Parkside students who are picking up siblings.
- G. 4.15 Create a community recreation and playground space.
- H. 2.25 Create parking where tennis courts are now.
- I. 4.23 Improve neighborhood-school routes for bicycles and sidewalks.
- J. 3.76 Improve visibility/safety for walkers.
- K. 3.53 Need to accommodate visitor parking.
- L. 2.92 If possible, keep buses off streets.
- M. 4.08 Improve intersection of Parkside Ave. and Sullivan St. including crosswalks and signage.
- N. Fill in your own concerns: Parking on just one side of the street, parking on Blucher St for buses only, parents need to pay closer attention.

II. Please label your top three priorities (1, 2, and 3) next to the corresponding letter (A-N)

Neighborhood Charrette

A neighborhood-wide public charrette was organized and facilitated by SNHPC on September 16, 2015. It was intended that a wider audience including residents, school officials, City department representatives, and other stakeholders would add to the discussion and provide input identified through the focus group and neighborhood surveys.

All of the public input and the results of these three community engagement efforts were shared with the Steering Committee. The Steering Committee evaluated the results and worked together over several meetings to develop specific recommendations and a capital improvement plan for the Gossler and Parkside schools. These recommendations and the capital improvement plan are described in the next Section of this HIA.

The meeting took place at the Gossler Park Elementary School where stakeholders from the Manchester Board of School Committee, Gossler Park, Manchester Health Department, Manchester Community Health Center, Manchester Police Department, NeighborWorks of Southern NH, Department of Public Works, local residents, and SNHPC staff collaborated to identify issues and opportunities within the neighborhood. Focused discussions were held on four key topic areas: recreation areas; connections both physical and social; various public health concerns; and welfare and safety issues especially in and around the schools and other public areas. Ideas were encouraged that could be publically supported and have immediate and positive benefits to the school campuses and neighborhood.

Participants had an opportunity to discuss all four topic areas as each group moved from one focused discussion to another. The groups were responsible for identifying issues, opportunities, and projects relating to the following topics:

1. Neighborhood & Community Connections: Focus on social and physical improvements which connect the neighborhood residents with community assets inside and outside of the project boundaries. Discussion points included social services, access to services and recreation facilities, sidewalks, bike paths, special needs, ADA, general cleanup, landscaping and beautification.
2. Safety and Crime Prevention: Focus on identifying projects which have both immediate and long term benefits in improving public safety; reducing crime; including general clean up and beautification of surroundings.
3. School Access - Vehicles/Bicycles/Pedestrians: Focus on projects that will improve access to and from the schools for all modes of travel, pedestrians, bicycles, cars, buses, and where the best routes and parking should be located.
4. Recreation & Health: The focus was on identifying projects with both recreation and health benefits – such as playgrounds. Facilitators steered discussions to types of

recreational facilities, where should they be located; what improvements could be made to existing recreational areas/facilities including access, lighting, and safety.

1. Neighborhood and Community Connections

There were two common concerns identified during each session that were designated as major challenges to the community: access to adequate public transportation and infrastructure deterioration. The stakeholders believed the neighborhood is very isolated from the rest of the city and is generally overlooked by the municipality. Residents from the neighborhood went as far as suggesting the neighborhood could be dubbed, “Forgottenville”. This has affected the community’s collective esteem and created a perception that few resources in regards to city services are provided to this neighborhood.

To improve the area’s connectivity to surrounding neighborhoods along with cultivating a rich community identity, improved access and lighting to green spaces and primary streets were identified as critical measures to be implemented. These changes would improve accessibility for children and the community at large to reach recreational areas, residences, schools, and other points of interest. There was also a suggestion that the improvement of accessibility to the surrounding green spaces would give the school a better opportunity to implement environmental education programs.

Another challenge facing the community was the lack of social services on the west side in general or transit services to social services outside of the area. The stakeholders believed the addition of afterschool programs and social services would improve community relationships and its general well-being. Furthermore, the incorporation of organized events such as: recreational leagues, charity events; community gardens would bring residents closer together to create a stronger identity and local dynamic. Another observation was made indicating the community was located within a food desert. According to the USDA, food deserts are, “urban neighborhoods and rural towns without ready access to fresh, healthy and affordable food.” Future zoning amendments should be considered to improve the opportunity for small “corner stores” or food markets within a reasonable walking distance from the community.

In short, the stakeholders decided that the best projects to concentrate their efforts and financial resources were on improving access to various community amenities such as the bike trail, soccer fields across the river, and existing green space along the river, increase trail and green space maintenance, including Blueberry Hill ridge, and make existing community infrastructure such as the school and other public recreation facilities safer and more available for activities and community engagement events.

2. Safety and Crime

Safety is a topic that all stakeholders felt to be a priority issue. Comments from police officers mirrored those from residents and Gossler School staff. The issue of safety not only affects

Gossler students, but also the surrounding community. Stakeholders and residents found that the lack of visibility from the wide vegetative buffer surrounding the school's campus on three of four sides coupled with and inadequate lighting contributed to vandalism and signs of drug use in the Gossler School neighborhood. Additionally, participants believed that traffic congestion and school transportation access to be a safety issue for students and neighborhood residents.

Due to the problems concerning traffic congestion and pedestrian safety, stakeholders suggested there was an opportunity to design the school grounds to reduce vehicular/pedestrian conflict areas, improve emphasis for designated walking areas, and accommodate distinct traffic flow patterns. Stakeholders also suggested that by having parking in a designated area where the unused tennis courts are currently located would open up space to create a concentrated recreational area. The ideas for neighborhood recreation area focused on bringing the existing playground to the front of the school, expanding the current green space, starting a community garden, and to generally improve the landscape. Addressing all these issues would create a safer, more visible school campus.

3. School Access

Traffic surrounding the school has been a long standing issue. The stakeholders intimated general and specific observations that they deemed to have a negative impact on the school and the surrounding community it serves. Most prominently, stakeholders were concerned over main intersections, vehicular traffic at designated school drop-off points, inadequate sidewalks and hazardous staircases for pedestrian traffic; inefficient building lighting and unsafe designated parking places close to intersections.

The stakeholders identified certain opportunities for the community to pursue in order to help facilitate the planning and financial operations of future projects. The stakeholders suggested developing a parks and recreation master plan for Gossler and Parkside Schools. This plan would be the foundation and principle guide for the community to develop their neighborhood in a manner in which best fits their goals and aspirations. It was also suggested by school's staff that their administration submit a grant application to the Department of Homeland Security (DHS) to obtain funding for pre-determined security features designated by DHS essential such as: lighting, security vestibule, cameras and protective windows.

4. Recreation and Health

When discussing the existing recreation facilities on the school campus, the most prevalent suggestion was to move all of the recreation amenities to the front of the campus (closer to Parkside Avenue) to capitalize on existing yet underutilized greenspace. Stakeholders suggested multiple improvements: centralize recreational opportunities, focus parking away from pedestrians and recreation areas, and improve overall access campus-wide. The concept was to move the parking presently nearest Parkside's cafeteria to where existing tennis and basketball courts were located west of Gossler and moving play-space adjacent to the cafeteria, near the greenspace. This "swap" of uses would keep parking and vehicle traffic to the north-

west side of the entryway of the campus and improve pedestrian safety. The new large recreation space was envisioned to include play areas for playground games like four square, basketball courts, new playground equipment with shaded seating, volleyball, small soccer style kick-around, and winter activities like an outdoor skating rink.

Stakeholders believed that a more well-defined recreation area would be an opportunity to engage the neighborhood-at-large. Furthermore, participants felt that for any improvement project to be successful, the larger community including parents, students, and neighborhood residents would need to be involved and part of the project. This includes identifying ways for the middle and elementary school students to assist with the design and selection of key infrastructure elements for the project to build “buy-in” and reduce the likelihood of vandalism.

Lastly, the overall condition of the pavement area on the school campus was mentioned as an item that needed improvement. This was considered one of the simpler ways to aesthetically improve the school campus environment. As part of the discussion, there was consensus that trees should be added to the existing green space, along the school access areas, and parking to provide natural shading elements. Likewise, the stakeholders would like to see the existing trees along the back of the school campus property thinned and limbed to improve sight lines for safety purposes.

