



# **Assets-Based Community Map Crownbrook and South End**

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**Prepared for NEST by The Dawn Chorus Group**

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# **Executive Summary**



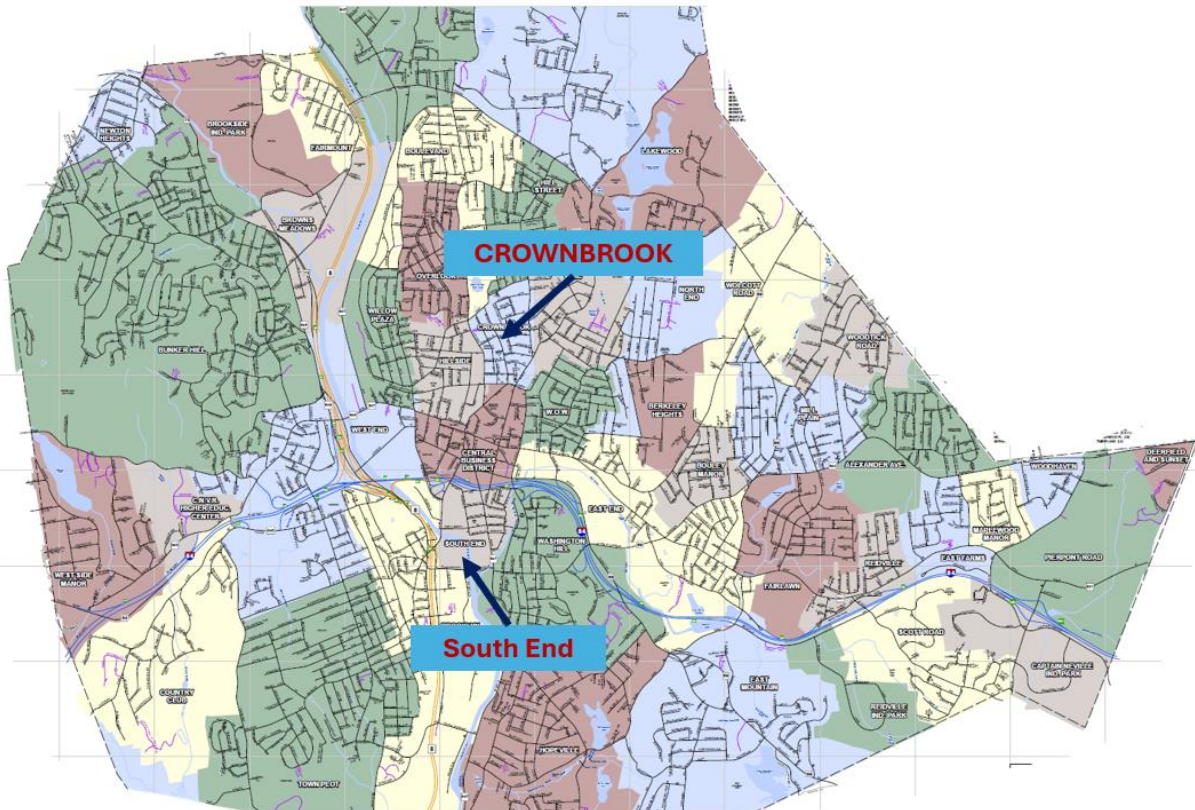


This report provides a comprehensive asset-based analysis of the Crownbrook and South End neighborhoods in Waterbury, Connecticut, emphasizing community strengths and opportunities for development. Conducted in collaboration with NEST and The Dawn Chorus Group, this Asset Mapping project aligns with the principles of Asset-Based Community Development (ABCD), focusing on identifying and celebrating local skills, institutions, and spaces that contribute to each neighborhood's vitality.

The findings highlight a strong sense of community cohesion in both Crownbrook and South End, with residents valuing neighborhood connections, local events, and familiarity among neighbors. Key assets in Crownbrook include accessible corner stores, recreational spaces like Fulton Park, and a network of supportive institutions such as Zion Baptist Church and NEST. South End's notable assets include Memorial Park, cultural hubs like St. Anne's Church, and local businesses like South Main Deli that foster economic and social connections.

Despite these strengths, both neighborhoods face challenges, including concerns about safety, crime, and limited access to essential services such as grocery stores and healthcare. High poverty rates and economic instability remain prevalent, underscoring the importance of economic support and employment opportunities. The HUBZone designation presents an opportunity to attract businesses and support local job growth, fostering long-term resilience in the area.

This report concludes with actionable recommendations to enhance these assets, including community-driven initiatives to improve safety, increase access to resources, and support youth programs. Through leveraging these existing strengths, Crownbrook and South End can continue to build strong, vibrant communities that promote both individual and collective well-being.



Note: Neighborhoods are defined slightly differently by the city of Waterbury and the US Census Bureau. While we made all effort to align the data, there is some overlap with adjacent neighborhoods.

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## Introduction

This report presents the final findings of the Asset Mapping project, a collaborative effort by NEST and The Dawn Chorus Group (DCG) to highlight and celebrate the strengths of the Crownbrook and South End neighborhoods in Waterbury, CT. As part of NEST's Asset-Based Community Development (ABCD) initiative, the project identifies, documents, and visualizes a broad spectrum of community assets—spanning local skills, institutions, recreational spaces, and economic contributions—that play a pivotal role in the neighborhoods' vitality.

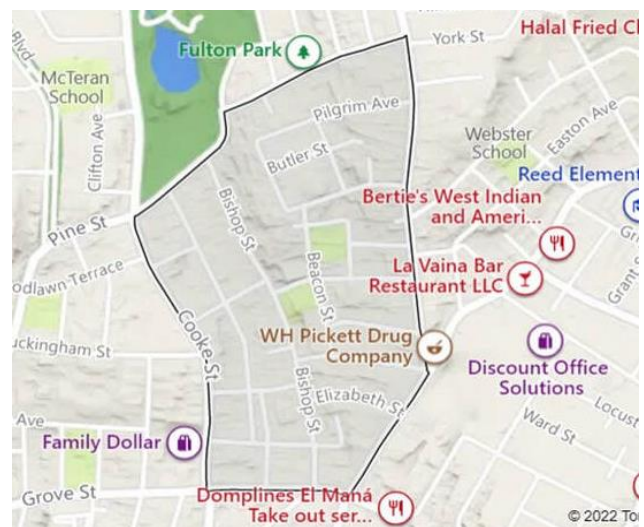
Through this project, DCG transformed raw data provided by NEST into accessible formats that emphasize the neighborhoods' assets. By pairing narrative insights from residents with data visualizations, the report captures the qualitative and quantitative value of these resources in residents' lives. The goal of this evaluation is to provide an asset-focused understanding of each community's unique strengths and to illuminate pathways for further development based on these existing resources.

This report details the data collection and analysis methods, presents findings through comprehensive maps, charts, and resident narratives, and highlights key trends that emerged during the asset mapping process. In addition, it includes outcome discussions and recommendations aimed at enhancing and expanding these assets, supporting long-term, community-driven growth in Crownbrook and South End.

## Setting

### Crownbrook

Crownbrook (seen at right) is a neighborhood with a rich history of diverse immigrant settlements. It blossomed in the early 20th century as the nearby North End commercial and manufacturing areas grew. Initially inhabited by Irish and German families, the area developed rapidly after the Waterbury Clock Company opened its factory in 1873. It attracted more settlers and led to the establishment of small wooden homes on streets like Bishop. Over time, Crownbrook saw an influx of immigrants from Italy, Poland, Russia, and later, Hispanic





communities, all of whom contributed to a vibrant cultural fabric. The neighborhood thrived with tight-knit community bonds, as residents supported each other through organizations like the Pearl Street Neighborhood House and local churches. Despite urban renewal efforts in the mid-20th century, which reshaped the area and displaced many families and businesses, Crownbrook has maintained its community spirit, with residents still gathering for events like the annual Harvest Festival. Today, Crownbrook remains a place where diverse backgrounds converge, reflecting both the challenges and resilience of a neighborhood shaped by waves of economic and social change.

## **South End**

The South End of Waterbury, situated south of downtown and bordered by I-84, is a historically rich neighborhood with a diverse immigrant heritage and a resilient community spirit. Known for its dense housing and variety of cultural traditions, the South End was initially home to French-Canadian immigrants who established landmarks like St. Anne's Church, a central cultural and spiritual institution for the area. The neighborhood later welcomed a large Latin American community, along with Irish, Italian, Portuguese, Lebanese, and Albanian families, each contributing to the South End's unique character. Economically, the South End thrived through factories and mills along the Naugatuck and Mad Rivers, which provided employment and anchored the community. However, industrial decline and urban renewal projects in the late 20th century, including the construction of I-84, led to significant economic downturns and dislocation for many residents. Despite these challenges, community pride remains strong, reinforced by neighborhood landmarks, local businesses, and vibrant social networks centered around schools, parks, and religious institutions. Today, initiatives focused on economic redevelopment and educational improvements aim to restore vitality and enhance the neighborhood's longstanding traditions of resilience and community.

The South End Neighborhood Association's Facebook page highlights community events, resources, and local initiatives, fostering a sense of community pride and engagement. Posts often promote events like the annual Gathering Festival, a vibrant multicultural celebration showcasing diverse music, performances, and cultural expressions. The page also shares updates on community resources, such as the grand opening of the CT Senior Health Benefits Learning Center, which aims to support seniors in accessing health benefits. Additionally, the Association engages in media promotion, collaborating with local news outlets to raise awareness of community events and initiatives. Overall, the page serves as a hub for celebrating local culture, promoting community services, and enhancing neighborhood connectivity.



## Methods

This asset mapping report for the Crownbrook and South End neighborhoods in Waterbury, CT, draws on both primary and secondary data sources to offer a comprehensive understanding of each community's unique assets and needs. The primary data was collected through a community survey administered by NEST in the summer of 2024. Designed to capture residents' perceptions and experiences, the survey covered topics such as neighborhood safety, community relationships, access to essential services, and perceived improvements over time. These insights provide a snapshot of residents' lived experiences and sentiments about their neighborhoods.

