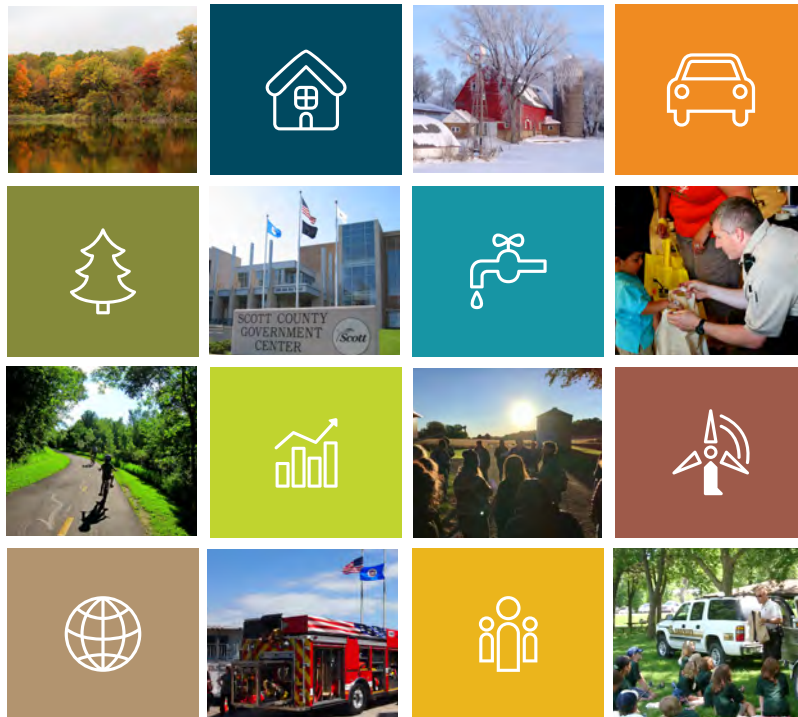


# Strengthening Community Engagement to Move Public Health Equity Data to Action



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Building community-university partnerships for sustainability

The project on which this report is based was completed in collaboration with Scott County as part of the 2019–2020 Resilient Communities Project (RCP) partnership. RCP is a program at the University of Minnesota’s Center for Urban and Regional Affairs

(CURA) that connects University faculty and students with Minnesota communities to address strategic projects that advance local resilience and sustainability.

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# **Strengthening Community Engagement to Move Public Health Equity Data to Action: Final Report**

## **Introduction**

Health disparities are preventable differences in burden of disease, mortality, prevalence and other health conditions that exist among specific population groups (CDC, 2008). About 67% of deaths of Scott County residents are due to chronic diseases, such as cancer, heart disease, stroke, chronic respiratory disease and diabetes (Scott County Community Health Improvement Plan, 2014). Determinants of health outcomes include education, income, employment, transportation, access to healthy food, and safe places to be physically active. Attention to these facilitators and barriers of health offer the potential for addressing disparities (Scott County Comprehensive Plan, 2019).

People of color in Minnesota have historically had lower incomes and education levels, leading to fewer opportunities to achieve their optimal health, according to Scott County. When further examining Scott County's demographics, this holds true for its residents. Income per capita by race shows a large disparity between White and Black or African American residents and White and Hispanic or Latino residents, impacting their overall well-being (U.S. Census Bureau, n.d.). To address the health disparities, Scott County officials have conducted robust engagement in the Latinx and Somali communities in the last few years.

However, Scott County officials have grappled with engaging Somali residents in the city of Savage in particular for a slew of reasons, including language barriers and distrust of the government. According to the American Community Survey (ACS), Savage is home to nearly 900 Somalis — 2.8% of the population (U.S. Census Bureau, 2018). That number is expected to increase as more Somalis move into the suburbs.

## **Problem Statement**

Scott County is striving to more deeply engage Somali residents in Savage to address barriers to healthy eating and active living to prevent the rise of chronic diseases. Working together with Scott County Public Health and the Resilient Communities Project (RCP) through the Center for Urban and Regional Affairs (CURA), this initiative intended to identify community-driven solutions to increase physical activity among Somali residents in Savage. Focusing specifically on the Winfield Townhome community in Savage, the planned location-based engagement is believed to be the first effort of its kind in Scott County. Ultimately, this project sought to connect Somali families with family-based social support resources for physical activity and further propose recommendations that could be implemented at the county level to advance public health equity work and improve outcomes.

## **Review of Prior Work**

In 2017, Scott County Public Health conducted a Healthy Equity Data Analysis (HEDA) through funding from the Statewide Health Improvement Partnership (SHIP) in order to identify barriers

and facilitators to healthy eating and physical activity among low-income residents and communities of color. Using principles of community engagement, SHIP staff in Scott County conducted focus groups and surveys with Somali and Latinx residents with the ultimate goal of developing culturally specific policy, systems, and environmental changes to increase physical activity and improve healthy eating habits. These methods highlighted several barriers to healthy eating in Scott County, including a high prevalence of fast foods, high costs associated with healthy food options, limited food options in general, and a lack of culturally appropriate foods in the area. Participants also pointed to barriers to physical activity, including safety, a lack of opportunities, and lack of access to existing resources.

Since then, Scott County has continued to expand on this work and address HEDA findings, most recently through the Moving Equity Data to Action (MEDA) grant made available through the Minnesota Department of Health (MDH). The focus of this grant is to employ HEDA findings to generate community-driven and culturally relevant solutions to increasing healthy food access and physical activity opportunities for Somali and Latinx residents in Scott County. By continuing to engage a wide range of community members, Scott County hopes to develop work groups to determine next steps for implementation based on community needs and barriers to healthy eating and physical activity. While engagement with Latinx residents has been fruitful, the county has struggled to develop direct relationships with Somali residents for the purpose of this work and to improve health outcomes overall. Moving forward, it will be essential to identify ways in which Scott County can more intentionally and authentically partner with the Somali community in order to inform their work and best respond to community needs.

Scott County is also actively engaged in a partnership with the Resilient Communities Projects (RCP) at the University of Minnesota's Center for Urban and Regional Affairs (CURA). So far, this partnership with RCP and a team of students at the Humphrey School of Public Affairs has resulted in a qualitative study assessing Somali and Latinx women's facilitators and barriers to sufficient weekly exercise, focusing heavily on facilities and programs. The study highlighted the positive work that has already been done to facilitate physical activity in Scott County, and also noted that cost and weather were some of the main barriers to accessing existing resources. Study participants also placed a strong emphasis on motherhood, such that it presents barriers to physical activity through time constraints or lack of childcare. Interestingly though, the study also found that motherhood acts as a facilitator to physical activity by motivating individuals to stay active in order to "keep up with their kids" (Brown et al., 2019). Lastly, the interviewees remark that Scott County should increase awareness of what constitutes sufficient physical activity and improve access to facilities and culturally specific recreational opportunities. To sustain these policies, systems and environmental changes, Scott County must integrate these findings into their solutions.

Meanwhile, Scott County Public Health staff have formed relationships with some members of the local community, including a Somali store owner who is working to increase healthy food access and promote healthy food consumption — through the Good Food Sold Here Partnership (GFSHP) associated with SHIP — and other Somalis who have expressed interest in continuing to work with the county to improve the health of their community. Scott County has also established partnerships with other county agencies and local organizations, including its Libraries through the Readmobile program and the River Valley YMCA, which attracts many immigrant communities. The county has an extensive network of local public health agencies who have joined the effort through SHIP, an additional source of learning and collaboration.

The county hopes to leverage those community relationships to not only advance their work but also build sustainable programs for the Somali communities in Scott County.

## Community Engagement to Ownership Model

An initial literature review was conducted as a way to identify models and community engagement principles to serve as guidelines in the work of this location-based engagement project. Most relevant to our work, the Community Engagement to Ownership model provides examples of community engagement specifically focused on issues of environmental equity and justice. It is also highly participatory in nature and identifies several steps for communities to move from simple engagement to full ownership and partnership with local government.

Placing an emphasis on “whole governance,” this model seeks to break the “cycle of perpetual advocacy” by building complete partnerships between government agencies and historically disinvested communities (Urban Sustainability Directors Network, 2019). The key strategies we applied from this model are as follows:

- **A commitment to collaborative governance:** community partners will be given space to voice any concerns about the collaboration, while county staff will commit to an ongoing collaborative approach that allows both parties to reflect regularly on what is working well or what could be improved.
- **Clear, intentional work:** all partners define their core motivations and role in working to achieve equity.
- **Community organizing and power building:** The voices of Winfield Townhomes residents will be central to our entire process -- data collection, building an intervention, and evaluating the success of the intervention.
- **Equitable Decision-making:** before a final recommendation is made or implementation of an intervention begins, Winfield Townhome residents will be able to voice all concerns and (ideally) build consensus. If there is difficulty in building consensus, Kaner’s Gradients of Agreement, an agreement tool that helps groups with decision-making, will be used to identify what is agreed upon by all participants.
  - The Gradients of Agreement approach begins with a discussion and proposal for action or next steps. The initial proposal is written on a board and each person is polled to determine their level of agreement on a scale from endorse to veto (See Figure 1).
  - Discuss positions of agreement. Everyone gets a turn to speak and explain where they are at. Those with the highest level of agreement should share how the proposal could be modified to better suit those with lower levels of agreement, and vice-versa.
  - Modify the proposal according to the group's ideas, and poll the group again. Repeat discussions until the necessary level of agreement is reached (Kaner 1995).
- **Community Resourcing and Accountability:** we will meet residents where they are and will try to impose as little inconvenience as possible in our information-gathering process. At the end of our project, we will share our research findings with community members in a manner they desire.