V. Gossler Park and Parkside Schools Campus Improvements CIP Proposal:

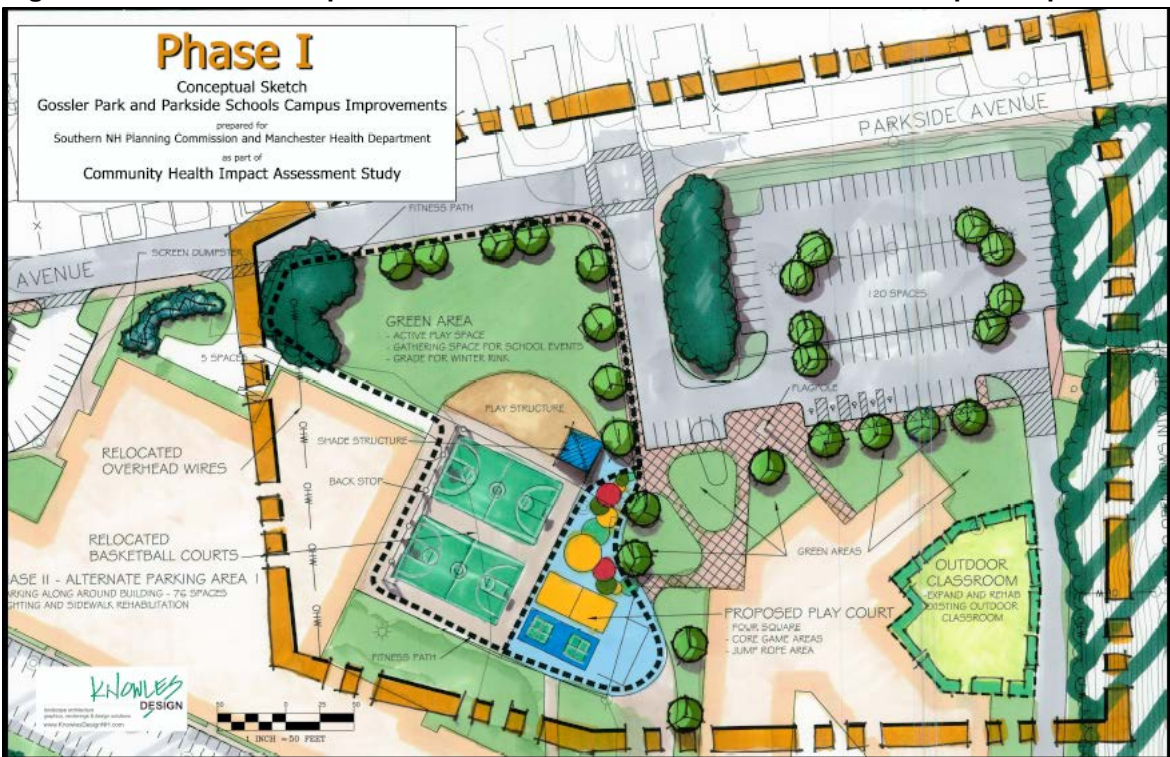
The project's steering committee including representatives from SNHPC, Manchester Health Department (MHD), Gossler Park and Parkside Schools, City Public Works and Police Departments, as well as landscape architecture consultant, Randy Knowles of Knowles Design, met to develop a project that would take into consideration all input from the various outreach efforts and combining that with the technical expertise of the committee. As a result of these meetings, the group developed a comprehensive and phased plan for improvements to the Gossler and Parkside School Campus. The various elements of the proposal included:

1. To improve the identity of the neighborhood and create a visible, community recreation space for both campuses and the neighborhood.
2. To improve visibility for entrances and walking areas, access, drop off, and parking areas including visitor parking.
3. To improve existing vegetative buffer, create improved landscaping including buffer between classrooms and play area.

The project has been submitted under the title Reenergizing Gossler Park: Healthy Places, Healthy Children with an estimated cost for Phase 1 of \$675,820.

The project application and layout can be seen in its entirety in Appendix A of this document.

Figure 10. Phase 1 Conceptual Illustration of Gossler Park and Parkside Capital Improvements



VI. Health Improvement Strategies and Recommendations

The purpose of this Health Impact Assessment (HIA) was to assess the overall health, social and physical infrastructure of the Gossler Park Neighborhood and to assist the Manchester Health Department in implementing the City's Neighborhood Health Improvement Strategy. The original recommendations for that came out of the Strategy were focused on improving neighborhood walkability and livability as well as enhancing places for physical activity. The following recommendations support not only these goals but expanded upon these in large part from feedback received by the Steering Committee and the broader participating stakeholders.

These recommendations may become the foundation for future community improvement strategies, capital projects for Gossler Park neighborhood, or adopted by various city departments as infrastructure improvement projects or plans.

1. Transportation and Public Transit

Fifteen percent of the neighborhood's population relies on public transportation. Frequency and length of service was found to be inadequate, especially for commuters going to and from work. Also, there were no permanent bus stops, shelters, or schedules along the route within the boundaries of the neighborhood. Manchester should consider the following to improve services:

- a) An in-bound bus stop should be installed on the corner of Putnam and Bartlett Streets to accommodate passengers travelling into the city.
- b) A minimum of an additional two hours of service is recommended during the evening hours in order to accommodate commuters traveling home from their work place.
- c) The City should continue to support MTA budget requests in order to maintain its fleet and extend service hours.
- d) Implement recommended transit improvements with a focus on access to social services.
- e)

2. Walking and Pedestrian Safety

Based on national recommendations, the Manchester Health Department has set a goal of reducing the neighborhood pedestrian injury rate from 4.1 to 2.0 injuries per 10,000 persons to be achieved by 2020. To reach this goal the following recommendations are suggested:

- a) Address the nine sidewalk locations and three intersections which have been identified as having unsafe pedestrian conditions. There are also a number of intersections along Putnam and Conant Street which should also be analyzed and considered for improved pedestrian crosswalks.
- b) Since Gossler Park Elementary School is designated a walking school by the Manchester School District, the City should assign pedestrian improvements to the Parkside and Sullivan Street as well as Parkside and Blucher Street intersections as high priority.

3. Bicycling Safety

While many of the existing streets in the neighborhood have low traffic volumes and are suitable for bicycling primarily among adult cyclists, special bicycle enhancements are needed for children within the neighborhood who bike to school. Regardless of age, there is a level of stress felt by every cyclist on any given street. It is very important to recognize these stresses and implement corrective measures. There are multiple benefits to making improvements including improved bicycle safety for children, increased physical activity and improved public health, and even making the neighborhood more desirable, resulting in increased property values within the neighborhood. The following are recommended:

- a) Install Shared Travel Lane markings and routes as proposed in the Manchester DRAFT Bike Plan.
- b) Encourage residents to work with the Public Works Department in completing road stress tests for the neighborhood with recommendations for improvements.
- c) Install bike racks at the school campus and encourage bike safety classes as part of the school curriculum.
- d) Encourage residents to join local bicycle advocacy groups who will help support additional improvements.

4. Land Use

A large percentage of Gossler Park's zoning (79.8%) is restricted only to residential use. This zoning configuration precludes small retail outlets to populate the neighborhood, compelling residents to travel at father lengths to gain access storefronts. Mixed-use zoning serves to strike a balance between residential and commercial use while simultaneously creating a sense of place. To achieve a balance in land use, the following are recommended:

- a) Establish a neighborhood redevelopment committee in which comprises City planners and officials and Gossler Park stakeholders in order to ensure that the direction of future development is set towards the goals and aspirations of all parties.

- b) Expand mixed use zoning to encourage more diverse development and economic development, but maintain the characteristic of the neighborhood.
- c) Incorporate more inclusive residential uses, supporting age friendly zoning and to create more housing opportunities.

5. Access to Healthy Food

The average distance of a supermarket from Gossler Park neighborhood is 2.24 miles. In spite of the USDA's definition, by which proclaims Gossler Park is not in a food desert, the closest retail stores resident interact with fail to provide fresh fruits and produce. The dearth of immediately available fresh fruits and produce may be a one of the contributing determinants of Gossler Park's susceptibility to high rates of obesity. The following is recommended to ensure Gossler residents have access to healthier food options:

- a) Mixed use zoning should be expanded or a zoning overlay should be enacted to permit small corner stores or small scale grocers to establish businesses within a reasonable walking distance from the community.
- b) Under-utilized parcels of municipal land should be considered for conversion to community gardens.

6. Social Connectedness

Gossler is home to multiple social structures such as churches, a library, social clubs, as well as the schools which all help further build community networks. The relationships these organizations form with the neighborhood is crucial to building trust and increasing social connectedness.

- a) Construct neighborhood identification markers similar to Rimmon Heights and designate areas in the neighborhood for artists to use as canvases, such as wall murals.
- b) The neighborhood could build on existing relationships by forming a neighborhood association or join Rimmon Heights to facilitate communication between existing social organizations and the community.
- c) Gossler residents found that the neighborhood lacks a common public space. By utilizing the school as a central community space, it would allow a low-cost alternative compared to building a community center, as is the intent of the Manchester Community Schools Project. The Schools could also host community events or other social opportunities such as creating a community garden on the school's campus.
- d) Create opportunities to make the neighborhood more of a destination. Incorporate organized events such as: recreational leagues, charity events; community gardens to bring residents closer together to create a stronger identity and local dynamic.

7. Recreation and Nearby Amenities

Gossler residents are in close proximity to public recreation areas such as the newly constructed Piscataquag Rail Trail, public parks, and an ice arena. The trail in particular provides residents greater access to various community assets such as Fisher Cats Stadium. Still, residents were clear that multiple improvements were necessary.