Additional information was sourced from the American Community Survey (ACS) and the US Department of Agriculture to complement this survey data. The ACS data focused on social determinants of health, providing a broader context for understanding the economic, educational, and health-related conditions in Crownbrook, South End, and the surrounding communities. Indicators such as income levels, employment rates, educational attainment, housing stability, and healthcare access were examined to shed light on the systemic factors affecting residents' well-being and the functionality of community assets. By integrating survey insights with ACS data, this report offers a multi-dimensional view of the strengths and challenges within these neighborhoods.

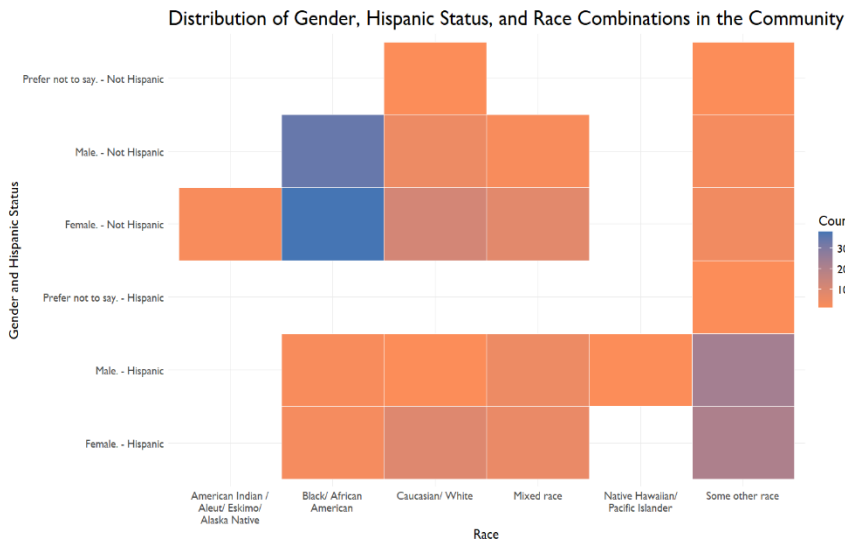
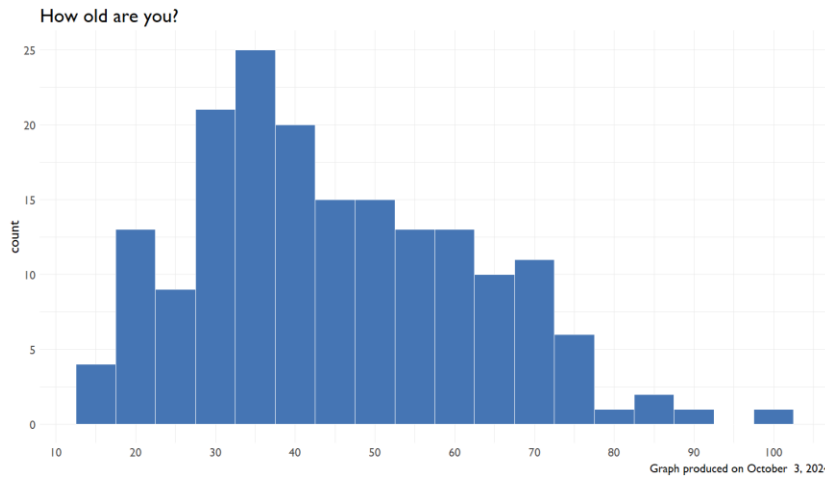
[A link to full results can be found here.](#) We only highlight specific findings in this report.



# Crownbrook

## Survey Results

The graphs below show the age, race, sex, and ethnicity distribution of those we responded to in the community survey. The majority of respondents were African American females or males.



### Community Voices

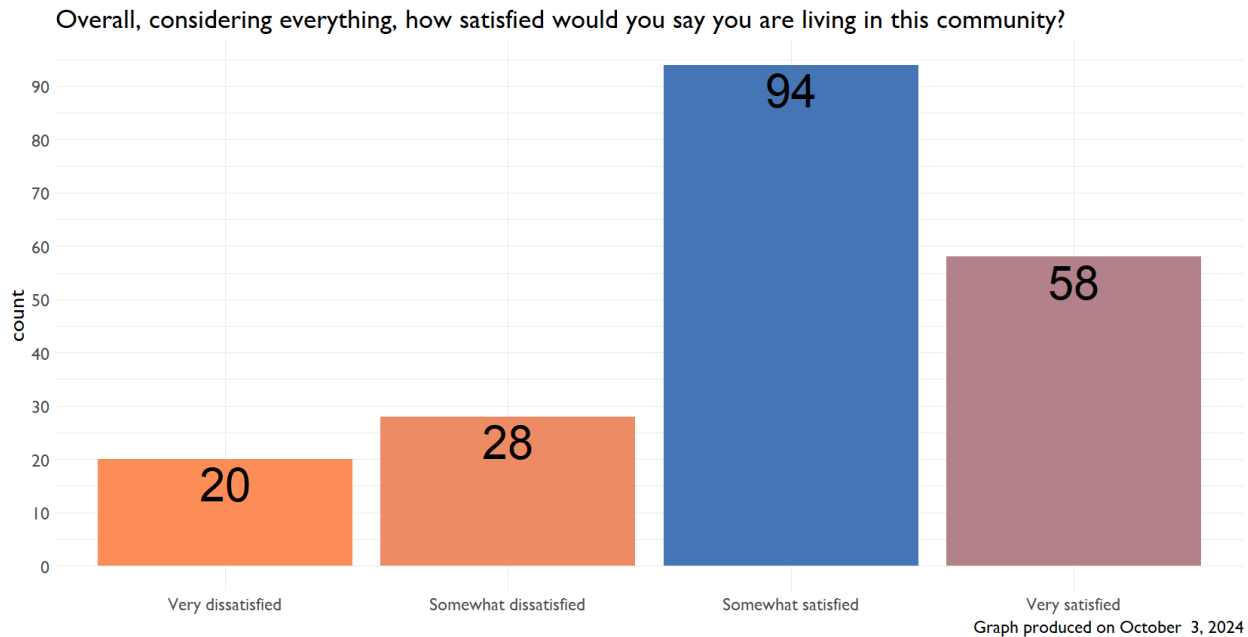
*Zion Baptist Church and Mt. Olive: "It is nice to have a place for the children to play in Fulton park, the Garden is nice for all ages. Having access to churches in walking distance is always good when their doors stand on the hinges of welcome."*

*Community Engagement and Youth Support: "PAL has been wonderful during the winter when my parents need help with snow. They are definitely a huge asset to the community. Their volunteer services help the elderly or disabled tremendously."*

*Corner Stores on Cook and Hill Streets: "Corner stores are open to get what they need when main stores are closed. They help when you don't have a car."*



In Crownbrook, 76% of residents reported feeling at least somewhat satisfied with their neighborhood, emphasizing the strong community bonds and familiarity among neighbors as central assets.

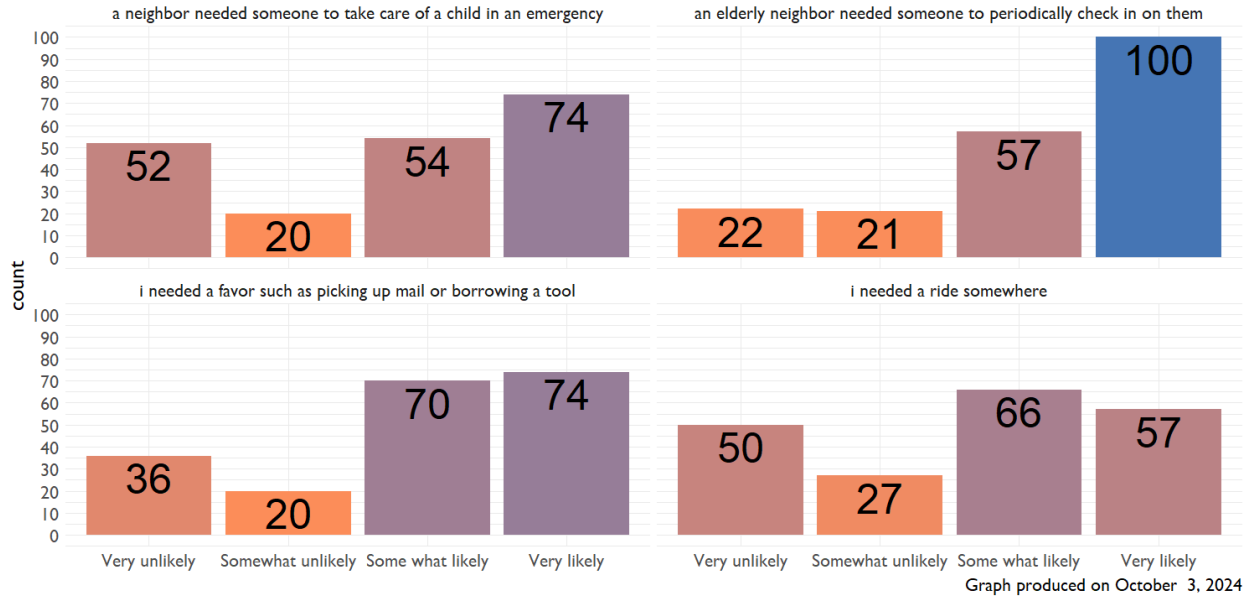


These connections create a supportive environment where regular events and close ties contribute to a cohesive neighborhood atmosphere. Many residents appreciate Crownbrook’s accessibility to corner stores and community spaces that provide everyday essentials and gathering spots, fostering a sense of convenience and connection. While there are areas for improvement, such as increased access to grocery stores and public transportation, the neighborhood’s existing assets—including its engaged community, strong neighborly ties, and sense of shared identity—form a resilient foundation that supports Crownbrook’s unique character and livability.

