Examining the Perception of Redevelopment Projects in a Low-Income Urban Neighborhood: West End, St. Louis

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Overview:
In the fall of 2015, residents of the West End neighborhood in St. Louis were asked to complete an anonymous survey based on their opinions toward redevelopment within the community. The study was aimed at assessing awareness toward redevelopment, the effects of redevelopment, and the potential benefits of redevelopment. In this survey, participants were asked a series of 28 questions in order to gauge the level of community involvement and to better understand the success of past and future projects.

Age:
- 0 - 24: 12%
- 25 - 44: 46%
- 45 - 64: 23%
- 65 - 74: 24%

Employment:
- Employed: 49%
- Self Employed: 22%
- Student: 8%
- Retired: 24%

Location:
Participants were asked to select the region that they feel most accurately represents the location of their residence in the West End. The following is the study sample distribution according to perceived geographic location.
- Region 1: 19%
- Region 2: 12%
- Region 3: 8%
- Region 4: 16%
- Region 5: 16%
- Region 6: 7%
- Region 7: 21%
- Region 8: 5%

Awareness:
The first segment of the survey was aimed at assessing levels of community awareness toward redevelopment in the West End neighborhood. The goal was to better understand resident interest in the topic of redevelopment.

- 87% of residents are familiar with at least one redevelopment project currently taking place in the West End neighborhood
- 90% of residents are familiar with at least one completed redevelopment project existing in the West End neighborhood

Participants were given examples of local projects and asked to respond with their level of awareness. Projects included an affordable housing development as well as a public charter school.

Involvement:
This segment of the survey was focused on gathering resident perception toward community involvement in redevelopment. Participants were asked to consider their input on a personal and communal level.

- 11% of residents feel that their personal opinions are considered when potential redevelopment projects arise in their neighborhood
- 16% of residents feel that the opinions of the community are considered when potential redevelopment projects arise in their neighborhood

In addition to assessing levels of community involvement, this segment targeted resident perception toward the influence of redevelopment within the neighborhood.

- 54% of residents feel that redevelopment projects have increased the quality of life in the West End neighborhood
- 86% of residents feel that redevelopment projects have the potential to increase the quality of life in the West End neighborhood

Evaluation:
In the final segment of the survey, participants were asked to provide attitudes toward the benefits of redevelopment within their community. This included perception of both past and potential projects.

- 81% of residents are familiar with the Village at Delmar Place affordable housing complex
- 9% of residents were aware of the city’s development plans for the Village at Delmar Place before its approval
- 88% of residents are familiar with the KIPP Victory Academy public charter school
- 44% of residents were aware of the city’s development plans for the KIPP Victory Academy before its approval

Participants were also asked what types of projects they would consider most beneficial to the community. Projects were broken into four categories and ranked in order of most beneficial to least beneficial.

Conclusion:
- There is a high level of resident awareness toward redevelopment projects taking place in the West End neighborhood.
- The vast majority of participating residents feel that their opinions toward potential redevelopment are not considered.
- Residents are generally optimistic about redevelopment and its effect on the quality of life within their neighborhood.
- Participating residents feel that the most beneficial categories for future redevelopment are commercial and residential.