- a) Relocate the existing playground to the front of the school, expand the current green space, start a community garden, and improve the landscaping within the school campus.
- b) Engage both residents and the Public Works Department to address the inadequate signage throughout the neighborhood, trails, and recreation areas.
- c) Improve accessibility to the surrounding green spaces to provide the school a better opportunity to implement environmental education programs.
- d) Improve access to various community amenities such as the bike trail, soccer fields across the river, and existing green space along the river.
- e) Increase trail and green space maintenance.
- f) Make existing community infrastructure such as the school and other public recreation facilities safer and more available for activities and community engagement events.
- g) Provide additional afterschool programs such as a “kids café” and social services to improve community relationships and its general well-being.
- h)

8. Safety and Neighborhood Crime

Safety was a topic that all stakeholders felt to be a priority issue. Comments from police officers mirrored those from residents and Gossler School staff. The issue of safety not only affects Gossler students, but also the surrounding community. Stakeholders and residents found that the lack of visibility from the wide vegetative buffer surrounding the school’s campus on three of four sides coupled with and inadequate lighting contributed to vandalism and signs of drug use in the Gossler School neighborhood. Additionally, participants believed that traffic congestion and school transportation access to be a safety issue for students and neighborhood residents. The following were recommended:

- a) Design the school grounds to reduce vehicular/pedestrian conflict areas and accommodate distinct user groups (buses, student drop off, special needs drop off, teacher parking, visitor parking, waiting for pick up).
- b) Improve emphasis for designated walking areas.

- c) Improve visibility to the schools and develop and implement plans to thin and manage the adjacent surrounding woods located along Dubuque and Putnam Streets.
- d) Create a safer, more visible school campus and work with the Manchester Police Department in consideration of a perimeter surveillance system.
- e) Establish a Watch Group for the Gossler Park Neighborhood.

9. Gossler and Parkside School Campus

The project Steering Committee as well as input from Stakeholders all contributed significantly in the development of a Capital Improvement Project. This project was submitted to the City (See Appendix A). The following were recommendations that led to the development of the project.

- a) Public Input: Ensure any improvement project includes public participation including school faculty, city departments, parents, students, and neighborhood residents.
- b) Recreation and Community:
 - i. Maintain and improve lighting for existing fields
 - ii. Utilize the open green area in the front of the two schools for a much needed community/school playground and recreation area. The area is completely visible from Parkside Drive and accessible to both the schools and neighborhood.
 - 1. Move all existing playground facilities and basketball courts to the area between Parkside Cafeteria and Parkside Avenue.
 - 2. Include play areas for playground games like four square, basketball courts, new playground equipment with shaded seating, volleyball, small soccer style kick-around, and winter activities like an outdoor skating rink.
 - 3. Create a walking path around the school campus.
 - 4. Focus parking away from pedestrians and recreation areas, and improve overall access campus-wide.
- c) School Identity and Safety:
 - i. Maintain school grounds and infrastructure to ensure school safety and the sense that the City cares about the community.
 - ii. Resurface the pavement campus-wide as it is in very rough shape and some students occasionally throw pieces of asphalt at other students.
 - iii. Plant trees within the existing green space, along the school access areas, and parking to provide natural shading elements.
- d) Perimeter Buffer and Safety:
 - i. A safety analysis in regards to a possible perimeter fence and access should be completed to identify key locations for fencing including gates.

- ii. Create an overall management plan including an inventory of types and desirability of trees for the various sections of buffer and an annual maintenance plan.
 - iii. Remove all dead and dying trees and shrubs as well as problematic trees.
 - iv. Prune, thin and manage the existing buffer along the back and sides of the school campus property to improve sight lines for visibility and safety purposes.
- e) Parking and Circulation:
- i. Redesign the parking, drop-off zones, circulation, sidewalks, and visitor parking areas. Consider utilizing the old, unused tennis courts for a shared parking lot for both schools.
 - ii. Gossler School's entrance and walkways leading to entrance should be better emphasized to create a safer walking area and a more prominent entrance to the school.
 - iii. Pedestrian access into the campus should be reviewed by Public Works Department especially from streets that have severe elevation differences.
- f) Campus Coordination: Continue to review and coordinate all user drop-off and pick up zones at a minimum on an annual basis to eliminate conflicts and ensure student safety. Manchester Police Department should be included in the discussion so that changes to drop-off can be coordinated with crosswalk guards.

10. Community Identity

There were two common concerns identified as major challenges to the community: access to adequate public transportation and infrastructure deterioration. The stakeholders believed the neighborhood is very isolated from the rest of the city and is generally overlooked.. Residents from the neighborhood went as far as suggesting the neighborhood could be dubbed, "Forgottenville". This has affected the community's collective esteem and created a perception that few resources in regards to community services are provided to this neighborhood.

- a) The City should work with residents in creating an identity that would include efforts to enhance the neighborhood's street trees, encourage and promote landscaping, remove graffiti and promote wall murals and paintings; and provide opportunities for public seating and benches to enhance the neighborhood's identity, overall pedestrian experience, and environment.
- b) To improve the area's connectivity to surrounding neighborhoods along with cultivating a rich community identity, improved access and lighting to green spaces and primary streets were identified as critical measures to be implemented.

Conclusion and Future Opportunities

These recommendations will guide the Department of Public Works, Division of Parks and Recreation, and School District in implementing the newly adopted project, titled “Reenergizing Gossler Park: Healthy Places, Healthy Children” as a part of the City of Manchester’s Capital Improvement Plan (CIP). The project focuses on capital improvements to Gossler Park Elementary and Parkside Middle School. As a result of this project, the City of Manchester Department of Public Works submitted the request for Reenergizing Gossler Park: Healthy Places, Healthy Children and has successfully replaced a previously prepared plan for recreation and transportation improvements at the schools and the project has been accepted as an assigned number of 7 in the City’s CIP for future implementation, as seen on page 5 in Appendix A.

Phase One of the project will include the creation of a new playground area, shade element for outdoor learning and community wellness/fitness classes, pavement repair and pedestrian striping, and complete site engineering/planning costs to set the foundation for the entire project (see concept plans presented in Section V of this document).

SNHPC is also currently working alongside the Manchester Health Department to seek and secure additional funding for the project from Jane’s Trust and possibly the Land and Water Conservation Fund in order to leverage support for Phase One of the capital infrastructure improvement project.

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APPENDIX A.

Gossler Park and Parkside Schools Campus Improvements CIP Proposal: Remember Forgottenville: Its Children and Its Community

For the past several months, Southern NH Planning Commission (SNHPC) and Manchester Health Department (MHD) have been working with Gossler Park and Parkside Schools on a Community Health Impact Assessment (HIA) Study. Working together with school representatives, staff from City Public Works and Police Departments, as well as landscape architecture consultant, Randy Knowles of Knowles Design, these stakeholders have met several times to discuss site issues, including, access, recreation, pickup/drop off, safety, identity, and other neighborhood issues. Stakeholders met with teachers and parents and set up a table at the neighborhood National Night Out Event, in which SNHPC staff surveyed neighborhood participants on what they felt were critical needs of the school campus and immediate neighborhood. Also, as part of the HIA study, stakeholders conducted a neighborhood charrette to obtain valuable public input from residents and stakeholders as to what their ideas were, both physical and social, in four main topic areas including: recreation and health, neighborhood and community connections, safety and crime prevention, and school access and parking.

The result of these public outreach efforts was a phased approach, beginning with this initial capital request, the school campus improvements. The various elements of the proposal are as follows:

1. To improve the identity of the neighborhood and create a visible, community recreation space for both campuses and the neighborhood.

Existing Issues: School representatives and parents insist that Manchester's west-side has been neglected and forgotten for decades, giving credence to the name "Forgottenville". The neighborhood is remote, and spaces within the campuses are also remote. For example, the existing recreation spaces for the school are hidden from the neighborhood, located behind the schools, away from the street and watchful eyes. It creates the feeling of both isolation and being trapped between the surrounding over-grown hillside and the school buildings. These spaces have been vandalized on several occasions and are difficult to monitor from the road. On the other hand, tennis courts at the front of the building are in poor shape and never utilized. Only a basketball court and shade structure, where students wait to pick up their siblings are utilized.

Proposed Solutions: Combine existing recreation areas with the existing, underutilized lawn area in front of the schools. Include two basketball courts, four-square and other organized play areas. Convert the green space to ice skating in the winter. Add a covered sitting area, playground equipment, and a walking loop.

