UB Center for Urban Studies

BMHA Perry Choice Neighborhood Planning Initiative
Service Delivery Analysis Report for Perry Choice Neighborhood

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I. Executive Summary

In the past few decades, the paradigm shift in the social support system for low-income families has changed the dynamics under which families can receive assistance to help them better their lives and economic circumstances. Direct financial support has been replaced by a system of service provisions contracted by the federal government to nonprofit organizations and local service agencies. The goal of this system was to ensure that residents had needed services available to them. Understanding this network is essential to ensuring that residents of Commodore Perry Development and the greater Perry Choice Neighborhood are effectively receiving all of the services that they need in order to comprehensively improve the quality of their lives.

This report examines the spatial distribution of supportive services and institutions within the framework of the Perry Choice Neighborhood and Commodore Perry Development and examines the perspectives of both residents and service providers with regards to the current service delivery framework. A number of interviews were conducted with key service providers in the community and a series of focus groups were held with residents of both Perry Development and the surrounding communities to figure out what currently works, what doesn't, key issues, and new ideas for how to improve service delivery.

II. Introduction to Service Delivery

The role of the service delivery system in the lives of residents of the Commodore Perry Development may be the most important factor that impacts the community residents. The well-being of individuals and families is affected by things as simple as accessing fresh food, accessing health care needs, accessing training opportunities, and receiving services that are necessary to achieve economic independence and to lead a healthy and productive life. What

may be seen as a simple problem to solve by people who are better off is a far more complex issue for people who live on a limited income, who often lack vital information, and who have barriers to accessing services, such as the availability of transportation, placed on them. Overlaid onto this platform is the spatial dimension of the service delivery system – where people need to go to receive the services they need. The service delivery system – and being able to effectively connect people to the services they need then becomes one of the most important hurdles to creating a truly transformed society.

In his book entitled "Out of Reach", author Scott Allard provides an in-depth look into how the spatial dimension, or the geography of the "safety net" (the service delivery system), is directly related to the levels of service low-income individuals and families receive from public and private service organizations. For those unable to navigate the geography of the safety net, he argues, is the equivalent to the denial of service. In addition, Allard shows how the history and changing nature of service delivery in the United States, and the way assistance is provided to individuals and families who depend on it, has shaped and impacted how this system operates today.

In the period of the late 19th century and leading up to the Great Depression, Allard states that most of the assistance to the poor was "...often inadequate, served relatively few individuals, and left may needs unmet" (p.20). The level of assistance varied from community to community because governments didn't offer much help, so local organizations such as churches were left to provide support to the poor. This changed dramatically with the Great Depression, as rising need for assistance, coupled with governments inadequately prepared for the number of people needing assistance, forced the federal government to respond to rising needs.

The form this assistance took, and the manner in which was delivered, remained constant through World War II to the War on Poverty and into the mid-1990's. During this era, the nature of assistance was a cash assistance model, where help for individuals and families came in the form of direct cash assistance through things such as welfare checks and food stamps. The number of people served, and the amount of funding spent in this manner steadily increased throughout this period and offered individuals the flexibility of making their own decisions about how to utilize the resources they received to improve their lives. In 1996, with a shift in the public opinion and a change in the political landscape, the assistance model was transformed once again with the passing of the Personal Responsibility and Work Opportunity Reconciliation Act, otherwise known as Welfare Reform. Through this legislation, the assistance available to individuals and families changed dramatically to a system where cash assistance was tied to a work requirement, and where social services agencies now serve as the primary source of help for individuals and families. In this current model which relies on an individual's ability to identify and access the services they need, the location of these services within a neighborhood, city, or metropolitan region takes on heightened importance.

Today, Allard writes, the geography of the service delivery system – where services are located – is the single most important factor that influences the level of support people get. People who are located long distances and commute times from the services they need are less likely

to be able to access vital services they need. In addition, people who need to access multiple service agencies that are not located near each other are forced to make decisions on what services they can get to. Multiple trips often mean multiple stops in multiple areas of a city or region. The issues associated with transportation – access to it, availability, and affordability often is a barrier to service delivery for low-incomes persons.

So why then is service delivery important to the residents of the Commodore Perry District? Through the data gathering that was completed through the focus groups, community needs assessment, and project meetings held with residents in the fall of 2011, it is readily apparent that the spatial aspect of service delivery in the City of Buffalo and Erie County impacts Commodore Perry residents. Perry residents say there are no services for them in their immediate neighborhood and that they have to go outside of the neighborhood to access the services they need. In addition, issues surrounding transportation are of a huge concern to residents, whether it is not having personal transportation or not being able to afford transportation, getting to the services they need is difficult for people in the community. The geography of the service delivery system that Allard writes about exists in the Perry community. The challenge is to figure out a way to eliminate the spatial dimension of service delivery so that all of the residents of Perry are able to access the services they need in an equitable and efficient manner.

III. Demographic Profile of Perry Choice Neighborhood

Perry Choice Neighborhood Demographic Profile

The following section provides an overview of the demographic profile of the individuals and households that are located within the boundary of the Perry Choice Neighborhood (PCN). Much of this section will be based on Census data from 2000, since much of the information generated by the 2010 Census has yet to be released. These figures will be incorporated into this report once they are made available to the project team.
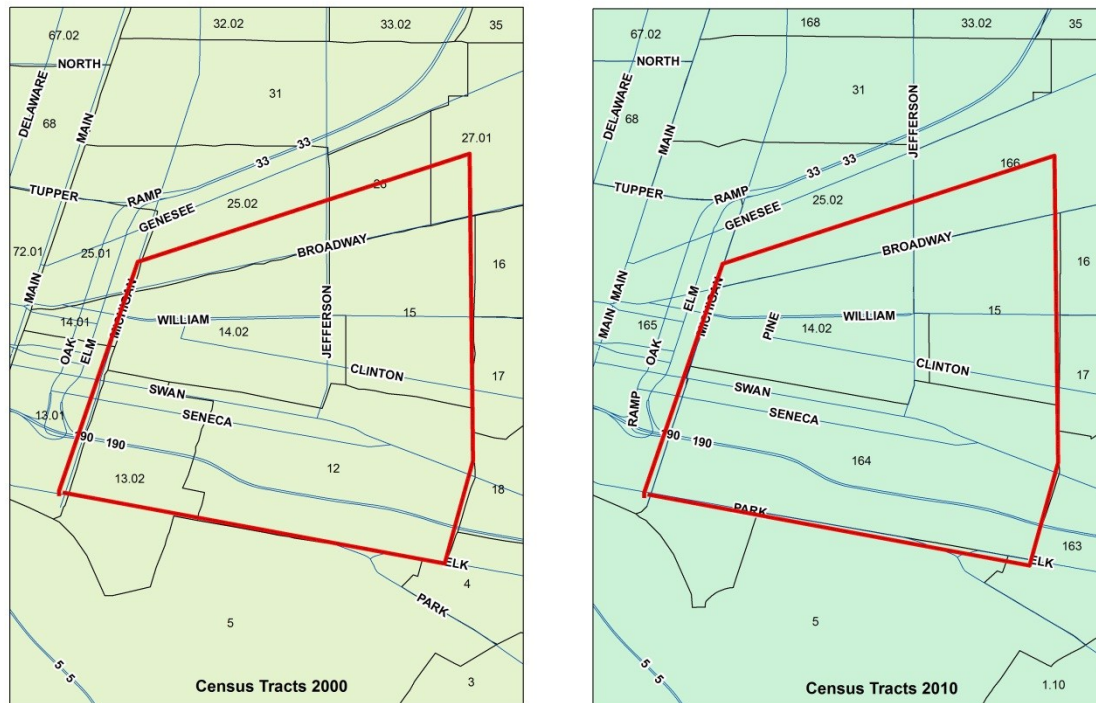
Source: UB Center for Urban Studies
Maps Database. November 2011

Target Area Boundaries

The boundaries of the Perry Choice Neighborhood extend from South Park Avenue on the South, Smith Street on the East, Sycamore on the North and Michigan Avenue on the West. In comparing the data between the 2000 and 2010, we had to take into consideration the changes in the census tracts between the two decennial periods. For the 2000 Census, the BMHA PCN target area consisted of

census tracts 12, 13.02, 14.02, 15, 25.02, 26 and 27.01. The 2010 Census saw several changes to the numbering of these tracts. The target area in 2010 now consists of the entire (or portion) of census tracts 14.02, 15, 25.02, 164.00 and 166.00. Tracts 14.02, 15, and 25.02 remained the same in the PCN target area, but census tract 166 is now a combination of the old 12 and 13.02 tracts, and census tract 166 replaces tracts 26 and 27.01.

Perry Choice Neighborhood

Source: UB Center for Urban Studies, Maps Database. September 2011

Population Characteristics

The 2000 Census shows the total population of the PCN target area at 14,720, whereas the 2010 Census reports this population now at 12,411 – a loss of 2,309 persons, or a 15.7% decrease. This loss of population in the target area followed a similar trend for the City of Buffalo as a whole, which sustained a loss of 31,338 people, or 10.7%, during the 2000's. ("Area population decline continued in 2000s, census data shows", The Buffalo News, March 24, 2011).

While the target area experienced a loss of total population during the period of 2000-2010, the racial makeup of the PCN remained similar. In 2000, the African-American population community was 79.8% of the total population of the PCN, and in 2010 this figure is 79.6% - this despite a drop in the total African-American population of 1,859 persons (or 15.8%) from 11,740 in 2000 to 9,881 in 2010. The second largest racial group in the PCN is persons of Caucasian descent, which in the in 2000 was 14.3% and in 2010 was 14.5% of the total population. The Other population group also experienced a decrease in population between 2000 and 2010, from 4.1% to 1%. There was only one group that saw some growth during this period. The Latino (of any race) segment of the population increased from 6.7% of the population in 2000 to 8.1% in 2010. It is important to note that the Latino population is a component subset of multiple racial groups.

The gender breakdown of the population remained constant during this period, with females making up 54.8% of the population in 2010 (vs. 54.5% in 2000) and males representing 45.6% of the population (vs. 45.4% in 2000). In terms of the age structure of the population, many of the cohorts did not see major fluctuations from 2000-2010. Some segments of the population saw slight increase while other saw slight decreases. The population of children between 0-5 years decreased from 8.7% in 2000 to 7.4% in 2010. Similarly, the number of school aged children (6-18 years) also decreased, from 21.4% to 19.1% of the population during this time. When taken together with children 0-5 years of age, children 18 years and younger currently makeup 26.5% of the population, which is 3.6% smaller than the percentage in 2000 (30.1%). Young adults, persons under 25 years, made up 35.3% of the population, which is a slight decrease from 36.8% in 2000.

The largest segment of the population remains persons between the ages of 35-54, which showed no change between 2000 and 2010 at 27.5% of the total population. Where the PCN target area saw some growth was in the working age population, persons between 19-64 years of age. When collapsed together, this group grew as a percentage of the total population from 53.8% in 2000 to 59.7% in 2010, a 5.9% increase. In addition, the number of persons 55 years or older increased from 24.9% to 26.6%. Finally, the number of senior citizens in the PCN decreased slightly, from 16% in 2000 to 14.3% in 2010.

Total Population

Population Group	2000	2010	Change
Perry Choice Neighborhood (Total)	14,720	12,411	-2,309 (-15.7%)
African American	11,740	9,881	-1,859 (-15.8%)
City of Buffalo	292,648	261,310	-31,338 (-10.7%)

Race/Ethnic Groups as Percentage of Total Population

Population Group	2000	2010	Change(**Percentage Point**)
African American	79.8%	79.6%	-0.1
Caucasian	14.3%	14.5%	+0.2
Other	4.1%	1.0%	-3.1
Latino (Any Race)	6.7%	8.1%	+2.4

Household Structure

As expected with the loss of population, the total number of households and the total number of family households both decreased between 2000 and 2010. The total number of households decreased in number by 1,051, from 6,747 to 5,696 and the number of family households from by 651, from 3,529 to 2,878 during this period. However, the percentage married couple family and single family households as a percentage of family households remained almost unchanged, from 33% and 67% respectively in 2000 to 32% and 68% in 2010. Similarly, the percentage of female householder - no husband present (57% in 2000, 56.3% in 2010) and nonfamily households also remained almost unchanged (48% in 2000, 49.4% in 2010) in the PCN target area.

Households, Perry Choice Neighborhood, 2000 and 2010

Population Group	2000	2010	Change

Total Households	6,747	5,696	-1,051
Family Households	3,529	2,878	-651

Household Subsets Percentage of Total Population, Perry Choice Neighborhood, 2000 and 2010

Population Group	2000	2010	Change
Single Family	67	68	+1
Married Couple	33	32	-1
Female – No husband	57	56.3	-0.7
Nonfamily	48	49.4	+1.4

The rest of this section is based on 2000 Census data, since 2010 data for these variables has not been released.

Educational Profile

The 2000 Census shows that 63.7% of the PCN residential population had at least earned their high school diploma, while 36.2% had not earned their high school diploma. For the total population, 29.3% of individuals have graduated high school, 18.3% had some college, but had not earned a degree, and 16.1% had earned a college degree (Associate's degree or higher). For those residents who had not graduated from high school, 12% of the individuals had less than a high school education and 24.2 had attended high school, but did not earn a high school diploma.

Education Attainment, 2000

Population Group	2000
% with High School Diploma	63.7
% less than High School Diploma	36.2
% with Some College	18.3
% with College Degree	16.1

Source of Household Income and Employment Profile

In 2000, 59.6% of households reported receiving their income from employment and 49.3% from "other assistance". For the population receiving other assistance, 18.9% reported retirement income, and 13.8% said that public assistance was the source of their income. At the time of this Census, 79.6% of person in the PCN area were employed and 20.4% were unemployed.

Source of Income, Perry Choice Neighborhood, 2000

Population Group	2000
From Employment	59.6
Other Assistance	49.3
Retired	18.9

Employed	79.6
Unemployed	20.6

Poverty Status

The number of individuals in poverty in 2000 was 5,036, or 34.2%, and the number of families was 1,037, or 29.3% of the PCN population. Both of these figures are higher than the average for the City of Buffalo, which showed 26.6% of the population and 23% of families are below the poverty level. The families in poverty cohort also reflects that 24.4% of families with related children under 18 years of age and 9.9% with related children under 5 years of age were below the poverty line. In addition, 22.4% of all families with a female householder – no husband present were under the poverty level, including 19.4% of families with related children under 18 years of age and 8.61% with related children under 5 years of age. A smaller percentage of senior citizens (3.6%) were living in poverty at this time.

Poverty Status, Perry Choice Neighborhood, 2000

Population Group	2000
% In Poverty	34.2%
% Families in Poverty	29.3%
% Families in Poverty with Children Under 18	24.4%
% Families in Poverty with Children Under 5	9.9%
% Of All Families with a Female Householder – No husband in Poverty	22.4%
% Of All Families with a Female Householder – " " – with Children under 18	19.4%
% Of All Families with a Female Householder – " " – with Children under 5	8.61%
% Of Senior Citizens in Poverty	3.6%

Commodore Perry Development Demographic Profile

The following section provides demographic information on the households and individuals who live at the Commodore Perry Development. The information in this section comes from either the BMHA Annual Survey of Tenants or from BMHA generated data. The data includes residents of the Commodore Perry Homes (Homes), Commodore Perry Extension High-rises (Towers), and Commodore Perry Extension Row Houses (Row Houses).

Population Characteristics

The BMHA Annual Survey of Tenants indicated that 497 total households responded to the survey. Of this number, 304 households were from the Towers, 121 from the Homes, and 72 from the Row Houses. The racial breakdown of these households was 79% African-American, 20.3% Caucasian, and 11.7% of Hispanic, or Latino, descent.

Percentage of Race by Households, Commodore Perry Development, 2010

Population Group	Percentage
African-American	79%

Caucasian	20.3%
Hispanic, Latino	11.7%

BMHA data shows a total of 775 individuals in the Commodore Perry development. The majority of individuals are female, making up 60.6% of the population, as opposed to 39.4% of the population that is male. When looking at the age structure of Perry residents, the largest single group is adults in the 34-54 age cohort, at 23.4% of the population. Working age individuals, those between 19-64 years of age, make up 59.5%, or 461 individuals, of the population in the development. Based on this BMHA data, there are a significant percentage of young people living in Perry. According to this data, 26.7% of the population is under the age of 18, with 11.1% of individuals between 6-13 years and 9.2% of individuals between 14-18 years. 13.8% of the population identified themselves as seniors. Finally, there is a large disabled population within the Perry development, with 209 individuals, or 26.9% of the residents of the complex identifying themselves as disabled.

Percentage of Residents by Gender and Age, Commodore Perry Development

Population Group	Percentage
Female	60.6%
Male	39.4%
34-54	23.4%
19-64	59.5%
Under 18	26.7%
6-13	11.1%
14-18	9.2%
Disabled	26.9%

Household Structure

A total of 354 households, or 71.2% of the total households in the Commodore Perry Development identified themselves as a one-person household, while 13.1% were reported as two-person households, and 8% three-person households. Larger families of four-persons were 4.4% of this total and only 2.2% of Perry households were made up of five people. All other family sizes represented less than 1% of the total household population in Perry. size data population

Percentage of Households of Various Sizes, Commodore Perry Development

Population Group	Percentage
One-Person Households	71.2%
Two-Person Households	13.1%
Three-Person Households	8.0%
Four-Person Households	4.4%
Five-Person Households	2.2%

Greater than Five Person Households	<1%

Source of Household Income

It must be stated for this section of the demographic profile that no information on the source of household income was available for the residents of the Commodore Perry extension High Rises, so the information provide only represents the BMHA Annual Survey of Commodore Perry Homes (Homes), and Commodore Perry Extension Row Houses (Row Houses).

A total of 193 households responded to this survey. Of these households, 26.4% received their household income from wages, which means that 73.6% of respondents receive their income from somewhere other than wages. Of the group whose income is not from wages, 23.3% of household income is from Social Security, 12.4% from Public Assistance, and 4.7% from Social Security and Public Assistance. 9.8% of this population said they have "Other Income". Significantly, 23.3% of households reported no income.

Source of Household Income, Commodore Perry Development

Population Group	Percentage
Income from Wages	26.4%
Income Not from Wages	73.6%
Not from Wages, Social Security	23.3%
Not from Wages, Public Assistance	12.4%
Not from Wages, Social Security and Public Assistance	4.7%
Not from Wages, Other Income	9.8%
Not from Wages, No Income	23.3%

VI. Spatial Analysis of Existing Service Framework in Perry Choice Neighborhood

1. Introduction

In order to develop a sound understanding of the supportive service network in Perry Choice Neighborhood and the surrounding area, one must first identify the location of all existing service providers. The Perry Choice Neighborhood Planning Team examined both the location of service providers and the specific types of supportive services that each offers to residents. The objective of this research was to determine the breadth of services available to residents and the accessibility of these services by way of various modes of transit.

2. Commodore Perry District: Services Overview

The Commodore Perry District, primarily populated by public housing units, includes a limited number of service providers that offer a basic array of services to residents.

