Shaping the City
for Equity, Health, Community & Place:
Strategic Investment Area (SIA) Small Area Plan—Eight (8) years later
Starr Hill Small Area Plan - New Hill Community Development Corporation

A presentation to the Charlottesville NAACP by
Kathleen M. Galvin, Architect AIA
Charlottesville City Councilor,
November 11, 2019
National Challenges—Equity, Health, Community

• “50 years from the March on Washington, white people tend to live over here; black people live over there. As long as you live in separate places, you don't know each other. You can't have access to the best jobs.” (Julian Bond, Susan Page Interview)

• “We find a strong negative correlation between racial and income segregation and upward mobility.” (Geography of Intergenerational Mobility in the U.S., Raj Chetty, January 2014)

• In 2017, the median household income for whites was $68,145; $40,258 for blacks. (Peter G. Peterson Foundation)

• In 1985, no state had an adult obesity rate higher than 15%. Today, nearly 38% of adults nation-wide are obese. (Harvard School of Public Health)

• 28.5% of 2016 greenhouse gas emissions (more than coal-burning plants) were caused by the transportation sector. (Environmental Protection Agency EPA -2016)

• “It is difficult to design a space that will not attract people. What is remarkable is how often this has been achieved.” (William Whyte (1917-1999), Founder of Project for Public Spaces)
• 66% of black children born from 1985 -2000 were raised in neighborhoods with at least a 20% poverty rate, compared to 6% of white children. (“Neighborhoods Key to Future Income, Study Finds” Alec MacGillis, Washington Post 7/27/09)

• We identified the "walkability" of a city, how easy it is to get things done without a car, as a key factor in determining the upward social mobility of its residents. (“The socioecological psychology of upward social mobility” Oishi, Koo and Buttrick in American Psychologist, 2019)

• Black children in neighborhoods in which poverty fell by 10% had higher incomes as adults than those who grew up in areas where the poverty rate stayed the same. (John E. Morton, Patrick Sharkey, “Neighborhoods Key to Future Income, Study Finds” Alec MacGillis, Washington Post 7/27/09.)

• “You give me a situation where there are a sufficient number of social resources so people don't have to compete for those resources, and I will show you a society where racism is held in check.” (William Julius Wilson, American sociologist and Professor of sociology at Harvard University, interview with Mother Jones in 1996)
Jane Jacobs spearheaded efforts in the 1960’s to oppose neighborhood clearing and highway building as championed by New York City Parks Commissioner Robert Moses.

Jacobs’ harsh criticism of “slum-clearing” and high-rise housing projects was also instrumental in discrediting these once universally supported planning practices. “Whole communities are torn apart and sown to the winds, with a reaping of cynicism, resentment and despair that must be heard and seen to be believed.” (The Death and Life of Great American Cities, by Jane Jacobs, 1961)
Legacy of Urban Renewal: Vinegar Hill

Vinegar Hill Before Urban Renewal (9 blocks)

Vinegar Hill After Urban Renewal (2 super-blocks)

Source: http://www2.iath.virginia.edu/schwartz/vhill/vhill.html
Legacy of Urban Renewal: South of Water (SIA)

SIA Before Urban Renewal (7 blocks)

This diagram illustrates that much of the original mixed-use fabric and many of the original smaller streets and blocks had altered over the last 45 years.

SIA After Urban Renewal (3 super-blocks)

By 1990, connectivity in the area had decreased dramatically. Although new buildings began to spring up along Garrett Street in the 1980s, the super-blocks remained. New development occurred in a piece-meal fashion, without a large-scale employer taking the place of the previous industries which had closed.

Today, the super-block structure remains in the central portion of the area. Discontinuous streets and the fragmented grid cause visitors confusion and make destinations in the area difficult to reach. While the Belmont grid has successfully connected residents to employment downtown, other parts of the study area are less connected. Infill development continues in the SIA, but the large-scale housing development sites, the large IX property, and other still vacant land parcels give sections of the area a sense of isolation, particularly in the central part of the SIA.