Details:

- Establish new lawn areas (entry area and classroom buffer)
- Revitalize existing lawn areas (large open space off Parkside Ave and outdoor classroom)
- Relocate and rebuild court and playground areas
- Add new painted walks and play spaces
- Add two new basketball courts

- Add fencing between basketball court and Parkside cafeteria
- Add playground equipment
- Shelter
- Add new flagpole

2. To improve visibility for entrances and walking areas, access, drop off, and parking areas including visitor parking.

Existing Issues: Parking areas presently dominate the front of Gossler Park and the back of Parkside, making the campuses have a “sea of asphalt” appearance. It is difficult to discern where student walking areas are from the rest of the asphalt. There is no designated visitor parking. Gossler Park has no designated drop off area. Access around the buildings is difficult and cuts through Gossler Park’s outdoor classroom. It is difficult to distinguish the main entrance of Gossler Park School.

Proposed Solutions: Create parking area in front of Gossler, utilizing the tennis court area and existing parking lot area, including a visitor parking area near the new recreation area and front of Gossler’s entrance. Create a new improved emergency access road on the north side of the outdoor classroom. Improve sidewalk access from street, linking with new recreation loop walk and creating a distinct main entrance for Gossler Park School.

Details:

- Create sidewalk with ADA access
- Install new paved area including parking at tennis courts and emergency access
- Install curbing
- Add new painted walks and parking lines
- Add new painted crosswalks

3. To improve existing vegetative buffer, create improved landscaping including buffer between classroom and play area..

Existing Issues: The surrounding vegetated hillside acts as a buffer and provides a desired canopy, however, it also can conceal an unwanted element creating safety concerns. The perimeter is seen as potential threatening due to the lack of visibility. Also, there are few trees other than those around the perimeter and the classrooms are not buffered from noise of activity or the elements.

Proposed Solutions: Create a buffer along the south side of Gossler Park and include trees throughout the plan to create a sense of place and provide for shading. Thin out dead and dying trees and underbrush in perimeter vegetation to allow for improved visibility especially at access point such as the stairs going to Putnam Street.

Details:

- Plant 14 additional deciduous trees to add shade, buffering of classrooms, and create the sense of place.

Begin first section of thinning process along Putnam Street especially near stairway.

**CIP 2 - CIP ACTIVITY FINANCIAL REQUEST: CITY
FY2016**

DEPARTMENT/
PROJECT TITLE: Reenergizing Gossler Park: Healthy Places, Healthy Children
DIVISION: Health Department

GENERAL DESCRIPTION: See narration

CIP BUDGET HISTORY:

PROJECT PERIOD:
 7/1/2016 TO: 6/30/2017

CRITICAL EVENTS: _____ **DATES:** _____

PRELIMINARY ACTIVITY BUDGET: (Only fill out additional Fiscal Years if the project is multi-year)

<u>LINE ITEM</u>	<u>7/1/15-6/30/16 2016</u>	<u>7/1/16-6/30/17 2017</u>	<u>7/1/17-6/30/18 2018</u>	<u>Amount</u>	<u>Identify Anticipated Specific External Funding Source Source</u>
0110 SALARIES & WAGES					
0230 FRINGES					
0960 DESIGN/ ENGINEERING	\$ 51,986.13				
0962 CONSULTANT FEES					
0963 CONSTRUCTION ADMIN	\$ 51,986.13				
0964 LAND ACQUISITION					
0965 PROJECT EQUIPMENT					
0966 PROJECT OVERHEAD	\$ 519,861.35			\$ -	
0967 CONST. CONTRACTS					
0968 OTHER (SPECIFY) 10% for contingencies	\$ 51,986.13				
TOTAL	\$ 675,819.74	\$ -	\$ -		

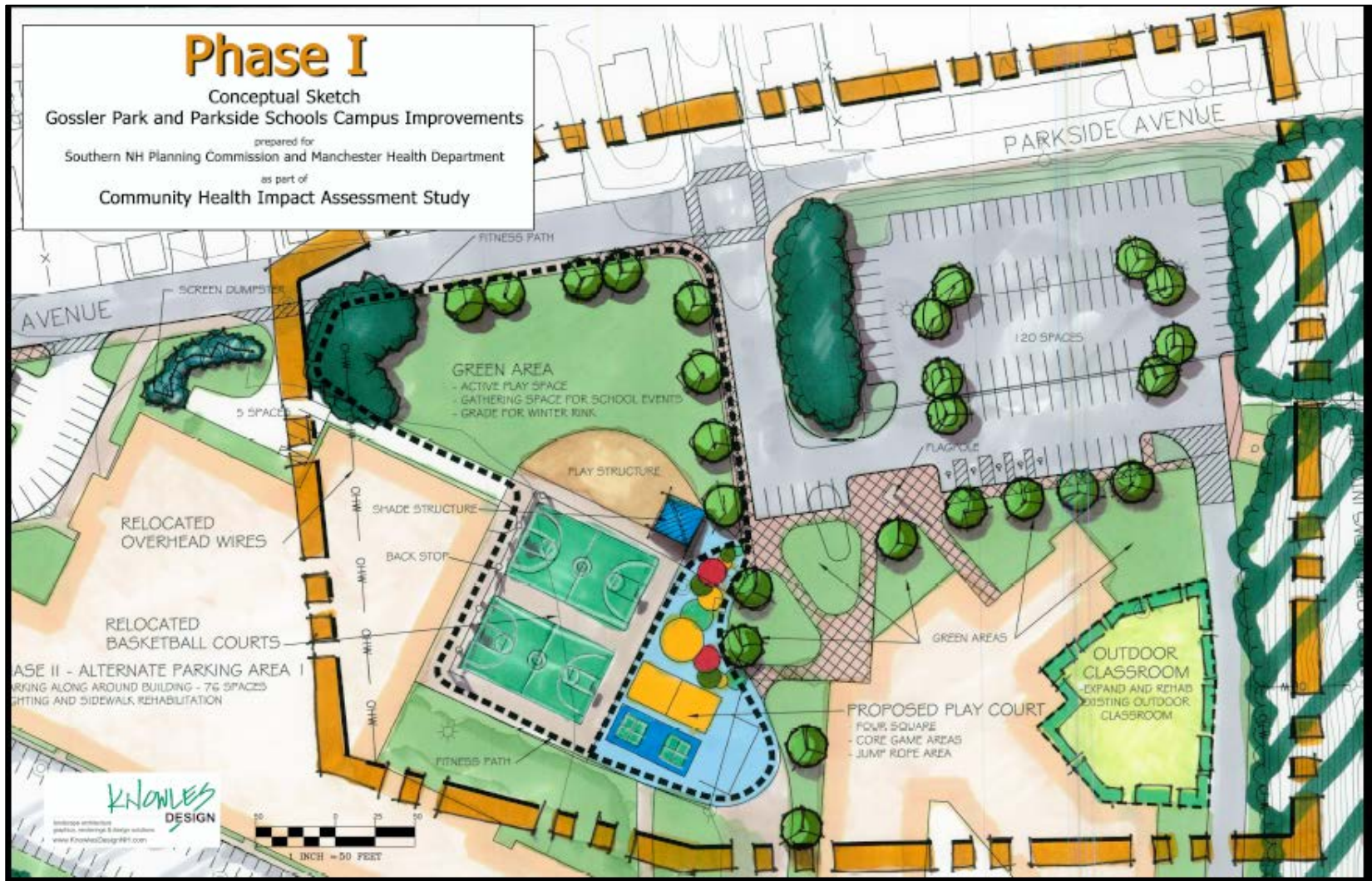
 (FOR CIP USE ONLY)

National Objective: _____
 (LMA, LMC, LMH, LMJ,)
Con Plan Strategy: _____
Fund/Activity Type: _____
 (Source/Matrix Code)
Prior FY Balance: _____