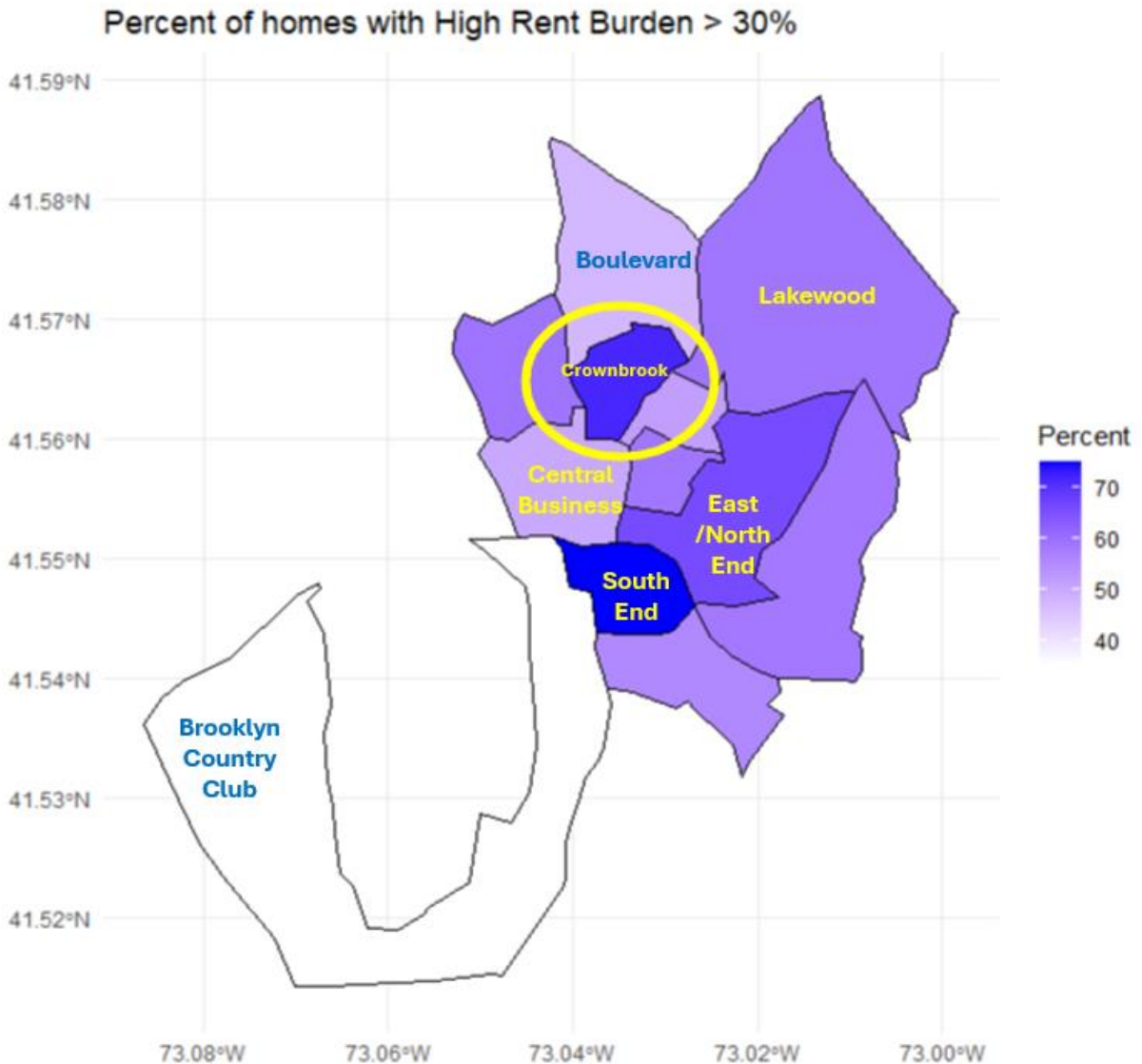
While some residents recognized recent improvements and community development efforts, others felt progress needed to be made, especially in addressing crime and poverty.

Residents express concerns about crime and safety, particularly regarding drug activity, shootings, and general violence, which makes some hesitant to recommend the neighborhood, especially for families. While some see the area as improving or "not bad," others feel that certain parts are less ideal due to noise, vandalism, and a lack of community activities for children (quality of life crimes)

Friendly neighbors provide a sense of community for some, though others feel that people overlook ongoing issues, weakening this sense of togetherness. We asked how likely people would be able to get assistance from neighbors from a variety of sources.

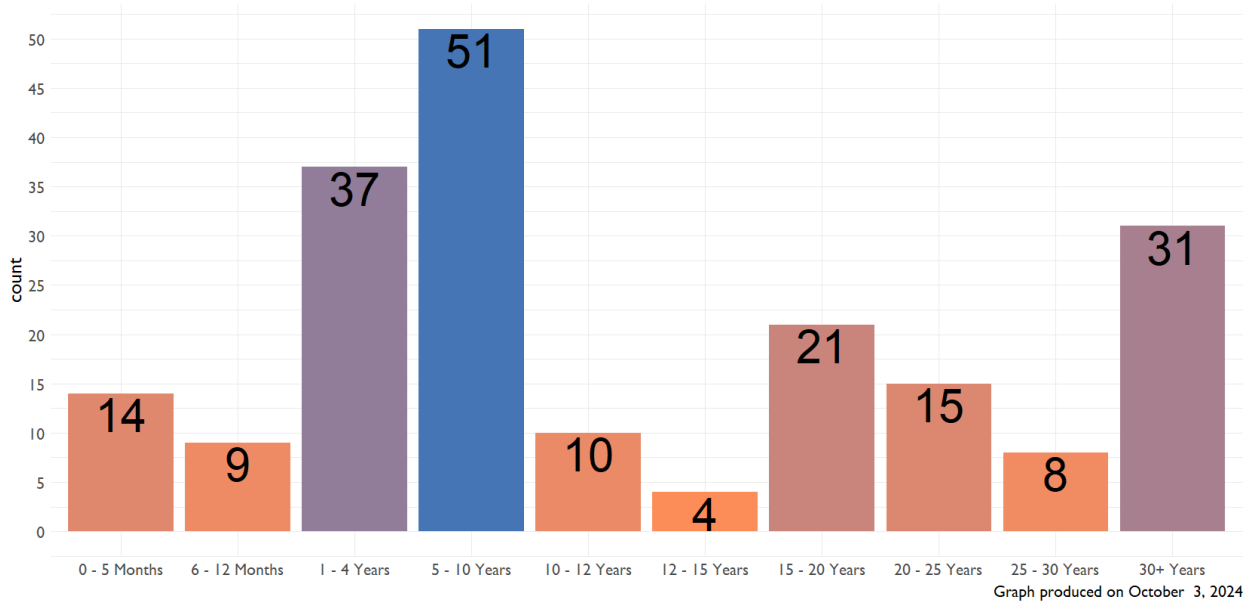


Affordability is noted as a practical benefit, offering necessities for those in need of an affordable place to live. Although residents talked about affordability, we found that the rent burden (computed by the percent of income devoted to rent) was one of the highest in the surrounding neighborhoods.



Housing is stable, with most people having lived in the community for more than one year. Housing stability is a valuable community asset that strengthens neighborhood cohesion and enhances the social fabric, particularly in areas with high long-term residency rates. Stable housing contributes to a sense of belonging and mutual responsibility among residents, fostering community pride and social networks that support individuals and families over time. Research highlights that frequent residential instability can lead to various challenges, especially for children and families, such as disruptions in education, mental health struggles, and weakened social ties, which ultimately affect overall neighborhood stability (Desmond & Perkins, 2015). Therefore, communities with high housing stability are less likely to experience these negative effects as residents develop sustained relationships and collective investment in their local environment.

### How long have you lived in this community?

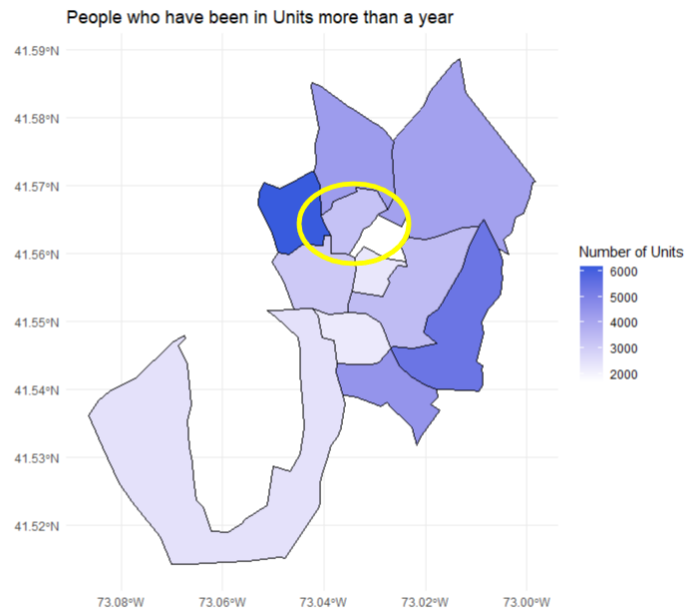


Opinions on the area vary widely, with some blocks being quiet and peaceful while others are seen as dangerous. Despite these challenges, many residents believe the neighborhood has potential and could improve with efforts to address crime, enhance infrastructure, and create more positive spaces for children.

### Periods of Changes

In recent years, many residents feel that the community has experienced minimal change or even decline, with some reporting that crime, drug activity, and overall neighborhood deterioration have worsened.

Concerns about safety are prevalent, as increases in shootings, drug activity, and criminal behavior have made residents feel less secure. Despite these issues, some positive changes have been noted, including improvements in infrastructure, such as better roads and sidewalks, as well as increased police presence and clean-up efforts in certain areas.