**Figure 1:** Levels of Agreement Scale, adapted from Kaner (1995)



## Stakeholder Analysis

In order to ensure a successful, sustaining location-based implementation, a clear understanding of who holds interest and influence was essential to our work. A stakeholder analysis creates a shared understanding of who has the power to impact our plan of action and who is the most affected by this project. This understanding provided the foundation needed to develop an intentional communication and engagement plan that aligns with the “Community Engagement to Ownership” model.

We mapped stakeholders along two axes: influence and interest (see Appendix A: Stakeholder Analysis). Because this analysis happens in the beginning stages of planning, it is expected that stakeholders will shift as we make progress. For instance, the analysis shows Winfield Townhomes’ Management with relatively high influence and high interest. This was not the case when we first started our stakeholder analysis. We were initially unsure of the level of interest and support we would receive from Winfield Townhomes’ Management. However, after making initial contact with the property manager, we learned that Winfield Townhomes wanted to engage their Somali residents more but did not know how or have the resources to do so.

Through this analysis, we determined key players and existing resources, including organizations with deep interest in engaging the Somali community. This reinforces our idea to work alongside these resources and to leverage relationships between trusted community members and the larger Somali community. By building upon existing work, we hope to clearly define each stakeholder’s motivation and role in achieving equitable access to active living and healthy eating. In addition, we hope to bridge the trust between Scott County and the Somali community by leveraging trusted community partner relationships to encourage community organizing and power building.

## Planned Engagement

The initial intent of this project was to first build our understanding of community resources that already exist in Savage, and leverage our community partners to gather insight from Winfield

Townhome residents, almost all of whom are Somali, about what they would like to see. We planned to utilize both the Community Engagement to Ownership model and our stakeholder analysis to inform our work moving forward. The findings from the planned study would yield an implementation plan for community-driven solutions to increase access to existing opportunities and perhaps establish programs, services, and supports more specific to resident needs. Additionally, we hoped to provide recommendations for Scott County to consider as this work is sustained and expanded upon, with the ultimate goal of promoting community ownership and advancing health equity.

## Gathering Community Input

In order to gather community input and identify active living opportunities most relevant to and desired by Savage's Somali community, we planned to utilize primarily qualitative methods. These might have included focus group conversations with residents (see Appendix B: Focus Group Interview Guide), which could be facilitated as part of a neighborhood-wide event. Translation or interpretive services may have been required to ensure equitable participation so that all residents interested in providing feedback are able to do so. Special considerations would also have been taken into account when determining how to engage children and young adults in this study in order to tailor interventions to these residents in particular.

Whereas previous work led by and completed for the County focused primarily on identifying barriers and facilitators to engaging in physical activity and healthy eating habits, the proposed community engagement is action-oriented and seeks to answer questions such as:

- What would community-driven solutions to address barriers to active living look like among the residents of Winfield Townhomes?
- How might these solutions be implemented, and what supports are needed to do so?
- What is needed to enable community ownership and sustain efforts after the duration of this project?

This information could be used to develop an implementation plan for Scott County to enact and evaluate. It may also help to inform future place-based initiatives so that the work done in the Winfield Townhomes community may be replicated in similar neighborhoods across the county and beyond.

The proposed plan for engagement included the following steps and considerations:

1. Establish a trusted relationship with the Winfield Townhomes' property managers.
  - a. Property management has the authority to allow/deny any on-sight active-living and healthy eating programs.
  - b. Working alongside property managers will help define their motivation and role in achieving our goal of establishing opportunities for healthy eating and physical activity specific to resident needs.

2. Leverage relationships with trusted community partners, including the owner of the nearby L &F Grocery and Dollar Store.
  - a. This creates space for community organizing and power building.
  - b. Once trust is established, this will lead to a commitment to collaborative governance.
3. Establish a trusted relationship with the River Valley YMCA.
  - a. River Valley YMCA has high interest in establishing off-site programs to better suit all residents.
  - b. Working alongside River Valley YMCA will help connect residents with existing opportunities for physical activity in the community and aid in the establishment of new programs and services specific to resident needs.
4. Establish a trusted relationship with Scott County Library, and the Readmobile program in particular.
  - a. Working alongside Scott County Library and the Readmobile will help connect residents with family support resources.

After this initial contact with organizational stakeholders and trusted community partners, we planned to move forward with an engagement plan with the Somali community to ensure equitable decision making. Originally, our group was hoping to host an outreach event or several outreach events to engage with residents and ask open ended questions about barriers and desired community changes. We envisioned these meetings taking place at Winfield Townhomes, L & F Grocery and Dollar Store, the River Valley YMCA, or another accessible location where we could reach a wide range of respondents. Ideally, we hoped to build the format of these events with a trusted community partner, and intended to gather their recommendations prior to coordinating the event.

### Mapping Community Infrastructure

We also planned to scope out the area surrounding the Winfield Townhomes community within a walkable one-mile radius in order to generate a map of existing community infrastructure and further identify aspects of the built environment that may help or hinder this work moving forward. Using data available through Google Maps, we sought to conduct an initial mapping analysis and planned to ‘fact check’ our map for accuracy and improved detail with a walking tour and resident feedback. Walking tours have been identified by community-based researchers as a useful tool for gaining insight into local needs, allowing researchers the chance to look at a space with “fresh eyes.” Per Wallerstein, these tours are most effective when conducted alongside community members. We also intended to share the draft of our map with Winfield residents and ask them to highlight additional assets and potential concerns that we, as non-residents, may have missed in our initial assessment (Wallerstein et al., 2018).

As we attempted to identify physical barriers and assets, we also recognized that community partnership will be vital to achieving a culture of health in Savage. We planned to incorporate our complete findings into our final report to be shared with Winfield residents, along with recommendations as to how Scott County could influence the planning process and secure safe routes to healthy foods and active-living spaces for Winfield residents and beyond. Our ultimate goal is that the work done in tandem with community members can guide broader community development and future stakeholder investment that falls outside of the scope of this project.

## Community Engagement During a Crisis

The COVID-19 pandemic halted our planned engagements; however, it did not stop our research. Our group had been enthusiastically planning for a more robust face-to-face community engagement process before the COVID-19 pandemic. Unfortunately, in recent weeks our approach has taken a different shape. But our commitment and desire to improve the health and well-being of our target community remains even more crucial now as many of them are in isolation and scrambling to figure out the safest way to stay active amid this new and confusing reality. Because we believe in a community to ownership model, community engagement is a central pillar to this research. Although we were met with many constraints, we persisted and found ways to engage and collect information virtually and developed tools to be used in future engagements.

Due to the stay-at-home executive order issued by Governor Walz on March 25th (State of Minnesota Executive Department, 2020), we were unable to conduct in-person focus groups, nor survey the surrounding assets around Winfield Townhomes firsthand. We made initial contact and gained support from the YMCA and the Readmobile but were unable to reconnect and further expand upon these burgeoning partnerships. In order to adapt to these changes, we restructured our project to include the following tools for Scott County to utilize at a later date.

## Winfield Resident Survey

Although we were not able to conduct in-person engagement with the Winfield Townhomes residents, we were still able to gauge their wants and needs through a survey, implemented by the Winfield Townhomes property management. On April 10th, after consistent and effective communication with Winfield property management, a total of 134 paper surveys were placed in resident mailboxes, one per household. This survey asked residents to respond to a list of questions about their physical health and other challenges they are facing during this isolation period, among other things (see Appendix B: Winfield Resident Survey). It should also be noted here that two of the survey questions were added by the management team and aligned with their interests in gauging resident usage of the neighborhood pool and asking participants to select facilities they would like to see built in the community, including a fitness center, community garden, or community center.

A total of 64 surveys were received by property management and passed along to our team for analysis using Microsoft Excel. We generated a summary report of emergent themes regarding gaps in healthy living and resident suggestions for improvement, which has been shared both with Winfield property management and Scott County Public Health directly (see Appendix C: Winfield Resident Survey Summary). We hope that this data and analysis will help to improve Scott County's existing community engagement efforts in the Winfield community, and allow county officials to better respond to resident health needs. This may also serve as a model for future place-based initiatives enacted by the county, with the survey acting as a necessary first step to inform the rest of the work.

## Community Map

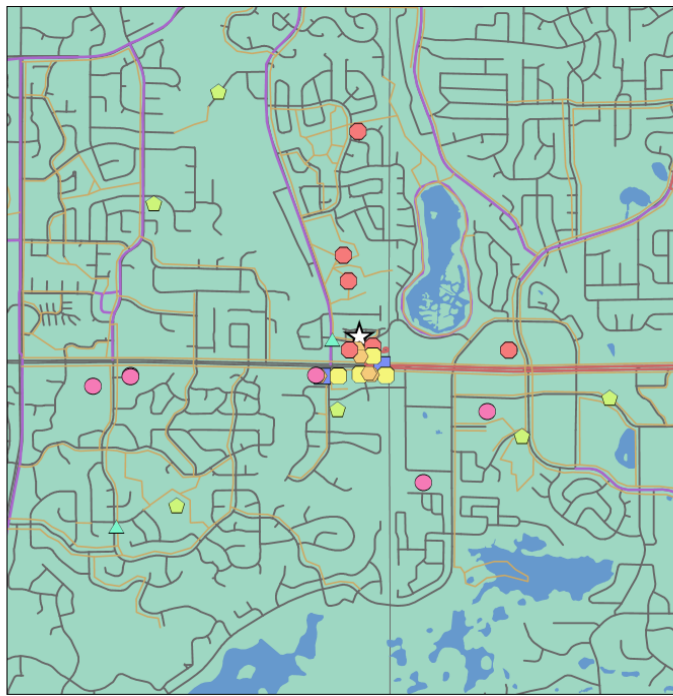
With an understanding that an on-site visit would no longer be possible, our team went back to the drawing board. Although it is not ideal, we determined that a virtual walk could serve as a way to collect information about potential community barriers and resources surrounding Winfield Townhomes. To complete this mapping, we built a rudimentary map with 1-mile markers to the north, south, east, and west of Winfield townhomes. We decided to use 1-mile as our cut-off because of prior discussions with Scott County, as well as literature that identifies this distance as a walkable range.