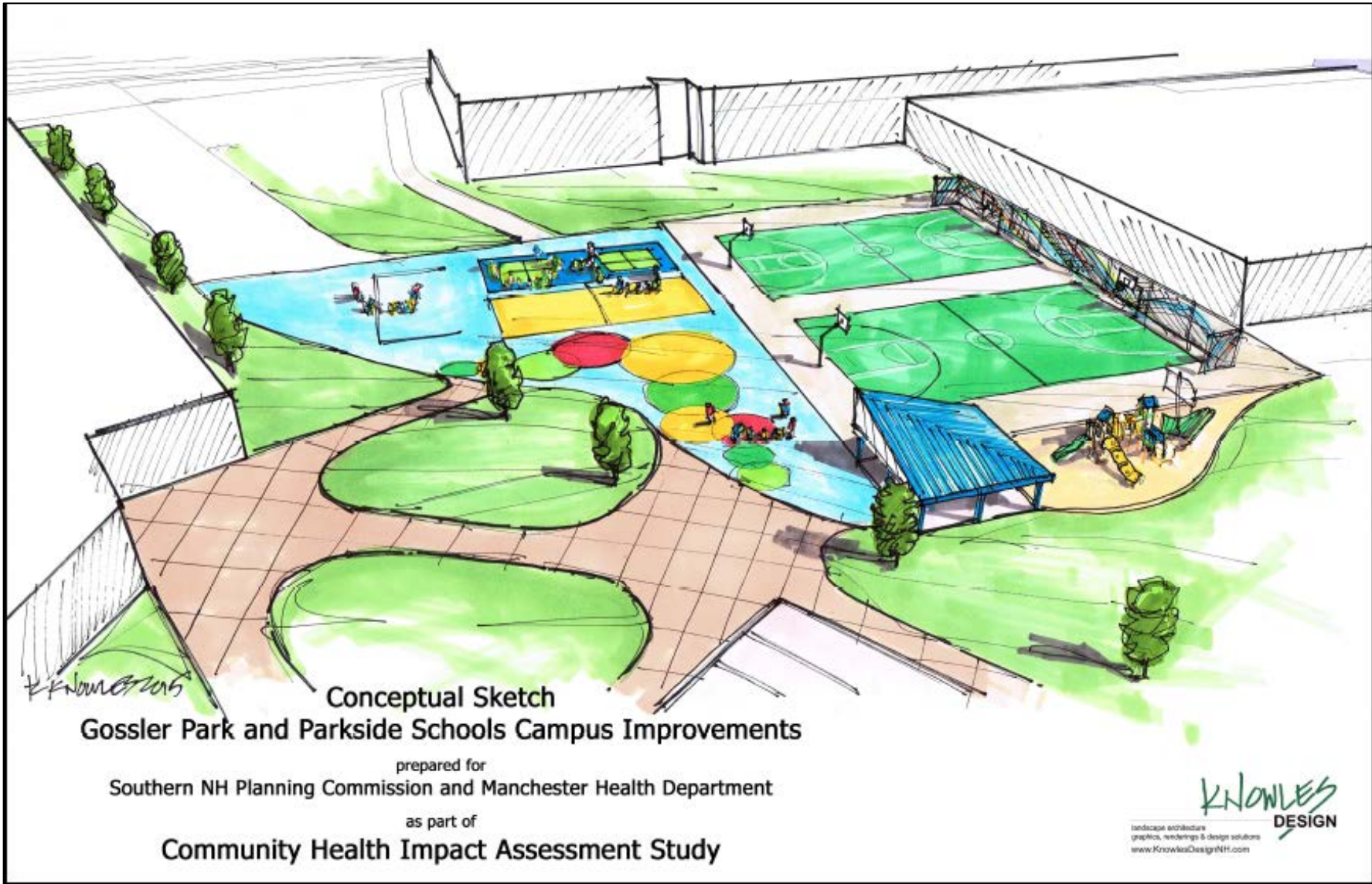
FY17 CIP Priority Listing

<u>Admin Priority FY17</u>	<u>School</u>	<u>Concern/Problem</u>	<u>Dept.</u>	<u>Estimated Cost</u>
1	District Wide	10 Buses	MTA	\$1,000,000
2	McLaughlin/Central	McLaughlin roof and sprinkler and Central garage	Facilities	\$1,200,000
3	District Wide	FY17 Deferred Maintenance Program	Facilities/P&R	\$2,000,000
4	MST	Building Addition for 4 Year High School-Phase II	Facilities	\$7,775,000
5	District Wide	Facility to Meet Capacity-Preschool	Facilities	\$5,400,000
6	District Wide	FY18 Deferred Maintenance Program	Facilities/P&R	\$2,000,000
7	Gossler	Gossler/Parkside Site Rehabilitation Phase I	P&R	\$676,000
8	District Wide	Code Improvement/Life Safety	Facilities	\$234,100
9	District Wide	Install Columbine Style Locksets	Facilities	\$525,000
10	West	West High, Floor Tile Removal and Replacement	Facilities	\$324,000
11	District Wide	FY19 Deferred Maintenance Program	Facilities/P&R	\$2,500,000
12	Bakersville	Gym/Cafe floor (buckled & needs replacing)	Facilities	\$83,000
13	McDonough	Removal of lockers, remove ACBM and replace with small size	Facilities	\$137,000
14	Green Acres	Green Acres, Cabinetry Renovations 30 Classrooms	Facilities	\$99,000
15	Northwest	Northwest, New Cabinets in Kindergarten	Facilities	\$61,000
16	District Wide	FY20 Deferred Maintenance Program	Facilities/P&R	\$3,000,000
17	Hallsville	Addition to remove portable and add space for classes, storage	Facilities	\$350,000
18	Weston	Hallway and Gym Floors	Facilities	\$100,000
19	Memorial	Clem Lemire Complex Phase 2A	P&R	\$1,500,000
20	HGF	Highland Goffes Falls School Design	P&R	\$500,000
21	Hillside	Field improvement/Site Rehabilitation	P&R	\$750,000
22	Memorial	Clem Lemire Complex Phase 3	P&R	\$2,300,000
Total				<u>\$32,514,100</u>

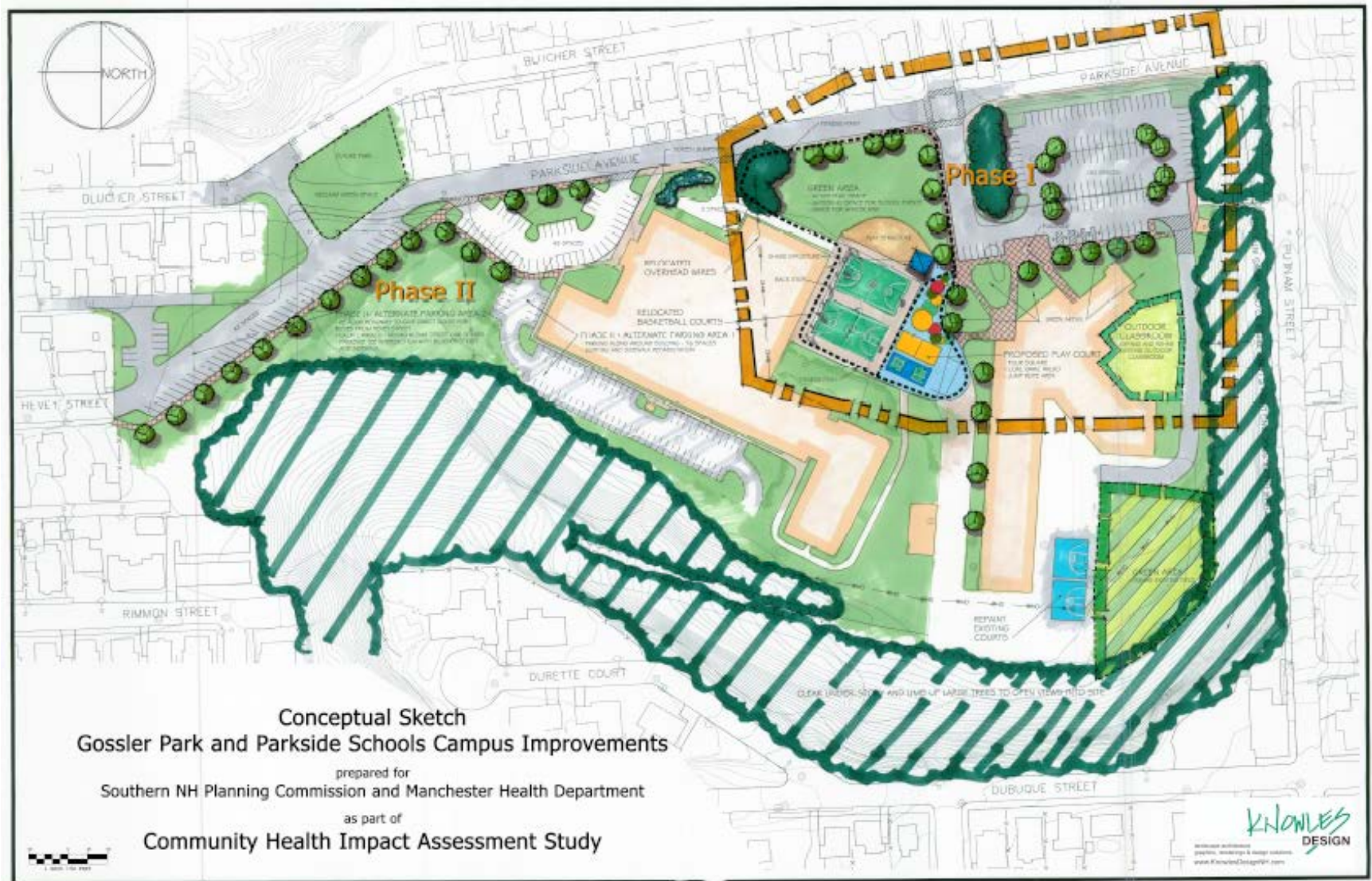
Phase 1: Gossler Park and Parkside Capital Improvements



Phase 1: Gossler Park and Parkside Capital Improvements



Phase 2: Gossler Park and Parkside Capital Improvements



APPENDIX B.