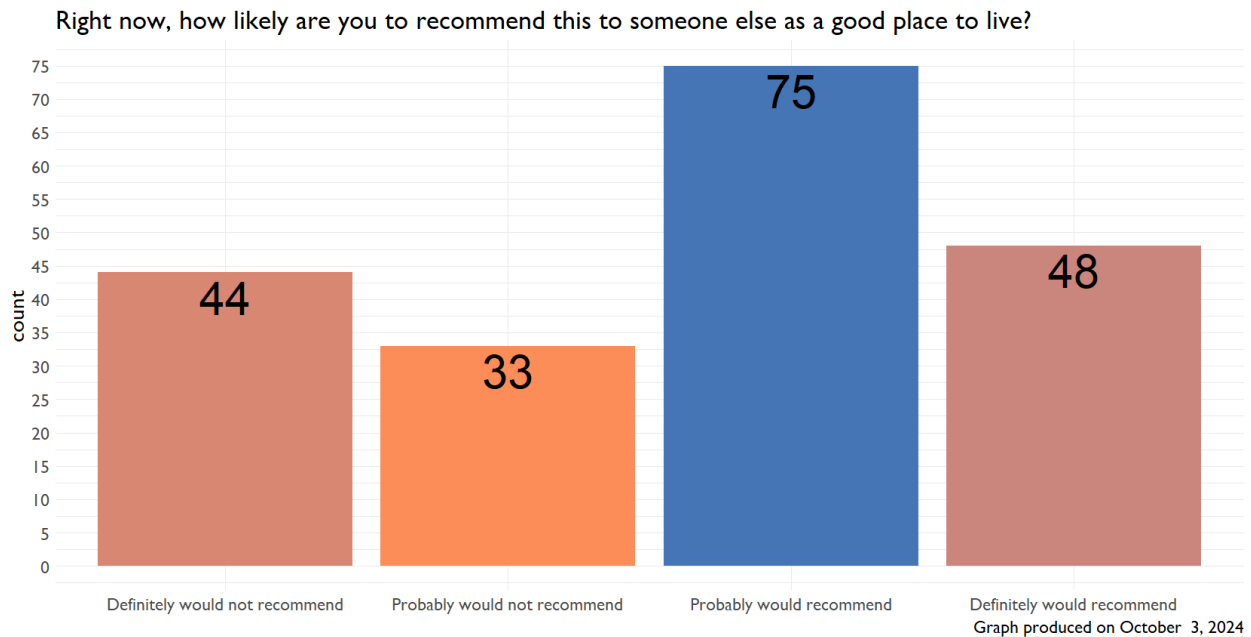




Community dynamics are also shifting, with long-time residents moving out and new, unfamiliar neighbors moving in, leading to a sense of instability and mixed feelings about the neighborhood's future.

Looking ahead, several factors suggest that the community is likely to continue evolving. Rising costs of living and stagnant wages have intensified economic struggles, potentially pushing out long-time residents and affecting affordability for new arrivals. While new housing developments are underway, residents worry that increased rent and traffic congestion may strain resources and disrupt the area's character. Additionally, ongoing safety concerns and mixed results from recent improvements may either encourage future community efforts or exacerbate existing issues. The changing population, combined with new economic pressures and infrastructure projects, indicates that the neighborhood is on the cusp of further transformation, for better or worse, in the coming years.

The likelihood of recommending the neighborhood is polarized, with concerns about crime and infrastructure being the primary deterrents. Positive community aspects were noted as reasons that might still attract recommendations.



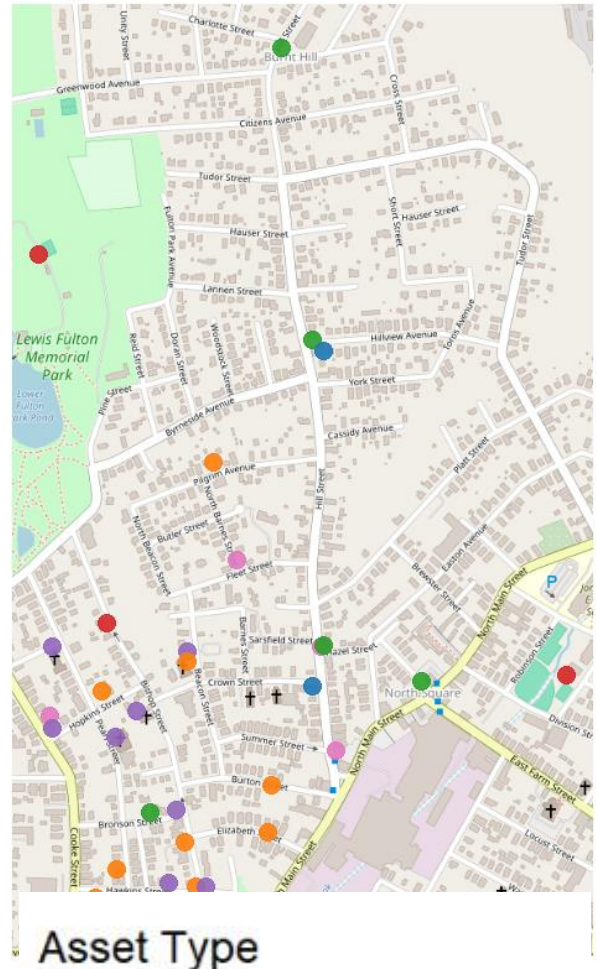
## Key Assets in the Crownbrook Community

The Crownbrook neighborhood benefits from a rich array of community assets that enhance quality of life, foster a strong sense of belonging, and promote overall well-being. Local corner stores on Hill Street and Cooke Street provide residents with easy access to daily essentials, which is especially valuable for those without reliable transportation. Nearby Fulton Park offers both recreational opportunities and space for community events, allowing residents to relax, exercise, and gather with neighbors.

Religious institutions, such as Zion Baptist Church and Mt. Olive, are central to Crownbrook’s community life, offering spiritual support and fostering a sense of unity. Complementing these, organizations like the YMCA, NEST (formerly known as Neighborhood Housing Services of Waterbury), and New Opportunities Inc. provide essential outreach programs, health education, and economic support for low-income families. Public facilities, including the local library, senior centers, and community

gardens, further contribute to educational and social engagement, enhancing the neighborhood's social and environmental well-being.

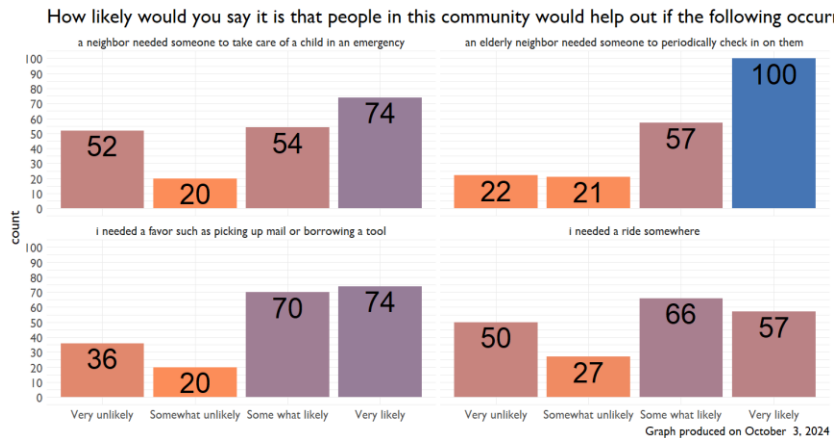
## Neighborhood Assets in Crownbrook



- Asset Type**
- Automotive and Industrial
  - Community Services
  - Food and Dining
  - Health and Wellness
  - Recreation and Entertainment
  - Religious and Educational

## Safety

In Crownbrook, safety and security are supported through a blend of formal and community-led initiatives that actively engage residents and youth in maintaining a secure neighborhood. Police support, video surveillance, and community watch programs play a key role in deterring crime and enhancing residents' sense of safety. These efforts are strengthened by the active involvement of residents in neighborhood watch initiatives and collaborations with local law enforcement, fostering a sense of shared responsibility for the community's well-being.



The Police Activity League (PAL) is a vital youth-focused asset, offering structured programs that not only keep young people engaged in positive activities but also build stronger connections between youth and law enforcement. Additionally, community centers, parks, and gardens provide spaces where residents can gather, exercise, and participate in recreational activities, contributing to mental and physical health while reinforcing social ties. Community gardens, in particular, enhance well-being by offering fresh produce and promoting physical activity, supporting Crownbrook's cohesive and resilient community environment.

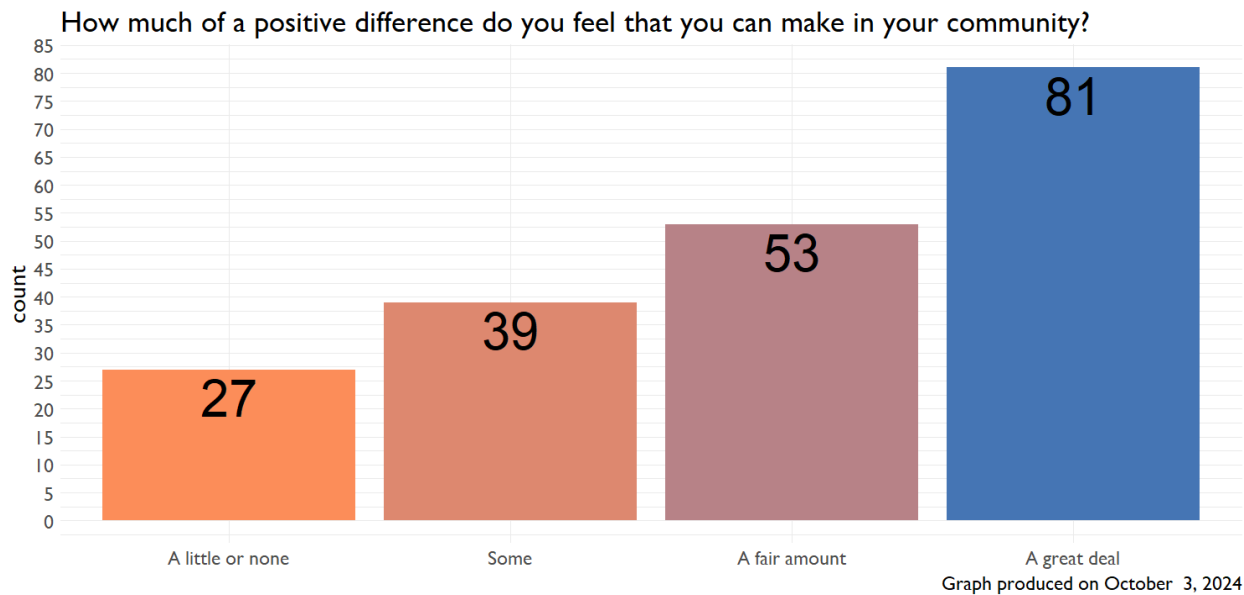
### Community Voices

*I feel comfortable during the day cuz this is my village. I feel somewhat comfortable during the night cuz outsiders come into the village."*

*"We keep it tight here, not gonna get robbed here."*

*"During the day there's more people around, kids being supervised. At night there's no supervision"*