Figure 1: Commodore Perry Supportive Services
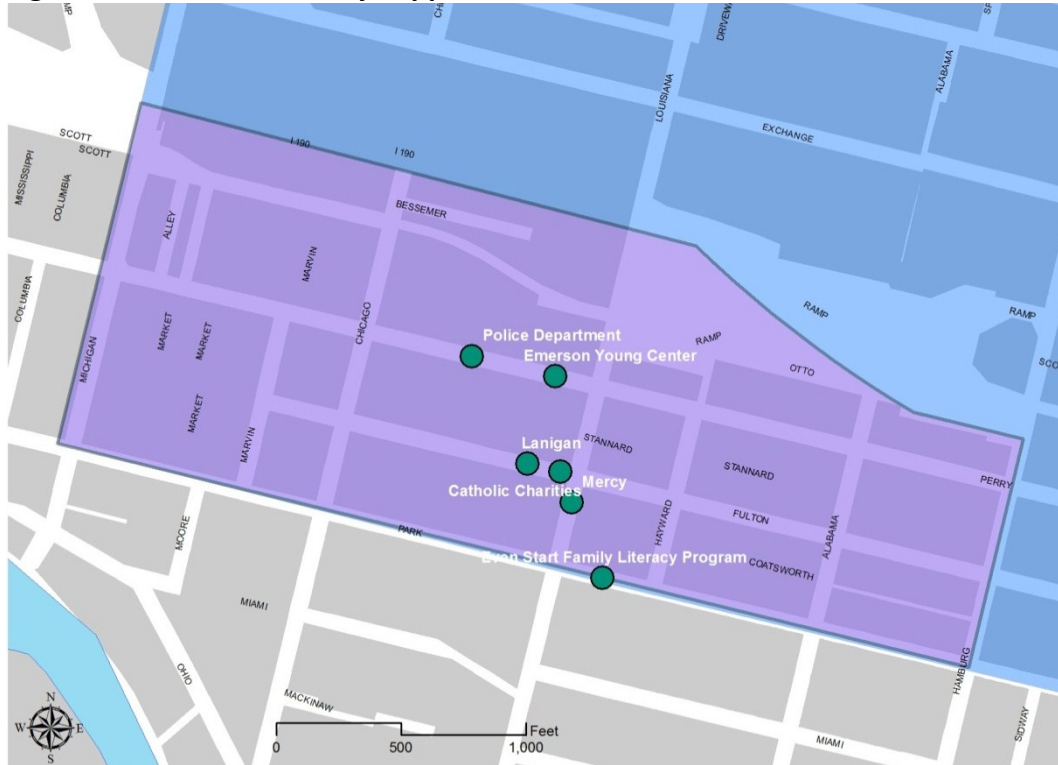
Service Organization	Service Type	Class	Address
Buffalo Police Department	City Department	Public Safety	312 Perry St
Buffalo City Even Start Family Literacy Program	Education	Adult	425 South Park Ave
Catholic Health's Mercy Comprehensive Care Center	Health Service Industry	Health Clinic	397 Louisiana St
Emerson Young Family Care Center	Health Service Industry	Health Clinic	305 Perry St
Catholic Charities	Social and Support Services	Family Services	170 Fulton St
Lanigan Field House	Recreation facility	General Services	150 Fulton St

3. Perry Choice Neighborhood: Services Overview

The entire Choice Perry Neighborhood also offers a wide range of social and supportive services largely within 2 miles from the center of Commodore Perry District. However, these services are scattered widely across the district, making it physically difficult for residents to navigate to needed services.

Figure 2: Supportive Services in Perry Choice Neighborhood

Table 1: Names and Types of Service Providers in Perry Choice Neighborhood (PCN), Commodore Perry District (CPD), and Old First Ward (OFW)

Organization	Address	Type	Location	Services
First Shiloh Baptist Church	15 Pine St	Faith-Based Group	PCN	youth, elders and general services
Buffalo Elementary School of Technology (Public School 6)	414 South Division St	Education	PCN	youth, general services
JFK Recreation Center	114 Hickory St	Community Center	PCN	youth, general services
PS 93 Southside Elementary	430 Southside Pkwy	Education	PCN	Youth
Sts. Columba-Brigid Montessori School	75 Hickory St	Education	PCN	Youth
PS. 31 Harriet Ross Tubman School	212 Stanton St	Education	PCN	Youth
PS. 32 Bennett Park Montessori	342 Clinton St	Education	PCN	Youth
YMCA	585 William St	Social and Support Services	PCN	youth, general services
Harvest House New Hope Education Center	175 Jefferson Ave	Education	PCN	youth, elders and general services
Sheehan Memorial Hospital	425 Michigan Ave	Health Service Industry	PCN	general services
Mid-Erie Counseling and Treatment Services	463 William St	Social and Support Services	PCN	general services
Harvest House Good Neighbors Health Care	175 Jefferson Ave	Health Service Industry	PCN	youth, general services
Office Team	726 Exchange St	Professional Services	PCN	general services
Sheehan Family Care Clinic	425 Michigan Ave	Health Service Industry	PCN	general services
Valley Community Association	93 Leddy St	Community Center	OFW	youth, general services
Old First Ward Community Center	62 Republic St	Community Center	OFW	youth, elders and general services
Community School #53	425 S Park Ave	Education	OFW	Youth
Buffalo Police Department	312 Perry St	City Department	CPD	general services
Buffalo City Even Start Family Literacy Program	425 South Park Ave	Education	CPD	youth, elders and general services
Catholic Health's Mercy Comprehensive Care Center	397 Louisiana St	Health Service Industry	CPD	general services
Emerson Young Family Care Center	305 Perry St	Health Service Industry	CPD	general services
Catholic Charities	170 Fulton St	Social and Support Services	CPD	youth, elders and general services
Lanigan Field House	150 Fulton St	Recreation Facilities	CPD	general services

4. Specific Services Available throughout Perry Choice Neighborhood

The Perry Choice Neighborhood Planning Team examined the availability and distribution of specific services across several categories of service types. These specific services were examined as a result of literary studies suggesting their importance to the framework of neighborhood service delivery (particularly within the context of public housing) or because they were services desired by residents or known to be provided within the neighborhood. Many service providers offer more than one type of service, and so it is important to analyze the distribution of specific service types in order to fully understand what is available to residents.

Specific Services by Category

(Identified from Literature and from Focus Groups/Walking Tours as important, Get Specific Here)

Employment Opportunity	Crisis Assistance	Health and Well-Being	Technical Assistance	Education and Information	Targeted Cohort Services
Employment Assistance	Emergency Assistance	Mental Health Treatment	Legal Assistance	Schools	Senior Services
Job Training	Food Pantry	Healthcare Clinics	Computer Training	Libraries	Youth Programs
Green Jobs Training	Crime Victim Assistance	Child Day Care	Financial Literacy Training	After School Programs	Services for Disabled
	Substance Abuse Treatment	Doctor's Offices	Social Services Assistance	Adult Education Classes	
	Emergency Housing Assistance	Supermarkets		GED Classes	
		Corner Stores			

General Definition of Each Support Service Category:

Employment Opportunity: These are services that specialize in assisting residents with finding employment, training for a specific type of employment, or gaining access to existing job opportunities.
- **Employment Assistance-** Services that assist people with obtaining employment
- **Job Training** – programs that help train individuals to perform a specific type of job

- **Green Jobs Training** – specialized job training services that focus on training people to perform jobs in the emerging "Green jobs" fields

Crisis Assistance: These are services provided to people facing a serious crisis and who are in need of immediate and concentrated support in order to recover from the crisis. Although related to health and well-being, these are services that residents would only access if in need of specific and immediate help for safety, recovery, or survival.
- **Emergency Assistance** – Services to immediately assist individuals with some type of trauma, including police and fire services and emergency healthcare services
- **Food Pantry** – Any service that provides food to people in need, also including soup kitchens
- **Crime Victim Assistance** – services that provide protection, mental health care, or support to individuals or families of individuals who have been victims of a crime
- **Substance Abuse Treatment** – facilities that provide rehabilitation or social support to individuals who are addicted to drugs, alcohol, or other harmful substances that reduce their quality of life significantly
- **Emergency Housing Assistance**

Health and Well-Being: These are support services that improve the physical and social health of residents. These may include healthcare clinics, social programs, and other activities that contribute to the improvement of the general quality of life of residents.
- **Mental Health Treatment**- Services that help to consult or assist people in need of mental health care or support, from general stress and anxiety to severe mental illness.
- **Healthcare Clinics** – Entities that provide basic health and medical care
- **Child Day Care** - facilities that look after and care for children while parents are at work or school
- **Doctor's Offices** – Offices of primary-care general practitioners
- **Supermarkets** – Large grocery store facilities that include a wide array of fresh produce.
- **Corner Stores** – Small neighborhood convenience stores that sell a basic array of everyday necessities

Technical Assistance: These are support services that help residents to understand and navigate technical processes or tasks that can potentially help them to gain access to specific information or benefits in their everyday lives that they could otherwise not obtain effectively. While related to education, the goal of these services is to give residents access to professional support or to build a specific skill that will help them navigate complicated tasks that may arise in their daily lives.
- **Legal Assistance** – Services that provide free legal counseling to residents regarding various issues that impact their lives
- **Computer Training** – Services that train residents in basic computer skills, such as browsing the web, e-mail, and word processing

- **Financial Literacy Training** – Services that educate residents about how to balance their budgets, file their taxes, apply for loans and mortgages, purchase housing, and other finance-related skills to assist with their daily lives
- **Social Services Assistance** – Agencies which either provide specific social services programs or provide social workers or other assistants to help residents apply for services for which they qualify

Education and Information: These services provide residents with basic access to information resources and knowledge that is essential to general and social well-being. These services might also help residents to build knowledge about areas of interest and provide social outlets for hobbies and activities.
- **Schools –** Institutions of education, both public and private, that cater to grades Pre-K to Grade 12
- **Libraries –** Public or nonprofit facilities that provide residents with a wide array of reading materials to further their education. Some may provide information on highly specialized topics, such as medical libraries
- **After School Programs –** Programs designed to cater to youth specifically to provide them with opportunities for advanced learning after school hours
- **Adult Education Classes –** Education courses or crafts courses designed to further the education or enhance the skill base of adults. Unlike technical assistance services, adult education services are primarily for personal growth.
- **GED Classes –** Courses designed to help adults receive their graduate equivalent diploma.

Targeted Cohort Services: These are services that are offered to a targeted group of individuals in order to meet the specific needs of a certain group of people.

- **Youth Services –** Any supportive service that is specifically targeted to benefitting the quality of life of youth. Unlike after school programs, these services are not designed to take in youth immediately after school and may serve a wider array of functions than education alone.
- **Senior Services –** Any supportive service that is specifically targeted at benefitting the quality of life of senior citizens
- **Services for the Disabled –** Services that cater specifically to the needs of persons with physical or mental disabilities
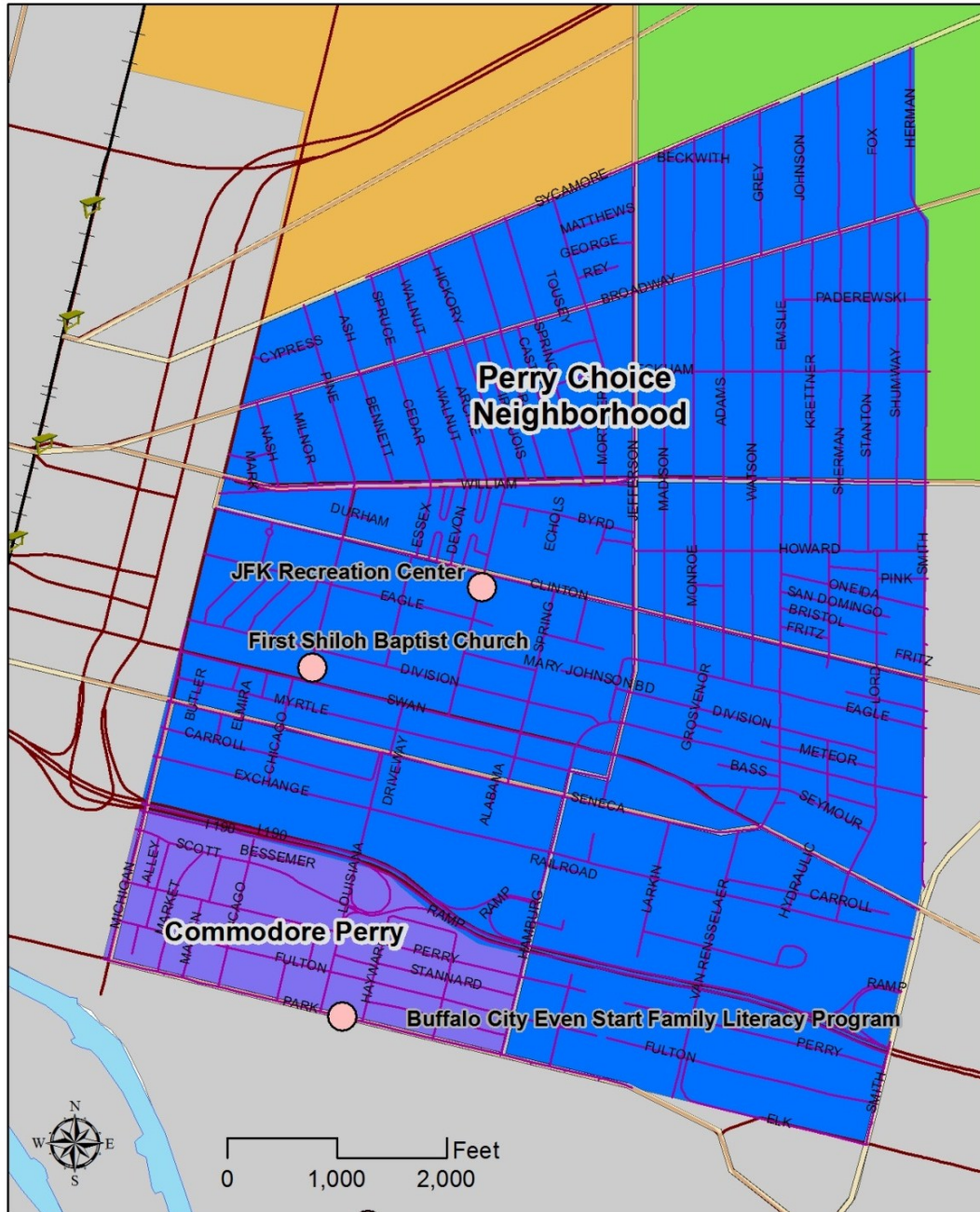
Figure 3: Employment Assistance Services Located in Perry Choice Neighborhood
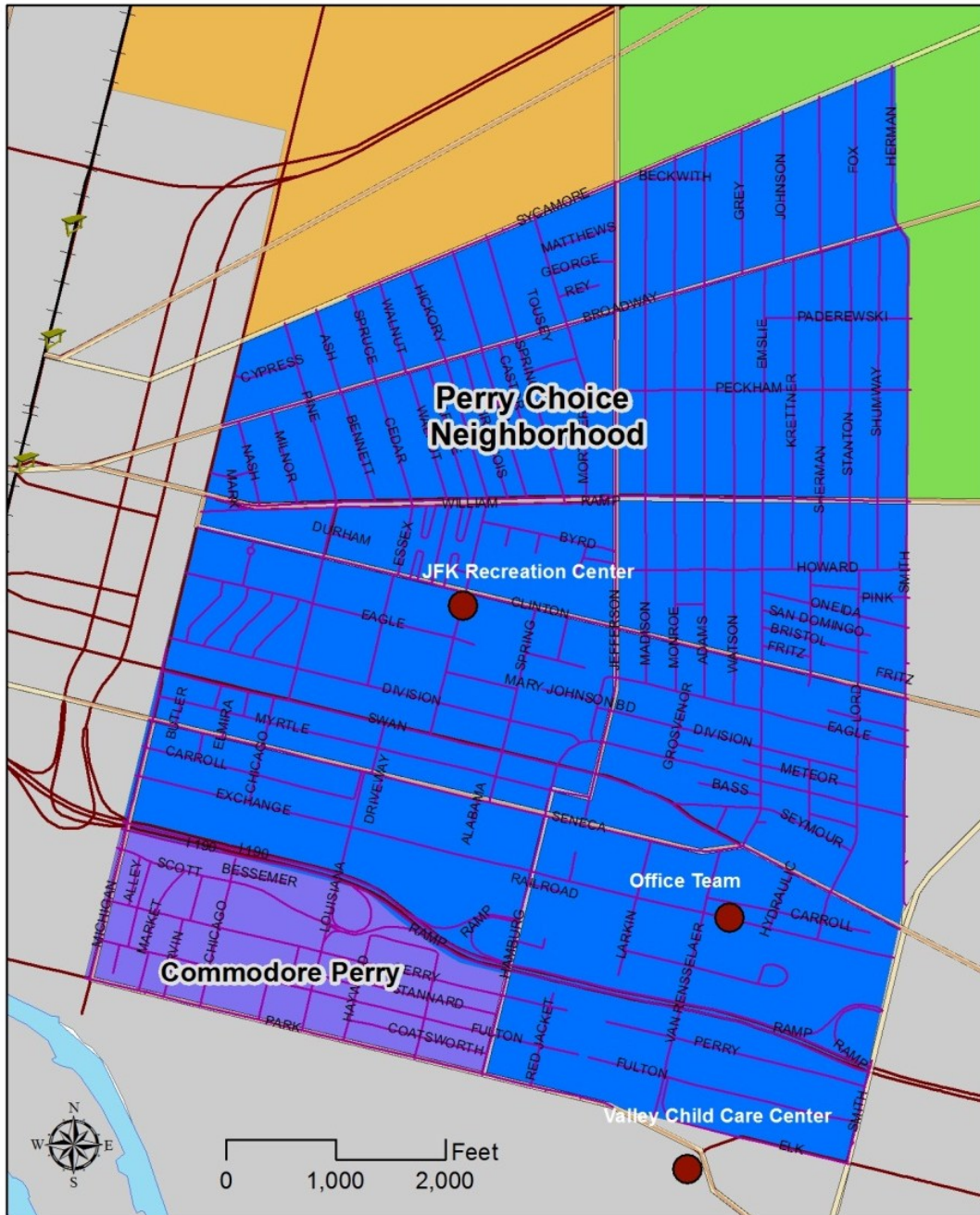
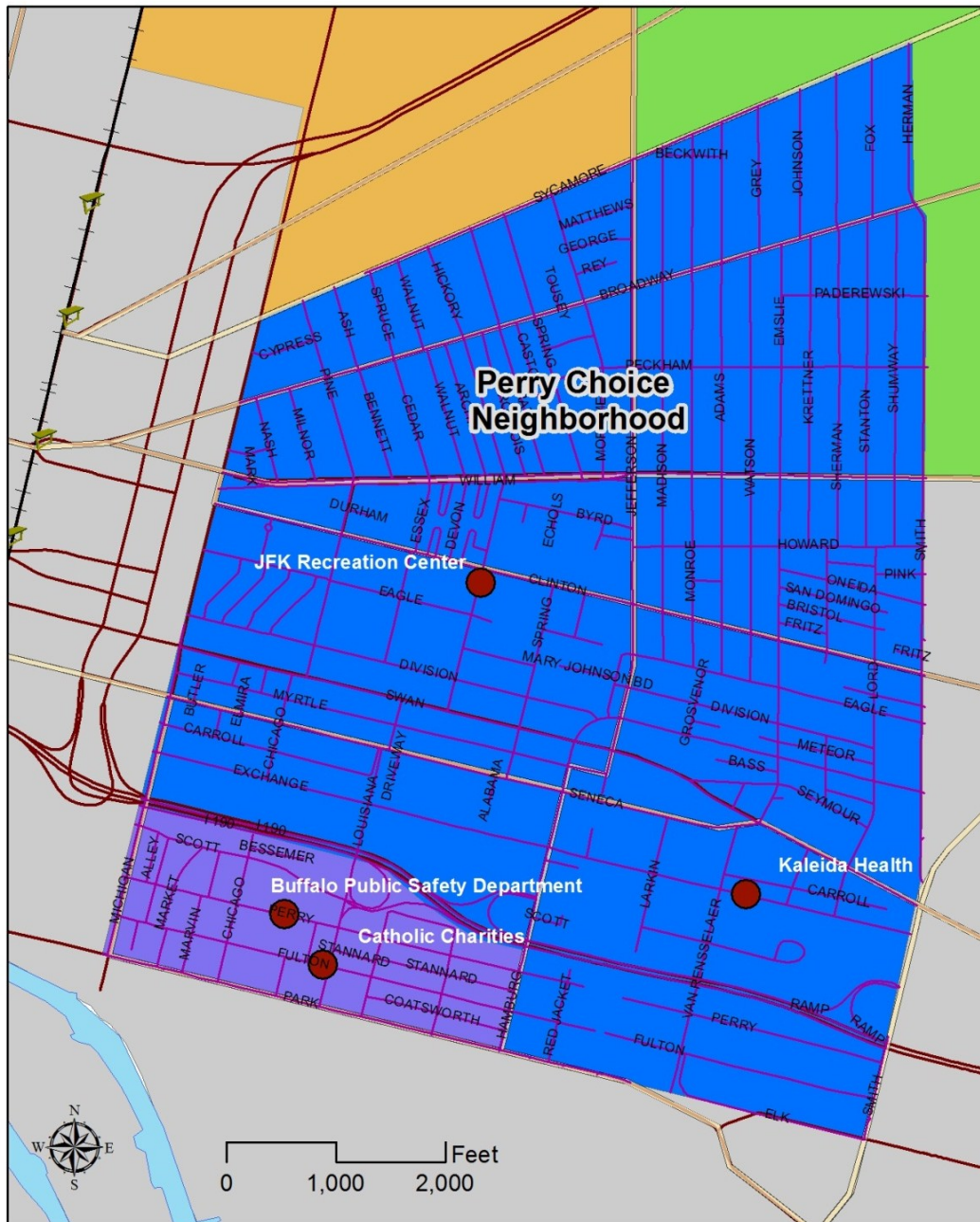| Organization	Address	Type	Location
JFK Recreation Center	114 Hickory St	Community Center	PCN
Office Team	726 Exchange St	Professional Services	PCN
Valley Community Association	93 Leddy St	Education	OFW

