





EASTSIDE THRIVE

Neighborhood Revitalization Plan

Wilmington, Delaware







Habitat for Humanity® of New Castle County

The Central Baptist Community Development Corporation

Healthy Communities Delaware
alignment. investment. impact.

mend collaborative

Executive Summary

Eastside Thrive is a plan to make Wilmington's Eastside better over the next 10 years. The Eastside neighborhood lays between the Christina River and the Brandywine Creek adjacent to Downtown Wilmington. The boundary on the west mostly follows Walnut Street but also includes a few blocks west of Walnut on the north side of the area.

Created with input from local residents and community supporters, this plan outlines the steps needed to bring the community's vision to life and achieve its goals, while building on the foundation laid by the 2008 Eastside Blueprint Community Strategic Plan.

The plan focuses on the **7 vital conditions for health and well-being**, important things that help everyone stay healthy and happy. These are things everyone needs in their community to live good, healthy, and safe lives. These include:

- **Belonging and Civic Muscle**
- **Basic Needs for Health and Safety**
- **Humane Housing**
- **Thriving Natural World**
- **Meaningful Work and Wealth**
- **Lifelong Learning**
- **Reliable Transportation**

The Plan

The Eastside Thrive plan is organized into recommendations for the 7 vital conditions, a total of **35 recommendations**. The Eastside Community Zones section highlight key areas with unique features and resources, based on community input and research, to create thriving neighborhoods with recommendations for improvement. Finally, the Implementation section includes details on what recommendations and initiatives to prioritize and potential funding sources to meet the community's goals.

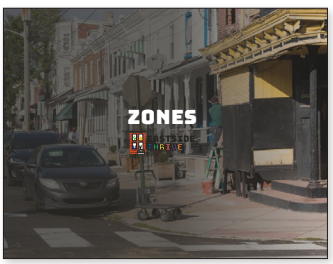
Project Introduction



Recommendations



Zones



Implementation



Project Schedule

The Eastside Thrive process took place over nine months in 2024, but was a product of much pre-planning work by local organizations and individuals starting in 2023.

The project phases included:



Public Engagement

Public engagement has been a big part of creating the Eastside Thrive plan. By listening to the ideas and concerns of the people who live in the Eastside, the plan better reflects what the community values, needs and wants. By sharing their thoughts, neighbors have helped shape solutions that will make the area stronger, safer, and more welcoming for everyone. The Eastside Thrive process was designed to ensure the community's voice was prioritized.

Outreach Results

1,816 people were engaged throughout the process.

More than 30% of the total population of the neighborhood participated.

The Vision

To create a vision statement, the steering committee looked at ideas and feedback from the community during the Understand phase. Together, they decided on a statement about the future that the community wants to see. This statement helps guide the plan. For each recommendation, we ask: If we do this, will it help us reach the future we all imagine?

Our Vision

My Eastside is a **vibrant neighborhood** where **everyone feels welcome** and our **needs are fulfilled** at every stage of our lives. Our neighborhood is **safe, with well-maintained homes, comfortable streets and green parks** that reflect the pride of its inhabitants. **Artists and musicians give life to our rich history** and there are places that support **continual learning**. **Different ways to get around** help us reach jobs, important services, and locally-owned small businesses. From community programs, block parties and local gatherings, **Eastside has many ways for residents to stay active and connected.**

Belonging and Civic Muscle

Vital Condition Details:
74 Community Votes (5th/7)
7 Recommendations Proposed

Belonging and Civic Muscle means having support from friends, family, and community to handle challenges and feel fulfilled. When people trust and help each other, they build stronger connections and work together to create a better future.

BC 1. Establish a "roundtable" for collaboration between community based organizations and clarify the role of a "backbone" organization to coordinate implementation of the plan

A roundtable of community organizations will be created to select a backbone group to lead Eastside Thrive, managing projects, funding, advocacy, and communication to achieve its goals.

BC 2. Develop a capital campaign to establish dedicated funding for the plan's goals

The Eastside community can launch a capital campaign to unite donors and secure funding to improve health, create jobs, and enhance quality of life.

BC 3. Enhance Communication and Information Sharing through "Eastside Thrive"

The Eastside can strengthen communication with an "Eastside Thrive" newsletter and tools to share local news, events, and resources through social media, mailings, and bulletin boards.

BC 4. Collaborate with partners to support existing and new community events

The Eastside should partner to revive community events like the August Quarterly festival and host year-round activities that celebrate local culture and history for all ages.

BC 5. Incorporate public art and historical interpretation throughout the neighborhood

The Eastside can celebrate its history and culture with public art, including an Underground Railroad memorial, murals, and sculptures honoring its people and heritage.

BC 6. Work with the National Park Service to expand the visibility of the "Brown vs. Board of Education National Historic Park" at Howard High School and to preserve and expand Howard's historic collection

The Eastside can partner with the National Park Service to showcase Howard High School's role in equal education through preservation, displays, and storytelling.