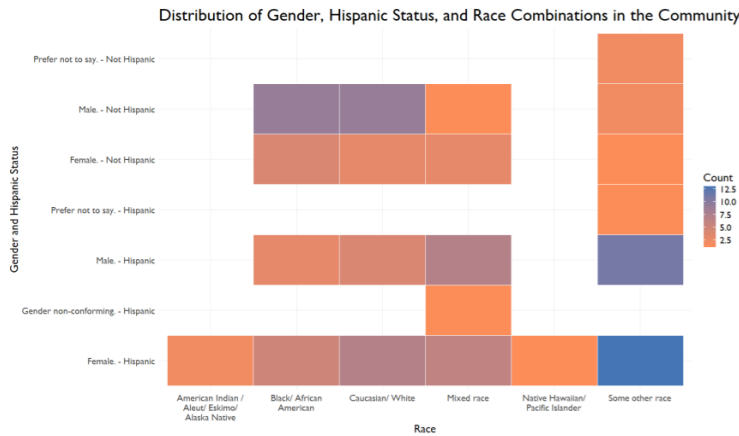
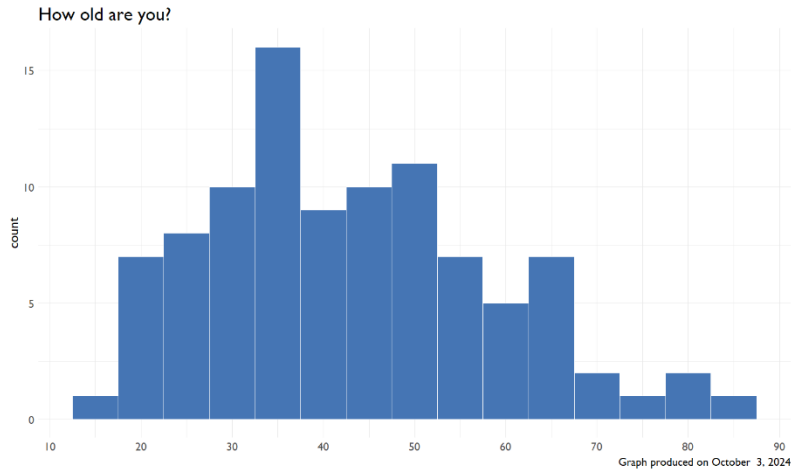




Crownbrook residents also lead a variety of initiatives that strengthen community cohesion and pride. The annual Harvest Festival, a highlight in the neighborhood, brings together families and local organizations to celebrate Crownbrook's diverse heritage, supporting local businesses and creating opportunities for connection. Additionally, neighborhood clean-up events, frequently organized by groups like the Pearl Street Neighborhood House, bring together volunteers of all ages to maintain and beautify public spaces. Informal gardening groups also tend to community gardens, enhancing the neighborhood's aesthetics and promoting environmental awareness. These efforts reinforce a collective investment in Crownbrook's appearance, health, and community bonds, creating a foundation for sustainable growth and resident pride.

# South End

South End appears to be primarily Hispanic, with a more normal age distribution than Crownbrook.

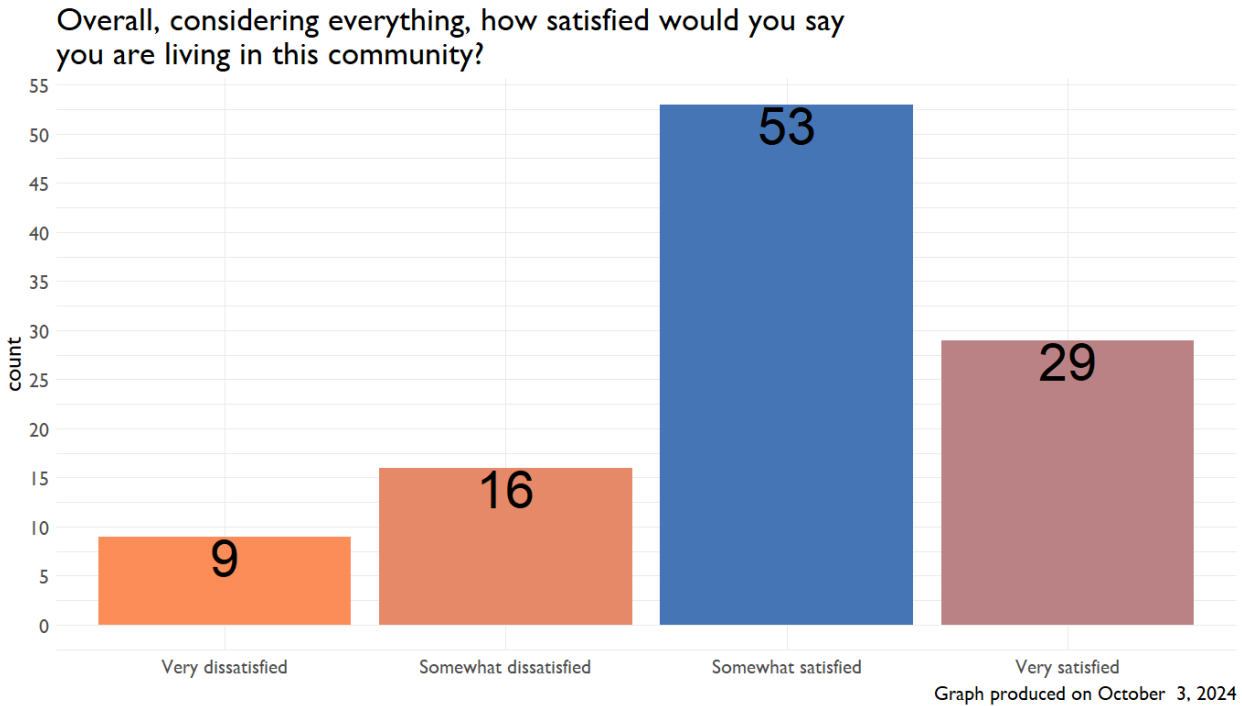


## Community Voices

*Memorial Park and Youth Engagement: "Memorial Park is a safe place to hang out and stay out of trouble."*

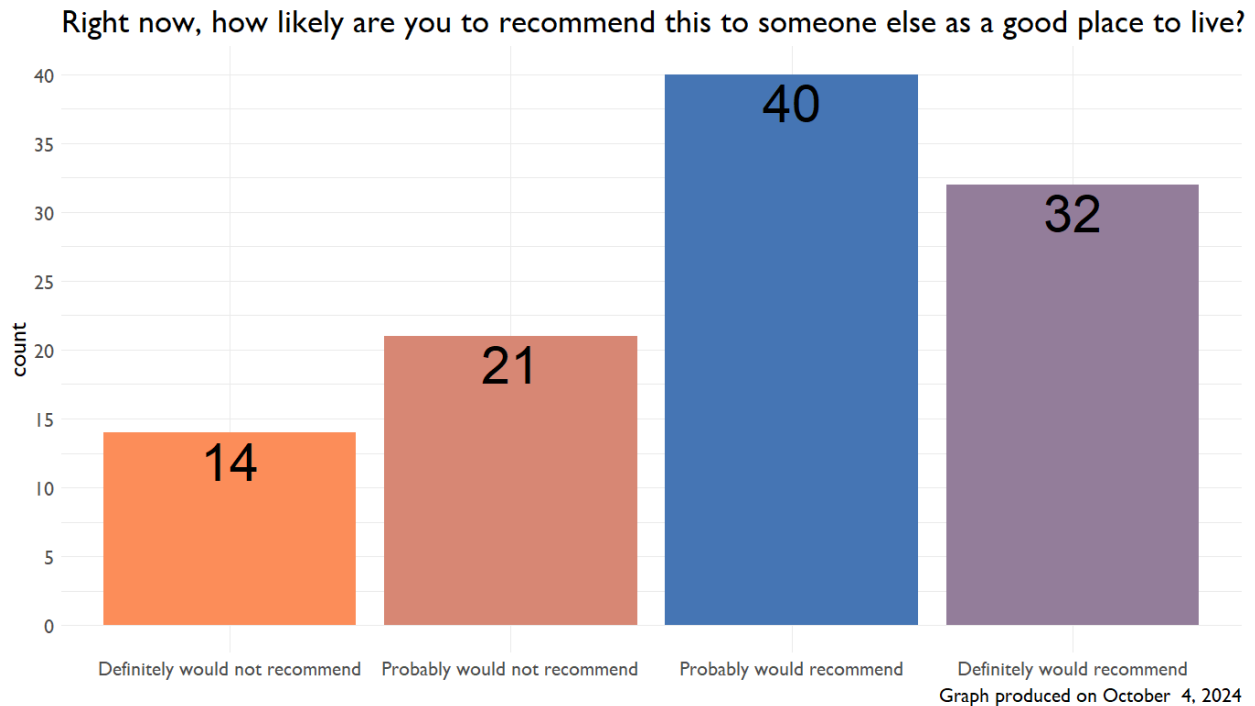
*La Casa Bienvenida: "La Casa Bienvenida helps a lot, especially for the elderly."*

*Community Support and Togetherness: "The people... they all chip in if a car dies and needs to be moved. They alert you if something funny is going on. They all help."*



In the South End neighborhood, while many residents expressed some satisfaction with their community, a significant portion voiced concerns about key issues. Perceptions of safety are mixed; some feel secure, while others are troubled by crime, violence, and inadequate police response. Many residents see a need for community improvements, calling for more activities, cleaner streets, and better support for enhancing community life.

Despite these concerns, a strong sense of community and neighborly support contributes positively to overall satisfaction. However, resource challenges such as limited government assistance, homelessness, and insufficient support services, including cash aid and help for domestic violence victims, remain prevalent. The neighborhood environment also received mixed reviews, with some appreciating the quiet while others were frustrated by litter, noise, and reckless driving. Residents generally acknowledge the area's progress, though they recognize the need for further development in safety and infrastructure to fully realize the neighborhood's potential.



Residents have mixed opinions on whether they would recommend the community, with safety concerns being a primary factor. Many point to issues with violence, drug activity, and limited police presence, which make some hesitant to endorse living in the area.

Experiences vary widely; while some residents enjoy the neighborhood's quiet and calm, others report frequent disturbances, unsanitary conditions, and a growing sense of danger. Many feel that the community needs improvements, such as addressing blight, enhancing security, and supporting positive development initiatives. Friendly neighbors and a sense of community are often highlighted as positives, though some believe the area lacks adequate support and resources. Affordability is seen as an advantage, but high taxes and insurance costs are noted as financial burdens. While some residents feel the neighborhood is on an upward trajectory, others believe there are better, safer places to live.