Gossler Park Neighborhood Charrette

Summary Report

Date: September 16, 2015

Time: 6 – 8:00pm

Location: Gossler Park Elementary School, 145 Park Side Avenue, Manchester, NH

Attendance (18):

Katie Desrochers – Ward 11, Board of School Committee

Kate Donovan – Social Worker at Gossler Park Elementary School

*Lori Upham – Principal at Gossler Park Elementary School

Victoria Adewumi – Community Liaison at Manchester Health Department

Amy Petrie – Community Schools Coordinator at Manchester Health Department

*Jaime Hoebeke, Division Head of Neighborhood Health at Manchester Health Department

Heather Grant – Neighborhood Resident

Joe Wright – Neighborhood Resident

Todd Cormier – Neighborhood Resident

Kamal Basnet – Community Health Worker at Gossler Park Elementary School

Kathy Staub – At-Large, Board of School Committee

*Mandi Tappin – Assistant Principal at Gossler Park Elementary School

Ed Devereaux – Community Policing Division, Manchester Police Department

Justin Maguire – Community Policing Division, Manchester Police Department

Jennifer Vadney – Neighborhood Development Manager, NeighborWorks Southern NH

*Bruce Thomas – Manchester Department of Public Works

SNHPC Staff:

*Sylvia von Aulock – Deputy Executive Director

*Jack Munn – Chief Planner

Bart McDonough – Planning Intern

Cameron Prolman – Planning Intern

*Randy Knowles – Contractor (Knowles Design NH)

*HIA Steering Committee (including Forrest Ransdell, Principal of Parkside Middle School)

Purpose

The Southern New Hampshire Planning Commission (SNHPC) in conjunction with the Manchester Health Department and Manchester Schools are working to prepare a Health Impact Assessment (HIA) of the Gossler Park Neighborhood.

The purpose of the HIA study was to conduct a neighborhood charrette to obtain valuable public input from residents and stakeholders as to what their ideas and suggestions are for improving recreation areas, connections both physical and social, various public health concerns, welfare

and safety especially in and around the school and other public areas – particularly physical improvement ideas that can be turned into easily funded and doable projects with immediate impacts and positive benefits.

Introduction

A Charrette is an opportunity for the public -- youth, families, and residents to offer input and ideas that can be turned into projects and design plans to improve and shape the physical (built), environmental and social characteristics of their surroundings. It provides a process for focusing on a site, a neighborhood or a community by considering the built environment – site layout, streets, buildings, landscaping, etc. and quality of life characteristics and needs – such as public health, safety and recreation.

Charrette Design

On September 16, 2015, stakeholders and residents were asked to attend the Gossler Park Neighborhood Charrette in order to gather ideas and suggestions for improving the surrounding Gossler Park neighborhood and the Gossler Park Elementary and Parkside Middle Schools. The meeting took place at the Gossler Park Elementary School, where stakeholders from the Manchester Board of School Committee, Gossler Park, Manchester Health Department, Manchester Community Health Center, Manchester Police Department, NeighborWorks Southern NH, Manchester Department of Public Works, local residents, and SNHPC staff collaborated to identify and agree on short and long term physical improvements to inform the creation of a funding plan that supports *opportunities for community recreation, improved safety and crime prevention, improved travel patterns for pedestrians and vehicles, and better linkages to neighborhood assets.*

Participants were asked to discuss various topics in four different groups. Each group was responsible to suggesting issues, opportunities, and projects relating to the following topics:

1. Recreation & Health: Focus on identifying projects with both recreation and health benefits – such as playgrounds, what type and where they should be located; recreational fields; what to do with existing recreational areas/facilities, etc.
2. Neighborhood & Community Connections: Focus on social and physical improvements which connect the neighborhood residents with community assets inside and outside of the project boundaries. Possible discussion points may include, sidewalks, bike paths, special needs, ADA, general cleanup, landscaping and beautification, etc.
3. Safety and Crime Prevention: Focus on identifying projects which have both immediate and long term benefits in improving public safety; reducing crime; including general clean up and beautification of surroundings, etc. and
4. School Access and Parking - Vehicles/Bicycles/Pedestrians: Focus on projects that will improve access to and from the schools for all modes of travel, pedestrians, bicycles, cars, buses, and where the best routes and parking should be located.

Summary by Topic Area

Recreation & Health

When discussing the existing recreation landscape on the school campus, one central suggestion emerged – be sure to move all of the recreation offerings to the front of the campus (closer to Parkside Avenue) to capitalize on existing greenspace. In addition, stakeholders suggested that parking and vehicle traffic should be kept to one side of the entryway of the campus to improve pedestrian safety. This included the idea of transforming the existing unusable tennis space and deteriorating basketball courts to the main parking lot for the campus. This would eliminate the need to park outside of Parkside’s cafeteria and allow this area to be redeveloped into a large recreation space with ideas that included play areas for playground games like four square, basketball courts, new playground with shaded seating, soccer, volleyball, and winter activities like an outdoor skating rink.

In addition, the stakeholders believe that a more well-defined recreation area will also be an opportunity to engage the neighborhood-at-large. Greater parent, student, and neighborhood resident involvement, in general, was raised as an area in need of improvement for any redevelopment efforts to be successful. This includes identifying ways for the middle and elementary school students to assist with the design and selection of key infrastructure elements for the project to build “buy-in” and reduce the likelihood of vandalism.

Lastly, the overall condition of the pavement area on the school campus was mentioned as an item that could be improved. This may be a simple way to aesthetically improve the school campus environment. Moreover, there was a strong suggestion from the stakeholders to add trees in the existing green space and along the school to provide natural shading elements. Likewise, the stakeholders would like to see the existing trees along the back of the school campus property thinned and limbed to improve sight lines for safety purposes.

Neighborhood & Community Connections

There were two common concerns identified during each session that were designated as major challenges to the community: access to adequate public transportation and infrastructure deterioration. The stakeholders believed the neighborhood is isolated from the rest of the city and is generally overlooked by the municipality. Residents from the neighborhood went as far as suggesting the neighborhood could be dubbed, “Forgottenville”. This has affected the community’s collective esteem and created a perception that few resources in regards to city services are provided.

To improve the area’s connectivity to surrounding neighborhoods along with cultivating a rich community identity, improved access and lighting to green spaces and primary streets were identified as critical measures to be implemented. These changes would improve accessibility for children and the community at large to reach recreational areas, residences, schools, and other points of interest. There was also a suggestion that the improvement of accessibility to the surrounding green spaces would give the school a better opportunity to implement environmental education programs.

Another challenge facing the community was the lack of social services on the west side in general or transit services to social services outside of the area. The stakeholders believed the addition of afterschool programs and social services would improve community relationships and its general well-being. Furthermore, the incorporation of organized events such as: recreational leagues, charity events; community gardens would bring residents closer together to create a stronger identity and local dynamic. Another observation was made indicating the community was located within a food desert. According to the USDA, food deserts are, “urban neighborhoods and rural towns without ready access to fresh, healthy and affordable food.” Future zoning amendments should be considered to improve the opportunity for small “corner stores” or food markets within a reasonable walking distance from the community.

In short, the stakeholders decided that the best projects to concentrate their efforts and financial resources were on improving access to various community amenities such as the bike trail, soccer fields across the river, and existing green space along the river, increase trail and green space maintenance, including Blueberry Hill ridge, and make existing community infrastructure such as the school and other public recreation facilities safer and more available for activities and community engagement events.

Safety & Crime

Safety is a topic that all stakeholders felt to be a priority issue. Comments from police officers mirrored those from residents and Gossler School staff. The issue of safety not only affects Gossler students, but also the surrounding community. Stakeholders and residents found that the lack of visibility from surrounding trees and inadequate lighting contributed to vandalism and signs of drug use in the Gossler School neighborhood. Additionally, participants believed that traffic congestion and school transportation access to be a safety issue for students and neighborhood residents.

Due to the problems concerning traffic congestion and pedestrian safety, stakeholders suggested there was an opportunity to design the school grounds to reduce vehicular/pedestrian conflict areas, improve emphasis for designated walking areas, and accommodate distinct traffic flow patterns. Stakeholders also suggested that by having parking in a designated area where the tennis courts are currently located, it would open up space to create a concentrated space for recreation. The ideas for a concentrated recreation area focused on bringing the playground to the front of the school, expanding the current green space, starting a community garden, and to generally improve the landscape. These improvements would create a safer, more visible school campus.

School Access

Traffic surrounding the school has been a long standing issue. The stakeholders intimated general and specific observations that they deemed to have a negative impact on the school and the surrounding community it serves. Most prominently, stakeholders were concerned over road crossing, vehicular traffic at designated school drop-off points, inadequate sidewalks and hazardous staircases for pedestrian traffic; inefficient building lighting and unsafe designated parking places close to intersections.

The stakeholders identified certain opportunities for the community to pursue in order to help facilitate the planning and financial operations of future projects. The stakeholders suggested developing a parks and recreation master plan for Gossler and Parkside Schools. This plan would be the foundation and principle guide for the community to develop their neighborhood in a manner in which best fits their goals and aspirations. It was also suggested by school's staff that their administration submit a grant application to the Department of Homeland Security (DHS) to obtain funding for pre-determined security features designated by DHS essential such as: lighting, security vestibule, cameras and protective windows.