BC 7. Utilize historic organizations and designation to increase funding in the Eastside

The Eastside can grow by preserving its African American history through national partnerships, grants, and historic designations that attract funding and recognition.

Basic Needs for Health and Safety

Vital Condition Details:
167 Community Votes (11th/7)
6 Recommendations Proposed

Basic Needs for Health and Safety include clean air and water, healthy food, a safe home, and strong relationships. It also means living free from violence and stress, with access to regular doctor visits and care to stay healthy.

BN 1. Collaborate with partners to develop and offer more health programs

Partnering with others to expand local clinics, share care information, and explore mobile services like clinics or shuttles will help provide accessible wellness programs for all ages, promoting lifelong health in the Eastside community.

BN 2. Work with partners to create accessible rehabilitation facilities that allow individuals to seek support with minimal barriers

Partnering with others to bring rehabilitation services closer—through satellite centers, transportation, or mobile clinics—can help Eastside residents recover, improve health, and lead more stable lives.

BN 3. Develop comprehensive support facility for people experiencing homelessness in the neighborhood

A community support center offering shelter, food, medical care, and job training in one place can help people experiencing homelessness rebuild their lives, whether through temporary pop-ups or a permanent hub.

BN 4. Establish a dedicated street team to provide safety support in collaboration with local law enforcement

Form a street team to collaborate with local police, build community relationships, provide support, and work with partners to improve safety and reduce crime.

BN 5. Undergo a nighttime safety audit to find ways to improve conditions

Create community teams with police and specialists to identify unsafe areas, address issues like trash and drug activity, and work with partners to improve lighting, pathways, and cleanliness.

BN 6. Advocate for healthy food options in the neighborhood

Partner with local groups and city leaders to bring a grocery store with healthy food to the Eastside by gathering support through meetings and petitions.

Humane Housing

Vital Condition Details:
153 Community Votes (2nd/7)
5 Recommendations Proposed

Humane Housing means having stable, safe homes in welcoming communities where people feel secure. Good neighborhoods provide food, resources, and support to help everyone live healthy lives.

HH 1. Expand program to fund deferred maintenance from homeowners for rental properties

Establish a program to help small landlords in the Eastside make affordable repairs to rental properties while ensuring homes stay safe, high-quality, and reasonably priced.

HH 2. Redevelop waterfront properties in ways that meet community needs

Collaborate with local partners to develop the Eastside waterfront with affordable housing, spaces for Black-owned businesses, green parks, and cultural sites that honor its heritage and provide recreation for all.

HH 3. Reinvest in or redevelop Wilmington Housing Authority properties to improve housing conditions and expand housing opportunities

Reinvest in Wilmington Housing Authority properties to improve living conditions, increase energy efficiency, and create more affordable, high-quality housing for the Eastside community.

HH 4. Expand homeownership programs

Expand homeownership programs to help Eastside residents buy homes, access loans, and improve properties, while offering workshops, counseling, and a "Homecoming" initiative to strengthen neighborhood ties and stability.

HH 5. Create a program for reduced utilities for new homeowners

Help new homeowners save on utilities by promoting existing programs, creating discounts with local providers, and offering energy-efficient home upgrades.

Thriving Natural World

Vital Condition Details:
60 Community Votes (6th/7)
6 Recommendations Proposed

A Thriving Natural World means clean air, water, and land, and keeping nature healthy. It's about having an environment that can adapt to changes, stay safe from dangers, and allow us to enjoy and connect with nature.

TN 1. Complete the RiverWalk Greenway connecting the Christina and Brandywine River

Form a team of Eastside community members to collaborate with local groups on completing the RiverWalk Greenway, ensuring it reflects the community's character, includes art and history, supports local businesses, and is well-maintained.

TN 2. Collaborate with the Department of Parks and Recreation to update plans for city owned parks

Partner with the Department of Parks and Recreation to improve Eastside parks by forming community teams to inspect playgrounds, cleanliness, and safety, and working together on improvements while involving the community at every step.

TN 3. Advocate for improvements to Herman Holloway Park, Foster Brown Pool and Maurice Pritchett, Sr. Academy open spaces to create a central park zone (Maurice Pritchett Community Zone)

Create a central community zone by connecting Herman Holloway Park, Foster Brown Pool, and Maurice Pritchett, Sr. Academy, conducting a safety walk with the community to improve sidewalks, crossings, and signs, and working with the city to plan these changes, especially for kids' safety.

TN 4. Invest in expanding the urban tree canopy

Invest in expanding the urban tree canopy on the Eastside to improve the environment, reduce temperatures, support health, and create green spaces by organizing local planning events, forming a tree maintenance team, and working with city experts for long-term support.