During the day, many residents feel safe in the community due to familiarity and trust among neighbors. Knowing the people in their area contributes to a sense of security, and some feel comfortable walking around as they haven't experienced any personal threats. The presence of people outside during daylight hours further reinforces this perception of safety. However, some respondents acknowledge certain areas with higher levels of violence or drug activity, noting that while some parts of the neighborhood feel safe, others remain concerning.



Views on police presence are mixed; some residents appreciate seeing law enforcement, while others feel police support is insufficient to address ongoing issues like shootings and drug activity.

At night, the sense of safety decreases significantly, with many residents describing increased danger due to drug activity, violence, and the presence of intoxicated or suspicious individuals. The unpredictability and reduced visibility at night make some residents feel vulnerable, especially with fewer people around. While some individuals feel safer by staying close to familiar areas or carrying self-protection, others worry more, particularly for the safety of children.

There is a strong call for more police presence at night to manage issues such as loitering, fast driving, and crime. Personal experiences vary, with some long-time residents feeling accustomed to the area and relatively safe, while others avoid going out at night due to the perceived higher risks.

### *Community Voices*

*"At night you're more susceptible to danger due to the drug problem in this area."*

*"People are kind and help each other."*

*"Would love to see more police (visual in community)."*



## **Periods of Change**

Many residents feel their community has either seen minimal improvement or has worsened over time, with issues like crime, drug activity, and violence becoming more prominent. Some attribute this decline to the COVID-19 pandemic, which they believe intensified existing problems in the neighborhood. Positive changes, such as new parks, walkways, community gardens, and reductions in drug-related crime in specific areas, are noted, though they remain limited.

A lack of consistent police involvement frustrates residents, as they feel that law enforcement only intervenes when major incidents occur. Additionally, many believe the community would benefit from more job opportunities, better public transportation, and structured activities for children to help keep them out of trouble.

Looking ahead, residents have mixed expectations for the future. Some feel that without active efforts, the community will remain stagnant, with no major improvements on the horizon. However, there is cautious optimism among others who see recent enhancements, like new parks, as a step toward a brighter future. Many believe that meaningful change hinges on community involvement, with a need for both resident engagement and effective leadership. Persistent concerns about crime and drug issues, along with the rising cost of living, create uncertainty about how these factors will shape the neighborhood. Ultimately, while some remain hopeful, others feel that real change is unpredictable and will largely depend on external factors like political pressure and local leadership initiatives.

## **Key Assets in the South End Community**

The South End neighborhood is supported by a range of community assets that enhance residents' quality of life, create a strong sense of unity, and foster active community engagement. Parks and recreational spaces, such as Memorial Park and local handball and basketball courts, offer essential leisure opportunities, providing safe areas where children and teens can engage in positive, active pursuits. Nearby corner stores and businesses, like South Main Deli and Banana Brazil, ensure residents have convenient access to everyday necessities, reducing reliance on transportation. Places of worship, including All Saints Church, along with supportive organizations like St. Vincent De Paul, play a crucial role in offering both spiritual guidance and resources, such as food and shelter, to vulnerable community members.

Community hubs like the South End Recreation Center, community gardens, and organizations like La Casa Bienvenida further support social and cultural engagement, providing essential spaces for gatherings, workshops, and recreational activities. These programs and spaces not only strengthen neighborhood bonds but also offer vital services, educational resources, and cultural

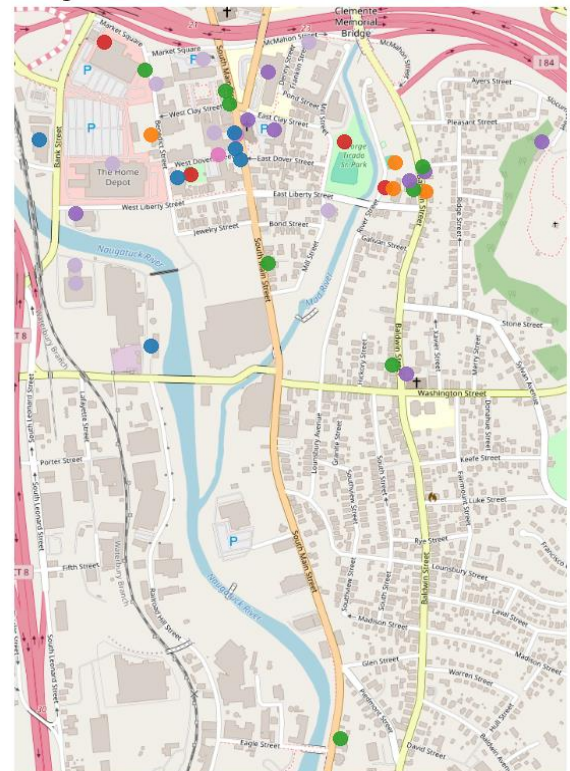
events that support community well-being. Public transportation accessibility and proximity to these essential stores and centers make daily tasks manageable, especially for those without personal transportation.

La Casa Bienvenida Senior Center provides Hispanic seniors in Waterbury and surrounding towns with access to essential services, including socialization, nutritional support, and assistance with medical and personal needs. The center offers daily activities like Zumba, arts and crafts, tech training, and case management services, fostering a vibrant community atmosphere that promotes seniors' well-being and quality of life.

The South End's assets collectively contribute to the neighborhood's economic, social, and cultural health. Local businesses generate job opportunities, while parks, recreation areas, and churches support social interaction, spiritual connections, and a shared community identity. The annual Gathering Festival, organized with support from the South End Neighborhood Association, further highlights South End's cultural vibrancy by celebrating the neighborhood's diversity with music, food, and art. The festival not only fosters social ties but also provides a platform for local artisans and vendors, supporting the local economy and preserving cultural heritage.

In addition, resident-driven neighborhood clean-up days, often organized with local business and church support, address issues like litter and neglected public spaces, encouraging residents to take pride in their community.

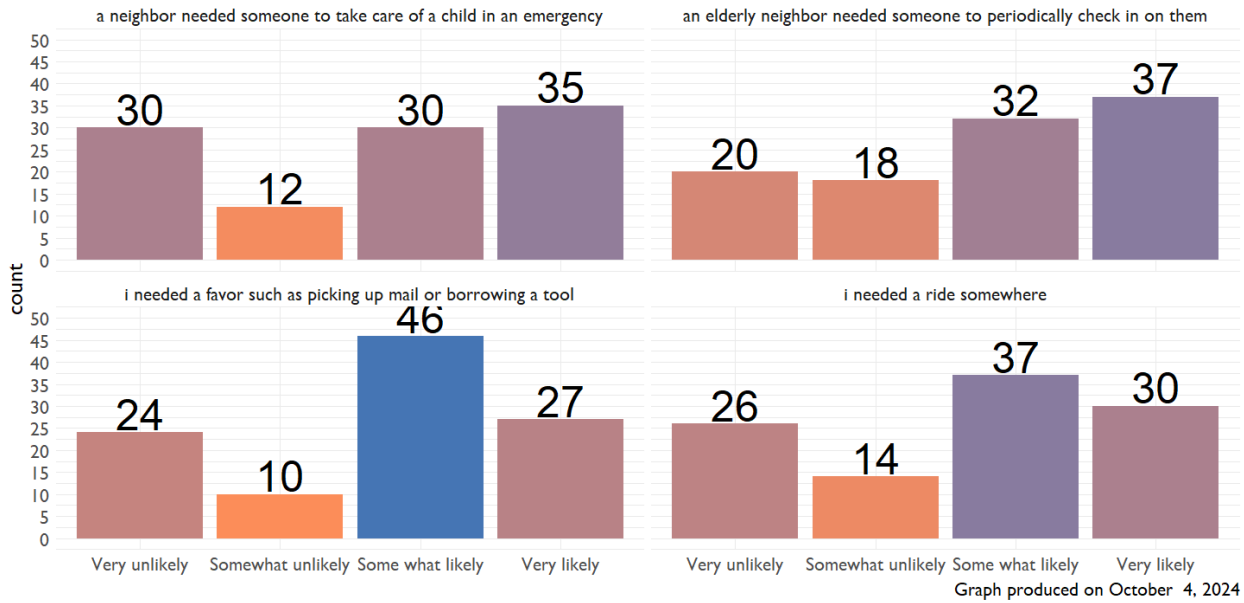
Neighborhood Assets in South End



### Asset Type

- Automotive and Industrial
- Community Services
- Food and Dining
- Health and Wellness
- Recreation and Entertainment
- Religious and Educational
- Retail and Commercial

How likely would you say it is that people in this community would help out if the following occurred?



With ongoing development and investment in these resources, the South End continues to cultivate a stable, connected, and culturally rich environment that supports long-term community growth and engagement.





## **Assets across communities**

In comparing Crownbrook and South End with surrounding neighborhoods and Waterbury as a whole, both areas reflect broader citywide trends, particularly in crime and economic challenges. While crime rates, particularly drug-related and violent incidents, are elevated, they align with trends seen across Waterbury, underscoring a citywide need for resources and safety measures. Economically, however, Crownbrook and South End stand out as some of the most impoverished areas within New Haven County, where residents face significant financial constraints, impacting their access to resources, housing stability, and overall well-being.

Despite these challenges, both neighborhoods maintain a strong sense of community and resilience, which serves as a vital asset. This context highlights that while Crownbrook and South End face similar struggles as neighboring areas, the level of poverty they experience places an added strain on community resources, making the support from local organizations and initiatives particularly critical for sustaining quality of life and fostering future growth.

### **Community Health Needs Assessment**

The 2022 St. Mary's Community Health Needs Assessment, conducted as part of the Affordable Care Act's requirement for non-profit hospitals to assess community health needs every three years, highlights key community assets and challenges in Waterbury's Crownbrook and South End neighborhoods. These assessments are essential for identifying health disparities and aligning local health services with community needs. In both neighborhoods, organizations like Waterbury Bridge to Success and the Hispanic Coalition play a central role in community health engagement, facilitating focus groups and educational programs that foster resident involvement. Despite their engagement, residents report a lack of safe recreational spaces and affordable, culturally respectful healthcare, indicating a need for more inclusive, accessible services. Food security remains a concern, with both areas experiencing limited access to fresh produce, affecting low-income and minority residents and contributing to chronic health issues. However, initiatives like Brass City Harvest in the South End offer positive developments, transforming brownfields into urban agriculture hubs to improve food access and self-sufficiency. These findings underscore the importance of ongoing, community-driven efforts to address health disparities, promote well-being, and enhance economic development in these neighborhoods.