Group Summary

After an hour of group discussions, all participants gathered to consolidate ideas and comments. During this time many similar comments arose, illustrating major themes that all stakeholders and residents had in common. Many participants found the Gossler and Parkside School Neighborhood to lack an identity compared to other Manchester neighborhoods. A comment was made that the North, East, and South side of Manchester have access to a greater number of assets such as social services, parks, markets, community spaces, and events that contribute to their identities. This presents itself as an opportunity to make the neighborhood more of a destination for the community, by developing a place-based approach to enabling community events and a well-defined character that would contribute to Gossler Park Neighborhood's identity and well-being.

Conclusions:

The HIA Steering Committee should utilize this input to develop a strategic plan with a phased investment strategy to further prioritize and implement physical improvements in the areas of access management, safety, recreation, community identity, and social service connections.

Notes from the Gossler Park Neighborhood Charrette

Recreation & Health

Issues

1. Basketball area is used, but is in disrepair
2. Waste of useful space – i.e. unusable tennis courts
3. Condition of existing pavement is in disrepair; including grading issues that cause pooling of water during inclement weather
4. Need to improve/increase community involvement and communication
5. Existing playground is not in good condition
6. Need more opportunities for children/families to be active (i.e. limited local parks in this neighborhood)
7. Need more opportunities for free student activities/clubs
8. Wooded area in the back of the property needs to be thinned / limbed to improve safety
9. Vandalism is a concern
10. Pedestrian safety is a concern

Improvements

1. Move all recreation to the front of the school campus (near Parkside Avenue) to capitalize on existing green space area. Make this a “community destination.”
2. Develop new basketball courts, since this is the most popular activity currently
3. Transform unusable tennis courts and deteriorating basketball courts to the primary parking area
4. Relocate existing parking area outside of Parkside’s cafeteria to make space for an expanded recreation area
5. Build/install a new playground structure
6. Add trees for natural shading; while limbing/trimming trees on the back property to improve safety
7. Find ways to incorporate a variety of activities, such as soccer, volleyball, and skating

8. Create newsletters to keep families and neighborhood residents informed and engaged
9. Clean-up baseball field area in the back of the school
10. Resurface/repair the existing pavement areas around the school

Safety & Crime

Issues

1. Lack of visibility and lighting
2. Dense wooded area behind school
3. Traffic congestion
4. Vandalism of school
5. Drug use
6. Social care issues
7. Children activities limited after school
8. Dearth Scarcity of neighborhood groups
9. Lack of pedestrian safety
10. Sight depressions of tarmac pavement area surrounding school in poor condition

Improvements

1. Improving the landscape within the wooded area; thin out dead and general brush clean up
2. Additional lights especially along sidewalks and trails, in recreation areas, parking, and behind school
3. Increase police patrols
4. Improve school grounds throughout, improve recreational areas and make them more visible and accessible to the community
5. Improve recreational courts/areas
6. Improve road access, especially to Dubuque St.
7. Curfew
8. Create community gardens

Projects

1. Improve forested area Improve pruning management in the wooded area surrounding the school
2. Increase the amount of lighting
3. Create additional access paths/roads to city streets
4. Install strategic fencing behind school
5. Create community gardens

Neighborhood Connections

Issues

1. Isolation; Connections out of neighborhood/ across river/fields/shopping
2. Lack of social services/ afterschool programs / school services
3. A lack of public transportation
4. Trail access/lighting; improve trail signage
5. Planned / organized events(soccer, Frisbee golf, volleyball, basketball leagues; community events at existing facilities;
6. Community solidarity; No community pride; unacknowledged citizens; community disenfranchisement; neighbor to neighbor connection missing; connect kids to seniors
7. Improve recreation space
8. Improve existing facilities and create additional parks (e.g., West Side Arena; pool, possible beach along the river)
9. Educational opportunities such as wildlife trail walk along the river
10. Food desert
11. Improve sidewalk conditions
12. Environmental Justice; brown field at the 'Compound'

Improvements

1. Create/improve connections via transit between West and East side, community activities, and improved, well lit recreation areas.
2. Improve fields; diversify recreational space to include an opportunity to play a variety of sports (emphasis also on lighting)
3. Improve access to surrounding parks on both sides of the river
4. Increase school usage during afterhours for various programs
5. Create a "Kids Café"
6. Make access points to trails safer for kids, also install trail signage that would lead to the neighborhood.
7. Improve walking safety and access to school especially the staircase by Gossler School and install a staircase behind the school. Prune the areas near both access points to improve visibility
8. Connection/sidewalk from Sullivan St. to the trail

School Access

Issues

- Congestion in morning and afternoon
- Dangerous road crossing
- Intense Blucher St. bus traffic
- Parking is allowed too close to intersections
- Dangerous "staircase" in back of school
- Little access to school from surrounding neighborhood
- Lack of lighting and security

- Inadequate sidewalks

Opportunities

- Parks and Recreation Master Plan – Gossler and Parkside Schools
- Apply for Homeland Security Grant for lights, security
- Broaden painted 'Green' and 'Blue' lines for better visibility and organization

Suggestions and Projects

- Design site by use – ie. parking out back, recreation in front
- Better lighting and security presence
- Trim/manage wooded area in back of school
- Move playground in front
- Keep recreation areas concentrated
- Move parking to back of school
- Designated bus drop-off area
- Better drop-off area on Dubuque St.
- Complete sidewalk
- Continuing Hevey St. to Parkside Ave to alleviate traffic
- Speed bumps on Sullivan

Appendix C

SNHPC Gossler Park Sidewalk Survey

1. On the south side of Putnam between Douglas and Cumberland: no sidewalk.
2. On south side of Putnam at 104 Putnam at intersection with Whittemore: New Sidewalk with asphalt
3. On the south side of Putnam just east of Whittemore: new construction of building, sidewalk is in rough shape due to construction vehicles frequenting the property
4. On east side of Blucher between Putnam and Sullivan: no sidewalk except along property of 247 Blucher.
5. On the corner of the east side of Putnam where it intersects Sullivan at 241 Putnam: sand path instead of sidewalk.
6. On Blucher between Sullivan and 165 Blucher east side: no sidewalk and large tree along street in what could be sidewalk path at 227 Blucher. Sidewalk begins at 165 Blucher. Could be resurfaced or re-leveled. Stops right where 133 Blucher starts.
7. Where Blucher forks into 2 streets (from south to north) could use crosswalks and/or stop signs, as school is right there and sight is limited.
8. Where Blucher forks all the way to Sullivan: on west side of Blucher there is no sidewalk, except starting at the southwest corner's house, 232 Blucher. Sidewalk could be resurfaced.
9. On west side of Blucher, just north of Sullivan along 189 Blucher, there is a narrow stone sidewalk path.
10. From 189 Blucher on west side to Putnam there is no sidewalk.
11. On south side of Blucher at the intersection with Putnam heading east (south east corner): the curb is 2-3 inches high, not easily wheelchair accessible.
12. Along Putnam crossing Bartlett st., both curbs are ½ to 1 inch high and uneven.
13. Sidewalk in front of 305 Bartlett (East side) could be resurfaced and leveled.
14. Badly damaged sidewalk between 283 Bartlett and 291 Bartlett (on the east side of the street).
15. Sidewalk along 283 Bartlett is bumpy and uneven.
16. South of Sullivan on the east side of Bartlett until the dead end: no sidewalk.
17. On the west side of Bartlett south of Sullivan St. at 226 Bartlett: dirt sidewalk used for parking.
18. At 230 Bartlett, on the west side, sidewalk is being used as car parking.
19. Most of Bartlett on the west side south of Sullivan has no sidewalk, except what was mentioned and along the southwest corner of Sullivan and Bartlett intersection.
20. The west side of Bartlett at 246 Bartlett just south of Putnam has bumpy and uneven sidewalk that is in slight disrepair.
21. The west side of Bartlett at 308 Bartlett has bumpy and uneven conditions.
22. On the east side of Thornton, at 215 Thornton, the hose is in disrepair: boarded windows, no grass, junk all over property. It is occupied. A neighbor says the inside is even worse.
23. No sidewalk at 179/181 Thornton on the east side corner just south of Sullivan.
24. East side of Thornton starting at 151 Thornton until the dead end: there is no sidewalk.