Existing Historic Sites

There are several historic buildings and sites remaining in the SIA, including the Ridge Street Historic District (National Register), the Brown Milling Building and the Belmont Mansion. The Daughters of Zion Cemetery (1873), the Oakwood Cemetery (+/- 1860), and the Hebrew Cemetery (1870) are some of the key historic sites within the SIA.

As industry and business continued their disinvestment from the SIA area, the IX Mill (the last industry) closed in 1999 removing more jobs from the strategically located employment center.

Source: SIA Plan (Section II, December 2013)
Legacy of Urban Renewal: Lack of Opportunity

Public Housing developments, built in the 1960’s and 70’s replaced local centers with jobs, walkable streets & mixed use, mixed income blocks with:

- Barracks-style, apartment buildings;
- Internally oriented and at times “gated” complexes;
- Isolated and disconnected parking lots and super-blocks;
- Single use, single type buildings of one income class;
- Few employment choices within walking distance.
- Poor natural surveillance with “Many blind areas and poor supervision from the street.” (WRT, “Working Paper,” June 5, 2009.)
What Can We Learn from Mistakes?

According to Jacobs, the key to a thriving City is diversity:
- Of land uses: More than two to create places to go to;
- Of blocks: Short w/frequent corners and sidewalks to get people walking;
- Of buildings: Various ages, sizes and conditions to provide a range of affordability;
- Of people: Lots of them and different, to create vibrant and diverse markets.

Places that were urban renewed, now need repair. Reversing the physical harm involves working with the community to get the blocks, lots, streets and building form right. Reversing social and economic harm requires many other strategies working in tandem.

That’s why we make Small Area Plans.

(Diagram Courtesy Albemarle County Neighborhood Model and Torti Gallas & Partners)
The City’s First Small Area Plan: the SIA

Charlottesville’s latest Comprehensive Plan update (2013) identified 12 areas that warranted more study in the form of a Small Area Plan (SAP).

Why was the Strategic Investment Area (SIA) first? The area’s equity and health challenges could no longer be ignored. They also made it eligible for President Obama’s Choice Neighborhood Program, which sought to:

- Rebuild, and preserve public and assisted housing.
- Invest in community assets.
- Build neighborhoods of opportunity.
- Address the interconnected challenges of: housing decay, crime, disinvestment, health and educational disparities, and lack of childcare, transportation, and job opportunities.

The SIA did not receive federal money, but the City slated local dollars to achieve the Choice Neighborhood’s goals.
SIA’s Challenges- Equity, Health, Community

• The Strategic Investment Area (SIA) has less than 20% of Charlottesville’s population, but a 25% poverty rate where over half of its households are below 60% of the area median income (AMI). (Qualified Census Tract as defined by the Bureau of the Census)

• In 2010, 55% of the City School division was on the free and reduced lunch program (FRLP), whereas in October 2016, 90% of the elementary school districts within the SIA were on the FRLP. (Virginia DOE and CCS Data, 12/1/10 and 3/8/17.)

• The SIA has no public parks and it is food desert. In 2016, 31% of Charlottesville’s African American 5th graders were obese; 6.5% of White 5th graders were. (MAPP2Health Report, Thomas Jefferson Health District, December 2016)

• Between 1960-80 the SIA’s network of narrow streets (Diggs, Dice, Oak, Ware, 2nd, Parrot, and Charlevoix) was either truncated or removed to make way for superblocks and Monticello Avenue. Three streets within the SIA made the top 10 list of Charlottesville’s most dangerous streets and intersections. (Streets that Work Plan, 2016)
The SIA is now dominated by “super blocks,” devoid of walkable streets, or a variety of lot and building types. Current zoning is biased toward large scale market-driven development, not affordable housing or neighborhood scale business that benefits local residents.
Guiding Principles of the SIA Steering Committee

(affirmed 6/28/13)

1. Improve and maintain a high quality of life for the people who live there and those who may in the future by addressing issues surrounding housing decay, crime, health, jobs, adult education, child care, and transportation.