Figure 4: Adult Education Services Located in Perry Choice Neighborhood

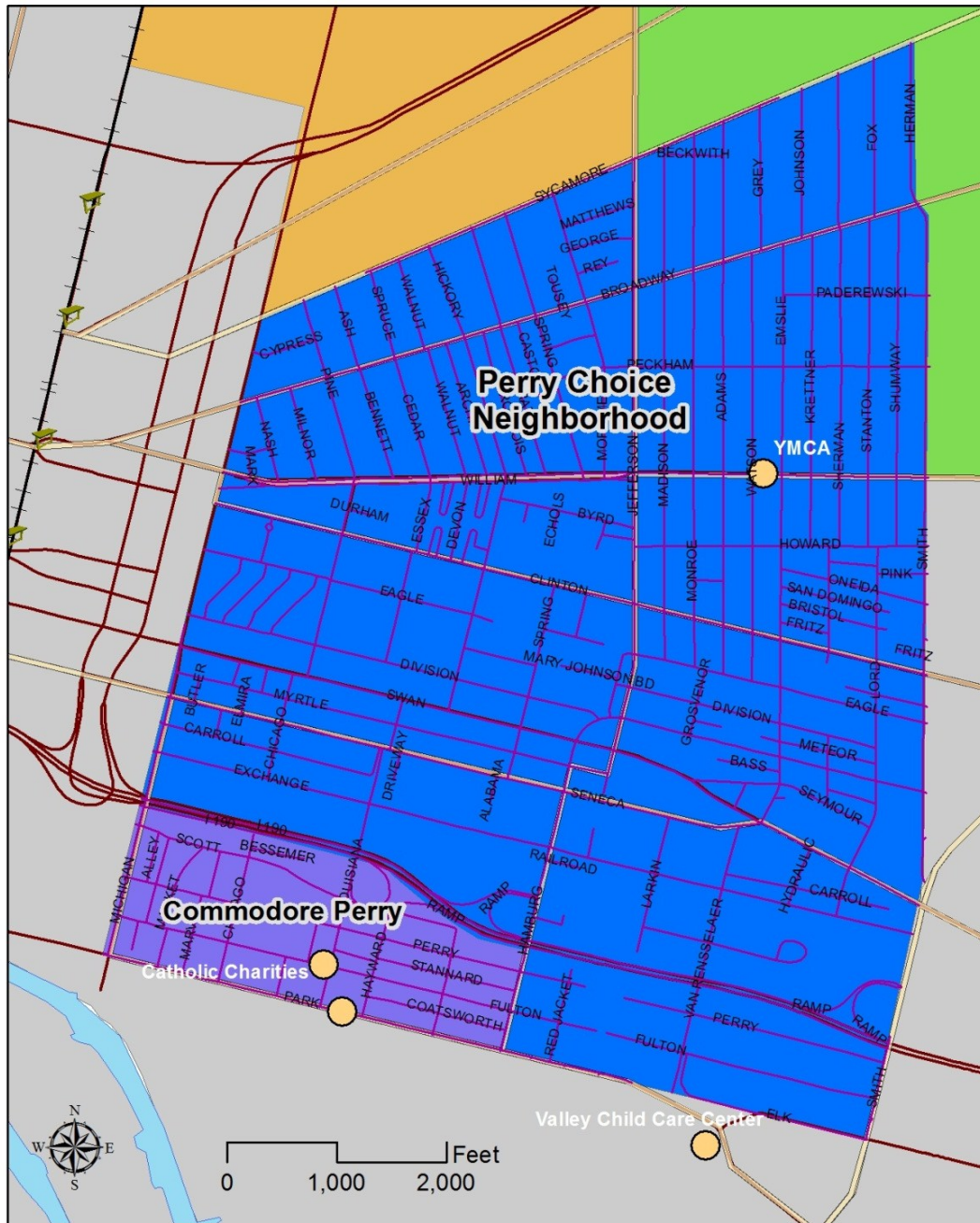| Organization	Address	Type	Location
JFK Recreation Center	114 Hickory St	Community Center	PCN
First Shiloh Baptist Church	15 Pine St	Faith-Based Group	PCN
Buffalo City Even Start Family Literacy Program	425 South Park Ave	Education	CPD

Figure 5: Emergency Assistance Services Located in Perry Choice Neighborhood

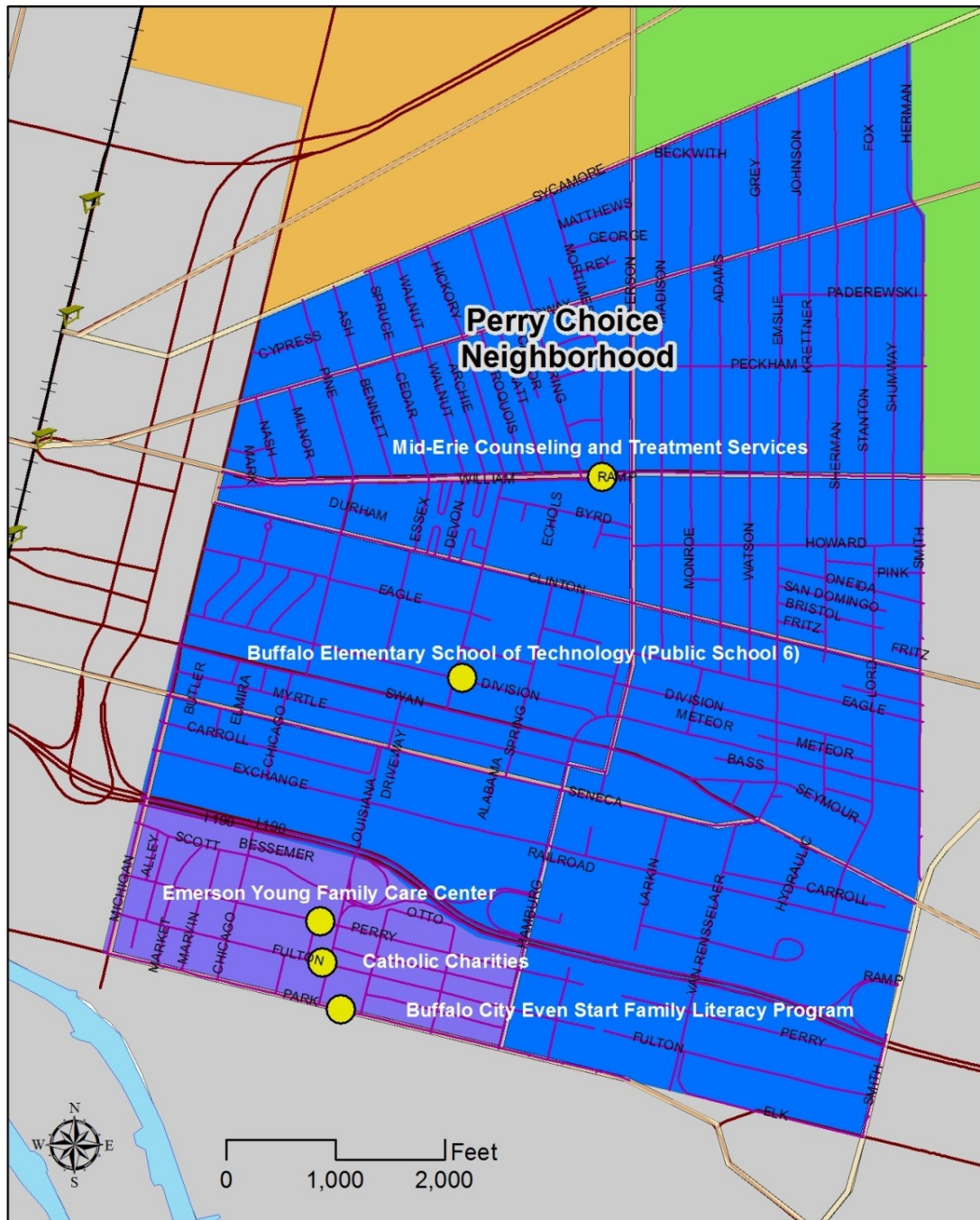| Organization	Address	Type	Location
JFK Recreation Center	114 Hickory St	Community Center	PCN
Kaleida Health	726 Exchange St Ste 100	Health Service Industry	PCN
Buffalo Police Department	312 Perry St	City Department	CPD
Catholic Charities	170 Fulton St	Social and Support Services	CPD

Figure 6: Child Care Services Located in Perry Choice Neighborhood

Organization	Address	Type	Location
Catholic Charities	170 Fulton St	Social and Support Services	CPD
Buffalo City Even Start Family Literacy Program	425 South Park Ave	Education	CPD
Valley Community Association	93 Leddy St	Education	OFW
YMCA	585 William St	Social and Support Services	PCN

Figure 7: Mental Health Treatment Services Located in Perry Choice Neighborhood

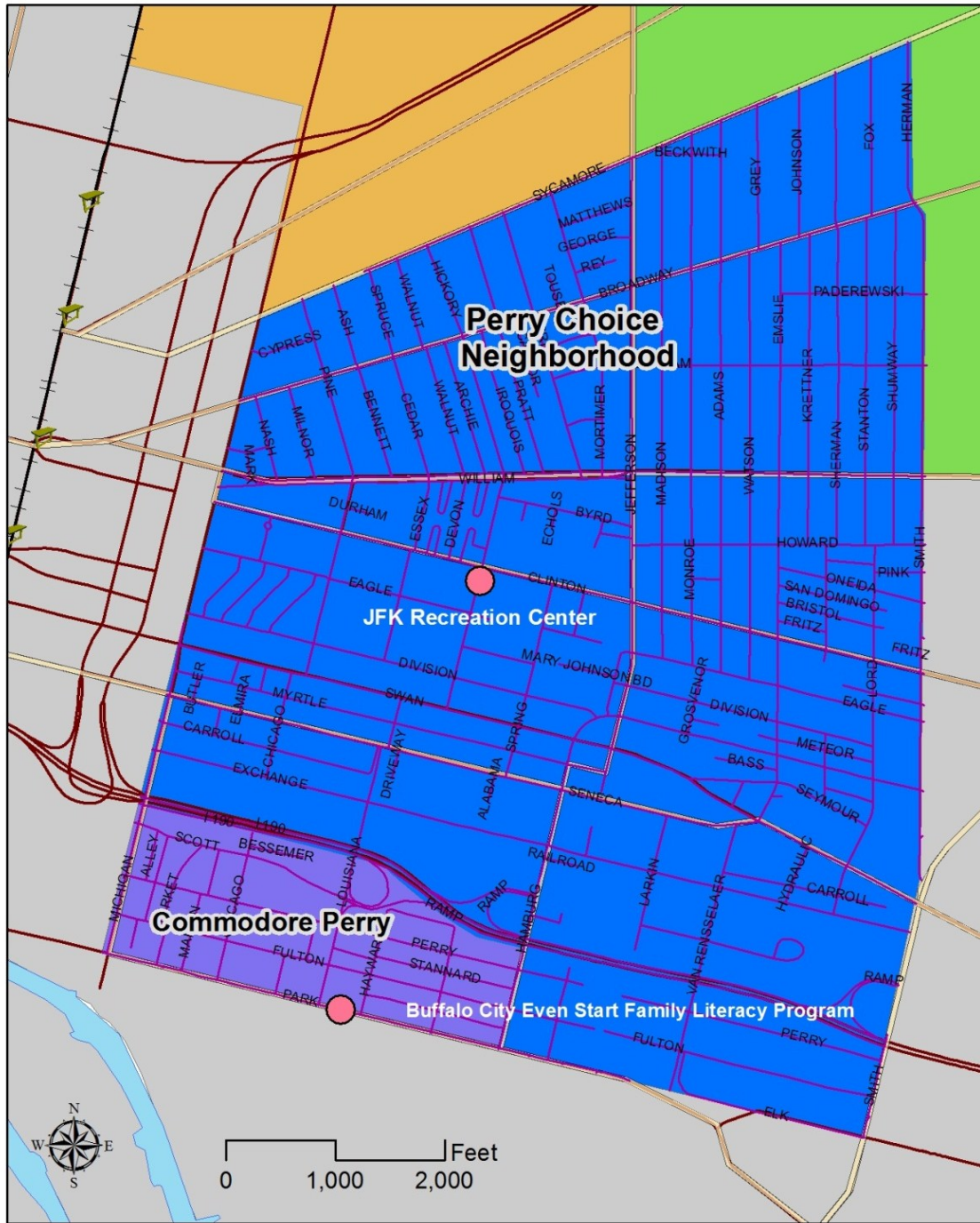| Organization	Address	Type	Location
Catholic Charities	170 Fulton St	Social and Support Services	CPD
Buffalo City Even Start Family Literacy Program	425 South Park Ave	Education	CPD
Buffalo Elementary School of Technology (Public School 6)	414 South Division St	Education	PCN
Mid-Erie Counseling and Treatment Services	463 William St	Social and Support Services	PCN
Emerson Young Family Care Center	305 Perry St	Health Service Industry	CPD

Figure 8: Substance Abuse Treatment Services Located in Perry Choice Neighborhood

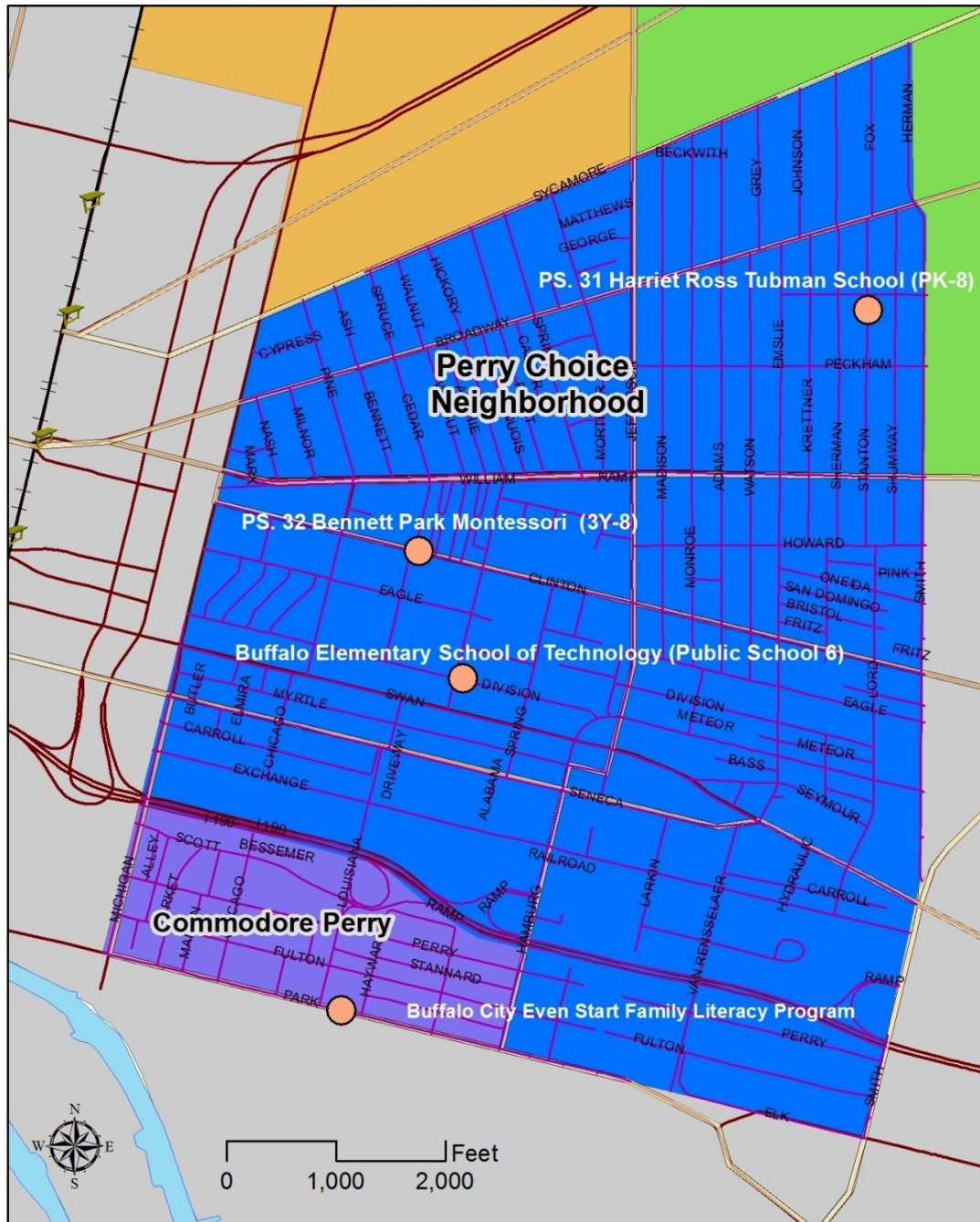| Organization	Address	Type	Location
Catholic Charities	170 Fulton St	Social and Support Services	CPD
Buffalo City Even Start Family Literacy Program	425 South Park Ave	Education	CPD
Mid-Erie Counseling and Treatment Services	463 William St	Social and Support Services	PCN
Emerson Young Family Care Center	305 Perry St	Health Service Industry	CPD
JFK Recreation Center Community Action Agency	114 Hickory St	Community Center	PCN
Sheehan Memorial Hospital	425 Michigan Ave	Health Service Industry	PCN