After building the map, we used Google Street View to move through the streets looking for barriers and resources. We classified fast-food restaurants and streets without sidewalks or bike lanes as barriers to healthy living. We classified grocery stores, parks, libraries, schools, and walkable/bikeable streets as community resources. We classified locally owned restaurants as neutral observations. We considered classifying the industrial area/gun range in the southeast quadrant as a barrier to healthy living, but ultimately left this out of our final map due to ambiguity and an inability to observe the area for ourselves. The resources and barriers identified were shared with the GIS team at CURA to build informational maps for us, and a detailed list can be found in Appendix E. Broadly speaking, our maps include the following assets:

- Schools
- Parks
- Libraries
- Roads
- Community Centers
- Gyms/Fitness Clubs (5)
- Trails (bike/walking)
- Public transit routes
- Grocery Stores/Halal Markets

Map 1 displays the full 1-mile radius. To better identify immediate resources, Map 2 is a closer look at Winfield with parameters set at  $\frac{1}{4}$  mile. These maps can provide future student groups or county officials with a broad overview of where community resources exist in relation to Winfield. The most notable observations made by our group was the fact that just about  $\frac{1}{4}$  of all roads surrounding Winfield feature sidewalks, and even less have bike lanes. Additionally, just one small grocery store exists within 1 mile of Winfield.

Map 1



Student Capstone Project  
Winfield Townhomes

**Legend**

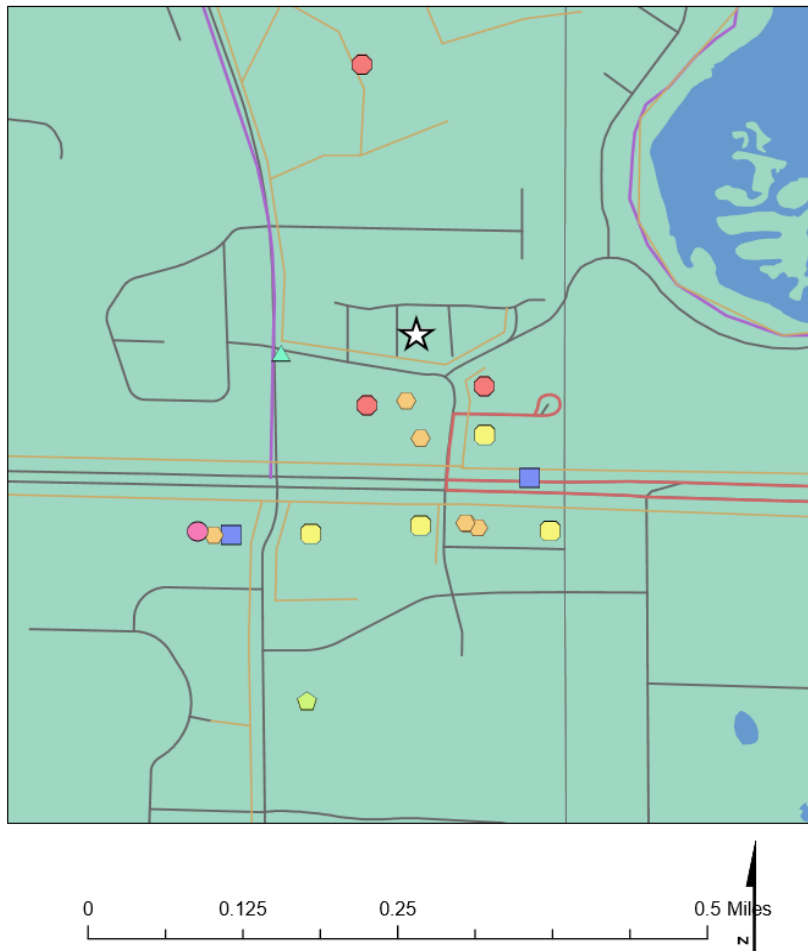
- ☆ Townhome
- Fitness
- Grocery/Market
- ▲ Library
- ⬠ Park
- Fast Food
- Restaurant
- School/Daycare
- Sidewalks
- Transit Routes
- Bikeways
- Roads
- Water

Prepared by CURA Staff  
Spring 2020

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Map 2



## Student Capstone Project Winfield Townhomes

### Legend

- ☆ Townhome
- Fitness
- Grocery/Market
- ▲ Library
- ⬠ Park
- Fast Food
- ⬠ Restaurant
- School/Daycare
- Sidewalks
- Transit Routes
- Bikeways
- Roads
- Water

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## Focus Group Interview Guide

Although we were unable to conduct focus group conversations with Winfield residents, we have created a focus group interview guide to be utilized by Scott County Public Health as they continue to advance this place-based initiative (see Appendix D). While the questions included in the attached guide may be most appropriate for an adult audience, Scott County may consider facilitating focus groups with youth and young adults living in the Winfield Townhome community. There may also be value in pilot testing the interview guide prior to engaging with residents, and/or consulting property management and other community partners in the process of refining questions.

With regard to other focus group methods and logistics, we recommend that conversations be limited to 10 participants in order to allow for enough time for rich experiences to be shared and to encourage deep conversation between participants. Focus groups should also be hosted in pairs with one Scott County staff member or volunteer acting as the primary facilitator and the other acting as the notetaker and timekeeper. Approximate timing for each question is included

in the attached guide, amounting to a conversation that is just under 2 hours long; it is advised that focus groups be scheduled for 2 hours with having leftover time being preferable to the alternative. Additionally, as previously stated, Scott County may also consider utilizing translation or interpretive services to ensure equitable participation so that all residents interested in providing feedback are able to do so.

The recruitment process must also be considered when facilitating focus group conversations. For example, Scott County may consider incentivizing participation by providing a meal, transportation if offsite, childcare, or other monetary incentives. Connections with property management may also be leveraged for greater resident access and reach by way of contacting individuals directly and/or utilizing tangible and virtual marketing materials to be shared via neighborhood-wide communications.

In reference to the process of data analysis, we recommend that Scott County pursue an inductive coding process utilizing easily accessible tools in order to allow for emergent themes to be adequately captured. Results should be in the form of active living opportunities most relevant to and desired by the Winfield Townhomes community, as identified by participants. This qualitative data may also be analyzed in tandem with survey data captured in the resident survey detailed above to allow for greater data triangulation. Ultimately, this information should be used to develop an implementation plan for Scott County Public Health to utilize when making progress toward solutions identified by the community.

## Unexplored Initiatives & Future Directions

Prior to the COVID-19 crisis growing in scale, our group had intended to actively build collaborative partnerships with community organizations in Scott County. During the week of March 9th, we had planned on-site informational interviews with Ernest Kaehler (YMCA) and Blanca Guzman (Readmobile). We also intended to check out Winfield Townhomes and other community resources. Unfortunately, the university requested all non-essential university travel to be cancelled prior to our meetings.

Ernest was open to a conference call at first, but it sounds as if things became quite busy and he no longer had the capacity to discuss the project with us. The unpredictable nature of the COVID-19 pandemic is likely a huge part in this. He offered to answer some of our questions via email, and we sent a list of inquiries (see Appendix E: Emails with Community Partners). We have not yet heard back, but we hope he will be able to connect with us soon. We believe the YMCA could be a very strong partner in this work as Ernest expressed a great deal of interest prior to COVID-19 intensifying.

Similarly, Blanca was also open to and excited about the prospect of bringing the Readmobile to Winfield Townhomes. However, upon further investigation, she deemed the property unable to

support the 32-foot vehicle. Blanca did assure our team, though, that staff and volunteers associated with Readmobile operations could facilitate early literacy classes and other youth activities throughout the summer (see Appendix D: Emails with Community Partners). Unfortunately, with the current situation, the initial meeting we arranged was postponed and we have yet to hear back about continuing this conversation. Regardless, we recommend Scott County continue to pursue this partnership in order to advance this place-based initiative in the future.

## Lessons Learned

Community engagement is a people's business. It involves a wide range of stakeholders, including citizens, community leaders, public officials, and academic institutions. Each of these groups and individuals bring diverse opinions and life experiences. When you add a global pandemic to the equation, things can become even more challenging and messy. A reimaged community engagement initiative requires ongoing discussion and open communication. The following lessons have been identified by our team as we weigh their magnitude and relevance to our final product:

- **Communication:** Open communication amongst our group, community partners, and external stakeholders has been vital in building our “socially distant” capstone. Our group has held regular Zoom meetings to check in on one another and provide status updates. We have also been scheduling regular meetings with Scott County, CURA, and our capstone facilitator to help guide the changes we make. Finally, communication directly with Winfield has been huge in conducting and completing an initial survey of community-identified resources and barriers to active living.
- **Adaptability:** With the unforeseen and rapidly evolving situation surrounding the escalation of COVID-19 in the United States, we have had to quickly adapt to ever-changing conditions and restructure our project in order to yield deliverables still relevant to our clients. Additionally, the stay-at-home order and closure of the University of Minnesota has led to a shift in communication and workflow to exist in entirely virtual arenas. Fortunately, we have not run into any technical difficulties as of yet, but we must be prepared in the event that they do occur.