2. Create a healthy neighborhood and a “sense of place” with public parks, libraries, other amenities and excellent food sources with safe and interconnected streets that promote walking, bicycling and efficient public transit and green infrastructure techniques that improve water quality.

3. Promote mixed income residential development without displacing current residents.

4. Focus and coordinate private and public investment in infrastructure, education and community assets so as to increase economic, recreation and housing opportunities.

5. Honor the CRHA Residents Bill of Rights and rebuild and preserve existing public and assisted housing as part of an overall plan to revitalize the area. (The SIA will work in concert with the CRHA redevelopment plan and not supersede or replace it).

6. Develop shared understandings of the issues, challenges, opportunities and desired outcome for the SIA.

The SIA Plan had extensive community engagement (39 opportunities) with community and public housing residents, property and business owners, community leaders, youth and religious leaders, school officials, planners, city officials and elected and appointed city leadership.

Photo images courtesy Cunningham Quill and the SIA Consultant Team
The SIA Plan’s “Vision” (2014)

Promotes a wide range of housing types at different levels of affordability to foster economic mobility. Builds a network of streets, safe for walking, cycling, and bus riding without displacing existing residents so as to expand access to jobs, housing, services, essential shops and intentionally-designed public places. The Plan was made part of the City’s Comprehensive Plan in 2014.

Map diagrams courtesy Cunningham Quill
Do we have the Tools to Execute the Vision?

**Equity, Health, Community & Place** are values embedded in our comprehensive plan and zoning is supposed to execute that plan. Instead current zoning processes and outcomes may:

**Not be Equitable because they:**
- Can Inflate Land and Development Costs,
- Restrict Lot Size and Housing Types, and
- Limit Public Input in Making the Rules.

**Not be Healthy or Safe because they:**
- Create Superblocks and Fast Streets, without Street Trees, Sidewalks and Bike Lanes, and
- Do not Promote Natural Surveillance.

**Not be with a Sense of Place because they:**
- Give Rise to Out-of-Scale, Out-of-Context Buildings and Undesirable Public Spaces, and
- Provide Little to No Transitions to Older Places.

The Flats on West Main Street

Photo image courtesy Galvin Architects
Without a Sense of Place

Special Use Permits (SUPs) that provide funds for affordable housing in exchange for more height and density, can also lead to: **oversized buildings that are out of scale with the context and tower over adjacent residential areas, because the city lacks transition zones between high and low intensity development areas.**

The Flats at West Main Street, adjacent to Fifeville (in spite of Design Guidelines & a BAR)
Without a Sense of Place

**Excessive Parking** minimums & **No Block Size** maximums lead to: *oversized buildings that are out of scale with the context and tower over adjacent residential areas. The existing Downtown Extended zoning within the SIA, allows this condition to happen.*

The Standard at West Main Street, adjacent to Westhaven (in spite of Design Guidelines)
Execute with the Right Tools

*Can Equity, Health, Community & Place* which are values embedded in our comprehensive plan become an integral part of our organizational culture and zoning ordinances, i.e. the rules that implement the plan?

**Equity:**
- Builds Affordable Housing via Height Bonuses
- Reduces Overall Development Costs
- Diversifies Lots & Housing Types
- Engages the Community in Crafting the Code

**Health & Safety**
- Creates Smaller, Walkable Blocks & Streets
- Encourages small grocers and corner stores
- Promotes “Eyes on the Street”

**Community & Sense of Place:**
- Promotes Human Scale and Desirable Spaces
- Provides Transitions that Respect Neighbors
Execute with the Right Tools- an FBC

Diagrams courtesy the Form Based Code Institute-Smart Growth America

Conventional Zoning
City Walk Apartments on Water Street

Design Guidelines
The Flats on West Main Street

Form Based Code Approach
Downtown Mall at East Main Street

Photo images courtesy Galvin Architects
Execute with the Right Tools-the Transect

SIA residents wanted better transitions between areas of high and low intensity development. Current zoning in the SIA allows 101' tall buildings (9 stories) anywhere, regardless of what's next to them.