Figure 9: Job Training Services Located in Perry Choice Neighborhood

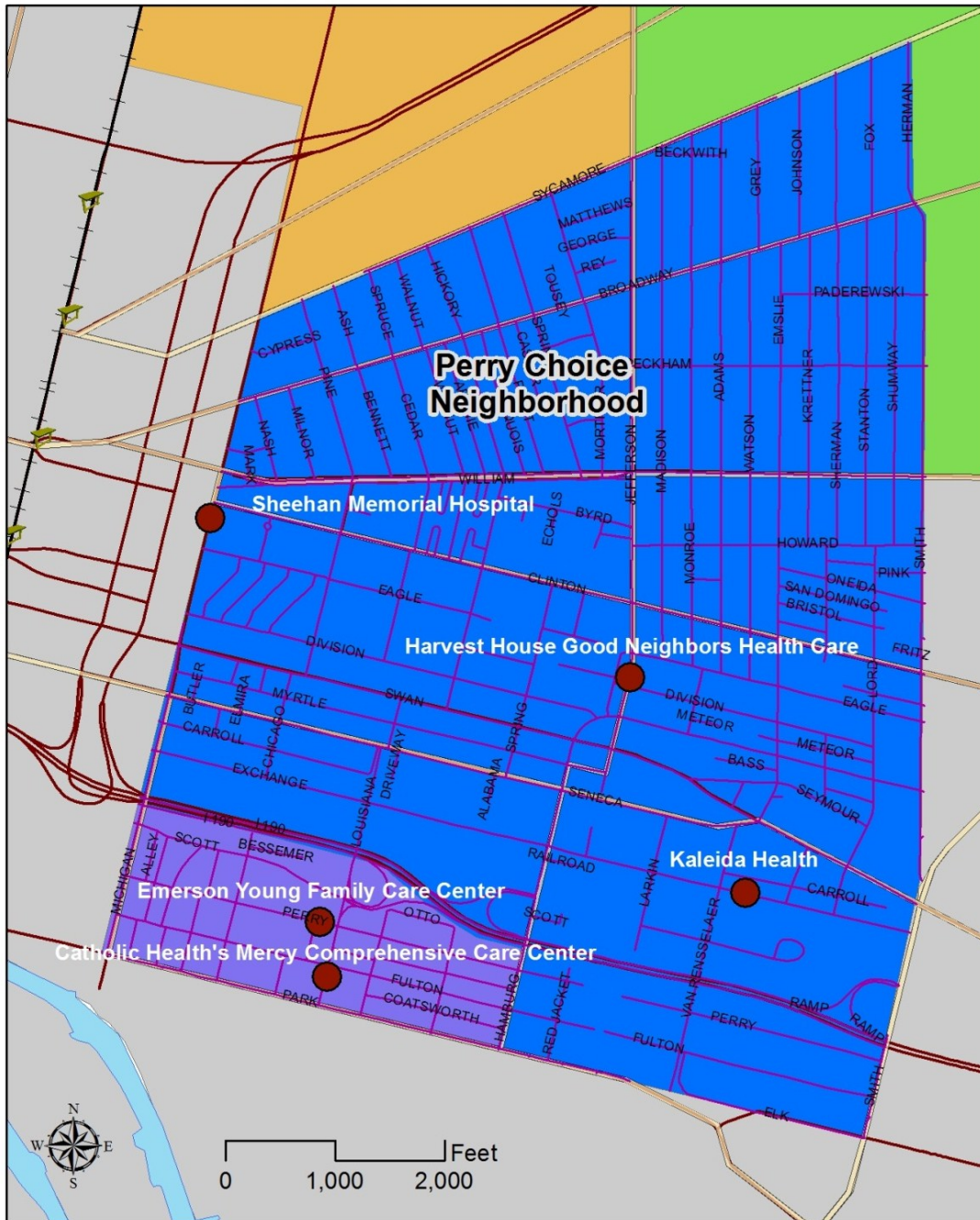| Organization	Address	Type	Location
Buffalo City Even Start Family Literacy Program	425 South Park Ave	Education	CPD
JFK Recreation Center	114 Hickory St	Community Center	PCN

Figure 10: Libraries Located in Perry Choice Neighborhood

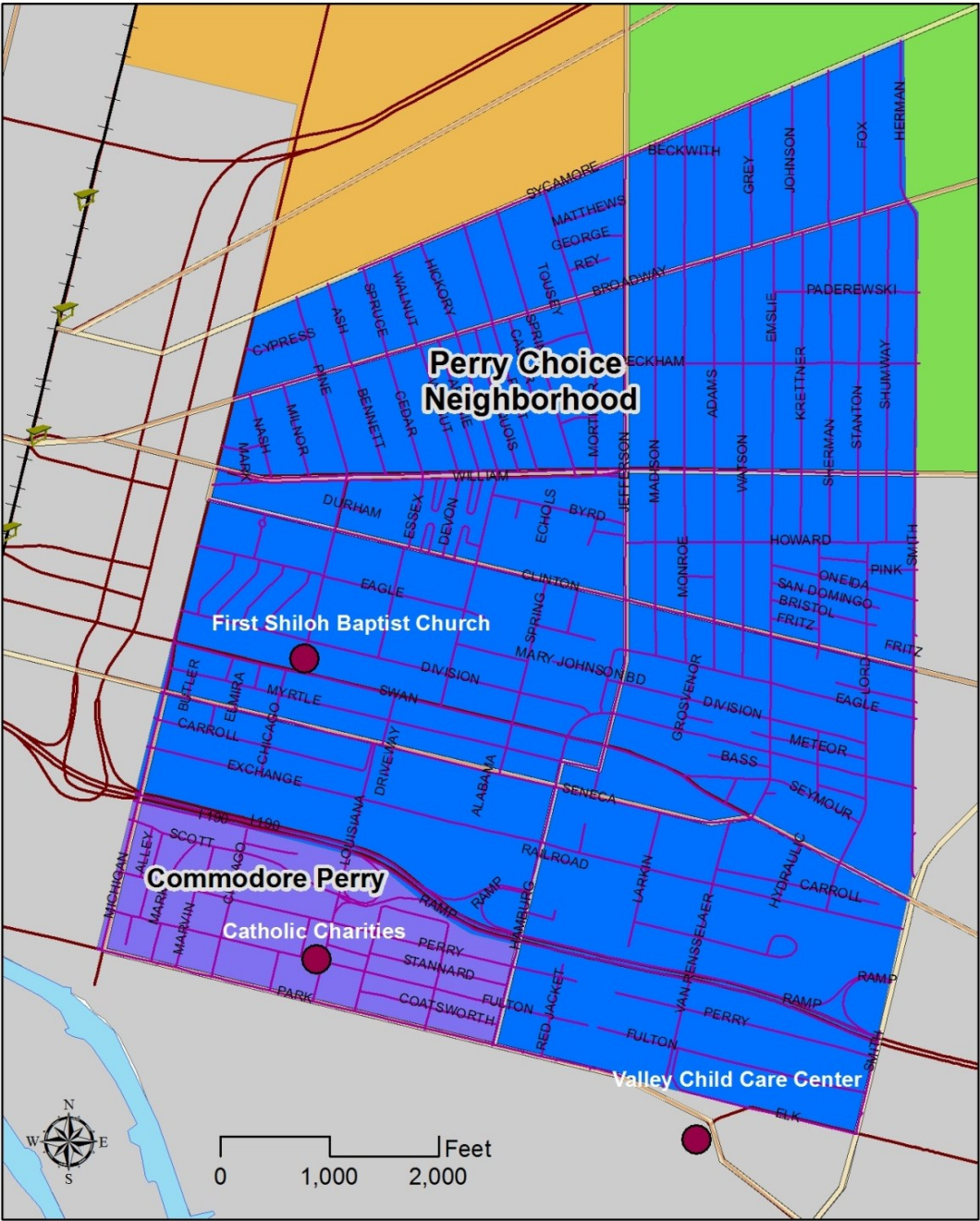| Organization	Address	Type	Location
Buffalo City Even Start Family Literacy Program	425 South Park Ave	Education	CPD
Buffalo Elementary School of Technology (Public School 6)	414 South Division St	Education	PCN
PS. 31 Harriet Ross Tubman School (PK-8)	212 Stanton St	Education	PCN
PS. 32 Bennett Park Montessori (3Y-8)	342 Clinton St	Education	PCN

Figure 11: Health Clinic Services Located in Perry Choice Neighborhood

Organization	Address	Type	Location
Emerson Young Family Care Center	305 Perry St	Health Service Industry	CPD
Sheehan Memorial Hospital	425 Michigan Ave	Health Service Industry	PCN
Kaleida Health	726 Exchange St Ste 100	Health Service Industry	PCN
Harvest House Good Neighbors Health Care	175 Jefferson Ave	Health Service Industry	PCN
Catholic Health's Mercy Comprehensive Care Center	397 Louisiana St	Health Service Industry	CPD

**Figure 12: Food Pantry Services Located in Perry Choice Neighborhood**

Organization	Address	Type	Location
Catholic Charities	170 Fulton St	Social and Support Services	CPD
Valley Community Association	93 Leddy St	Education	OFW
First Shiloh Baptist Church	15 Pine St	Faith-Based Group	PCN

Figure 13: Legal Assistance Services Located in Perry Choice Neighborhood

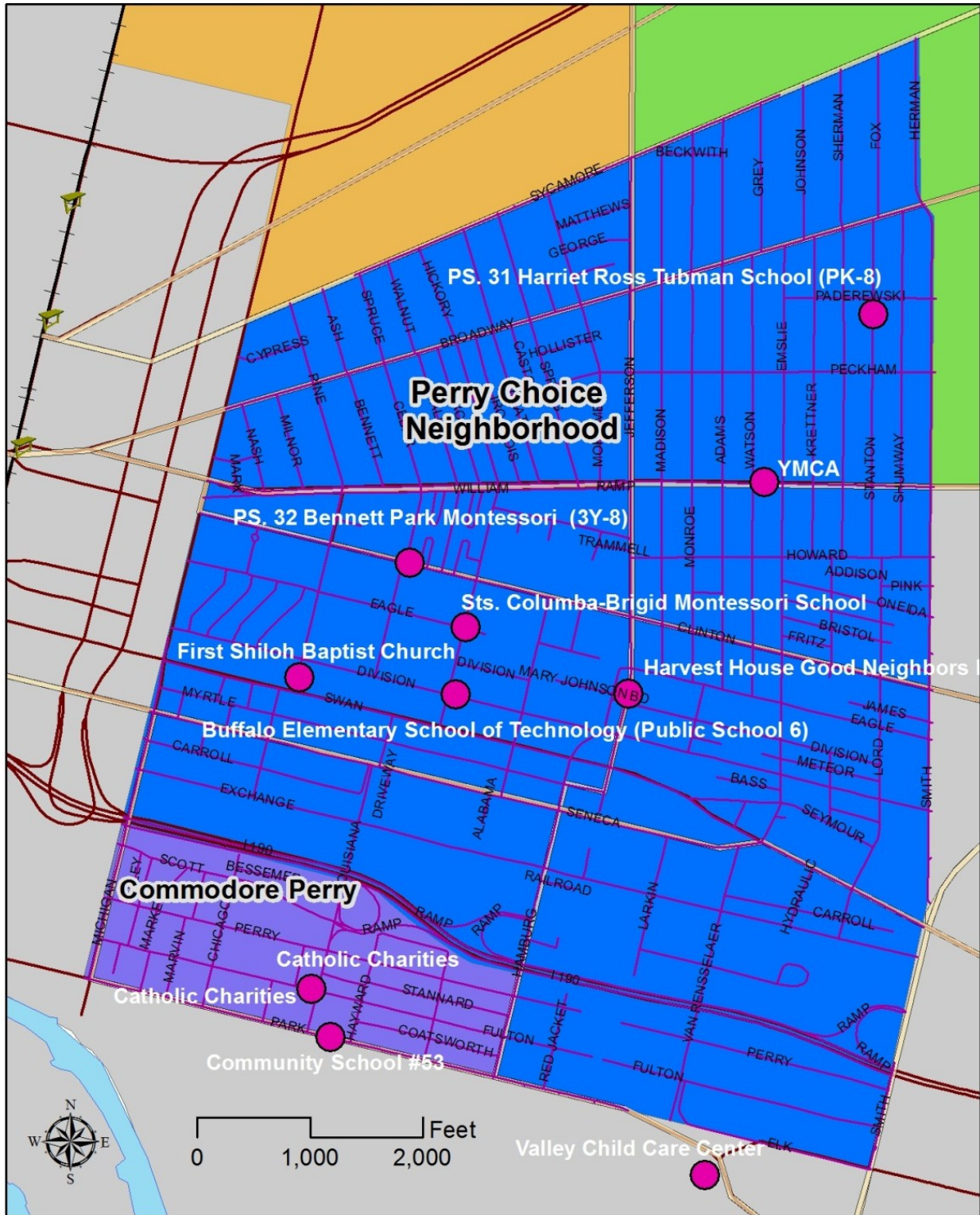| Organization	Address	Type	Location
Harvest House Good Neighbors Health Care	175 Jefferson Ave	Health Service Industry	PCN

Figure 14: Crime Victim Assistance Services Located in Perry Choice Neighborhood
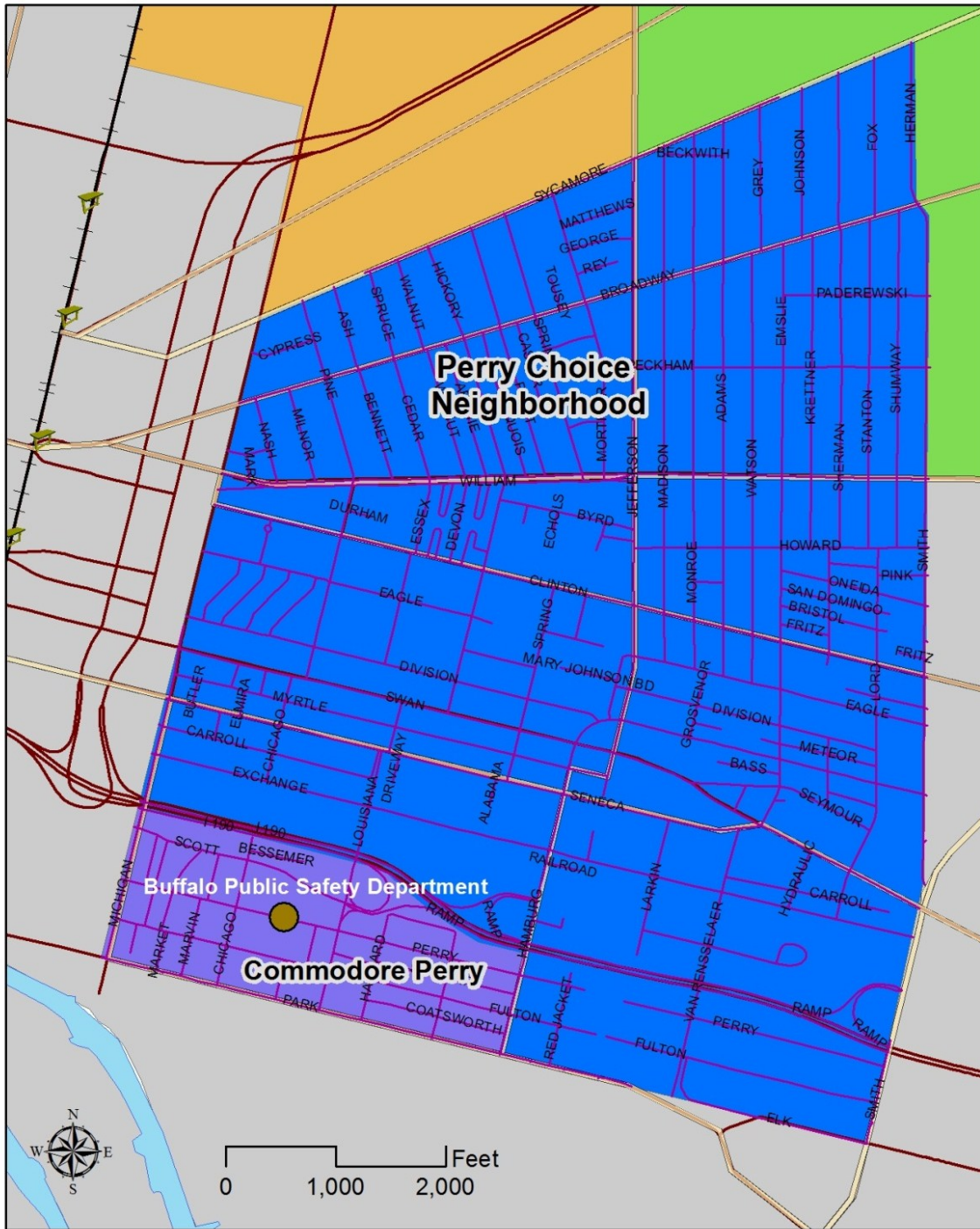
Organization	Address	Type	Location
Buffalo Police Department	312 Perry St	City Department	CPD

Figure 15: Schools Located in Perry Choice Neighborhood

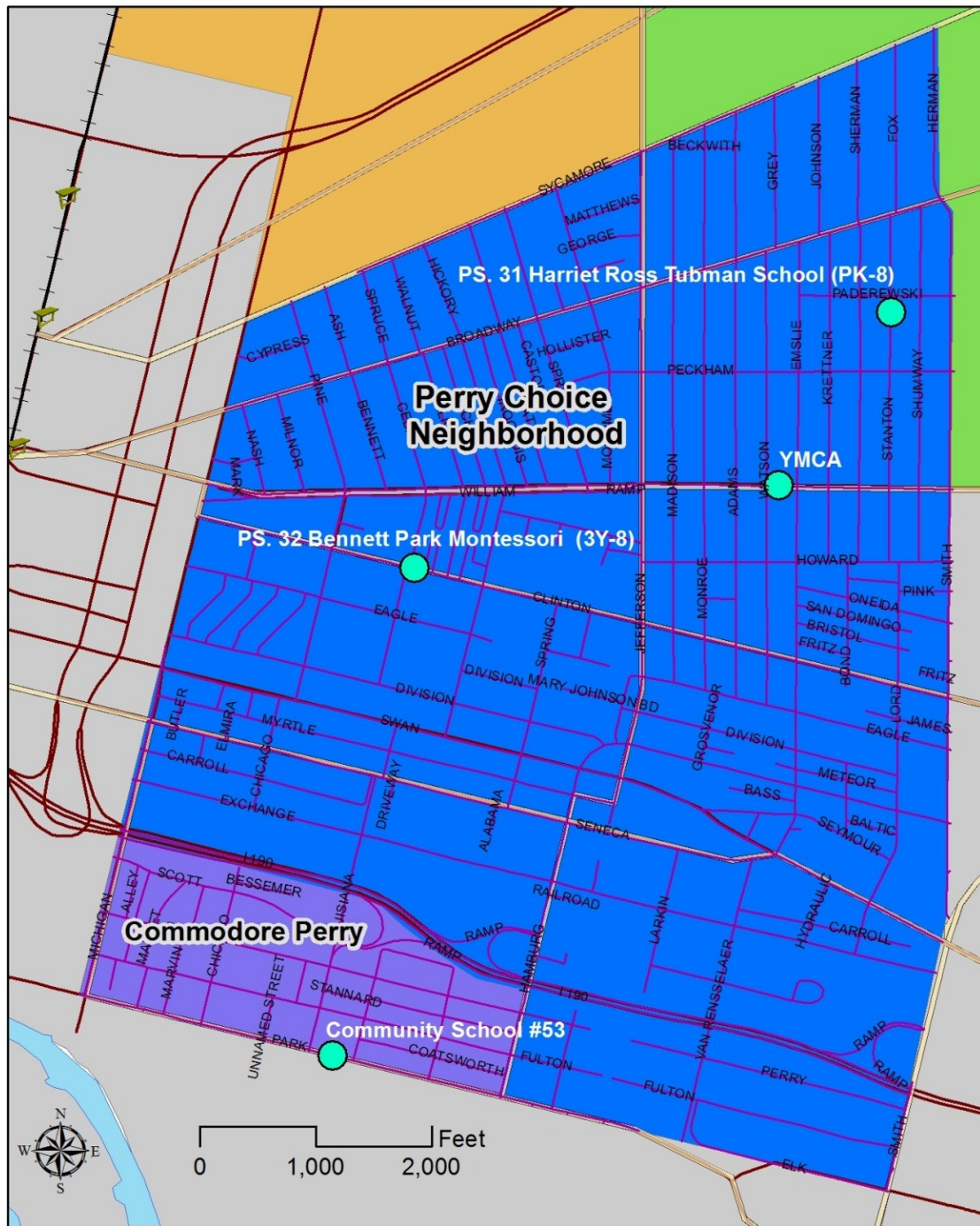| Organization	Address	Type	Location
Harvest House Good Neighbors Health Care	175 Jefferson Ave	Health Service Industry	PCN
Harvest House New Hope Education Center	175 Jefferson Ave	Education	PCN
Catholic Charities	170 Fulton St	Social and Support Services	CPD
Valley Community Association	93 Leddy St	Education	OFW
First Shiloh Baptist Church	15 Pine St	Faith-Based Group	PCN
Buffalo City Even Start Family Literacy Program	425 South Park Ave	Education	CPD
Buffalo Elementary School of Technology (Public School 6)	414 South Division St	Education	PCN
PS 93 Southside Elementary	430 Southside Pkwy	Education	PCN
PS. 31 Harriet Ross Tubman School (PK-8)	212 Stanton St	Education	PCN
PS. 32 Bennett Park Montessori (3Y-8)	342 Clinton St	Education	PCN
Sts. Columba-Brigid Montessori School	75 Hickory St	Education	PCN
YMCA	585 William St	Social and Support Services	PCN
Community School #53	425 S Park Ave	Education	OFW