## Conclusion

Although our research plans did not come together as we had originally anticipated, the partnerships we have established and the information we have gathered over the last few months serve as a great foundation for future engagements. The YMCA, Readmobile, Winfield Townhome management and community liaisons were willing to help, ensuring this project centered the needs of the community members. We encourage Scott County to continue strengthening these existing relationships and find ways to forge new ones. To build on past

SAVAGE  
Final Report

engagements, the tools developed during this research utilize community input from previous interviews and incorporate a community to ownership model. The community engagement process can be complex and often requires multiple iterations, particularly if an authentic community to ownership model is the desired path. Thus, we urge Scott County to use the tools we have developed to help with future implementation work and to dig deeper beyond what has been recommended thus far.

Lastly, this report emphasizes the need to develop new means of community engagement during times in crisis in order to ensure that community member voices are being heard and their needs are being met. It is unfortunate that our original project plan was derailed in the midst of COVID-19, but this is work worth doing in order to improve the lives of Winfield Townhomes residents and those that will be positively affected by the implementation of similar place-based initiatives in the future.

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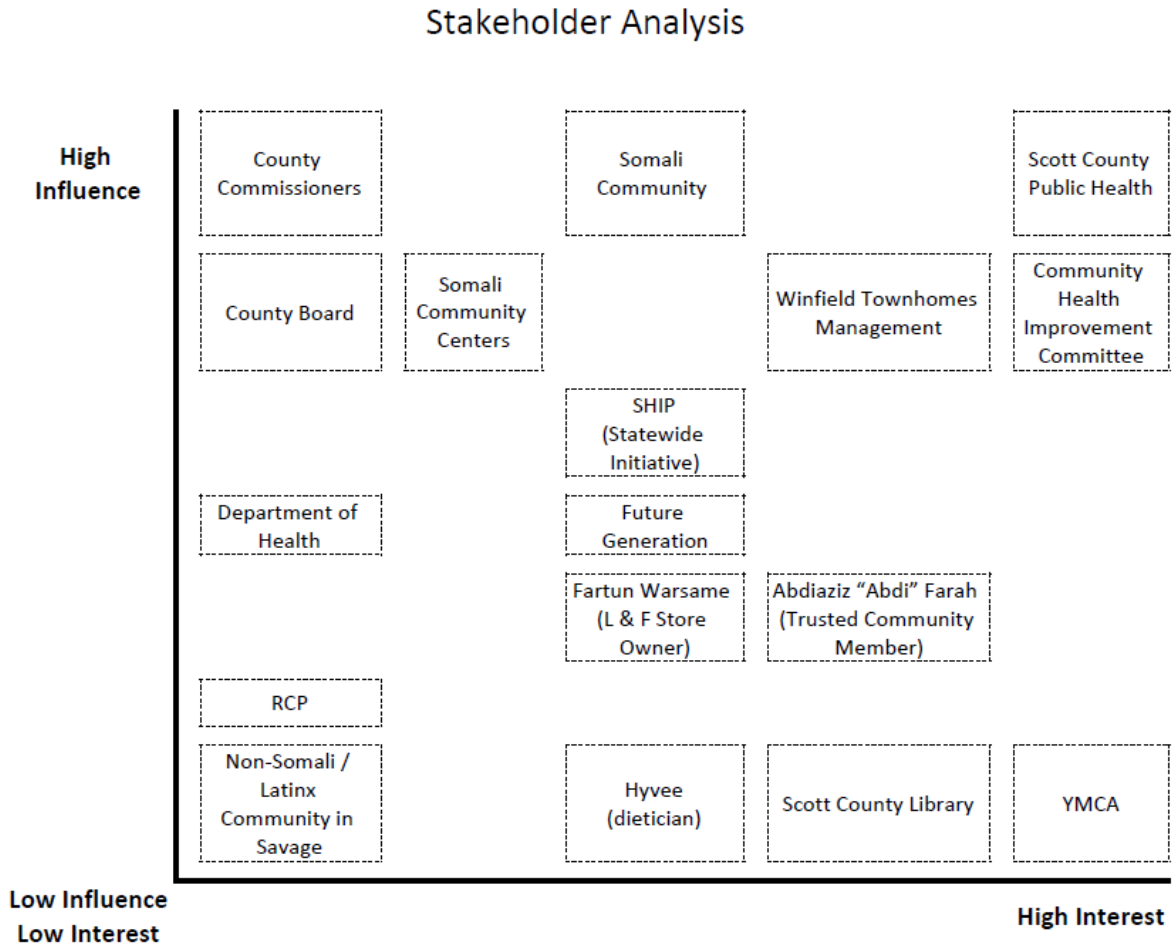
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# Appendices

## Appendix A: Stakeholder Analysis



## Appendix B: Winfield Resident Survey

### **Attention All Winfield Residents**

Attached please find a Survey that we are conducting **that MUST BE COMPLETED AND TURNED INTO THE LEASING OFFICE BY WEDNESDAY, APRIL 15<sup>TH</sup>.**

This survey is being gathered for the Scott County Public Health Department to determine Winfield's Resident's perspective on whether or not there are adequate opportunities available to provide for your physical activity demands within the neighborhood.

Please answer all the questions in detail and include your entire household's opinion/needs (all adults and children) so we can gather the perspective from all family members. If you need additional surveys, for your household's older children to complete, we have extras in the leasing office. We would like a perspective from the older, middle and younger age community to meet every household member's needs as we move forward.

Winfield is looking to partner with Scott County Public Health Department to increase access for opportunities to engage in physical activity in the Winfield Townhomes community.

We appreciate your prompt response to this Survey. **Please return to the Leasing Office no later than April 15<sup>th</sup>. These can be dropped in the drop box located to the bottom left of the Leasing Office Door.**

Any questions, please contact Pam in the Leasing Office at 952.846.0355 for clarification.

*This survey is in place to gain knowledge to implement additional activities in our Community to maintain a Healthy Environment for you, our valued Resident!!*

*For the following questions, please indicate your level of agreement.*

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1. Being physically active is important to me.

Strongly disagree \_\_\_\_\_ Disagree \_\_\_\_\_ Neither Agree/Disagree \_\_\_\_\_ Agree \_\_\_\_\_

Strongly Agree \_\_\_\_\_

2. I would like to be more physically active.

Strongly disagree \_\_\_\_\_ Disagree \_\_\_\_\_ Neither Agree/Disagree \_\_\_\_\_ Agree \_\_\_\_\_

Strongly Agree \_\_\_\_\_

3. There are adequate opportunities for physical activity in my community.

Strongly disagree \_\_\_\_\_ Disagree \_\_\_\_\_ Neither Agree/Disagree \_\_\_\_\_ Agree \_\_\_\_\_

Strongly Agree \_\_\_\_\_

If disagree or strongly disagree, please specify why: \_\_\_\_\_

4. I am aware of physical activity programming in my community.

Strongly disagree \_\_\_\_\_ Disagree \_\_\_\_\_ Neither Agree/Disagree \_\_\_\_\_ Agree \_\_\_\_\_

Strongly Agree \_\_\_\_\_

If agree or strongly agree, please specify what programs: \_\_\_\_\_

How did you hear about these programs? \_\_\_\_\_

*Please answer the following questions about how you engage in active living.*

1. What do you do to stay physically active? Select all that apply:

Walking \_\_\_\_\_ Running \_\_\_\_\_ Swimming \_\_\_\_\_ Go to the gym \_\_\_\_\_

Other (please specify) \_\_\_\_\_

2. During a typical week, how often are you physically active?

0-1 time/week \_\_\_\_\_ 2-3 times/week \_\_\_\_\_ 3-4 times/week \_\_\_\_\_ 5+ times/week \_\_\_\_\_

3. What mode of transportation do you use to get around? Select all that apply:

Walk \_\_\_\_\_ Bike \_\_\_\_\_ Public Transit \_\_\_\_\_ Car \_\_\_\_\_

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Other (please specify) \_\_\_\_\_

*Please answer the following questions about Winfield facilities.*

1. How often do you or your family members utilize the pool when it's available at Winfield?

All the time \_\_\_\_\_ 2-3 times/week \_\_\_\_\_ 4-5 times/week \_\_\_\_\_ Seldom use \_\_\_\_\_  
Never \_\_\_\_\_

2. Which facilities would you like to see in the neighborhood? Check all that apply:

Fitness Center \_\_\_\_\_ Community Center \_\_\_\_\_ Library \_\_\_\_\_ Community Garden \_\_\_\_\_  
Basketball Court \_\_\_\_\_ Larger Playground \_\_\_\_\_

Please list below any additional facilities not listed you would like to see added:

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

3. What barriers do you face when trying to be physically active? Check all that apply:

Transportation \_\_\_\_\_ Childcare \_\_\_\_\_ Cost \_\_\_\_\_ Safety \_\_\_\_\_ None \_\_\_\_\_

Other (please specify) \_\_\_\_\_

4. Has social distancing or the stay at home order affected your ability to be physically active?

Yes \_\_\_\_\_ No \_\_\_\_\_

If so, how? \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

*Lastly, please provide the following demographic information.*

1. What is your race? \_\_\_\_\_

2. What is your gender? Male \_\_\_\_\_ Female \_\_\_\_\_ Transgender \_\_\_\_\_

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Gender Non-conforming \_\_\_\_\_

3. What is your age? \_\_\_\_\_

4. What is your occupation? \_\_\_\_\_

If you are interested in being contacted to provide additional feedback, please include the following information:

Unit # \_\_\_\_\_ Phone # \_\_\_\_\_

Email \_\_\_\_\_

**Thank you for your participation – Please return to office by April 15<sup>th</sup>**

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## Appendix C: Winfield Resident Survey Summary

### Introduction

We asked residents of Winfield Townhomes to respond to their level of physical activity. Between April 10 to May 5, 2020 we received about 64 responses, a majority of which were from African American residents. Because the surveys were only administered in English, we did not get all of the 134 residents to complete the paper survey. At times, property managers were fielding questions over the phone or in-person. Additionally, all missing values were dropped during the process of data analysis; differences in counts are specified where applicable.