TN 5. Develop a beautification project program with a care plan for stewardship/ maintenance/capacity building

Create a beautification program for the Eastside with a dedicated team to keep streets clean, maintain trees, and address bigger issues, starting with a pilot program that hires local residents and tracks its success for future expansion.

TN 6. Partner with and expand community garden programs in the neighborhood

Expand community garden programs in the Eastside to provide spaces for planting food, youth programs on healthy eating, and activities that build connections, while working with local groups to grow the gardens and offer more community events.

Meaningful Work and Wealth

Vital Condition Details:
108 Community Votes (3rd/7)
3 Recommendations Proposed

Meaningful Work and Wealth means having good jobs that pay well and feeling financially secure. Personal, family, and community wealth helps people live healthy, safe, and rewarding lives now and in the future.

MW 1. Reestablish the Eastside as a Black Business District

Support Black entrepreneurs by creating a business center with mentorship, affordable workspaces, funding, grants, loans, and partnerships with schools to teach skills, while promoting the district as a vibrant hub for Black-owned businesses through events and marketing.

MW 2. Expand career development opportunities for women

Create career opportunities for women by offering training, childcare, mentorship, career fairs, and skills workshops.

MW 3. Collaborate with partners to expand childcare, support and job training programs for single parents

Work with local childcare centers and businesses to make childcare affordable for single parents, offer support services, and create a group for parents to share resources and advice.



Lifelong Learning

Vital Condition Details:
82 Community Votes (4th/7)
4 Recommendations Proposed

Lifelong Learning means providing everyone with a strong education to help them succeed. Everyone should have opportunities to start great careers and continue learning and growing at any age.

LL 1. Collaborate with partners to expand youth after-school educational and job placement programs

Form a team with local groups to expand after-school programs for Eastside youth, offering education, job placement, mentorship, and career training opportunities.

LL 2. Develop internal summer internship for high school students and/or create a youth council as part of the organization

Form a team to create a summer internship program or youth council that provides high school students with career experience and a voice in the community.

LL 3. Strengthen partnerships among area schools to expand adult education and job placement programs

Partner with local schools and organizations to expand adult education and job programs, helping Eastside residents gain skills for better-paying jobs and strengthen the community.

LL 4. Collaborate with partners to provide free early morning and after-school programming for youth

Partner with local organizations to offer free early morning and after-school programs for Eastside youth, providing a safe space for learning and supporting working parents.

Reliable Transportation

Vital Condition Details:
48 Community Votes (7th/7)
4 Recommendations Proposed

Reliable Transportation means being able to easily get to work, school, stores, and other places. Good transportation options, like walking, biking, and public transit, help people stay active and improve their jobs, health, and opportunities.

RT 1. Ensure streets are designed with the neighborhood in mind

Redesign Eastside streets to improve safety for pedestrians, cyclists, and drivers by slowing traffic and adding features like one-way streets, starting with Spruce and Church Streets and expanding the 4th Street project.

RT 2. Make pedestrian improvements tied to Safe Routes to School Program

Apply for a Safe Routes to School grant to improve Eastside intersections with better crosswalks, lights, signs, trees, and streetlights, making walking and biking to school safer for kids.

RT 3. Connect the River Greenways with a Greenway through the Neighborhood

Create a greenway through the Eastside connecting the neighborhood to the Christina River and Brandywine Creek trails, improving access, supporting local shops and historic sites, and enhancing street redesigns along Church or Spruce Street.

RT 4. Ensure ADA accessibility throughout the Neighborhood and support transportation options for seniors

Make the Eastside more accessible for people with disabilities and seniors by improving sidewalks, adding ramps, creating safer crosswalks, conducting a "walk audit," and partnering with local services for better transportation options.



Implementation

The implementation of **Eastside Thrive** will rely on collaboration among community organizations, residents, and the City of Wilmington. Key steps include establishing a "roundtable" to coordinate efforts and launching a capital campaign to secure resources. The plan emphasizes leveraging the strengths of existing organizations while addressing resource gaps in funding and staffing to ensure they can meet the plan's goals.

Recommendations are organized into three types: **projects**, which involve physical improvements like housing and parks; **programs**, such as job training and health services; and **policies**, like preserving affordable housing and supporting local businesses. Implementation will require tailored approaches, with the City often leading infrastructure projects, community organizations managing programs, and collaborative efforts driving policy changes.

Funding will come from a mix of sources, including government grants, private foundations, tax incentives, and community-based methods like crowdfunding. Early steps include prioritizing recommendations, setting timelines, and aligning efforts with organizational missions. Monitoring and reporting will ensure transparency, track progress, and maintain accountability to funders and the community. By fostering cooperation and building capacity, the plan aims to achieve meaningful and sustainable change.

EASTSIDE THRIVE

Neighborhood Revitalization Plan

Wilmington, Delaware

Habitat for Humanity® of New Castle County

The Central Baptist Community Development Corporation

Healthy Communities Delaware
alignment. investment. impact.

mend collaborative