### **Housing Stability**

Housing stability is a foundational asset in both Crownbrook and South End, supporting community cohesion and strengthening residents' ties to their neighborhoods. High long-term



residency rates foster a deep sense of pride as residents become more invested in the well-being and success of their community over time. Stable housing enables individuals and families to build lasting relationships with neighbors, forming a support network that contributes to safety, resilience, and a shared sense of identity. This stability also allows residents to participate more actively in community life, from involvement in local events to engagement with neighborhood organizations and initiatives that benefit the collective.

The research underscores the importance of housing stability for community cohesion. For instance, communities with high rates of long-term residency experience increased social trust and engagement, which in turn reduces crime and enhances collective efficacy (Desmond & Perkins, 2015). In both Crownbrook and South End, long-term residents serve as “anchors” within their communities, providing continuity and helping newer residents adapt to the neighborhood’s culture and norms. These stable living environments also promote economic resilience, as residents with strong neighborhood ties are more likely to support local businesses, invest in property maintenance, and contribute to community upkeep.

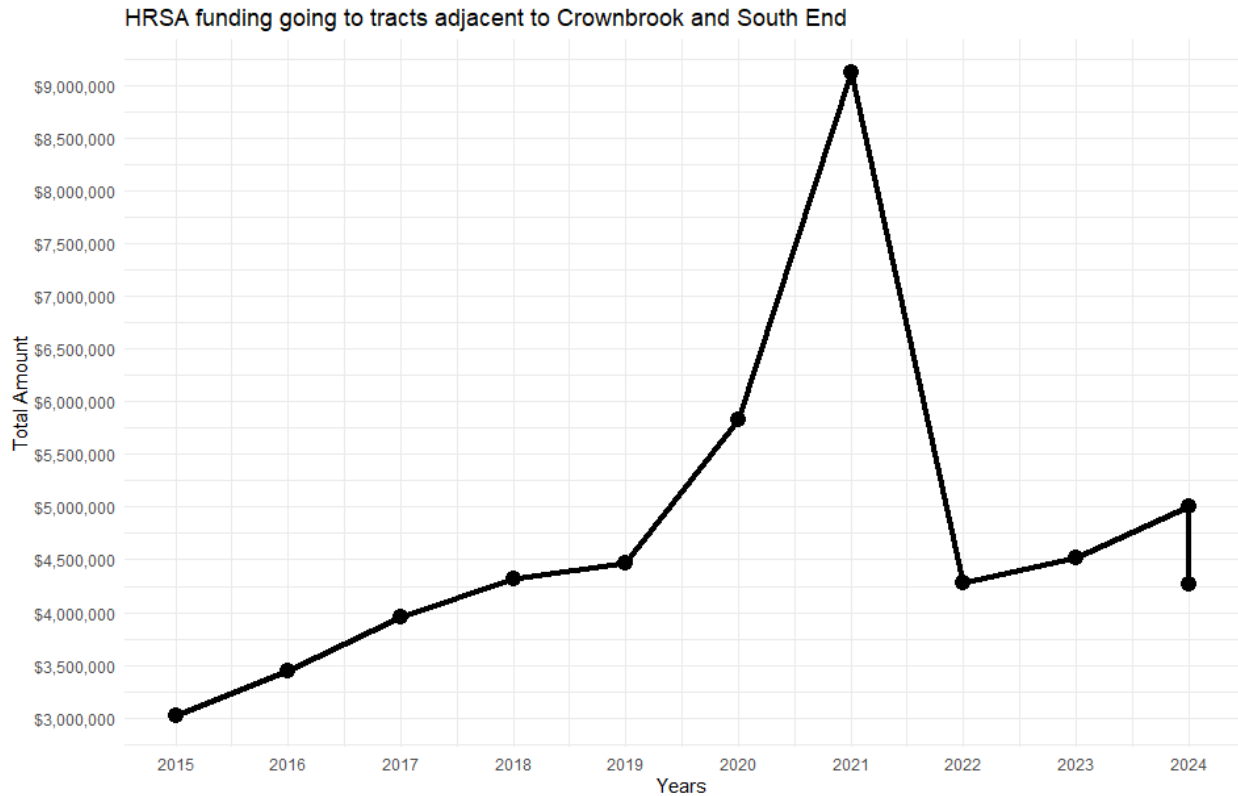
The report highlights the role of housing stability (as indicated by a willingness to recommend and general satisfaction with the neighborhoods), which not only demonstrates the inherent strengths of these neighborhoods but also aligns with the broader goals of sustainable community development. Stable housing is essential for fostering positive, long-term change, and recognizing it as an asset underscores its critical role in achieving neighborhood resilience and cohesion.

## **Business Development**

Both Crownbrook and South End are designated HUBZones (Historically Underutilized Business Zones), a classification that brings various economic benefits and opportunities to the neighborhoods. As HUBZones, businesses operating in these areas are eligible for certain advantages when contracting with the federal government, including preferential access to federal procurement opportunities and competitive pricing on government contracts. This designation is intended to encourage economic development and employment growth by incentivizing businesses to locate and hire within these zones. For Crownbrook and South End, the HUBZone status can attract new businesses, support the expansion of local enterprises, and create job opportunities for residents, ultimately fostering greater economic stability and community investment. Additionally, HUBZone programs help stimulate local economies, increase local tax revenues, and offer residents accessible employment options, contributing to both neighborhoods' long-term resilience and growth.

## Health Development

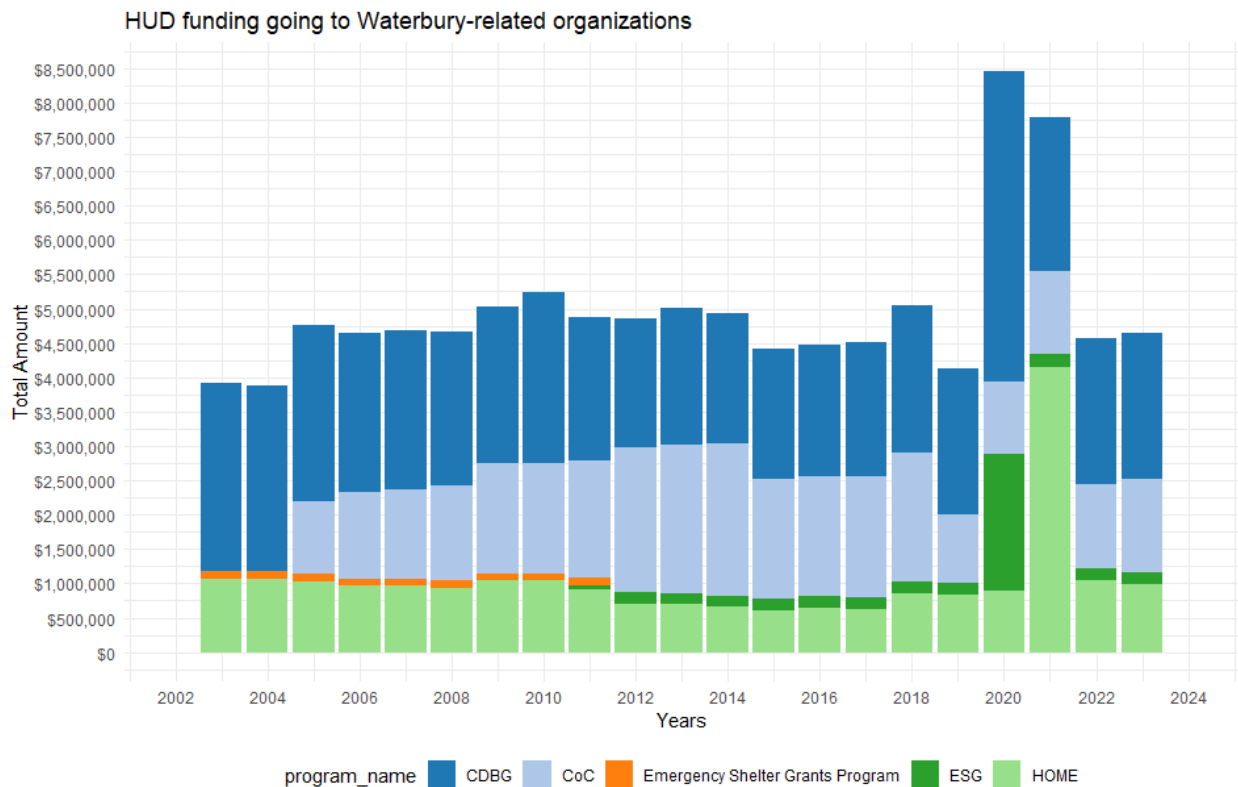
Health Resources and Services Administration (HRSA) has invested heavily in neighborhoods adjacent to Crownbrook and South End since 2015, at total amount of 52 million dollars.



## Housing Development

Through various mechanisms, HUD has made substantial investments in Waterbury to address housing needs, economic development, and homelessness. Since 2003, this amount total over 107 million dollars. Specifically, the Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) program provides flexible funding for housing, infrastructure, and economic initiatives that benefit low- and moderate-income residents. The Continuum of Care (CoC) program supports efforts to end homelessness by funding housing and support services, focusing on stable housing solutions for those without homes. Additionally, the Emergency Shelter Grants Program funds emergency shelters and services that help homeless individuals and families progress toward permanent housing and self-sufficiency. The Emergency Solutions Grants (ESG) program assists homeless individuals and those at risk of homelessness by supporting emergency shelters, street outreach, homelessness prevention, and rapid rehousing. Finally, the HOME Investment Partnerships Program allocates funds to create affordable housing for low-income households, often used for

housing construction, rehabilitation, or homebuyer assistance, thereby bolstering Waterbury's housing accessibility and stability.