Figure 16: After-School Programs Located in Perry Choice Neighborhood

Organization	Address	Type	Location
Buffalo City Even Start Family Literacy Program	425 South Park Ave	Education	CPD
Buffalo Elementary School of Technology (Public School 6)	414 South Division St	Education	PCN
PS 93 Southside Elementary	430 Southside Pkwy	Education	PCN
PS. 31 Harriet Ross Tubman School (PK-8)	212 Stanton St	Education	PCN
PS. 32 Bennett Park Montessori (3Y-8)	342 Clinton St	Education	PCN
Community School #53	425 S Park Ave	Education	OFW
YMCA	585 William St	Social and Support Services	PCN
JFK Recreation Center	114 Hickory St	Community Center	PCN

Figure 17: Computer Training Services Located in Perry Choice Neighborhood

Organization	Address	Type	Location
PS. 31 Harriet Ross Tubman School (PK-8)	212 Stanton St	Education	PCN
PS. 32 Bennett Park Montessori (3Y-8)	342 Clinton St	Education	PCN
Community School #53	425 S Park Ave	Education	OFW
YMCA	585 William St	Social and Support Services	PCN

Figure 18: GED Services Located in Perry Choice Neighborhood
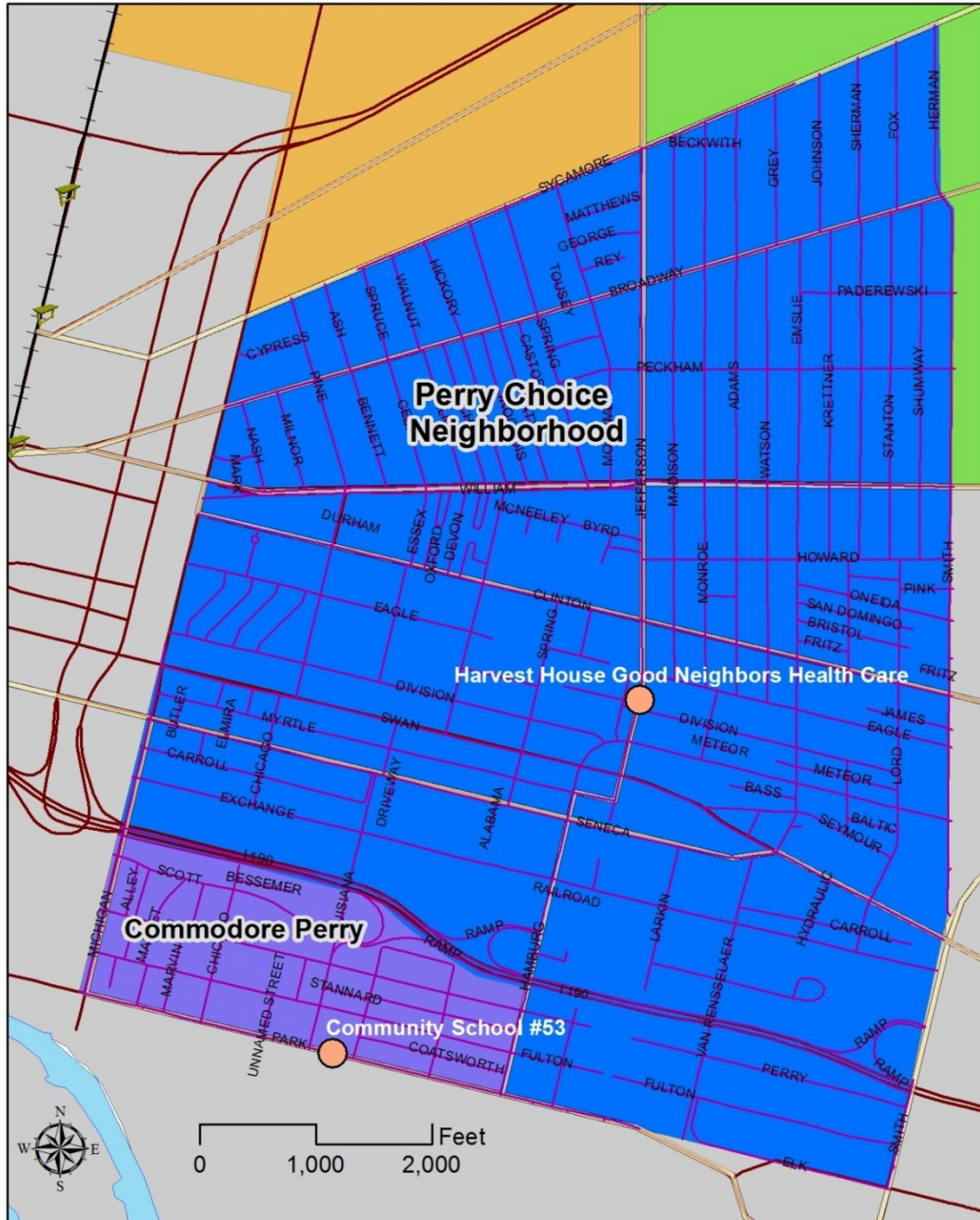
Figure 19: Senior Services Located in Perry Choice Neighborhood

Organization	Address	Type	Location
Valley Community Association	93 Leddy St	Education	OFW
YMCA	585 William St	Social and Support Services	PCN
JFK Recreation Center	114 Hickory St	Community Center	PCN

Figure 20: Youth Programs Located in Perry Choice Neighborhood

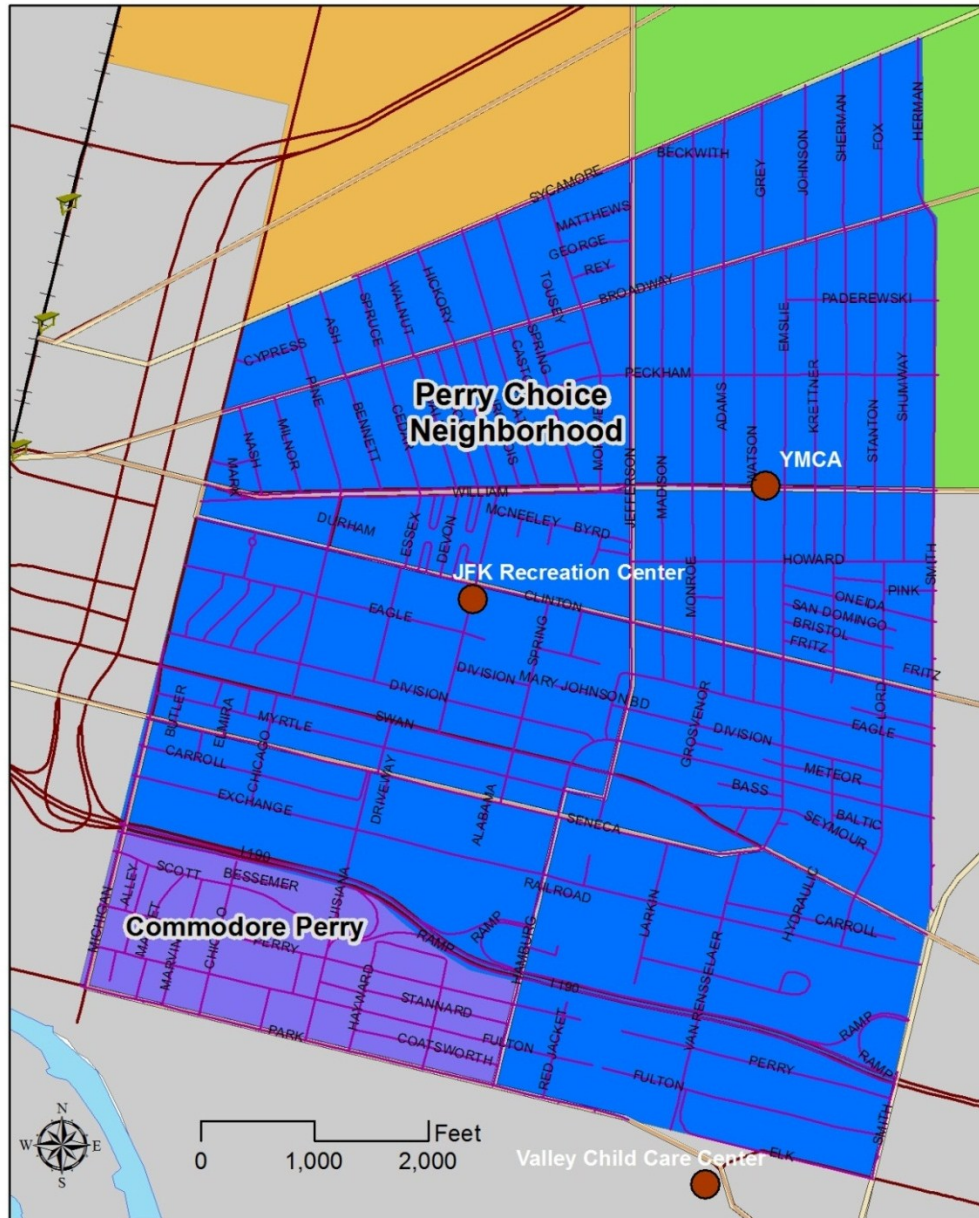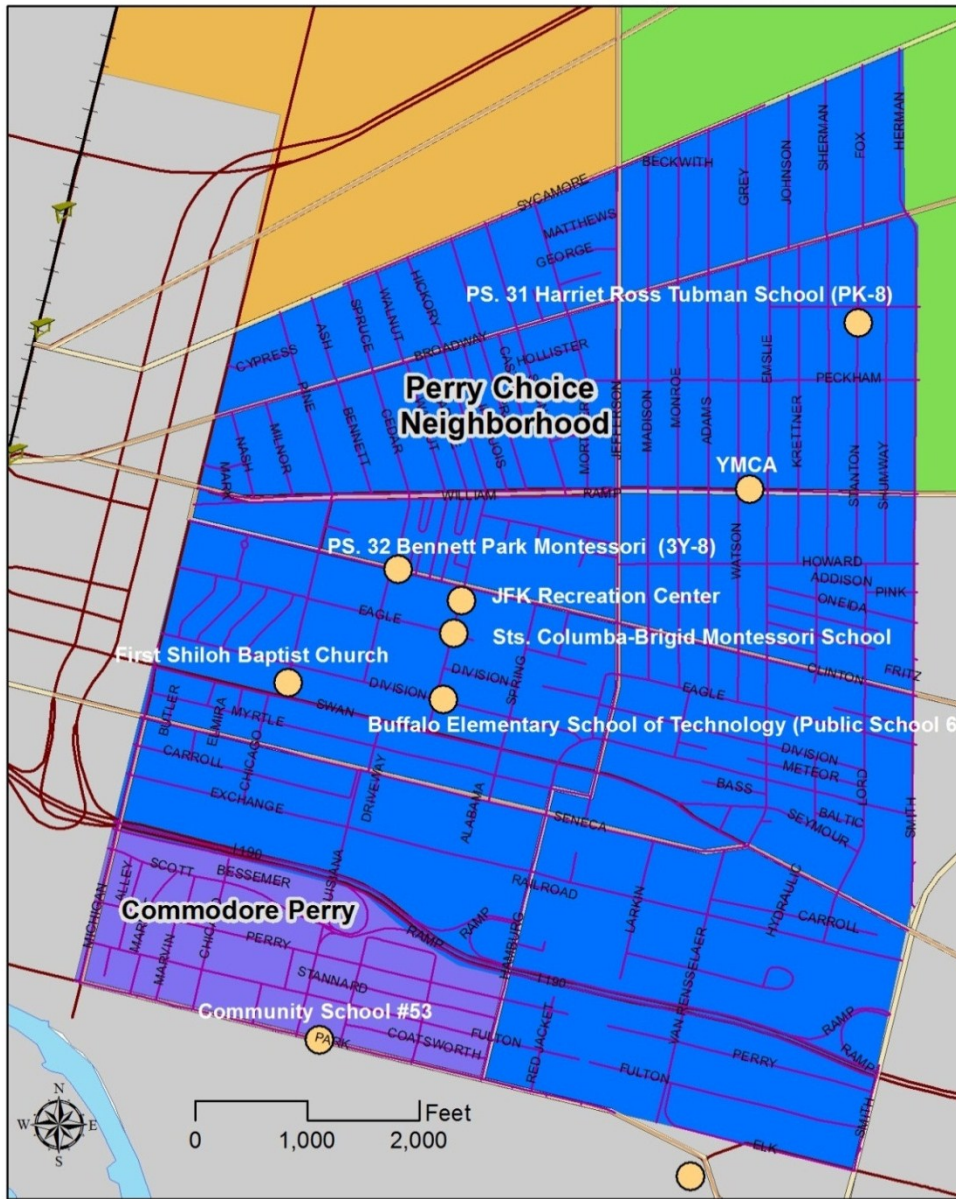| Organization	Address	Type	Location
Buffalo City Even Start Family Literacy	425 South Park Ave	Education	CPD
Sts. Columba-Brigid Montessori School	75 Hickory St	Education	PCN
PS. 31 Harriet Ross Tubman School (PK-8)	212 Stanton St	Education	PCN
PS. 32 Bennett Park Montessori (3Y-8)	342 Clinton St	Education	PCN
Community School #53	425 S Park Ave	Education	OFW
YMCA	585 William St	Social and Support Services	PCN
Buffalo Elementary School of Technology	414 South Division St	Education	PCN
JFK Recreation Center	114 Hickory St	Community Center	PCN
Valley Community Association	93 Leddy St	Education	OFW
First Shiloh Baptist Church	15 Pine St	Faith-Based Group	PCN

Figure 20: Social Service Assistance Located in Perry Choice Neighborhood
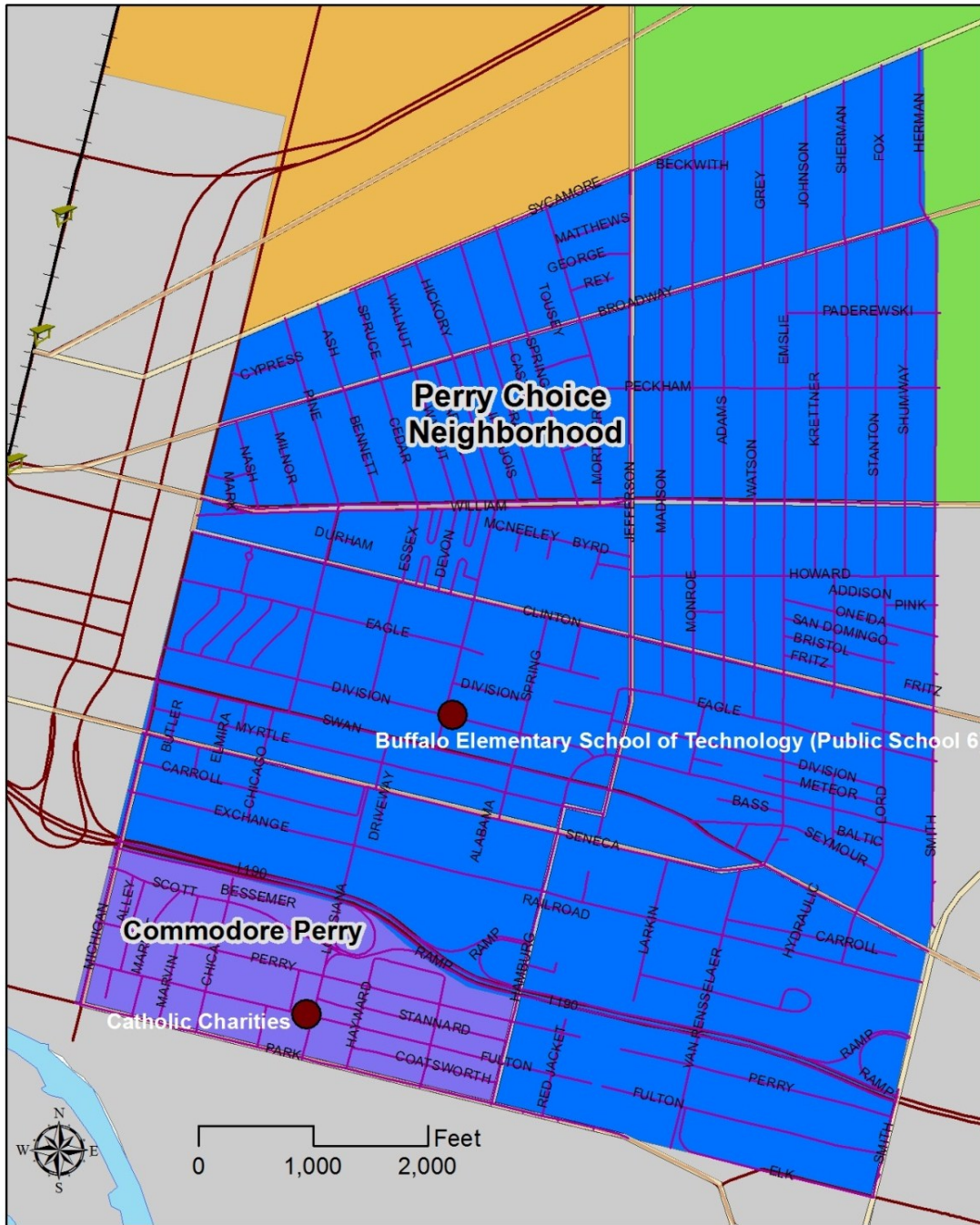
Organization	Address	Type	Location
Buffalo Elementary School of Technology (Public School 6)	414 South Division St	Education	PCN
Catholic Charities	170 Fulton St	Social and Support Services	CPD

Figure 20: Doctor's Offices Located in Perry Choice Neighborhood
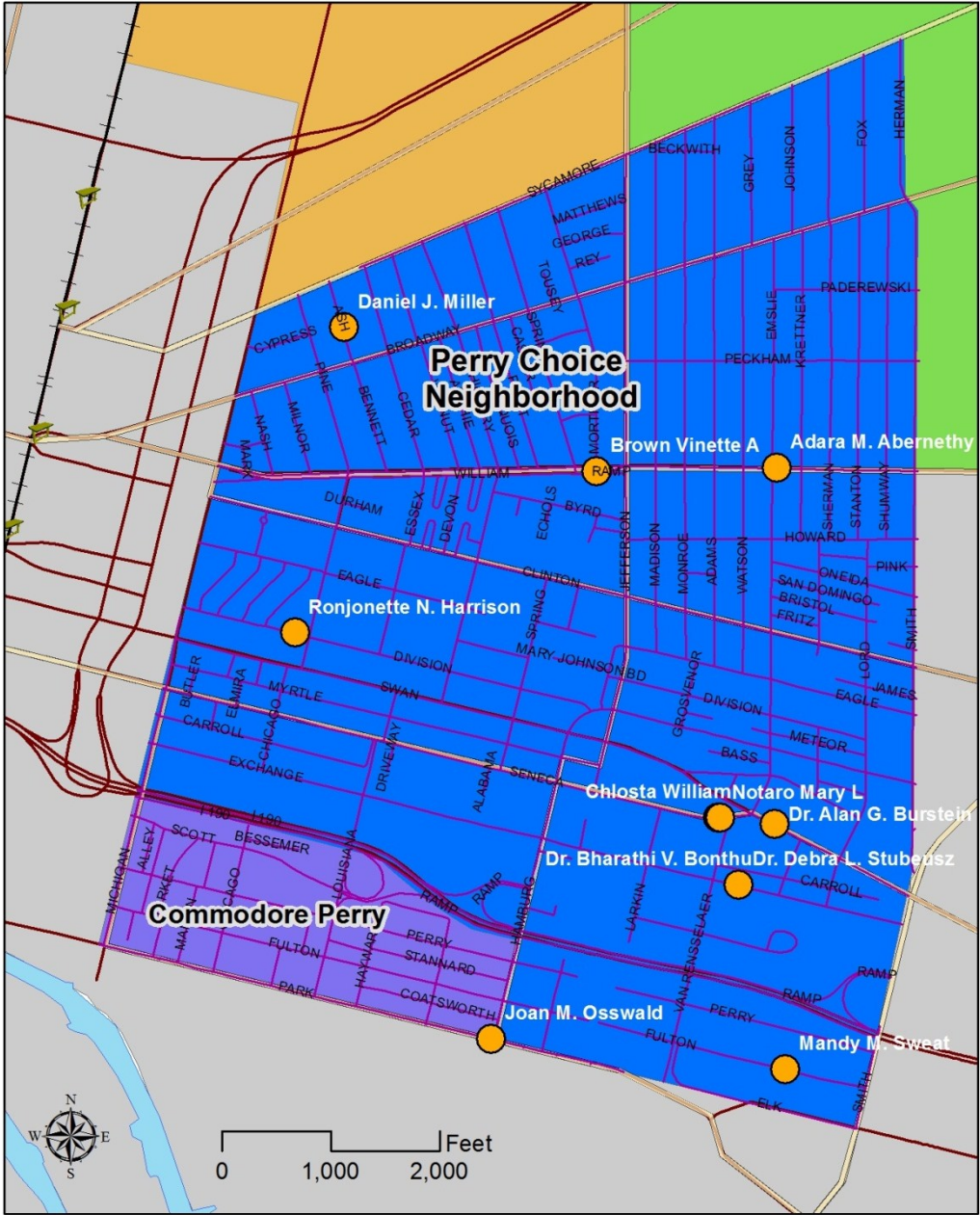
Organization	Address	Type	Location
Ronjonette N. Harrison, LMSW	261 South Division Street	Doctor's Office	PCN
Daniel J. Miller, MS	33 Ash St	Doctor's Office	PCN
Town Garden Pediatrics	461 William Street	Health Service Industry	PCN
Brown Vinette A	463 William Street	Doctor's Office	PCN
Adara M. Abernethy, MSW	608 William Street	Doctor's Office	PCN
Clinical Support Services: Notaro Mary L	701 Seneca St # 310	Doctor's Office	PCN
Cms Physician: Chlosta William MD	703 Seneca Street	Doctor's Office	PCN
Dr. Bharathi V. Bonthu, MD	726 Exchange Street	Doctor's Office	PCN
Dr. Debra L. Stubeusz, MD	726 Exchange Street	Doctor's Office	PCN
Dr. Alan G. Burstein, MD	755 Seneca Street	Doctor's Office	PCN
Mandy M. Sweat, RN	678 Fulton Street	Doctor's Office	PCN
Joan M. Osswald, NP	571 South Park Avenue	Doctor's Office	OFW
Frederick Douglass Community Center	234 Jefferson Ave	Community Center	PCN