In the right place, at the right scale!

(Diagram Courtesy of Opticos Design)

Townhouses
Small Apartment Buildings
Condominiums

Photos courtesy of Galvin Architects
The Right Toolkit has to Include: a Form Based Code, Height Bonuses for Affordable Housing, and Synthetic Tax Increment Financing (TIF.)

Legacy of August 12, 2017-Equity & Inclusion

Total Rental Housing Needs

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<th>Type</th>
<th>2017 Units</th>
<th>2040 Units</th>
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<td>Replacement Public Housing/Section 8</td>
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<td>TBD</td>
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<tr>
<td>Homeless</td>
<td>189</td>
<td>TBD</td>
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<td><strong>Total Units</strong></td>
<td><strong>3,318</strong></td>
<td><strong>4,020</strong></td>
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Diagrams and table courtesy the Form Based Code Institute (FBCI)-Smart Growth America (SGA), with additions by Galvin Architects
Legacy of August 12, 2017 - Height Bonuses

**T5: General Zone**

T5: is a medium intensity, mixed-use zone characterized by mid-rise, residential, commercial, institutional or mixed-use buildings.

4 stories + 2 stories (bonus); or
3 stories + 3 stories (bonus)

**T6: Center Zone**

T6: is a high intensity, taller with mix of uses (buildings, offices, hotels, institutions, and apartment buildings), located on a major open space type C or D.

5 stories + 4 stories (bonus); or
3 stories + 6 stories (bonus)

Diagrams courtesy the FBCI/SGA
Legacy of August 12, 2017 - Height Bonuses

**Affordable Dwelling Unit Bonus Heights**

<table>
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<tr>
<th>T-Zone</th>
<th>By-Right Height</th>
<th>Max. Add'tl Bonus</th>
<th>Total Height</th>
<th>Min % of ADUs¹</th>
<th>Minimum ADUs² by Affordability</th>
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<td>T-4</td>
<td>3 Stories</td>
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<td>3 Stories</td>
<td>10%-20%</td>
<td>10%</td>
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<tr>
<td>T-5</td>
<td>3 Stories</td>
<td>+3 Stories</td>
<td>6 Stories</td>
<td>10%-20%</td>
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<td>T-6</td>
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<td>+6 Stories</td>
<td>9 Stories</td>
<td>10%-20%</td>
<td>10%</td>
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¹Share of units that must be ADUs is calculated on the number of incremental units made possible by the additional height.

**Build-Out Potential**

**Special Use Permit** (Current Process for 60% AMI)

- **Max**: 147 ADUs @ 60% AMI + 99 Vouchers @ 30% AMI
- **Mid-1**: 76 ADUs @ 60% AMI + 69 Vouchers @ 30% AMI
- **Mid-2**: 52 ADUs @ 60% AMI + 53 Vouchers @ 30% AMI
- **Low**: 36 ADUs @ 60% AMI + 43 Vouchers @ 30% AMI

Table and graph courtesy FBCI/SGA with additions by Galvin Architects
Legacy of August 12, 2017 - Dedicated Funding

**Tax Increment Financing Annual Revenues**

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<th>Vouchers</th>
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<td>99</td>
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<tr>
<td>Mid-1</td>
<td>$554 K</td>
<td>69</td>
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<tr>
<td>Mid-2</td>
<td>$426 K</td>
<td>53</td>
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<tr>
<td>Low</td>
<td>$343 K</td>
<td>43</td>
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Build-Out Scenarios @ Ix & 6<sup>th</sup> St. Public Housing

TIF diagram and build out site plans courtesy FBCI/SGA

Map diagram courtesy Cunningham Quill

Assisted Housing Sites in Brown.
Friendship Court Master Plan (2012-2017)

“We absolutely and unequivocally commit to ZERO DISPLACEMENT. We will pursue a broad range of wealth-building and educational opportunities and support structures including, but not limited to job training, exploring opportunities for worker-owned cooperatives, the development of an early childhood center, and the incubation of resident-owned business initiatives.” (website)
Execute Across Generations

Resident Driven

New “Townhouse” Design along 6th Street

The residents of Friendship Court and Grimm and Parker Architects, visited other redevelopment sites in Washington DC and Northern Virginia to get ideas about architecture and building placement.