The answers show that most of the respondents are staying physically active amid a public health crisis that has forced many to stay home. Walking, going to the gym, and running were the main ways respondents continue to be physically active. Others reported that they have picked up creative ways to be active indoors and outdoors, such as lifting weights, exercising at home and walking to the park to play basketball. The majority of the residents have highlighted the need for safe places for children to play, a sentiment shared by property managers who said, **“If the kids had a bike path around the back of the property where it’s safe, that would be nice.”** Thus, there is a need for continued work in this area in order to improve resident access to opportunities for physical activity, particularly for youth in the neighborhood.

### Results & Discussion

#### Demographics

We want to begin this section by noting that many respondents did not identify race, age, or occupation. Those percentages will be accounted for in the “no response” categorization. One respondent who listed “human” as their race was reclassified as “no response”. Races identified in our survey include (in order of prevalence), no response, Black, Somali, African, African American, Somali American, White, and Hispanic American. For the following chart, N=64.

**Table 1. Self-reported race**

Self-reported race	Count
Black	7
African	5
African American	4
Hispanic American	1
Somali	6
Somali American	3
White	3
No response	35

Most residents were willing to provide their self-identified gender. Only 6 residents declined to do so. The majority of survey respondents self-identified themselves as females. Winfield management, meanwhile, declared that many of their residents are single mothers with school-age children.

**Table 2. Self-reported gender**

Self-reported gender	Count
Female	44
Male	13
Gender non-conforming	1
No response	6

Age was another data point with limited response. Results are based on the surveys where respondents did include this data point (n=30).

**Table 3. Age of respondents**

	Age
Average Age	36.7
Median Age	37
Youngest	19
Oldest	59

Our final demographic question was in regard to resident occupation. Previous survey results indicated that a high percentage of Winfield residents are service-sector employees. Overall, management noted that many of their residents are low-income single-parent households. Although non-response was high for survey respondents reporting their occupation, our results generally support previous knowledge. The following occupations were listed (n=24).

**Table 4. Occupation of respondents**

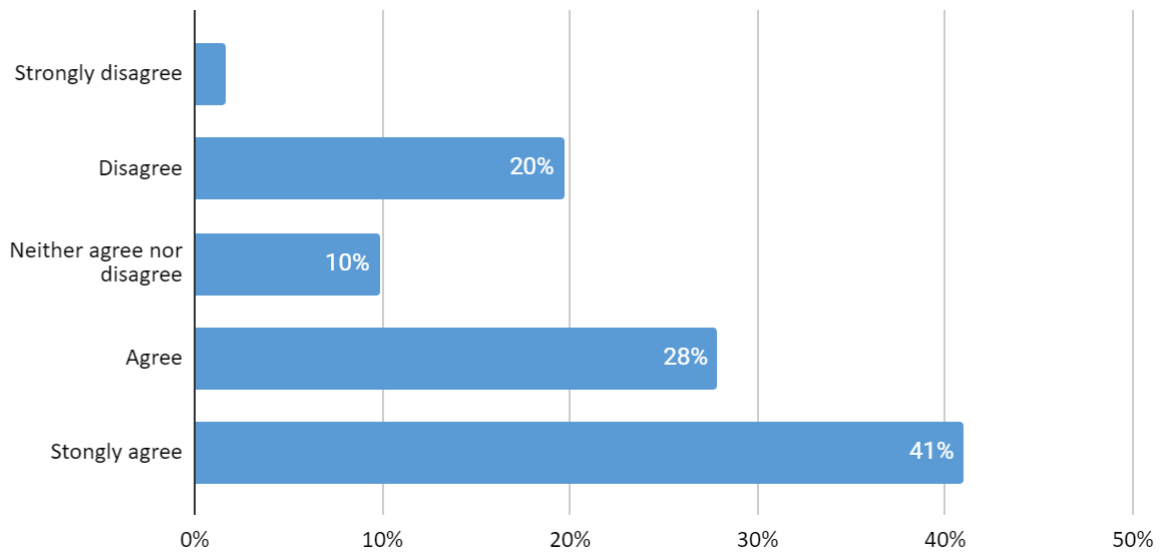
Occupation	Count
Domestic work (Caretaker, home care, homemaker, childcare, teacher)	6
Presently not working, determined disabled	6
Other (beauty advisor, BRM fraud, diamond, finance, office work)	5
Manufacturing (line worker, machine operator, production picker)	3
Driver	2
Food service (sandwich artist, etc.)	2

## Resident Perceptions of Physical Activity

Most Winfield residents agreed that being physically active is important. Forty-two survey respondents reported strong agreement with the importance of physical activity, while another 18 residents said they agreed. Most residents also indicated some room for improvement in their own levels of physical activity, with more than half noting that they would like to be more physically active.

Our next questions were designed to gauge resident perceptions of opportunity for physical activity in their community. These questions garnered a more mixed response (Figure 1). When asked if there are adequate opportunities for physical activity in their community, there may have been some confusion or unclarity that arose. The majority (69%) of the residents agreed or strongly agreed, noting that adequate opportunities already exist. But later statements indicated that many of these respondents were not aware of physical activity programming in their community.

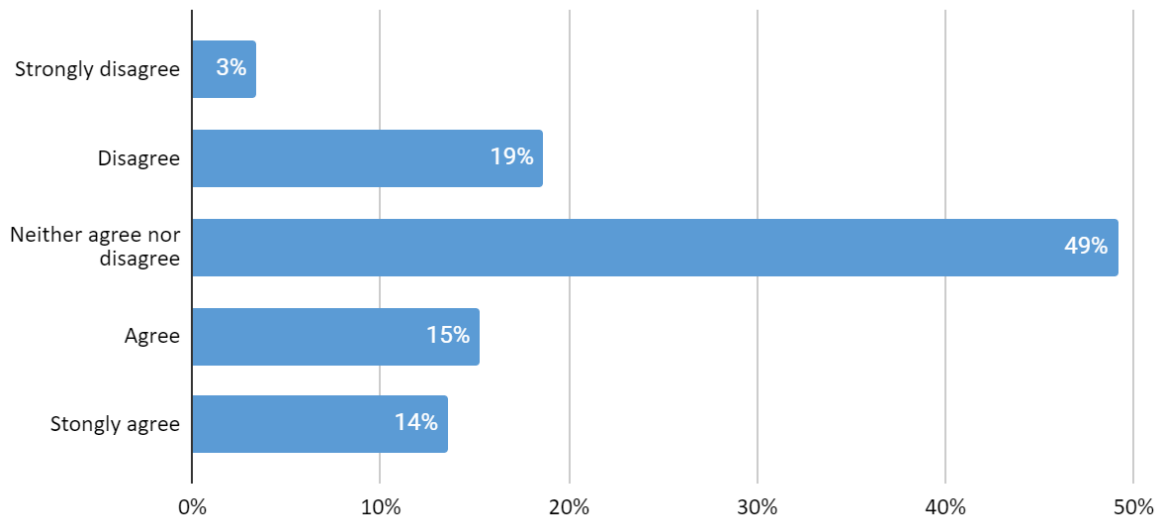
**Figure 1. There are adequate opportunities for physical activity in my community. (n=61)**



When asked to expand on perceptions of inadequate opportunities for physical activity, most residents cited limited options as the reason. Cost, transportation, limited awareness of options, being “new to the area,” and an absence of indoor activities, were among other reasons.

Our final question about resident perceptions focused on their awareness of physical activity programming in the neighborhood. Figure 2 shows that the majority of respondents neither agreed nor disagreed with the corresponding statement, meaning that about one-quarter of respondents are aware of physical activity programming while the remaining one-quarter are not. This may indicate a need to increase messaging to residents regarding programming within the community. Additionally, given the vast diversity of Winfield, messaging in various languages and using a variety of mediums may be more effective with this population.

**Figure 2. I am aware of physical activity programming in my community. (n=59)**



When asked what sort of programming residents could identify, the YMCA was listed numerous times, followed by parks and playgrounds. Some responses were not included as they were not specified programs but rather comments like “don’t have transportation” and “what programs?”. There may have been some confusion with Question 4a as well. Survey respondents noted “BAC” as another option without elaborating further. We are unsure of what this is in reference to, but respondents could be referring to the nearby Burnsville Athletic Club.

When asked about how residents gained awareness of physical activity programming in the area, the majority of respondents cited Winfield or the leasing office as a source of information. Other answers included the internet, friends, the YMCA, and being a former participant in local fitness programs.