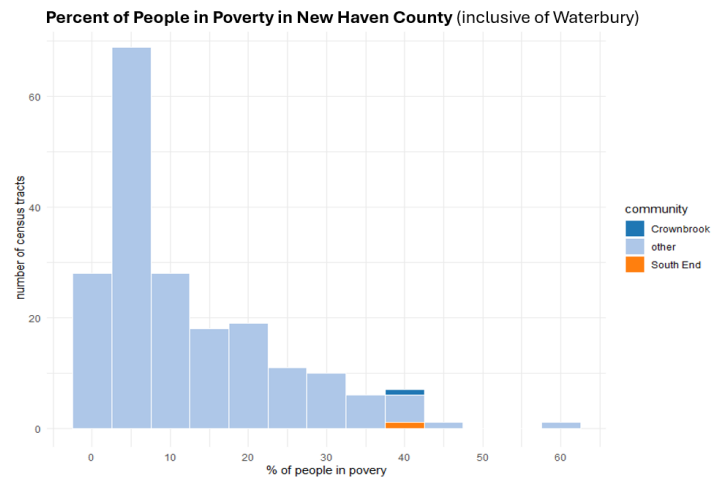
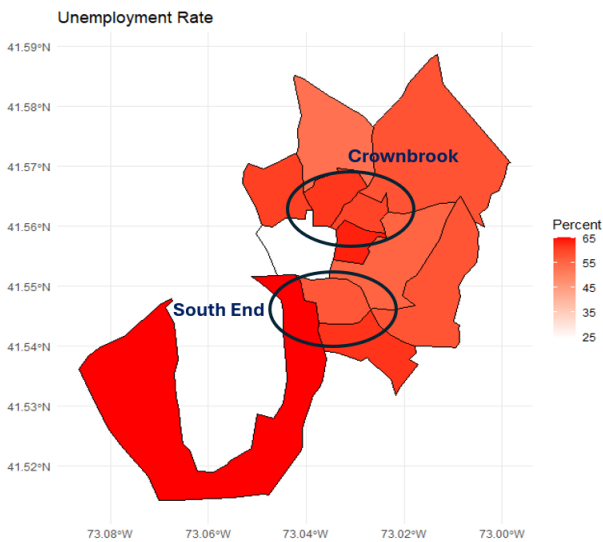


## The Role of Crime

While both Crownbrook and South End experience significant challenges with crime, Crownbrook reports a notably higher rate of violent crime, at 1,232.67 incidents per 100,000 people, compared to South End's rate of 512.63 per 100,000. Violent crimes in Crownbrook, which include offenses such as murder, aggravated assault, and non-consensual sex offenses, have been trending downward since 2022, suggesting some progress in reducing these incidents. In contrast, violent crime overall has been on the rise in Waterbury, indicating that both neighborhoods are affected by broader citywide trends. Drug crime rates are also high in both neighborhoods, with South End reporting 366.17 drug crimes per 100,000 people and Crownbrook at 423.73. The similarities in drug crime rates highlight shared challenges around substance-related issues across the community. These crime rates reinforce early resident concerns about safety, as crime remains a significant factor influencing neighborhood satisfaction and perceptions of security. Despite these issues, the consistency of rates with surrounding communities underscores that these challenges are part of larger patterns within Waterbury rather than isolated neighborhood-specific problems.

## Financial Burdens

Both Crownbrook and South End face substantial economic challenges, with some of the highest poverty rates in New Haven County. This economic strain heightens the need for financial support and accessible resources within these neighborhoods, as residents often experience limited access to essential services and opportunities. The high poverty levels also intersect with the safety concerns expressed by residents, as economic hardship can exacerbate issues related to crime and neighborhood stability. This context underscores the importance of initiatives focused on economic development, job opportunities, and social support, which are essential for fostering greater security and well-being in both Crownbrook and South End. Addressing these financial needs would not only improve living conditions but also enhance community resilience and long-term growth.





## Future Directions

To support sustainable growth and strengthen community bonds in Crownbrook and South End, future efforts should focus on enhancing existing assets, creating new opportunities for engagement, and gathering more targeted data. Capitalizing on both neighborhoods' unique strengths will be key to fostering long-term resilience and a sense of pride among residents.

### Crownbrook

In Crownbrook, current assets like local parks, religious institutions, and community programs offer valuable foundations for community growth. Building on these strengths, future initiatives could expand recreational programming at places like Fulton Park and promote community-driven events like the Harvest Festival, which have proven effective at bringing residents together. Engaging local organizations, including the YMCA and neighborhood churches, in collaborative projects could deepen community cohesion and increase participation in safety initiatives like neighborhood watch programs.

Further data collection could focus on understanding residents' specific needs related to crime prevention, access to essential services, and infrastructure improvements. Gathering data on transportation barriers and exploring how local businesses could better serve residents would provide insights into economic stability and accessibility issues. Additionally, tracking participation rates and feedback from youth-focused programs could highlight opportunities for engaging young people in community improvement.

### South End

In the South End, valuable community assets like Memorial Park, La Casa Bienvenida, and local businesses contribute significantly to quality of life and social unity. Building on these resources, efforts should encourage resident-driven programs that enhance cultural vibrancy, such as expanding the annual Gathering Festival to attract more local vendors and cultural groups. Developing partnerships with organizations like St. Vincent De Paul and the South End Recreation Center can further support efforts to create safe, inclusive spaces for residents of all ages, particularly those needing additional resources.

Future data collection in South End should focus on understanding residents' perceptions of safety, the effectiveness of existing public services, and areas for improvement in transportation and local commerce. Collecting more specific information on housing stability, youth needs, and healthcare access will support tailored interventions to address identified gaps.



## **Additional Data Collection Across Both Neighborhoods**

For both Crownbrook and South End, more in-depth data on economic stability, housing affordability, and resident engagement with community services will provide a clearer picture of each neighborhood's challenges and strengths. Regular surveys could help track changes in residents' perceptions of safety and satisfaction over time, offering valuable insights into the effectiveness of ongoing initiatives. Conducting interviews with long-term residents can also shed light on historical changes in community dynamics, informing approaches that honor neighborhood heritage while addressing contemporary needs.

Specific sensemaking questions can be found below,

### Community Assets and Resources

1. What are the most valuable resources or places in your neighborhood that you and your family rely on regularly?
2. Are there specific community programs, organizations, or services that stand out as especially important? Why are they significant?
3. How do local churches or places of worship contribute to the community beyond spiritual guidance?

### Neighborhood Connections and Engagement

4. How do you feel about the sense of support and connection you have with your neighbors? What activities or events help strengthen these relationships?
5. How do you see local businesses and stores contributing to the sense of community? Can you share specific examples?
6. Can you describe a time when neighbors came together to solve a problem or celebrate something in the neighborhood?

### Youth and Family Impact

7. How would you describe the neighborhood's impact on youth and families? What assets here help support children and young adults?
8. What additional activities or programs for youth and families would you like to see in your neighborhood?

### Parks and Community Spaces



9. In what ways do parks or recreational spaces impact your daily life or the lives of others in your neighborhood?
10. What improvements or changes would make these spaces more accessible and beneficial to residents?

#### Opportunities for Growth

11. What improvements or new resources would you like to see to enhance the community's strengths?
12. How do you feel about the accessibility of health, wellness, and recreational resources within your neighborhood? Are there any specific gaps or places you find particularly helpful?

#### Personal Stories

13. Can you share a personal story or experience that illustrates the character, strengths, or sense of togetherness in your neighborhood?

Expanding asset mapping to identify underutilized spaces and potential locations for new community projects—such as parks, community gardens, and cultural centers—will help guide future development. Lastly, evaluating local transportation needs, access to healthcare services, and economic mobility will equip stakeholders with the data needed to drive comprehensive, asset-focused growth in both neighborhoods.



## Sharing Data Back With Communities

### Crownbrook

The findings for Crownbrook underscore its vibrant community spirit, bolstered by accessible local resources like corner stores, Fulton Park, and neighborhood churches. Residents value the strong social connections and mutual support that define their community, yet concerns about safety and economic instability remain. Notably, the high rent burden, despite stable housing, highlights financial strain among residents, emphasizing the need for affordable housing and economic opportunities.

To share these insights with the community, a public forum at a central location like Zion Baptist Church or the YMCA could be organized. This forum would present findings through visual data (maps and charts) alongside narratives reflecting residents' voices. Actionable recommendations—such as strengthening neighborhood watch programs, increasing access to grocery stores, and expanding youth engagement initiatives—should be discussed collaboratively. Crownbrook residents could also benefit from an ongoing feedback loop, where a digital platform or quarterly community meetings ensure continued input and updates on progress.

### Sensemaking Questions for Crownbrook:

1. How can we better support youth and families through recreational spaces like Fulton Park and programs like PAL?
2. What additional resources or changes would help improve feelings of safety, especially at night?
3. How can neighborhood businesses and organizations collaborate to provide greater economic opportunities for residents?
4. What community events or initiatives would strengthen relationships and enhance the sense of pride among neighbors?

### South End

For the South End, the analysis highlights the importance of its cultural and social hubs, such as Memorial Park, La Casa Bienvenida, and local businesses like South Main Deli. These assets foster community engagement and pride. However, safety concerns, resource limitations, and financial burdens persist as significant challenges. The mixed perceptions of safety, particularly at night, and calls for increased police presence indicate an urgent need for targeted interventions.



Engaging residents through a data-sharing event could provide a platform to discuss findings and co-create solutions. Recommendations like expanding the Gathering Festival, enhancing public safety measures, and increasing support for vulnerable populations (e.g., seniors and youth) can be presented with clear action steps. To ensure inclusivity, multilingual materials and community representatives could facilitate the sessions, promoting an open dialogue and fostering collaborative ownership of the neighborhood's future. Regular updates through community newsletters or the dedicated South End social media group help maintain transparency and engagement.

### **Sensemaking Questions for South End:**

1. How can we expand and enhance events like the Gathering Festival to better showcase the community's diversity and strengths?
2. What steps would make Memorial Park and other public spaces feel safer and more welcoming for all residents?
3. How can local businesses, like South Main Deli and other corner stores, play a bigger role in strengthening the neighborhood's economy and sense of community?
4. What additional programs or services would improve the quality of life for seniors and youth in the South End?

### **References**

Desmond, M., & Perkins, K. L. (2016). Housing and household instability. *Urban Affairs Review*, 52(3), 421-436.