They also used the SIA Urban Design Standards as a guideline and provided input on the Form Based Code currently under review by the Planning Commission.
Execute Across Generations

What low income areas need is something they have never had: a consistent investment policy that touches multiple generations.

(Patrick Sharkey, NYU sociologist and William Julius Wilson, Harvard sociologist and author of, The Truly Disadvantaged, 1987.)

• Affordable housing incentives within a form based code are being developed.
• New safe, walkable street and intersection improvements (some are underway).
• Friendship Court’s redevelopment will insert a walkable block network within its 12 acre site and replace all 150 Section 8 units (one-for-one) and add 300 new units ranging from 30-80% AMI, with an early childhood development center, a central parks and a vision for a mixed use Second Street with healthy food sources.

Before-Second Street

After-2nd Street w/grocery store-courtesy Cunningham Quill
Execute Across Generations

• According to the SIA Plan completed in 2014, 750 new units will be built over the entire 330 acres over the next decade at all price points. According to more recent research done by the Form Based Code Institute in 2019, the 16 acre Ix Property alone has a potential build out of anywhere from 754 to 2,091 units across the next 10-20 years.

• With a height bonus tied to building affordable units on site, that build out of the 16 acre Ix property could yield 36-147 units affordable to households at 60% AMI. A synthetic TIF applied to this one 16 acre property, could generate enough public revenue to fund 99 rental vouchers for households at 30% AMI. CURRENT POLICY & ZONING DO NOT DO THAT.

• Up to 200 construction jobs will be needed to build the 1.0 million SF of new development projected within the SIA over the next 10-15 years. 300,000 SF of new commercial space during that same period will generate 1500 new jobs.

• Friendship Court recently secured an economic empowerment specialist to work on site with the residents and City and PVCC job training programs, so that they may be able to take advantage of these opportunities as they arise.
### INVEST Across Generations

From 2012-2020 (8 years):

- **$36,332,550** in local money was invested in 2019.
- **$11,363,554** was for Habitat and the Redevelopment of Friendship Court, Crescent Halls and South First Street.
- **$2,513,784** was for planning, zoning, programming and administrative support for the overall SIA Plan and PHA and CRHA master planning.
- **$22,456,212** as invested in infrastructure.

- **$33,248,661** in state/federal money was invested in infrastructure. In other words local investments (first proposed by the SIA Plan) secured 1.5 times more state/federal money.

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<th>Source of funds</th>
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<th>State</th>
<th>Federal</th>
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The FBC replaces the current Downtown Extended zoning (that incentives commercial buildings,) and ties extra building height to on-site affordable residential units.

A Maximum Build-out in the SIA would yield about 4000 units over 10-20 years, including about 1000 Affordable Dwelling Units-ADUs (30% to 80% AMI). That’s **25-30% of the total units**. In 2014, the SIA plan indicated a total of 1345 units in the SIA of which 338 or **25% were ADUs**.

When all affordable housing strategies are applied at the same time (ADUs via height bonuses, housing vouchers afforded by a synthetic TIF, CRHA, Habitat and PHA redevelopment and new ADUs) the **ratio of low income housing to market rate housing (i.e. 25-30%) remains the same after redevelopment**. City-wide the ratio is only 10% ADUs which is below our target of 15% by 2025.

The SIA, more than any other part of the city, is positioned to be equitably supplied with long term affordable housing over the next 10-20 years, provided the city is intentional about using its housing and fiscal policies in concert with new zoning strategies to actually build the ADUs on site.
Why the Starr Hill Small Area Plan?

Starr Hill includes the Vinegar Hill Shopping Center and it is under intense redevelopment pressure on all sides.