**Table 6. How residents gain awareness of physical activity programming**

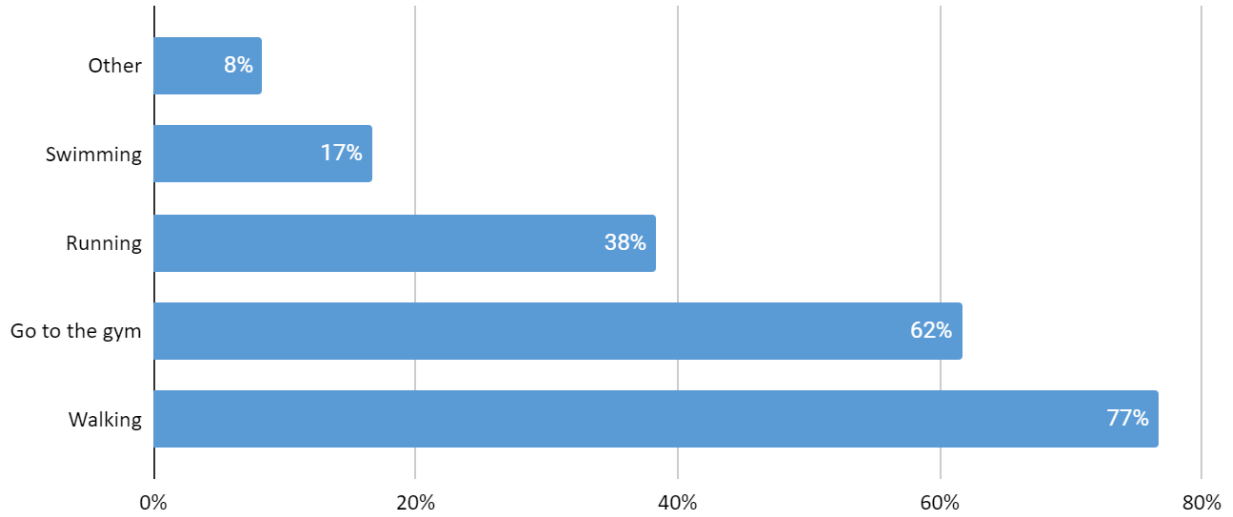
	Count
Winfield	11
Internet	2
Friend	2
Other	2
YMCA	1

## Resident Reported Physical Activity

Survey respondents were prompted to select all that apply when asked about the kinds of physical activities in which they regularly engage. As shown in Figure 3, the majority of residents reported that they walk and/or go to the gym regularly in order to stay physically fit. Given the nature of the question, we also generated Figure 3a to show that the majority of survey

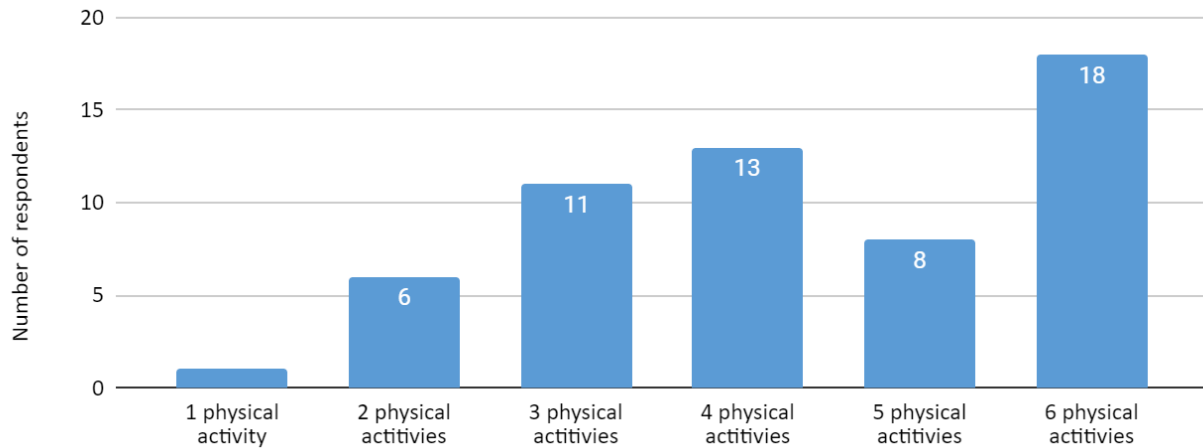
respondents reported engaging in multiple activities. This may suggest that there is not a particular need to increase resident physical activity, as the majority of survey respondents report high levels of physical activity. Rather neighborhood infrastructure could be improved in order to support and maintain current resident physical activity, with solutions tailored specifically to neighborhood youth.

**Figure 3. Activities to stay physically active (n=60)**



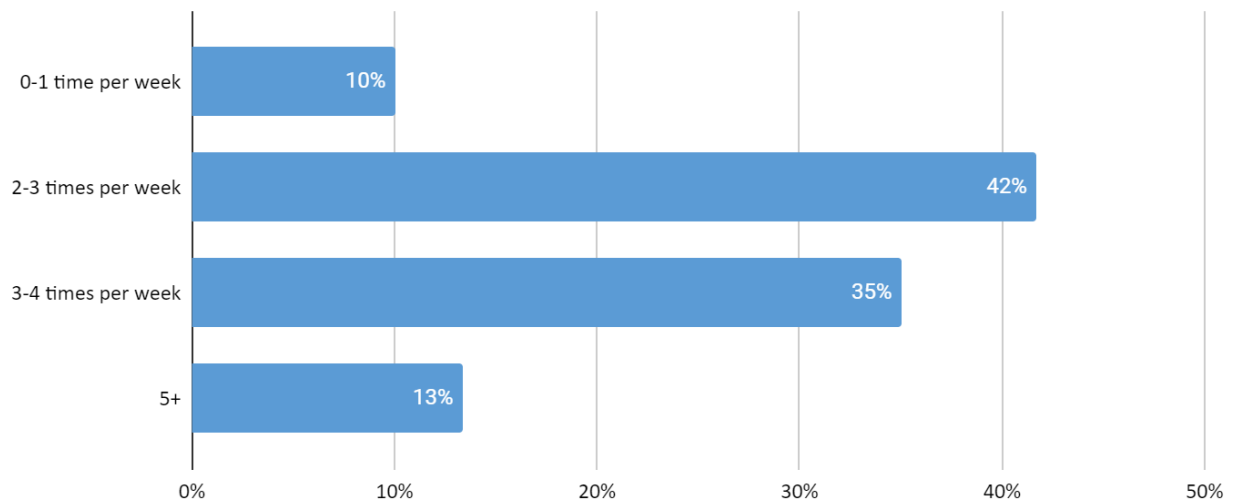
\*As specified by respondents, “Other” activities include home exercise, lifting weights, and engagement in recreational sports at nearby facilities

**Figure 3a. Number of physical activities selected per respondent**



This claim is further substantiated when looking at Figure 4. When asked how often they exercised, nearly half of residents said two to three times per week. Meanwhile, 35% of respondents noted they are physically active about three to four times per week, while a small share of residents is physically active every day of the week. Thus, residents already report relatively high levels of physical activity. However, neighborhood improvements may be needed to continue to support resident physical activity in order to promote health and wellbeing and further advance health equity.

**Figure 4. Physical activity frequency (n=59)**



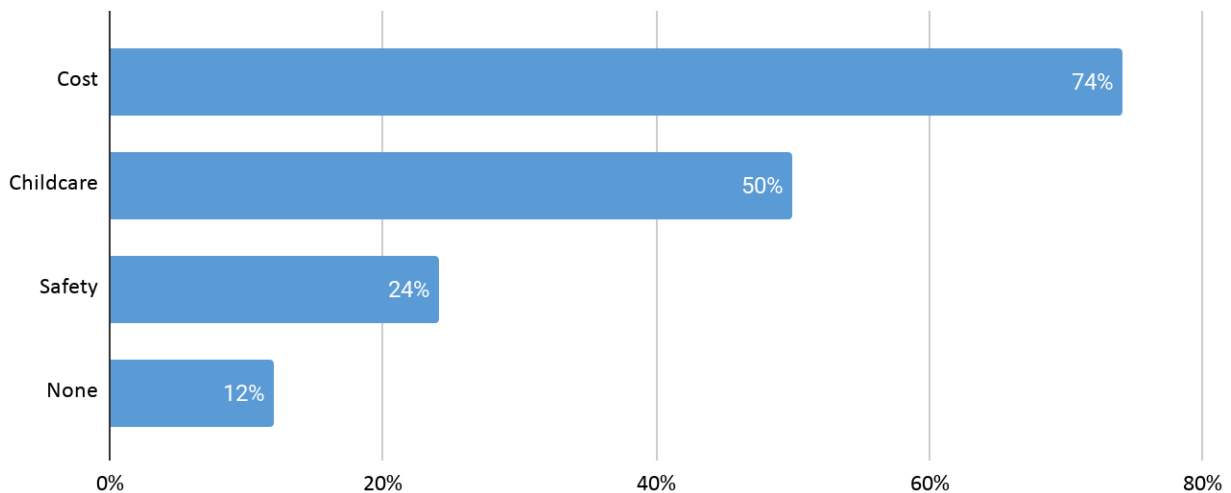
Another section of the survey asked how often residents and/or their family members utilize the pool when it's available at Winfield. Nearly 80% of residents said they never or only seldomly use the pool at Winfield when it is in season. This may suggest that the space and funds dedicated to the pool and subsequent maintenance could be better spent on a different facility or

physical activity opportunity for residents to engage in. The underused pool space could also be converted into an indoor workout room or used for other efficient purposes. Furthermore, an indoor space may be more conducive to promoting physical activity year-round.

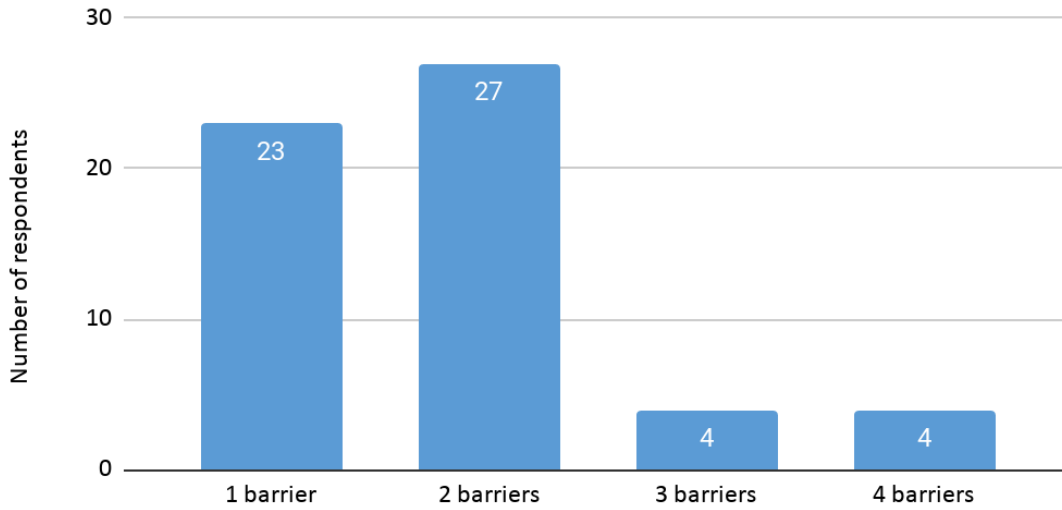
## Barriers to Physical Activity

The previous Resilient Communities Project (RCP) study (Brown et al., 2019) identified cost, weather, and transportation as barriers to healthy living. We used this information to gauge barriers Winfield residents might also experience. Similar to the previous RCP study, cost and lack of childcare were the top barriers to active living (Figure 5). Respondents were given the opportunity to select more than one answer, resulting in non-distinct counts. As such, Figure 5a shows the number of barriers selected by each respondent. This suggests that Winfield residents may be experiencing a number of barriers to physical activity, which could be improved upon by providing more opportunities for physical activity directly within the neighborhood.