Figure 21: Old First Ward Supportive Services
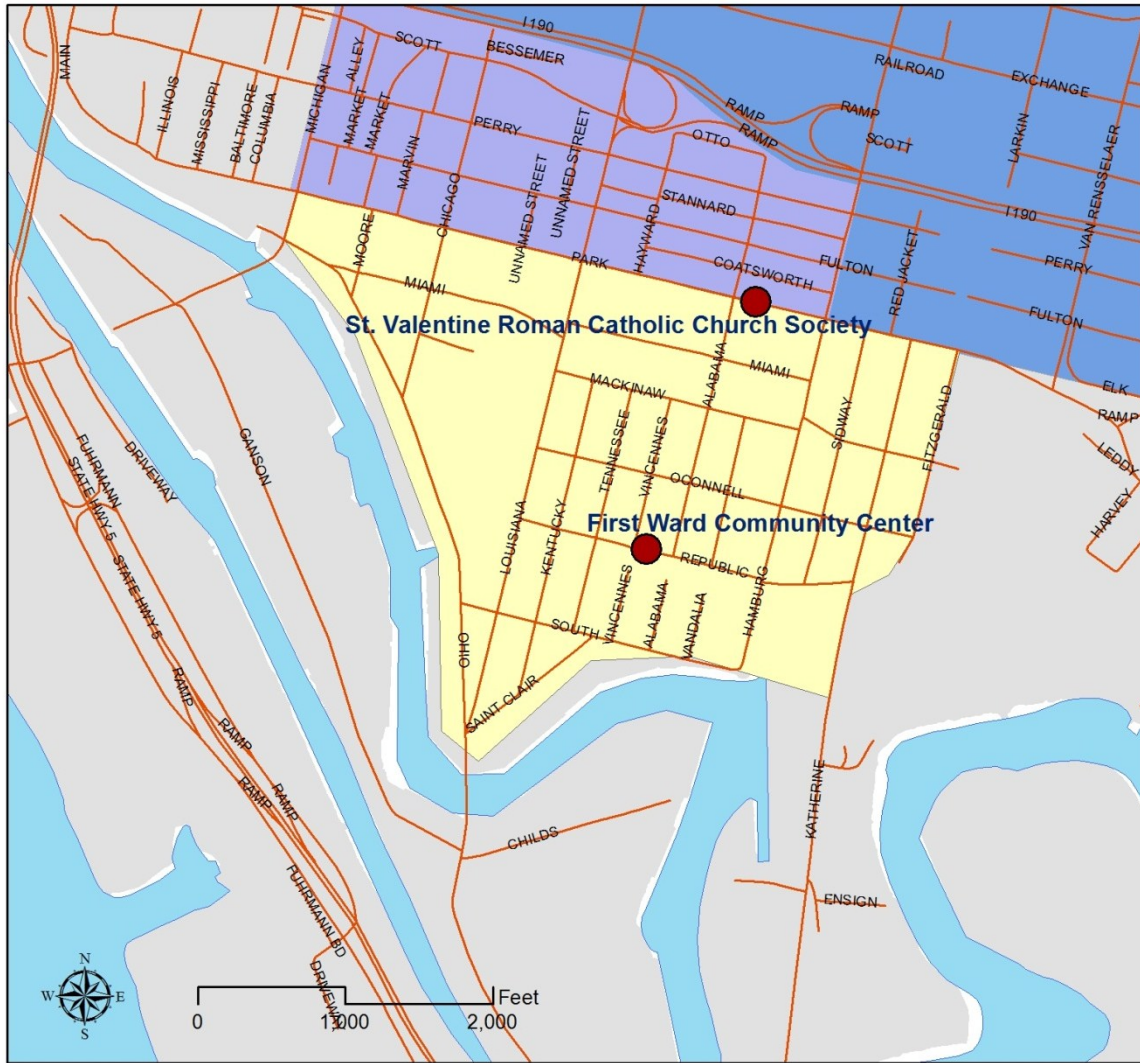
Table 2: Time travel and distances from Perry Auditorium (416 Louisiana) as reference point to supportive service places within three districts (PCN, OFW, CPD)

	Location	Distance	Walk (min)	Drive (min)	Bike (min)	Bus (Min)
Catholic Health's Mercy Comprehensive Care Center	CPD	0.06	1	<1	<1	none
Catholic Charities	CPD	0.07	1	<1	<1	none
Community School #53	OFW	0.1	3	<1	1	none
Buffalo City Even Start Family Literacy Program	CPD	0.1	3	<1	1	none
Emerson Young Family Care Center	CPD	0.1	3	<1	<1	none
Buffalo Police Department	CPD	0.2	3	<1	<1	none
Lanigan Field House	CPD	0.3	7	1	2	4
Buffalo Elementary School of Technology (Public School 6)	PCN	0.6	12	4	6	12
Old First Ward Community Center	OFW	0.6	12	2	4	9
First Shiloh Baptist Church	PCN	0.7	14	3	4	12
JFK Recreation Center	PCN	0.7	15	4	5	14
Sts. Columba-Brigid Montessori School	PCN	0.7	14	4	5	14
PS. 32 Bennett Park Montessori (3Y-8)	PCN	0.9	19	5	7	17
Harvest House New Hope Education Center	PCN	0.9	18	4	6	7
Harvest House Good Neighbors Organization Health Care	PCN	0.9	18	4	6	7
Valley Community Association	OFW	0.9	18	3	5	7
Sheehan Memorial Hospital	PCN	1	21	4	6	20
Sheehan Family Care Clinic	PCN	1	21	4	6	17
Office Team	PCN	1.1	22	4	7	13
Mid-Erie Counseling and Treatment Services	PCN	1.2	24	6	9	8
YMCA	PCN	1.4	28	6	10	12
PS. 31 Harriet Ross Tubman School (PK-8)	PCN	1.9	38	8	12	28
PS 93 Southside Elementary	PCN	2.7	53	6	16	19

(Source: Google Maps Estimates)

Figure 22: Supportive Services within 600 ft buffer zone (walking distance), 1200 ft and 1 mile
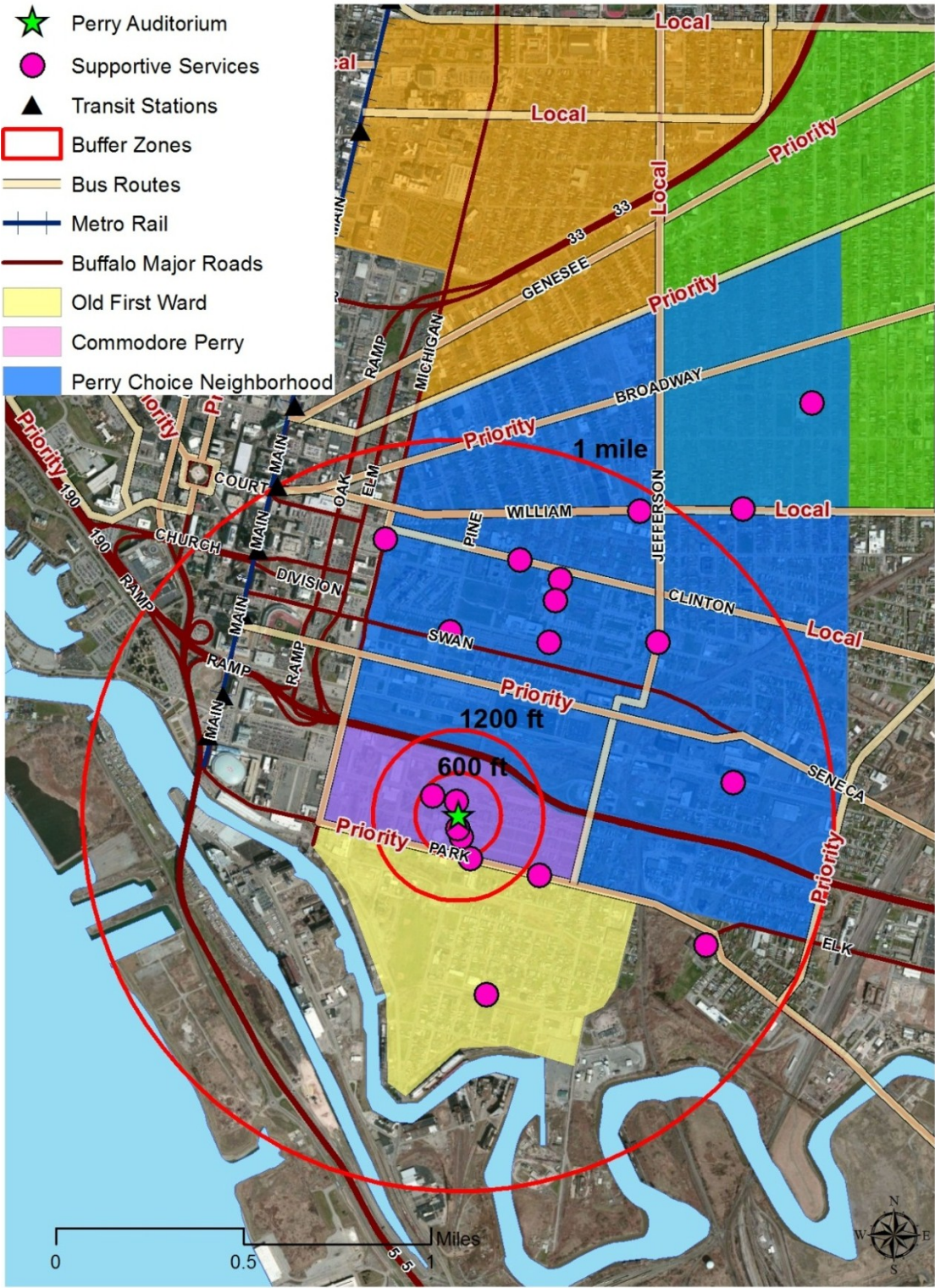
Conclusion

There are a wide range of services available to residents throughout the Perry Choice Neighborhood and Commodore Perry District. A number of supportive services providers offer a range of different services to residents of the community. These providers, however, are scattered widely across the neighborhood, making it difficult to obtain multiple services in one trip, especially by walking or by public transportation. Many of the service providers are on different bus routes that require a number of change-overs from one route to the next, which adds significantly to travel time. For instance, Sheehan Memorial Hospital, only a mile from the center of Commodore Perry District, might take a resident as long to take a bus as it would for him or her to walk due to required change-overs.

V. Interviews with Neighborhood Supportive Service Providers

Introduction

During June and July of 2011, a series of interviews were conducted with service providers located near the Commodore Perry Development and with other Buffalo Municipal Housing Authority (BMHA) developments that have services located on-site in order to better understand some of the services available to the residents of Perry and to get an understanding of some of the services the BMHA offers at other developments. These interviews were conducted on-site and in the setting in which they operate their services. The same set of base questions were used for each interview altering only in the specificity in the type of service they provided. The organizations interviewed provide healthcare, community centers, computer training, GED training and other types of support. This section includes a brief overview of each site that was interviewed, followed by an overall assessment. Full transcripts of noted from each interview are included in the appendix of this report.

<u>**Service Agencies Located in the Commodore Perry District**</u>

Catholic Charities

One of the most comprehensive human service providers in Western New York, offering a multitude of family and children services, is Catholic Charities. However, at Perry their services are limited to a food bank, informal referral services when necessary, sewing classes, metro passes, and art classes on occasion for children. There is no real collaboration with BMHA and Catholic Charities beyond a tenant landlord relationship. Catholic Charities agrees that residents seem to not be aware of services. They expressed that they would like to bring back other programs but there is no data to show a need in terms of the numbers and they cannot

get the participation needed to justify its continuation. However, that being said, the food pantry is a popular program at Perry and is used by many of its residents.

Lanigan Field House

The Lanigan Field House is owned and operated by the City of Buffalo's Recreation Department. There is a partnership with BMHA, but they have no real interaction. There is also a loose partnership with Buffalo Police Athletic League, who does offer funding from time to time. The building in which it is located is old and in need of repairs. At the time of the interview, there were plans to fix the roof over one of the gyms, which had sustained water damage. Much of the equipment in the facility is old, although the main gym is in fairly decent shape. There are 4-6 computers located in a room outside of the main gym, but they are not operable. The co-director of Lanigan said that he lets some of the children use the computer in his office, but that is only one computer. They try to organize a lot of small leagues and tournaments for the kids that include basketball, flag football, and more. Children and youth ages 18 and under are allowed to participate and use the facilities. Many boys come to the gym, but a limited number of girls use it. There is a desire to extend their programs to offer tutoring and more, but it never works out. This is due to either a lack of funding or a lack of attendance by the children.

<u>**Service Agencies Located Outside of the Commodore Perry District**</u>

Belle Center

This is a great facility and can possibly serve as a model for the proposed Life Chance Center for the Commodore Perry Development. They do a wonderful job with their youth programs and services, filling them to capacity. Although adults cannot use the facility if they have no children in the program, Social Services has an office there; they have a food pantry; People, Inc. has an office; Community Health Network of Buffalo holds meetings once a month with community health workers and interested community members; free AIDs testing if offered; youth counseling is available; and many other programs. Although they have all these services, the building mainly serves children. The building is 65,000 square feet, but they are still looking to expand as they are constantly "bursting at the seams." They are currently trying to partner with West Side Community Services because their senior population is very small and they need the space for their other youth programs.

Frederick Douglas

Frederick Douglas Community Center has two main programs: an after-school program managed by Literacy Volunteers and a Computer Training Program managed by the Buffalo Public School District. The after-school program is Monday-Friday, 3pm-7pm during the school year and is funded through the Neighborhood Network Grant. They have about 15 kids that

attend. The computer classes are 8-week sessions Monday-Friday, 9am-12pm. The classes must be full in order for them to continue to offer them. The majority of the people within the class are in their 60's, many of whom are learning to use a computer for the first time. However, a BMHA housing aide is there to monitor the computer lab Tuesdays and Thursdays 1-4pm so that youth may use the computers as well. The community center is also rented out to the community for celebrations and events.

Harvest House

Harvest House is a Christian based organization whose mission is to provide comprehensive services for families in need. Currently they have two sites. Their original building is on Seneca Street and is used for the retreats they host as well as the Baby and Children's Ministry. The Baby and Children's Ministry provides clothes, books, and other needs for babies to families in need. The Ministry Center on Jefferson Avenue, adjacent to the Frederick Douglas BMHA development, has Good Neighbors Health Care, New Hope Education Center, and is being expanded to hold the Baby and Children's Ministry (which they envision moving from the Seneca Street location). They are attempting to make a one-stop center for services. They have partnered with ECC, Erie2CC, Boces, and BPS Adult Education to provide classes in their Education Center. Within their health center they offer primary health care, dentistry, chiropractic, eye appointments, and more. They also have a lawyer that comes once a week at this site to give free legal advice for those who need it. Harvest House partners with BMHA solely for marketing purposes, but are willing to form new partnerships. The work of the Harvest House could serve as a good model for the Life Chances Center proposed for Perry as well. They seem to be able to fund their projects well and form lasting partnerships.

Martha Mitchell Community Center

Martha Mitchell Community Center is home to the SUNY ATTAIN lab in which people from all over the city go to get computer training. The ATTAIN lab serves a good model for a potential computer lab and training program at Perry. It is funded and staffed through SUNY Research Foundation funding. The computers were donated by the University at Buffalo, but miscellaneous supplies such as ink cartridges and paper come through the Neighborhood Network grant which is set to expire in June 2012. There are a lot classes offered throughout the year including advanced computer levels and GED. They receive 250 visits per month; about 95% of them are from BMHA residents. Through the grant they have been able to give out bus passes which they assure has helped a lot. They do have some retention issues particularly with the GED program which loses about 70-80% of their students. The staff expressed a need for family literacy and more for the kids at the community center. MMCC has gone through a few management changes and now is managed by the tenant council who just recently was given a budget of $135,000 to provide programs. Bethel head start is also in the building, but merely as

a tenant. There is no contact between BMHA and the head start program, so they have no telling of who is using the service.

Northwest Buffalo Community Center

The Northwest Buffalo Community Center is one of the largest human service providers in the Buffalo area. It serves as a sort of hub for service providing in the neighborhood. A volunteer board of directors made up of local citizens, business leaders, and government officials governs the facility. Some of the organizations within it are Kaleida Health clinic, a dental clinic, a medical lab, Social Services, a Senior Center, Head Start, WIC, ESL Classes, 21st Century, and more. BMHA operates a computer lab within the building, but it seems as if they are no more than a tenant although the space and Internet connection are provided for free. BMHA shares the room where the computer lab is located with senior services, so there is a flow of seniors in the room as well. There are not many BMHA residents who use this facility and are no Perry residents. A housing aide is there twice a week to help people with job searches, but they expressed a need for classes and interview tips.

Overall Assessment

Similar trends were found after assessing the interviews conducted with service providers. The vast majority of services seem to be reactionary not preventative. Although it is important to provide these needs, it is equally important to find the root of the problem and find ways to attack those issues. Many service providers are limited to only providing services after it has become a very drastic problem. For example, parent counseling occurring only after there is a report of abuse and if it is court ordered or an investigation of a person's needs only after they have neglected to pay their rent. It seems that many of the issues would not escalate the way they do if services were available before a drastic incident takes place.

Another issue that was prevalent was the lack of access to these services, especially of the Perry residents. Although the needed services are around, residents are either unaware of these options or they have limited access. Transportation becomes a huge obstacle as BMHA services seem to be very scattered throughout the developments. This scattering could be occurring for a number of reasons. Services provided are usually grant based so it becomes a matter of providing whatever there is funding for at the time and where they can fit this. Therefore, although a national trend may not fit within the needs of Buffalo, the funding often reflects these trends and services are provided without justification, or need. At the time of these interviews, the BMHA was funding many of its services located in their developments through a HUD Neighborhood Network Grant. This grant is set to expire in June 2012, which leaves one to wonder if those services funded by the grant will continue if another source of funding is not found by this time. This also brings up questions of the sustainability of the

services they offer. BMHA holds a series of partnerships with organizations that provide the services to residents. These partnerships are very limited and there is limited accountability and reporting to BMHA. A reporting system is needed so that BMHA can better track what their residents are accessing. This could be used to help develop a systematic strategy for service providing, find gaps, and the best use of funds. Another strategy may be for the BMHA to conduct a needs assessment in each of its individual developments so that they know that the services offered to each of its populations matches need.

