No Easy Way Out
Neighborhood Revitalization and Child Poverty
- 22% of all children live below federal poverty level
- 45% of children live in low-income families
- Childhood poverty most prevalent among black (35%), Latino (28%) and American Indian (29%) children
- Increased from 16.2% in 2000
- 71% of poor families with children are unmarried

**a national issue**
• Reduced cognitive development
• Lower school achievement
• Behavioral and emotional problems
• Poor physical health
• Teenage pregnancy

primary effects on children
• Poor children 1.3 times more likely to have developmental delays or learning disabilities
• Significant gap noticeable by age 3
• Duration of poverty increases effects
• Developmental delay caused by poor nutrition
• Shorter attention span
• Lower motivation
• Illiteracy and low school achievement later on

Cognitive Development
• Poverty alone has small impact on years completed
• Schools and neighborhoods have impact
• 1/3 of children from low-income communities enter kindergarten behind peers
• More than 1/2 behind in reading by fourth grade
• Dropout rates 6 times higher than for students from higher income families
• School performance affected by nutrition level

school achievement
• Externalization and internalization
• Persistent poverty increases internal emotional problems (anxiety, depression, withdrawal)
• Current or short-term poverty may increase external emotional problems (aggression, fighting, acting out)
• Behavioral and emotional problems more likely to be untreated
• Exposure to parental depression, domestic violence and substance abuse

behavioral and emotional problems
• Low birth weight and infant mortality
• Growth stunting (2X that of nonpoor)
• Exposure to lead can cause irreversible cognitive problems
• 1/3 of poor children obese (1/5 of nonpoor)
• Increased rates of asthma and anemia
• Less health coverage or treatment
• 28% of Alabama children live in poverty
• 22% of children in urban areas are poor
• 30% of children in rural areas are poor
• 45th state in overall child well-being (best since 1990)
Kids Count Data Book – Alabama 2012

- Children in poverty – 307,000
- Children living in areas of concentrated poverty – 14%
- Children w/ no full-time employed parents – 399,000
- Children in households that spend more than 30% income on housing – 394,000
- 67% of children have parents with no college education

in alabama
Kids Count Data Book – Alabama 2012

- Teens (16-19) not in school or working – 28,000 (10%)
- Children (3-4) not in preschool – 72,000 (58%)
- 1/3 of 4th graders below basic reading level
- 40% of 8th graders below basic math level
- 28% of high school students do not graduate on time
Kids Count Data Book – Alabama 2012

- 10.3% of babies born with low birthweight
- Teen births – 7,343
- Teen births to women who were already mothers – 1,392
- Children in single-parent families – 417,000 (39%)
- Children in care of grandparents – 70,000 (6%)
- Female-headed families receiving child support – 28%
The Poverty Cycle

Family in poverty

Child grows up in poverty

Limited education and job skills

Fail to escape the cycle

Struggle to get stable work
• Reduce the education gap
• Secure and stabilize the neighborhood
• Provide affordable, decent housing choices
• Assure accessibility and mobility
• Remediate any environmental problems
• Enhance job access and readiness
• Improve access to health care
• Support food security and nutrition
• Provide social support services

breaking the cycle
Planners can help put the pieces together.

roles of the planner

• Mixed income housing
• Accessibility and mobility
• Infrastructure
• Economic development
• Food security and food deserts
• Environmental justice
• Education and services
• Quality of life
the neighborhood
the neighborhood
• Woodlawn incorporates in 1891
• Grows to over 2500 by 1899
• Public library, fire department, City Hall, central business district, 3 elementary schools and 2 high schools
• Annexes into Birmingham in 1910
• Develops as a streetcar suburb
• Decline experienced in 1950s, intensifies during 1970s
• Unsustained revitalization efforts in 1980s and 1990s
• Woodlawn United partnership forms in 2009

background
• Woodlawn Foundation
• YWCA Central Alabama
• Church of the Highlands
• Cornerstone Schools
• Main Street Birmingham
• Merchants Association
• Neighborhood Associations
• Woodlawn High School
• Desert Island Supply Co.
• Purpose Built Communities

woodlawn united
• Historic business district
• Landmarks and institutions
• Accessibility (airport, interstate, US 11)
• Past streetscape improvements
• YWCA housing investments
• Well-defined edges
• Proximity to thriving neighborhood
• Traffic counts on 1st Avenue North
• Historic housing stock

assets
• Crime, perception of crime
• Inadequate code enforcement
• Scattered vacant properties
• Deteriorated, vacant housing
• Poor rental property management
• Low home ownership
• Limited early learning options
• Noise (airport, railroad, industry, interstate)
• Lack of retail and dining
• Spot zoning for multifamily

issues
30% of residential property vacant, neglected, overgrown

vacancy
294 delinquent properties (48.7 ac), mostly residential

tax delinquent property
opportunities

• Build on sense of place
• Land banking
• Early learning/workforce education
• Partnerships with churches and nonprofits
• Improve gateways
• New mixed density, mixed income housing
• Street and lighting improvements
• Police visibility, substation
• Grocer, other retail
• Neighborhood open space(s)
revitalization concept
• Improve public safety and access
• Improve perception/image
• Focus residential reinvestment
• Provide educational pipeline
• Expand economic opportunity
• Improve quality of life
- Citizens on Patrol program
- Increase police presence and visibility
- Code enforcement
- Improve streets, sidewalks, lighting

public safety and access
• Maintenance along gateways and corridors
• Beautification project on First Avenue North
• Code enforcement
• Streetscape improvements
• Railroad overpasses
• Public art

perception/image
residential reinvestment

- Initial focus: critical mass, quality and affordability
- Ultimate focus: stable housing market, increased home ownership
- Vacant sites for residential infill
- Avoid disruption to existing homes
- Expand housing choices
- Larger population to support business growth
- Density part of “transit readiness”
housing concept
Strategic rehab, infill and redevelopment

single-family housing
multi-family housing

YWCA Central Alabama won APA Davidoff Award for its Ywoodlawn Program
Infill, redevelopment for multi-family and attached housing

multi-family housing
• Quality, affordable early learning
• Woodlawn Innovation Zone (feeder school system)
• Enrichment programs
• After-school and tutoring programs
• Workforce training
• Adult education
• Quality, affordable early learning
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educational pipeline
• Initial focus: neighborhood-oriented
• Ultimate focus: Woodlawn as a destination
• Improve perceptions/image of business district
• Increase residential population
• Continue REV Birmingham/Merchant efforts
• Workforce training

economic opportunity
• Assure access to affordable health care
• Expand food choices, improve nutrition
• Improve economic opportunity
• Create educational pipeline
• Provide parks, open space and recreation
• Reduce crime
• Improve walkability
• Strengthen pride in the community

quality of life
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economic opportunity
• YWCA completed YWoodlawn program
• WU hosted community/stakeholder meetings
• WU continuing property acquisition
• City/WF received CMAQ grant
• Citizens on Patrol program created
• Redevelopment Plan prepared and adopted
• WF applied for LIH Tax Credits
• Feeder school program approved by BOE
• Social Venture project opened
• WF planning early learning center

progress
How is your community tackling neighborhood revitalization and child poverty?