**Figure 5. What barriers do you face when trying to be physically active? (n=58)**

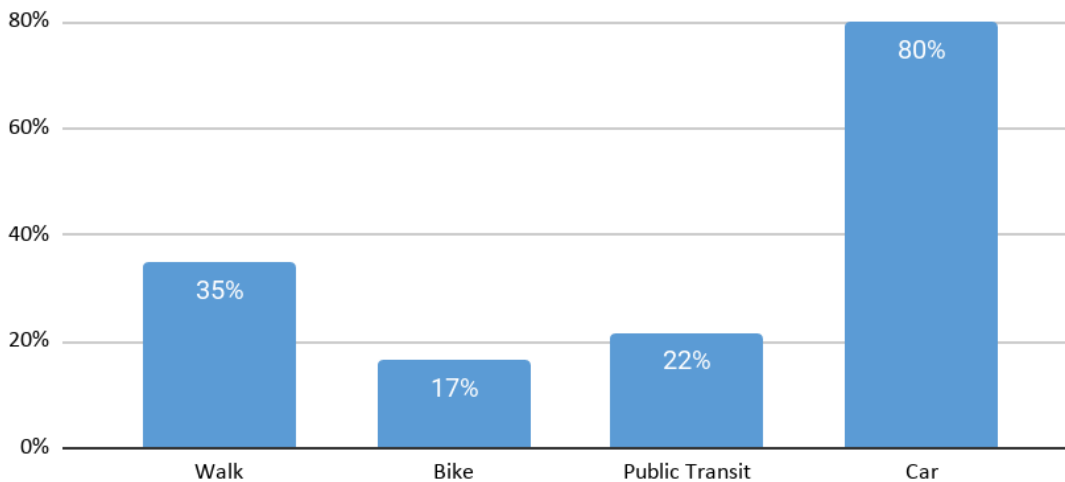


**Figure 5a. Number of barriers selected per respondent (N=58)**



Another section of our survey asked Winfield residents the mode of transportation they use to get around. The majority (80%) of the residents indicated that driving a car is the primary form of transportation (Figure 6). About one-third of residents selected walking, 22% reported use of public transportation, and 17% bicycle. Because respondents were able to select more than one answer, these are again non-distinct counts; additionally, several residents selected multiple modes of transportation. Coupling this information with the Winfield Townhomes maps, we can see that there are multiple accessible sidewalks and bike trails that could be used to get to a fitness facility, however cost is still the largest barrier.

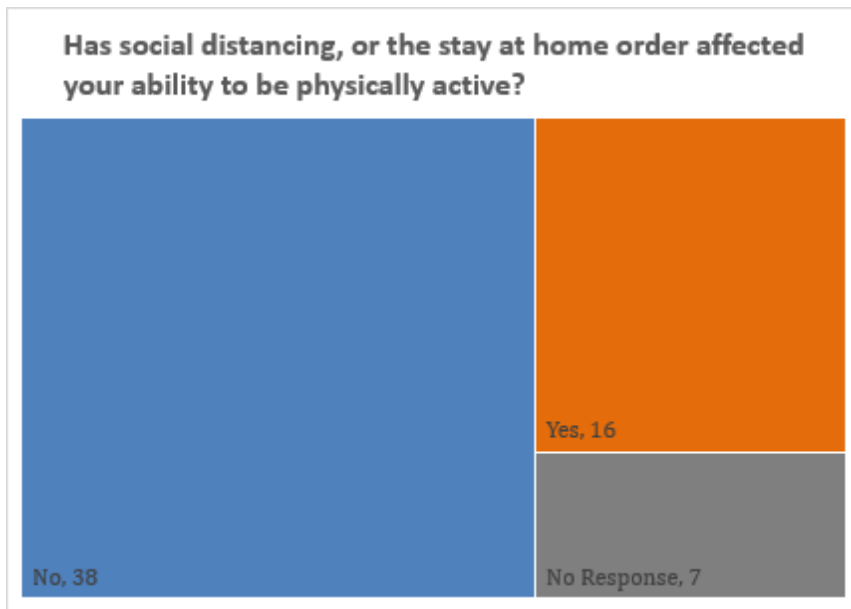
**Figure 6. Resident modes of transportation (N=60)**



## Staying Physically Active during Crisis

With respect to new statewide restrictions, we asked a COVID-19 related question to gauge how social distancing, or the stay-home order has affected residents' ability to be physically active. Many (38) did not report a change. But 16 residents noted that they haven't been as physically active, primarily due to gym closures. This finding is promising, showing that residents are continuing to stay active even in the midst of a pandemic.

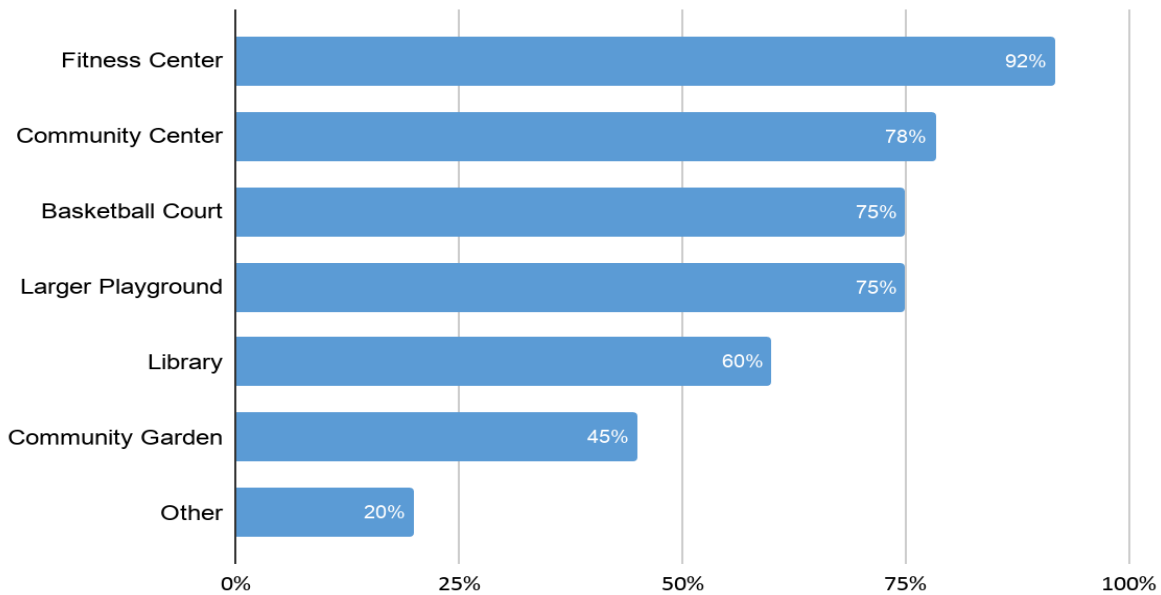
Figure 7. COVID-19 impact on physical activity, by count



## Resident Suggestions for Improvement

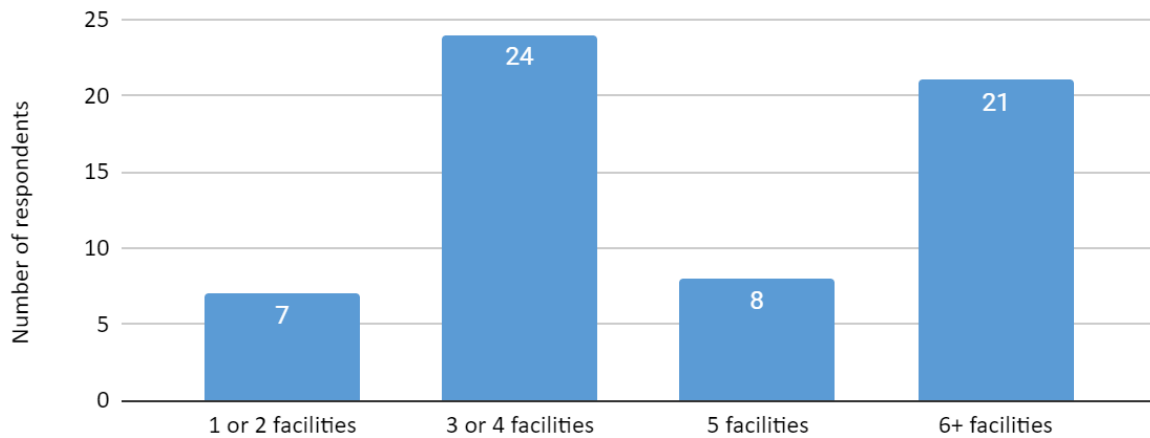
The most desired facilities were a fitness center (92%) and a community center (78%) for residents to gather and/or host events as they see fit (see Figure 8). A basketball court and/or a larger playground were also mentioned frequently, with about 75% of participants indicating a desire for either one, the other, or both. The construction of a library or community garden was not as interesting to residents, with only about 60% and 45% of survey respondents selecting each, respectively. A few participants also indicated that a path or trail for walking or biking would be preferable. Two participants specifically cited a need for safe spaces for Winfield youth to play and be physically active away from nearby highway traffic and neighborhood streets. Suggestions included a bike path off of the main road and/or a fenced-in playground.