A problem with service providing specifically in Perry seems to be sustainability and a service provider's ability to justify the need or feasibility for the service. It is difficult in many cases to get and retain people in these programs. This occurs all over the city, but with the shrunken population at Perry it often makes it impossible for services to keep running. Catholic Charities cannot provide the numbers needed to justify an expansion of their services much beyond the food pantry. Lanigan has had tutors in the past, but would only get about 1 or 2 students. There are a number of suspected reasons for these small numbers at the programs. It may be that the traditional means of advertising are simply not working. Mailers and flyers could easily get thrown away because they get so many other pices of information, or perhaps even due to literacy restraints. There could be a need for computer training to understand how to use websites such as 211wny.org or centralrefferal.org to find all the services they could potentially have access to. There could also be a lack of trust, or a loss of hope, in service providing due to past disappointments of discontinued services and cancelled programs.

There could be a serious lack of a foreseen benefit of utilizing programs, specifically job training. Computer classes may help a resident obtain their GED, but there is nothing to answer the question now what? It often stops there and services are not carried through so that people may truly elevate out of poverty. Where do they find a job? What do they need to know in an interview? Another issue is that many policies have created a catch-22 for people seeking self-sufficiency. If they do get a job they often lose many of the benefits they need. It becomes more financially viable to stay unemployed than to make steps to become independent. This is a huge gap in the system that keeps people who desire independency from sometimes seeking it. Steps need to be made to determine what best ways to make residents aware of the services, give them better access, and provide them with the means to become independent in a very rewarding and meaningful way.

Health Clinics Located in the Commodore Perry District

Mercy Care Center

Mercy Care Center, located in the heart of Perry, opened its new building in December 2010 and currently serves about 2,000 patients per month. They have continued to gradually add

more services. At the time of the interview, they were just beginning to open their laboratory services and x-rays. Mercy will soon have ultrasound and is also working on offering mammograms. They are attempting to be a one-stop shop for healthcare needs. Mercy will not turn anyone away. Patients can still get health care even if they do not have insurance. With the increased funding and services they have been able to obtain an in-house social worker (Eileen Needham) who assists patients with other needs outside of their health. She gets referrals from the physicians when they see a red flag. In addition, she helps them with job training and other services they may need to take care of themselves and their family.

Mercy estimates that about 40% of their patients were African-Americans. The clinic has a refugee program (about 25 patients currently, mostly Burmese), and also serve a significant number of Hispanics. They have a language services program as well as a program for the hearing impaired. A podiatrist is there once a week and is always booked due to the magnitude of patients with uncontrolled diabetes. Also once a week, the clinic offers nutritional education. They expressed the need for better marketing of their services and getting the word out to the neighborhood. They have found communication (phone numbers changing and no way to get a hold of their patients), transportation, and continuous care to be challenges in their service delivery to all those they would like to serve. They would like to do more, but will need to obtain another provider as they are already reaching capacity.

Service Hours
Adult Care: Monday-Thursday 8 a.m. – 6 p.m. Friday 8 a.m. – 5:30 p.m.
OB/GYN: Monday-Thursday 9 a.m. – 5 p.m. Friday 8 a.m. – 4 p.m.
Pediatrics: Monday-Thursday 8 a.m. – 6 p.m. Friday 8 a.m. – 5:30 p.m.
Laboratory Services (Full Service Draw Station): For Hours of Operation must call 923-6121
Imaging Services (X-Ray): Monday-Friday 8:30 a.m. – 4:30 p.m.

Health Clinics Located Outside of the Commodore Perry District

Towne Gardens Health Clinic

Towne Gardens is a pediatric primary health care clinic, part of the Kaleida Health Network. This is their primary specialty, as well as Pediatric Developmental Behavioral Health. They also have made the services PACT (Parents and Children Together) and Youthlink available. They are able to provide their services for free because all children are guaranteed health insurance in New York State. There was an expressed need to be able to further help parents be able to fill out the proper paperwork to get this insurance. Sometimes it is as simple as bringing the birth certificate to the office and they fill out all the paperwork for them. They still struggle to get some parents to bring these documents, as about 20% of their patients do not have health

insurance. However, they will never turn a child away from care. They provide care for children from birth to age 18 and then they refer them to an adult primary care provider. Sometimes, patients are continued to be seen pro bono by the physicians until they are 21 because the physicians have known them for so long. Most of their patients come from the East side of Buffalo, particularly zip code 14204. Their patients are tracked on both a monthly and yearly basis. Between 90-95% of their patients are African-Americans. They recognize the many other needs of their patients and families that contribute to the health of the children. An issue that they have recently recognized a need for a solution is transportation. Many of their patients miss crucial appointments because they have no way of getting to the clinic. Social workers are on site to help match the patients with programs and other services they may be in need of. The clinic does do some outreach in the schools, but expressed a need for funding to do more outreach in the community. They have contacted the block groups, but have received little response since.

Overall Assessment

After interviewing both Towne Gardens and Mercy Health Clinics, it appears that there are a multitude of services for those in need of healthcare. The issue seems to lie in both the limit to access and the lack of information knowledge. With every child having the ability to obtain health insurance, there is no reason that one should go without a primary healthcare provider. So why are there so many children that go without seeing a doctor for so long? Transportation is definitely a possibility if they do not have the means to bring their child to an appointment. The inability for the provider to have consistent contact and follow through with the parent through telephone messages could also hinder this consistency in care. However, it can be argued for Perry that Mercy is within walking distance of everyone that lives there so transportation should be a non-issue. Yet through our interviews we found that this lack of access may be due to a lack of information known about Mercy Care Center. Perhaps residents do not know that Mercy has all these different services within their building now. Residents may also not feel a level of comfort either if no relationships have been built. Parents may not know that they can obtain health insurance for their child or fully understand how they are to do so. It seems that a larger effort in outreach is needed. A lack of understanding could be what is keeping a child from continuous care. It could be as simple, for example, as a parent not understanding that a child's regular doctor visits can prevent them from becoming ill. A doctor's office is not just a place for the sick, but in these clinics it seems that is what they have mostly become. Residents seem very unaware of the services available to them and we must ask why that is.

VI. Focus Groups: Resident Perspectives on Service Delivery

1. Demographic Profile of the Meetings

Between September 28, 2011 and November 1, 2011, the project team conducted five (5) focus groups with targeted populations in order to supplement the Community Needs Assessment process. The five (5) focus groups conducted in order were:

1. Commodore Perry Residents - Senior Focus Group meeting (September 28, 2011)
2. Commodore Perry Residents - Youth Focus Group meeting (October 10, 2011)
3. Perry Choice Neighborhood Residents - A.D. Price / Frederick Douglas Towers (BMHA developments) and Neighborhood Resident Focus Group meeting (October 17, 2011)
4. Commodore Perry Residents – Quality of Life (working age residents) Focus Group meeting (October 19, 2011)
5. Old First Ward Resident Focus Group meeting (November 1, 2011)

A total of 104 people attended the focus group sessions. Of these 103 people, 37 were males and 67 were females. The total number of people attending focus group sessions is a higher number (but not known), since the number of people counted for each focus groups was limited to those attendees who chose to identify themselves on a sign-in sheet, which was made available as people walked in the door to each focus group.

The Commodore Perry Residents - Senior Focus Group meeting was attended by twenty-one (21) people, fifteen (15) who were female and six (6) of which were male. All of the attendees were residents of the Commodore Perry development and were recruited through the placement of posters in the Perry towers and a flyer drop to targeted residents. One non-senior female was present at the meeting and was counted as an attendee, and was allowed to participate in the meeting. All of the attendees were African-American, except for one Hispanic resident who participated in the meeting.

The second meeting was the Commodore Perry Residents - Youth Focus Group. The target population that was recruited for this meeting was youth who lived in Perry and who were between the ages of 12-17. There were a couple of youth who came with brothers or sisters that were younger than 12 years of age, but were allowed to participate in the meeting. A total of eighteen (18) youth took part in the focus group, and the gender population was evenly balanced with nine (9) male and nine (9) female members. Youth in Perry were solicited for their participation by a poster and sign-up sheet placed in the Lanigan Field House and a mailing to residents in Perry with children of this age cohort.

The third focus group was made up of people from the Perry Choice Neighborhood target area. Residents of two (2) BMHA developments (A.D. Price and Frederick Douglas Towers) as well as residents of the Perry Choice Neighborhood were recruited for this meeting. Recruitment was done in the BMHA developments through a flyer drop at each development. Non-BMHA

residents of the neighborhood were solicited through a mailing to block clubs and churches in the target area. The meeting was held in the Community Room located of the Frederick Douglas BMHA development. This was the largest focus group that was held, as a total of forty (40) people signed in at the meeting. Twenty-four (24) participants were female and sixteen (16) were male at the focus group.

The Commodore Perry Residents – Quality of Life Focus Group meeting was made up of a population of Perry residents of working ages, roughly 21-64 years old. Attendees of this focus group were recruited through a flyer drop to Perry residents and through the Perry Tenant Council. Twelve (12) people attended this focus group – eleven (11) were female and one was male.

The final focus group involved residents of the Old First Ward community, which is located immediately south of the Perry development. Several methods of recruitment were utilized for this meeting. The project team worked with the Director of the Old First Ward Community Center to recruit residents of the neighborhood. A poster was placed in the community center, a member of the project team attended a meeting of the Old First Ward Housing Association to announce the focus group, and a message was posted on the Old First Ward Community Center's Facebook page. The total number of attendees was twelve (12), although several participants chose not to put their name on the sign-in sheet. Of the participants, seven (7) were female and five (5) were male.

2. Organizational Structure of Meetings

The members of the project team who were responsible for overseeing the focus groups followed a similar format in organizing and conducting each focus group, with the exception of some minor changes necessary to tailor the focus group to a specific population.

For each meeting, a project team member from UB or from the BMHA was stationed at the meeting venue entrance in order to have attendees provide their name, address, phone number, and email on a sign-in sheet for tracking purposes. The tables and chairs at each focus group were set up in the shape of a square or rectangle, so that the focus group moderator, note taker, and participants could face each other while discussing the various questions posed to each group. This room set up provided an intimate atmosphere where people could face each other when responding to questions posed by the moderator. The exception to this room set up was the focus group made up of the residents of the A.D. Price/Frederick Douglas BMHA developments and residents of the Perry Choice Neighborhood target area. Because of the size of this focus group, this meeting was held in a town hall format, where residents sat on chairs throughout the room.

At the outset of each focus group, either the moderator or the project's principal investigator took a few minutes to provide an introduction for attendees to the format and expected outcomes the meeting. This introduction included a brief overview of the Perry Choice

Neighborhood project, the specific purpose of the focus group, the type of questions that would be asked, the information the project team was looking to collect, and the "meeting rules" for the participants. The "meeting rules" were provided to the people in attendance so that they would feel comfortable to freely express their opinions during the meeting. Generally, this discussion pointed out that participant's should respect the opinions of each person; that there were no wrong opinions; that no ideas were too outrageous or too big; and that all comments made during the meeting.

Once the introduction was complete, the focus group moderator began the process of going through the list of questions asked during the course of the meeting. The moderator for each meeting was a member of the project team, with the exception of the youth focus group, where the project team employed the services of an outside moderator who was an expert in youth issues to conduct that focus group. At each meeting, a project team member sitting at the focus group table took detailed notes on a laptop. In addition, a project team member also wrote down comments made on an easel pad. The moderator was also responsible for asking follow up questions to clarify opinions or in instances where a comment stated provided as opportunity to probe further into an issue when necessary.

Finally, when the question list for each focus group was completed, the moderator asked the participants if there were any other comments that people would like to make about the topics covered at the meeting. Once these final comments, if any, were collected, the moderator asked the meeting participants to remain seated so that the focus group information could be reviewed. At this final stage of each meeting, the note taker, or the project team member who wrote down the comments on the easel pad, went through each of the statements from the easel pad to ensure the accuracy of each comment that was written down. In addition, this recap allowed for the opportunity for participants to add additional comments that they may not have thought of during the course of the meeting. At the end of this final segment of the meeting, participants were thanked for their contributions and refreshments were served.

3. Question Template for Focus Groups

The following template of general questions was asked at each of the focus groups across a number of topics in order to discern residents' understanding and insights about the existing supportive service network. The objective was to learn as much about the perceived effectiveness of the existing system as possible, to determine resident perspectives on potential new strategies, and to gather resident input on methods and strategies to improve the existing system. Some of the questions were asked to learn more about resident concerns and their vision for improving the neighborhood.

General Questions

Health

- What types of recreation programs, amenities, or social activities and groups are available in the community? Do you use them?
- What types of recreation programs or social activities would you like to see?
- What types of health services are available to you? Are they in the community? How do you access them?
- What types of health services would you like to see available in the community?

Supportive Services

- What types of businesses and services are currently available in the community? How do you access them?
- What types of businesses and stores would you like to see in the community?
- What types of services would you like to see provided in the community?

Safety

- Where in the community do you feel safe? Where do you feel unsafe?
- If you feel unsafe in certain areas, what can be done to make them safer?

Neighborliness

- What are the five major problems the community faces?
- How would you address each of these five problems?
- What types of physical improvements would you like to see in the community?
- Do you feel that the community has a center or central place that draws people together?

Employment

- What types of employment and/or employment training opportunities would you like to see within the community?

Group-Specific Questions

Perry Seniors

- If an educational program for preschoolers and elementary school students were set up, would you want to participate in it? What special things do you believe seniors could offer?
- Describe your experience trying to get the services you need? Where do you go to get the senior services you need?

Perry Youth

- What school do you go to? Why did you choose that school?

- How satisfied are you with your school experience?
- What do you think about your teachers?
- Do you think doing well in school is important?
- Do you attend an after –school program? If so, what do you think about it?
- What are your plans for the future?
- If you could change things in your school, what would you do?
- Do you feel like people at home encourage you to do well in school?
- Do you do homework?   If so, do you have a good place to do your homework?
- If you need help with your homework, what do you do?
- Outside of school, do you have access to a computer or the internet?
- Can you use your bus passes to go to the library or some other place where they might have computers?
- Do you feel like you are ready for school in the morning?
  - Are you rested?
  - Do you have breakfast?
  - Are your clothes ready?
- Are there programs in Lanigan that you use or participate in?
- Do you have gangs in Perry?
- If you change things in Perry, what would you do?

Perry Quality of Life
- What types of activities do you believe would help get jobs and business ownership opportunities in the neighborhood?
  - Do you think job training problems linked to real work would be supported by residents?
- Does Perry have a neighborhood center that draws people from across the neighborhood to it—kind of a central place?
  - Would you like to see such a place?
  - Where should it be located?
- What types of activities could be done to improve the identity of Perry?

Price/Douglass
- Does this community have a neighborhood center that draws people from across the neighborhood to it—kind of a central place? Would you like to see such a place? Where should it be?
- What types of activities could be done to improve the identity of this neighborhood?

Old First Ward
- What housing programs are available to residents of the Old First Ward?
  - Where are they and what types of programs?
  - What programs aren't available that you would like to see offered?

4. Assessment of Senior Focus Group

Introduction

The purpose and goal of this focus group was to learn about the issues faced by the senior citizen residents of the BMHA Commodore Perry development. In particular, their view of the services available to them in the development and the surrounding neighborhood; the services that used to be available; the services they wish to see available; the problems they face as senior citizens in Perry; their view of safety and security in Perry; and what services they believe should be offered in the neighborhood.

Findings

There were several themes that came out of the senior focus group. The members of the focus group included many long-time residents of Perry have seen the changes to the neighborhood over time. These changes are not only limited to the physical changes to the neighborhood, which include the housing structures on the Perry site and the deterioration of the commercial corridor on South Park Avenue, but also quality of life issues connected to services, and access to services that assist people in their everyday lives. The seniors had strong opinions on these issues. The overriding themes made during the meeting were as follows:

1. **Seniors feel that there are no supportive services for them at Perry.** This statement was meant to include the disabled population at Perry, who seniors said there are a lot of. They all were aware of a time when there were services located in and around the Perry development for them. They remember when the Community Action Organization operated programs on site, they remembered lunches, movie nights, and shopping trips, but feel that nothing is there for them now. One resident stated that they felt like living at Perry was like "we are in a cage with nothing to do". There is awareness for services that are located near Perry, but not in Perry, and that is the issue. The members of the focus group provided a long list of services they would like to see in Perry – recreational programs, social and cultural programs, transportation services, a social worker, and living assistance – which may be a real need with the number of seniors who live in the Perry Development. Many of these ideas were connected to services that will help with their everyday lives, such as a place to buy fresh food and produce, but many of these ideas also were aimed at creating increased interaction among residents which may be directly related to the quote above.

2. **Access to services is a problem for seniors living in Perry.** This point was talked about on multiple levels – communication, transportation, BMHA information, and BMHA facilities. Seniors felt that the communication between the BMHA and residents needs improvement. They feel as there is nowhere to go to get information about services available to them and see a need for an organization or institution that can meet this need. The help they feel they need is everything from knowing where to go to get services to help in filling out applications or forms to get access to a particular service.

The access also includes literally being able to use BMHA resources. Seniors pointed out during the meeting that every building on the Perry site has a community room – but that no one gets to use it. The same thing goes for the Perry Aud. They feel as if Perry is treated differently, because they are aware of other BMHA developments that allow residents to use rooms on site for events.

3. **Transportation is an issue that transcends all age, gender, and racial groups in Perry.** Getting around the neighborhood and to services outside of Perry is difficult. Because residents have limited and/or fixed incomes, they have a hard time being able to afford to pay for transportation. Therefore, this limits their ability to get to services that they want or need. Their only way to access services then is to rely on a friend, or someone else to drive them where they need to go, but often this also means having to pay that person to get them there. So, seniors seem to be "trapped" in Perry (as one resident stated) more so than any other population in the development. The age of seniors, physical limitations, and possible health conditions would seem to prevent them from being able to walk long distances to get to a service they need. They would therefore also seem to be more dependent on paying for transportation then other age cohort in Perry. The senior population would benefit greatly from services being located in the future in and around Perry and/or the establishment of a transportation service or program that could move them throughout the neighborhood.

4. **Health care for the aged is a critical issue.** Resident participants in the focus group access some of the health care facilities in the Perry Choice Neighborhood – the Mercy Care Clinic and Sheehan Memorial were sites mentioned where people go, but seniors also felt there is limited knowledge of local health care facilities available to them. This could be a reason why many in the focus group listed sites outside of the Perry Choice Neighborhood as places where they get their health care. Some of the members of the focus group go to Lackawanna Mercy, ECMC, Millard Fillmore, and the Buffalo VA Hospital as the place they go to receive their health care. Some of these places are far removed from the Perry development, so it makes you think (1) what the cost of transportation for a round trip to see the doctor is for a senior on a fixed income, and (2) whether the real issue is a lack of knowledge on what health care facilities are available to them in the Perry choice Neighborhood.

5. **Safety and security issues are very important to the seniors in Perry on two (2) levels.** On one level, there are concerns over personal safety, since some of the seniors were genuinely worried about leaving their homes to go to the store, especially at night. They felt that increased security was needed on the site - from better lighting, to making sure the security cameras are working, to the idea of having the police do foot patrols in the neighborhood. These are neighborhood issues that can be addressed through the planning process, but also could be measures that BMHA could implement in the short term. However, on another level, seniors, similar to other Perry population groups, view issues of safety and security issues through the lens of the police on the Perry site. In this sense, seniors think new police officers and police management is needed. They feel

the current police force doesn't respect residents, harass youth, and are in need of sensitivity training. So, while residents have concerns for safety and security issues in Perry, they don't seem to be convinced that current security measures and security force in place today can be responsive to their needs and concerns.