**Resident Driven Vision**

- A More Equitable Community;
- Promote Black Prosperity;
- Continuous Learning;
- Belonging and Inclusion;
- Strong Connectivity; and
- Respect Existing Residential Fabric.

The Small Area Planning effort is being led by the New Hill Community Development Corporation (NHCDC.)

“**NHCDC is an African American led social enterprise established to build a community that is prosperous, inclusive, diverse, and equitable. We will expand and strengthen Charlottesville’s African American middle class by honoring our legacy and the heritage of the once vibrant Vinegar Hill community.”** (website)
Vinegar Hill’s “urban renewal” made room for corporate fast food with drive-throughs and low wage jobs in super-blocks, surrounded by parking lots and wide streets. That made cars faster and car storage easier, but walking more treacherous. The high sodium, sugar, fat content of fast food also made obesity and diabetes more likely, and low paying jobs in the fast food industry do not build wealth.

According to the City’s “Streets that Work” (STW) Plan, some of the highest priorities (where infrastructure improvements would have a significant positive impact on all users) are around Vinegar Hill, namely along Ridge McIntire and the West Main intersection.
A Vision for Starr Hill

A redeveloped 10 acre City Yard in accordance with the Starr Hill SAP guidelines could include:

- 300 additional units of majority affordable housing
- 274,000 GSF of new commercial & office space
- 137,000 GSF of new retail storefront and restaurant
- 1400+ jobs created (from construction activity, new commercial and retail space, and programming to support workforce and/or entrepreneurs).
- $70M+ in labor income associated with jobs created and supported.
A Vision for Starr Hill

Walkability impacts
Data suggests that increased walkability makes it more likely that children born into the lowest income quintile will reach the highest income quintile by their 30s.

Tax base impacts
• Create a 15-20% Synthetic TIF tagged for Affordable Housing
• Support of the Equity Fund
• Support an Anti-Tax Displacement Fund

“There were historically a lot of small businesses with owners who lived nearby. Recreating that in Starr Hill would be particularly powerful.” – community focus group participant
Shaping the Just, Healthy, Beautiful City in 2020

**Can Anti-Displacement be Quantified and Impacts Measured?**

The biggest fear is that an FBC will accelerate gentrification *because* it promotes a walkable, healthy environment. An “FBC + height bonus + synthetic TIF + new and refurbished ADUs built by non-profit agencies (PHA & CRHA)” in the SIA however, maintains a minimum 25% ADUs relative to the total unit count in the SIA, over time. 25% is the current ratio of ADUs to the total SIA unit count. City-wide the current ratio is 10%. New research now also suggests that children living in walkable neighborhoods have a higher level of economic mobility.

https://psycnet.apa.org/record/2018-63708-001

Insular Superblocks to Connected Walkable Streets- Westlawn Gardens, Milwaukee, WI (100% one-for-one replacement)
Photos courtesy Torti Gallas & Partners
Shaping the Just, Healthy, Beautiful City in 2020

*Should Affordability come at the expense of Human Health?*

Living in an “affordable” neighborhood can mean living in a neighborhood devoid of healthy amenities (like parks, walkable streets and grocery stores) and choice (in housing types and jobs accessible by foot, bike or bus). Planning, zoning, and financing strategies must therefore “level the playing field” so that everyone lives in a healthy, walkable neighborhood, regardless of their income. Recent studies show that a neighborhood’s design plays a critical role in the well-being and physical activity of its residents and could help reduce non-communicable diseases, such as obesity, diabetes and cardiovascular disease. [https://health.ucsd.edu/news/releases/Pages/2016-04-01-study-finds-neighborhood-design-helps-health.aspx](https://health.ucsd.edu/news/releases/Pages/2016-04-01-study-finds-neighborhood-design-helps-health.aspx)
“To be one community filled with opportunity.”

Are we one, progressive city that celebrates its diversity while growing opportunity for all and nurturing a communal sense and “pride of place?”

OR

Are we many socially, racially and economically segregated neighborhoods, unable to believe in the benefits of change or trust the intentions of “the other?”

Whatever we are,
Whatever we do, We teach it to our children.