Figure 8. Desired neighborhood facilities (N=60)



However, there are certainly limitations with this question in particular. It is perhaps unsurprising to learn that the majority of residents who responded to this survey would like to see these additions to their neighborhood (Figure 8a), as we might expect residents in similar neighborhoods to express similar desires. Additionally, while this information shows that there is a desire for such infrastructure to be implemented in the Winfield Townhomes community, this item does nothing to indicate whether or not such facilities would be utilized in the event that they were to become available to residents. Perhaps future surveys or other means of assessing resident input might utilize Likert scale questions similar to those at the beginning of the survey to gauge potential use (i.e. *If constructed, I would frequently use a Winfield Townhomes fitness center*). Another idea might be to rephrase the original question into a ranking-style question, such that participants could rank which facilities they would most like to see. This ranking system might help property management to better prioritize one project over another based on resident demand.

**Figure 8a. Number of facilities selected per respondent**



Regardless, this information may be useful for Winfield property management to present to property owners in an effort to make the improvements in the neighborhood that residents would like to see. Such improvements may lead to increased physical activity, community involvement, and resident connectedness for greater community vitality moving forward.

## Conclusion

Overall, survey results indicate that Winfield Townhomes residents may benefit from neighborhood improvements in order to sustain their current levels of physical activity, which are relatively high. One place to start, for example, may be the reallocation of funds associated with pool maintenance to other facilities and/or physical activity programming given that the majority of residents indicated that they rarely use the pool when it is in season. Given the list of desired facilities, space available in the Winfield leasing office could be repurposed to accommodate a fitness center to promote physical activity or a community center for greater social connectedness among residents. Additionally, residents emphasized the need for more safe spaces for neighborhood youth to play. Thus, any facilities constructed and/or programming implemented should be accessible or specially tailored to youth in the community.

We believe there is great potential within the Winfield community, and a desire on the part of both residents and property management to promote resident health and wellbeing. Moving forward, potential partnership between Winfield, Scott County Public Health, and other community partners may allow this community to further flourish and thrive.

Appendix D: Focus Group Interview Guide

<b>Winfield Townhomes Resident Focus Group Interview Guide</b>		
<p><i>Purpose:</i> To gather community input and identify active living opportunities most relevant to and desired by the Winfield Townhomes community. Additionally, these conversations should help to garner community support and property management buy-in as a way to sustain future efforts. Ultimately, this information will be used to develop an implementation plan for Scott County Public Health to utilize when making progress toward solutions identified by the community.</p> <p><i>Participants:</i> Winfield Townhomes residents</p>		
Questions		Minutes
Opening	1. Let's first go around and please share your name and how long you have lived in the Winfield Townhomes community.	5
Introductory	2. What do you like most about living in this community? Please explain why.	15
Transition	3. Are you physically active in the community? Why or why not? <i>Probe:</i> Is physical activity important to you? To your family? To your community? Why or why not?	15
	4. Tell me about how you engage in physical activity in the community. <i>Probes:</i> What kinds of activities? Where do you go to participate? How often?  If you are not physically active in the community, do you observe your neighbors engaging in physical activity? What kinds of activities do they engage in?	15
Key	5. Now let's talk about how the community could be improved to allow residents to be more physically active. a. Using a different piece of paper, write down or draw what improvements could be made to the community in order to promote active living. (Give time to write/draw) b. OK. Let's go around the table and each of you	25

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	<p>tell me what you wrote down or show what you drew, and give me a one-sentence description of that thing. (List each item on a flip chart and hang pictures with participants' permission. If an item is mentioned more than one time, put a tally next to it for each additional time it is mentioned)</p> <p>c. (Pick the one with the most tallies and say) A number of you said that you would like to see X in the community. Let's talk more about that. (Discuss two or three items—as time allows)</p>	
	<p>6. How can staff from property management and Scott County Public Health help to make these changes happen in your community?</p>	10
Ending	<p>7. What do you think is the most important thing we talked about today?</p>	10
	<p>8. What else would you like to add before we wrap up?</p>	5

## Appendix E: Emails with Community Partners

### **Email to Ernest Kaeler, River Valley YMCA. Sent 3/16/2020.**

To begin, our team just wants to give you a bit more context into the work we were hoping to accomplish with this project. Provided that we're still able to continue with our project as planned, we were hoping to do a neighborhood-based approach focusing on Somali residents in Scott County. Our plan was to work with a specific neighborhood in Savage, MN (Winfield Townhomes) to identify community programs that have been effective and provide community-based recommendations for future county interventions and investment. Right now we've learned that the University is suspending all in-person coursework and all travel, effective for an indefinite amount of time. At this time we are still in the process of adjusting our project scope. If we are unable to engage with residents for the rest of the semester, we will be changing our plans significantly and we hope future students will pick up where we left off.

We reached out to you after hearing a bit about the work the River Valley YMCA has already done with Winfield townhomes (summer camps nearby). Even if we can't complete this project as we'd hoped to, we still want to learn more about the work you've done and how potential partnerships between the Y and Winfield Townhomes could be built in the future.

Questions we have for you:

- What sort of programming and opportunities has the River Valley YMCA been offering to the community at large?
  - How did the River Valley YMCA determine these programs to be a good fit for the community?
  - How did the community hear about these programs/ how were they marketed?
  - How could programs be expanded and how might resident input be included in program design and delivery?
  - What kind of reception have these programs received? What kinds of evaluation tools have been utilized to collect participant feedback?
- How has the RV YMCA sought to engage with Somali residents in Scott County?
  - Have there been any specific efforts in Savage? Can you tell us more about the mobile summer camps offered near Winfield?
  - What gaps do you see in the programming currently offered? Has anyone else identified or mentioned areas they could see the Y improving? Have you received positive feedback about certain types of programming more than other types?

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- What community engagement strategies does the RV Y use to ensure they're meeting the needs of all Scott Co Residents?

Thanks again for being willing to chat with us. Any answers you can provide will be helpful! I hope we will all have a chance to chat face-to-face in the future. In the meantime, take care.

**Email Exchange with Blanca Guzman, Scott County Library. Sent and reply received 3/2/2020.**

Good morning,

My name is Sydney Hobart and I am a part of a team of students working with Lindsay Nelson at Scott County Public Health for a capstone project this semester. The focus of our project is a neighborhood-based approach to increasing access to opportunities for healthy eating and active living for residents at Winfield Townhomes in Savage as part of the Moving Equity Data to Action (MEDA) grant.

Lindsay mentioned that the work you do with the Readmobile utilizes a similar place-based approach and incorporates healthy eating and active living initiatives into community engagement efforts. She also mentioned that the program is looking for a location in Savage.

That being said, my team and I would love to connect with you, learn more about the Readmobile, and explore how we might combine efforts to expand on services and support for members of the Savage community.

Please let me know if this is something you would be interested in discussing further, and we can work on setting something up!

Looking forward to hearing from you soon.

Thanks,  
Sydney Hobart

Hi Sidney,

Thank you for reaching out and yes! The Readmobile has been trying to find a site in Savage and we were looking at Winfield Townhomes but unfortunately,

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the Readmobile is a 32-foot vehicle that would not be able to fit! With this being said though, do you know if Winfield Townhomes offers a community room? We might not be able to take the Readmobile but we could do some early literacy classes and activities with the kids that could run in the summer too!

We would love to meet with you and connect to be able to support the Savage Community together.

Blanca Guzman

## Appendix F: All Identified Community Assets and Barriers

### Assets:

- Northwest
  - Little Free Library- Glendale & 141
  - Eagle Ridge Middle School
  - Hidden Valley Elementary School
    - 4 tennis courts, track, many fields
  - Canterbury Park
    - 2 tennis courts
  - Hidden Valley Park
    - Limited sidewalks from Winfield
  - Trost Park
    - Baseball diamond, small park
    - Hard to access without a car
  - Preschool Perfect
- Northeast
  - Sunset Pond
    - Train surrounds
  - American Montessori
- Southwest
  - Von Hanson's Meats-butcher shop
    - Does not appear to be halal
  - L&F Grocery and Dollar Store
    - Only grocery store within 1 mile
  - River Bend Park
    - Some sort of court- paved, fields, playground
  - O'Connell Park
    - Tennis courts, baseball diamonds, fields, walking paths
  - Anytime Fitness
  - Savage National Karate
  - Training for Warriors
- Southeast
  - New Horizon Academy
  - Soccer Blast
  - Pitch to Pitch South

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Final Report

- Hollows Park
  - Baseball diamond, lots of field space and green space
- Rose Park
  - Soccer fields

**Neutral Observations:**

- Restaurants that are not “fast food”
  - Southwest
    - D Fongs Chinese Cuisine
  - Southeast
    - Carbones Pizzeria
    - El Parian Mexican Restaurant Savage
    - Spice Thai Cuisine

**Barriers:**

- L & F is the only grocery store within 1 mile radius
- Northwest
  - Limited sidewalks and bike lanes
- Northeast
  - Limited bike lanes
- Southwest
  - Limited bike lanes
- Southeast
  - Limited bike lanes
  - Many fast food options
    - McDonalds, Sonic, Taco John’s, Dairy Queen, Subway
  - Pistol and Rifle Range nearby
  - Many industrial warehouses, factories, etc