25. Between Sullivan and the dead end on the west side of Thornton, only some sidewalk at 126 Thornton and 184 Thornton on the corner with Sullivan.
26. No sidewalk on the south side of Sullivan between Whipple and Bartlett.
27. Between Sullivan and Putnam on the west side of Thornton: sidewalks only at the following addresses: 206, 232, 240 and 250 Thornton.
28. Whipple St. south of Putnam to Sullivan: only sidewalk is on the southwest corner of Putnam at 284 Putnam, and is in part disrepair.
29. Along Sullivan, on the north side between Whipple and Thornton, there is sidewalk. On the south side, the only sidewalk is at 284 Sullivan.
30. No sidewalk on either side of Sullivan between Whipple and Whittemore until the dead end.
31. Between Sullivan and Douglas there is no sidewalk along either side of Whittemore.
32. Between Putnam and Sullivan along Whittemore, the only sidewalk on the east side is at 81 Whittemore and on the west side at 96 Whittemore and 104 Whittemore.
33. No sidewalk along Douglas St, either side between Putnam and Conant St.

Surveyor Use Only: Info for the Community Schools Project, you do not have to participate and can stop at any time, results and any contact info collected are confidential, and contact Karen Manikowski at the Health Department for questions.

Appendix D.

SNHPC National Night Out Survey

I. Please rate the following for level of importance (circle your choice: 5 + most important, 1 = least important)

- A. 1 2 3 4 5 Improve designated drop off/pick up for buses.
 - B. 1 2 3 4 5 Improve designated drop off / pick up for parents.
 - C. 1 2 3 4 5 Create clear and visible routes for all users (buses, cars, bicyclists, and walkers).
 - D. 1 2 3 4 5 Woods should have fence around the schools.
 - E. 1 2 3 4 5 Woods around the schools should be pruned back and cleaned up to allow for visibility, reducing potential risks.
 - F. 1 2 3 4 5 Create visible waiting area for Parkside students who are picking up siblings.
 - G. 1 2 3 4 5 Create a community recreation and playground space.
 - H. 1 2 3 4 5 Create parking where tennis courts are now.
 - I. 1 2 3 4 5 Improve neighborhood-school routes for bicycles and sidewalks.
 - J. 1 2 3 4 5 Improve visibility/safety for walkers.
 - K. 1 2 3 4 5 Need to accommodate visitor parking.
 - L. 1 2 3 4 5 If possible, keep buses off streets.
 - M. 1 2 3 4 5 Improve intersection of Parkside Ave. and Sullivan St. including crosswalks and signage.
 - N. 1 2 3 4 5 Fill in
-
-

II. Please label your top three priorities (1, 2, and 3) next to the corresponding letter (A-N)

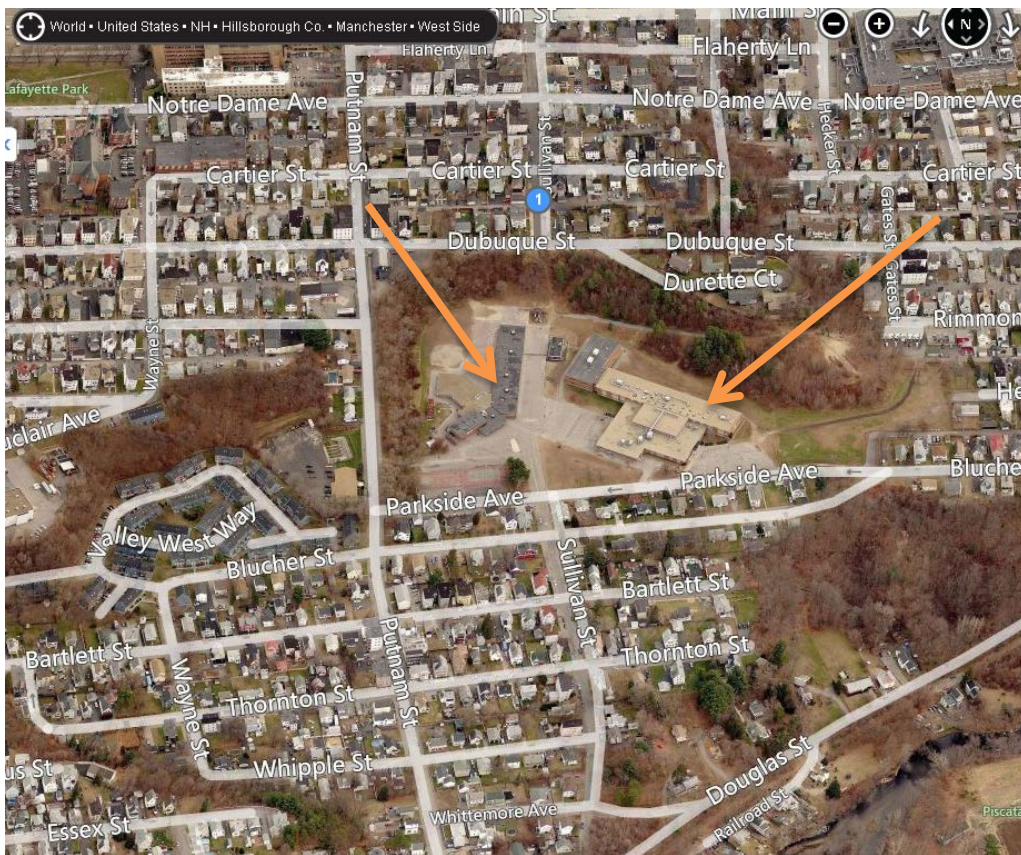
III. Draw on the map the most important routes for cars, buses, walkers, or bicyclists.

IV. Circle any areas that need safety improvements.

V. Please indicate how you or your family member(s) get to school.

Thank you for your input as it is very important to us. We will share your thoughts with the HIA Advisory committee in developing improvement strategies for the neighborhood.

Please provide any additional thoughts or suggestions to ensure the safety, efficiency, and sense of community for this neighborhood.



Appendix E.

Manchester Police Department INCIDENT REPORT



2015 Part I Crimes in Gossler Park Area



09A - FIRST DEGREE MURDER - 1 Incidents, 1 Offenses

11A - AGGRAVATED FELONIOUS SEXUAL ASSAULT FORCIBLE RAPE - 9 Incidents, 9 Offenses

11C - AGGRAVATED FELONIOUS SEXUAL ASSAULT-WITH OBJECT - 1 Incidents, 1 Offenses

120 - ROBBERY (A) ARMED - 8 Incidents, 8 Offenses

120 - ROBBERY (B) UNARMED - 9 Incidents, 9 Offenses

13A - AGGRAVATED ASSAULT DOMESTIC - 7 Incidents, 7 Offenses

13A - CRIMINAL THREATENING - 6 Incidents, 6 Offenses

13A - FIRST DEGREE ASSAULT - 3 Incidents, 3 Offenses

13A - OBSTRUCTING REPORT OF A CRIME DOMESTIC - 1 Incidents, 1 Offenses

13A - RECKLESS CONDUCT - 5 Incidents, 5 Offenses

13A - SECOND DEGREE ASSAULT - 13 Incidents, 13 Offenses

13A - VIOLATION OF PROTECTION ORDER DOMESTIC - 2 Incidents, 2 Offenses

200 - ARSON (B) - 2 Incidents, 2 Offenses

200 - ARSON (M) - 3 Incidents, 3 Offenses

220 - BURGLARY (A) - 11 Incidents, 11 Offenses

220 - BURGLARY (B) - 25 Incidents, 25 Offenses

23A - THEFT, POCKET PICKING (M) - 1 Incidents, 1 Offenses

23C - THEFT (A) - SHOPLIFTING - 1 Incidents, 1 Offenses

23C - THEFT (M) - SHOPLIFTING - 33 Incidents, 33 Offenses

23C - WILLFUL CONCEALMENT (M) - 4 Incidents, 4 Offenses

23D - THEFT, FROM A BUILDING (A) - 4 Incidents, 4 Offenses

23D - THEFT, FROM A BUILDING (B) - 8 Incidents, 8 Offenses

23D - THEFT, FROM A BUILDING (M) - 42 Incidents, 42 Offenses

23F - THEFT, FROM A MV (A) - 2 Incidents, 2 Offenses

23F - THEFT, FROM A MV (B) - 2 Incidents, 2 Offenses

23F - THEFT, FROM A MV (M) - 40 Incidents, 40 Offenses

23G - THEFT, MV PARTS OR ACCESSORIES (M) - 10 Incidents, 10 Offenses

23H - THEFT BY UNAUTHORIZED TAKING OR TRANSFER (A) - 5 Incidents, 5 Offenses

23H - THEFT BY UNAUTHORIZED TAKING OR TRANSFER (M) - 40 Incidents, 40 Offenses

23H - THEFT OF LOST OR MISLAID PROPERTY (B) - 1 Incidents, 1 Offenses

23H - THEFT OF LOST OR MISLAID PROPERTY (M) - 5 Incidents, 5 Offenses

240 - THEFT OF A MV (A) - 5 Incidents, 5 Offenses

240 - THEFT OF A MV (B) - 1 Incidents, 1 Offenses

240 - THEFT OF A MV (M) - 2 Incidents, 2 Offenses

240 - UNAUTHORIZED USE OF PROPELLED VEHICLE OR ANIMAL - 2 Incidents, 2 Offenses

313 Total Incidents

314 Total Offenses