5. Assessment of Youth Focus Group

Introduction

The goal of the focus group was to learn about the issues faces by youth in the neighborhood, the types of activities and amenities they would like to see in the neighborhood, what they like and dislike about the community, and their vision for the future.

Findings

Youth in Perry generally shared a strong sense of place. They clearly identified Perry as a distinct community from the surrounding areas, and even referred to individuals who lived in those neighborhoods as "outsiders." Youth strongly valued access to recreation activities at the Lanigan Field House, a youth-centered gymnasium facility centrally located in the Perry District. However, the poor physical condition of the facilities and the lack of a few practical amenities were of particular interest to the youth population.

1. **Youth identified a number of essential recreation activities were available to them at Lanigan Field House, but poor conditions and limited hours presented challenges to them.** This facility, which caters almost exclusively to youth 18 and under, offers a variety of activities including basketball, a lounge and game room, and a weight room. However, youth lamented that many of these facilities were in poor condition and in need of repair. Youth were dissatisfied with the hours of Lanigan, as well. While the facility was open until the late evening during the week, it was closed on the weekends, a time when many young people were looking for things to do.

2. **While neighborhood youth wanted to see some new facilities available to them such as a swimming pool, a volleyball court, and a baseball diamond, they were mostly interested in seeing the existing facilities repaired and improved**. The biggest issue for many was that the water fountain in the gym was broken, leaving them without convenient access to water while exercising. They also suggested that the leaky roof, forcing the facility to close down an entire gymnasium room due to mold, be repaired and that the weight room be stocked with working and updated equipment. Youth also explained that there used to be a place in Lanigan with computers that could be used to do homework and access to the Internet, but that they were outdated and broken. Still, some youth went to Lanigan to study and do homework in the absence of a quiet place to do so at home.

3. **Access and transportation to existing services was a major concern to Youth.** Despite living fairly close to the center of the city, youth felt that they had little access to stores and amenities that catered to their needs and interests in Perry, outside of Lanigan. Youth in high school had access to a bus pass, but this pass was only valid for traveling to and from school. This meant that they could not use the pass to get access to recreation facilities, medical centers, or even the public library, and left many teens frustrated. If they got caught using their pass on any other routes, they risked the chance of having it taken away. While the Downtown library was located only a short distance from Perry, with a wealth of books and computers with access to the Internet for research and homework, the walk required traveling down streets with high traffic volume coming off the freeway. Without the busses to get to the library, many youth felt unable to access the library and did not take advantage of its amenities.

4. **Youth had a high value of education and supportive families, but felt that their educators were generally un-committed and unsupportive.** Youth felt that their parents, grandparents and families were generally supportive of their education and strove to see them succeed. Virtually all the youth wanted to complete high school and attend college. However, many of their parents had not completed high school or college and did not know how to help them prepare. At the same time, youth felt that their teachers and guidance counselors were not interested or committed to help them succeed or achieve these objectives. They expressed a belief that some of their teachers were racist, that they were not invested in teaching them, and that they did not encourage the youth to succeed.

5. **Lack of access to healthy food was an issue for many youth.** Most admitted to not having breakfast at home in the morning. Some received breakfast at school in the morning, but felt that the food provided at school was unhealthy and of poor quality. Youth complained of a lack of drink options. Not many brought lunches to school.

6. **Gangs in schools made it difficult for many students to feel safe in school.** While youth in Perry generally felt that there were no major gang issues in the neighborhood, gangs in schools were a major concern and a major distraction from learning. Several teens mentioned that they chose their high school based on which schools their friends were attending in order to protect one another from gangs from other neighborhoods. Gangs and gang violence in school made some of them fearful of school, and pressure to join gangs was very high. While youth suggested there was no gang in Perry neighborhood, the youth as a whole functioned like a gang and worked together to protect the neighborhood from people coming from other places, or "outsiders," who were there to "start trouble."

7. **Youth did not feel that police were contributing to improving the safety of the neighborhood.** Youth generally felt that police did little to make the neighborhood safer and perceived them as both racially prejudiced and lazy, failing to respond to calls in the neighborhood within a reasonable time frame. They also complained that police

hypocritically ticketed people for driving through the playground near Lanigan and Fulton Street when many police were guilty of this crime as well. Youth also disliked the use of cameras in the neighborhood because they felt police did not look at the footage.

8. **An social distinction existed between the African American and Puerto Rican youth populations in the neighborhood.** African American and Puerto Rican youth sat together on opposite sides of the focus group and did not interact with one another much during the focus group. In general, African American youth, while larger in number, were disproportionately more vocal in the discussion. One of the African American boys sarcastically referred to the Puerto Rican girls in the room as "chicas," hinting that he viewed them as distinct from other girls in the room.

9. **Youth wanted to see improve housing conditions and quality within the neighborhood.** Youth viewed their residences as "ugly" and wanted to see improved design and improved landscaping in the redeveloped Perry. Some mentioned that the ceilings in their homes were collapsing and that the buildings were in need of serious repair. They also wanted to see the porches and sidewalks.

10. **Youth were also interested in increased employment opportunities.** Some participated in the Mayor's Summer Youth program and enjoyed the experience. Many were supportive of increased job opportunities for youth within the neighborhood.

6. Assessment of Quality of Life Focus Group

Introduction

The goal of this focus group was to learn about the issues faced by the "working age" residents of the BMHA Commodore Perry development – their view of the services available to them in the development and the surrounding neighborhood; the services that used to be available; the problems they face as senior citizens in Perry; their view of safety and security in Perry; and what services they believe should be offered in the neighborhood.

Findings

This focus group consisted of twelve (12) Commodore Perry development residents. In addition to having perspectives on the services delivery system in and around Perry, this focus group also touched on many other subject matters that connect to people's everyday lives in Perry. When thinking about the other focus groups held with Perry residents, this group perhaps had the widest ranging conversation on issues facing residents. There was an in depth discussion about what isn't in Perry and what improvements need to be made. The responses were both about the physical conditions as well as programs needed in order to improve the lives of everyone who lives there. This meeting was especially informative because unlike focus groups that were targeted specifically towards youth and/or senior issues, the quality of Life focus group provided a perspective of everyday life for someone trying to make a better life for themselves, raise a family, and deal with everyday issues.

1. **Focus group members felt that there is a need for more services in the Commodore Perry District.** For example, when discussing health care services, some focus group members utilize the Mercy Clinic and some said they go to Sheehan for their health care, but they believe that there are gaps in service. Some of the missing health care services they would like in the Perry area are a dental clinic, emergency care, a place to get physical therapy, and a place for seniors to go to. When the same question was posed to the group about supportive services, the answers from the focus group changed. They stated that there are no supportive services in Perry and that you have to leave Perry to get the services you need. The residents believe that Commodore Perry is left out of everything. There was agreement among the group that people have to go "over the bridge" or outside of Perry to access services. Finally, there is a lack of businesses in the area that would alleviate some of the needs of residents, which has been echoed by each of the focus groups that have been held. .

2. **There doesn't seem to be an issue over the awareness of the services available to residents of Perry throughout the PCN**. Members of the focus group are knowledgeable about the services that are out in the community, as everything from computer classes at Frederick Douglas, transportation at Martha Mitchell, the programs at Harvest House (GED, LPN), and the health clinics near Perry were all spoken about during the meeting. Focus group members also had awareness of programs that were once located in Perry, but are no longer in operation, like Child and Family Services and Personal Care Training. However, there is a disconnect between knowledge of services available and being able to actually access them. There are barriers that prevent residents from getting the services they need, such as transportation, or other barriers that aren't as straight forward as transportation. For example, a barrier to going to the Mercy Clinic mentioned is that it isn't open on weekends, or the feeling that there is a Catholic bias, which would be a social issue, or the fact that they don't take some insurance plans.

3. **As with other focus groups, transportation is a huge issue for residents of Perry and was listed as one of the top 5 problems in the Commodore Perry development**. There is a need for a transportation service or some additional transportation opportunities for the people that live in Perry. The cost of transportation, whether a bus or a cab, is something that impacts residents. One of the focus group members said it's difficult to afford transportation and was worried about any increase in bus fare. Therefore, its logical to conclude that the cost of transportation impacts how, how often, and where Perry residents access services.

4. **The working age residents in this focus group saw access to job training opportunities for both adults and youth as a critical need that is currently not being met.** Residents of Perry see a huge need for training programs for people who are looking for work, as long as they are linked to real work opportunities. The types of programs they want to see are everything from GED classes to resume writing to computer classes to skills training. The proposed Opportunity Center in Perry would be an ideal location to offer

this type of training. Adults – some of whom most likely have children, felt that the youth in Perry should not be left out of training opportunities and would like to see the BMHA as an organization that could help get the kids jobs, because they see how difficult it currently is for youth to find work in the Perry neighborhood. One critical service that is directly connected to working, and that would be needed in Perry, is day care for children, so that a parent could go to work and not have to worry about finding someone to watch their child. This would be most important for single parents in Perry.

5. **The types of programs residents feel are needed in Perry encompass almost every service area, so it does seem that residents don't believe there is anything for them in Perry**. They wish for recreational facilities, transportation services, training opportunities, day care and adult day care, and social opportunities. They see a Community Building or Center as the missing link to making this happen. This would give the Perry community a central meeting place and a neighborhood destination that isn't there now. It could also be the neighborhood center that many of the focus group members don't believe exists for adults the way Lanigan does for children.

6. **Residents do not believe Perry is unsafe, although drug activity was listed as one of the top 5 problems in the neighborhood**. Their concerns about safety and security were more connected to the relationship between the police and the community. Similar to the senior and youth focus groups, residents think the police use excessive force and target the youth in Perry. Others feel that there is a lack of investigation into incidents. There is a trust issue between residents and the police. This includes the security cameras that are throughout the Perry development, which are seen as an invasion of privacy. So, while people don't feel unsafe in their neighborhood, it does not necessarily mean that they feel safe in Perry. The trust issues that are real between residents and the police may actually make Perry feel unsafe to a degree, since there may not be anyone, or any group, as seen looking out for the safety and security of Perry residents.

7. **Residents are well aware of the conditions in which they live and the things that need to be done to improve the neighborhood**. Many of the physical deficiencies to the buildings in Perry are well known – from mold problems to cracks in the brick exterior of many of the buildings are serious issues that can be health hazards for people. Regular maintenance therefore is seen as a responsibility of BMHA, but responsiveness of the maintenance staff needs to increase. Members of the focus group said they have sometimes waited months for a work order to be addressed. An example of this would be a mother who needed a light fixed in the bathroom and said her son had to get dressed in the dark because it took so long to fix.

7. Assessment of AD Price/Douglass Focus Group

Introduction

The goal of the focus group was to learn about the issues faced by residents of AD Price/ Frederick Douglass Homes, which have experienced significant redevelopment in the past two decades. We also wanted to learn the types of activities and amenities residents of these communities would like to see in the Perry that would complement their community, what they like and dislike about where they live, and their vision for the future. This meeting was held in a town hall style and block clubs, tenant associations, and community stakeholders from South Ellicott will also invited to attend. The majority of participants were residents of public housing and private subsidized housing in the neighborhood.

Findings

While residents were grateful for having new housing, they were displeased with the fact that the redevelopment efforts in Price and Douglass Homes failed to address most of the fundamental- quality of life issues that residents in the neighborhood faced. In addition, they were resentful that residents were not given opportunities to participate or guide the process, and were displeased that some residents were forced out of their units during the renovations and never offered an opportunity to return. All of these issues caused many of the residents from both the public and private subsidized housing units in the neighborhood to greatly distrust BMHA and its partners.

1. **There was considerable dissatisfaction about safety and security services in the AD Price, Towne Garden, and Douglass developments.** Security was a major issue and there was a sense that current police presence was insufficient to address the crime and safety issues in the community. Some residents wanted to see security mirrors and cameras installed in some of the private subsidized housing facilities as well as the public ones, and some suggested that private security in the building entrances. Residents also wanted to see better lighting throughout the neighborhood to improve security.

2. **There was a sense of resident distrust in BMHA and its partners, especially with regards to pushing out or dislocating residents.** Residents generally expressed concerns that the redevelopment of Perry would mean current residents would be dislocated, as had happened in the past during Hope VI and other redevelopment efforts in the area. Residents viewed dislocating current residents with disdain, and considered it both unfair and unjust. Residents were also concerned that the redevelopment might mean an increase in rent for current residents or individuals who move to Perry. Residents were also concerned that the changes in the redevelopment of the neighborhood would mean new requirements for eligibility into public housing that would make it difficult for

current residents to return to Perry or to relocate to Perry from other housing developments.

3. **Residents were not satisfied with access to health services in the district.** Many went to private doctors for primary care and felt that neighborhood-based health care facilities were inadequate. Residents mentioned that Sheehan used to have higher quality clinical services, but there was a perception that these services had declined in quality and so fewer participated in these programs.

4. **Residents were interested in job training and employment assistance services to help residents of public housing find better employment.** Residents asked about the expansion of Section 3 opportunities through the neighborhood redevelopment process and training programs to help local people obtain these jobs.

5. **Despite new housing, residents were still dissatisfied with the overall appearance of the neighborhood.** They felt that the exteriors of many of the residential buildings should be cleaned and improved, with more space for community gardening, awnings for the sun, shaded shelters for the summer. They also wanted to see more public seating in outdoor public spaces, parks and near bus stops. In addition, they called for a removal of vacant and abandoned buildings in the community.

6. **Residents wanted a more convenient location to acquire needed social services and a more assistance navigating the application and provision process.** Residents felt that existing social services and social service assistance facilities were not conveniently located within the community or required special trips to downtown during work hours to obtain. In addition, many found navigating the social service system to apply for needed programs to be a difficult process. They suggested that some kind of case workers or social workers be provided to residents to help guide them through the process and provide them with more detailed information about what is available to them and how to acquire it effectively.

7. **Residents were not satisfied with the public and intra-neighborhood transportation available to them, especially for seniors.** Many lamented about the length of time between bus arrivals at many of the stops. In addition, residents pointed out with frustration that during school hours, some busses did not stop to pick up other passengers, even when there was still available seating. Another major issue presented by residents was the lack of bus shelters in the neighborhood and district. They pointed out that shelters were especially important during the winter time, when the cold wind off the lake made sitting outdoors especially hazardous to health. Residents were most concerned about this issue for the many senior citizens in the neighborhood, who were more susceptible to poor weather conditions. They proposed that a special senior intra-neighborhood transportation system be put in place to ensure that neighborhood seniors could get access to all the services they need.

8. **Residents wanted to see additional services, stores and recreational amenities in the community that cater to the needs of residents. However, not all residents possessed information literacy about the existing services available to them.** One of the biggest demands that arose from the meeting was that of a high quality supermarket. Residents also wanted to see a mall or commercial shopping district that provided a variety of shops. Shoe stores, theatres, cleaners, a fitness center, an African American History Museum, and more community gathering and outdoor space were among their recommendations. However, some of these facilities are already available within the bounds of South Ellicott and downtown. For instance, one resident suggested that legal consulting services would be useful and should be located in the neighborhood. However, Harvest House, right across the street from the Frederick Douglass Community Center, offers such services every Wednesday night.

9. **Residents were interested in seeing the creation of a central gathering space or place within the community.** In general, they felt that they did not have a single place within their neighborhood that served as a central gathering space. They were not opposed to Perry as a potential center of community activity. They wanted to see more gathering and activity space for outdoor social gatherings, but also a central location for shops, stores, and services that they need.

8. Assessment of Old First Ward Focus Group

Introduction

The goal of the focus group was to learn about the issues faced by residents of Old First Ward, a white working class neighborhood to the immediate south of Perry, bordering the neighborhood at South Park. We also wanted to learn the types of activities and amenities residents of these communities would like to see in the Perry that would complement their community and its vision. The Perry Choice Planning Team asked questions about what they like and dislike about where they live and their vision for the future. The meeting was conducted in a focus group style.

Findings

Many of the residents in attendance at the meeting were members of the Old First Ward Community Association, residents, and business owners. It was difficult to get detailed responses on many of the questions we asked, because a number of residents were highly fixated on expressing their distaste for public housing and their general opposition to the redevelopment of Perry for this reason. This has resulted in significant gaps in the insights we can provide about this group. Residents of Old First Ward that participated in the meeting expressed a strong sense of place to the point of territorialism, and viewed Perry as outsiders with completely different self-interests.

1. **Residents presented a strong interest in commercial redevelopment along South Park, catering to small local businesses serving the neighborhood. At the same time, residents expressed that a stigma exists for social services.** The most pressing demand by many residents was to see a full service grocery store within local proximity. Some expressed a dislike for the Tops on South Park in South Buffalo, which is the closest of such stores to the Old First Ward. In addition, participants expressed a desire to see the South Park commercial corridor between Old First Ward and Perry redeveloped to cater to small businesses that served the neighborhood. Perry residents also shared this interest in several other focus groups.

2. **Blighted, abandoned properties and absentee landlords were both perceived as major problems by Old First Ward residents and business owners, and desired to see effective strategies at enforcing building codes.** Several participants told us stories about problem properties in the neighborhood, many of which had owners who lived outside of the neighborhood and the region. Residents wanted to see more efforts to improve or remove these properties. Participants suggested allowing for more local control of code enforcement might help alleviate some of these problems. Maintenance of the abandoned grain elevators were also an issue and residents viewed these as examples of "corporate blight."

3. **Participants also wanted to see improvements to infrastructure in the neighborhood.** Like residents in the Perry focus groups, residents of Old First Ward complained about poor maintenance of streets and streetscapes in their community. They wanted to see additional investment in the city to improve roadways.

4. **Residents were dissatisfied with local healthcare services.** Virtually all of the participants used a personal doctor as a primary care provider, and few if any looked toward the neighborhood health clinics for general care.

5. **Residents in Old First Ward held misconceptions about Perry residents and felt themselves at odds with the Perry community.** Some participants expressed that they felt residents in Perry were to blame for most of the crime and disinvestment that had taken place in the community. Many felt that their values and interests were at odds with the values of residents in Perry. Our focus groups with Perry residents suggest that both neighborhoods actually share common values and interests. When asked the some of the same questions presented at the Old First Ward focus group, Perry residents provided similar responses. Safety was a major concern for Perry, many had a similar vision for a redeveloped South Park commercial district, and many wanted a new grocery store in the community. Both had a strong sense of place and cared deeply about their homes and communities.

9. Analysis of Focus Group Input

Throughout the focus groups, a number of common themes surfaced. Many residents in both Perry and the surrounding communities expressed a lack of trust or confidence in BMHA, the Buffalo Police Department, public school teachers, and other service providers. For public housing residents of Perry, A.D. Price and Frederick Douglass, some of this distrust stemmed from the displacement of many residents from past public housing redevelopment efforts. Residents felt that their concerns were not heeded and that they were not given a voice in these previous initiatives, and were thus skeptical of the Perry Choice Neighborhood Planning Initiative. Lack of effective communication between residents and BMHA as well as service providers, and between residents of adjacent neighborhoods, seemed to be a source of many frustrations and trust issues. Perry residents universally criticized Buffalo Police for not being responsive to the needs of the neighborhood and they suggested that more community-oriented policing, including officers on foot patrols who got to know residents personally, might be the solution. Crime and safety were major concerns for residents of Perry, South Ellicott, and Old First Ward and all called for more foot patrols and a more effective community policing strategy.

Better access and options for supportive services were major issues for residents of both Perry and South Ellicott. Participants in all three communities criticized the quality of healthcare services within the district, and argued that they had been declining in quality in recent years. Perry and South Ellicott participants both felt that the Perry Choice Neighborhood area lacked sufficient services for seniors, for youth, and for social interaction and recreation in general. Many participants wanted to see some kind of central community space for social and recreational activities. Transportation was a major issue with regards to accessing existing services. Many participants in both Perry and South Ellicott considered existing mass transit routes to be both inconvenient and ineffective at getting them to even the most crucial services. Many Perry residents had to borrow a ride from a friend with a car for important trips, and some had to rely on underground, sub-standard food trucks as a primary source of groceries when traveling to the grocery store was difficult. Bus shelters for harsh winter months were also a major issue, especially for older participants.

More options for shopping needs and recreation were an issue for both Perry and South Ellicott residents. Both Perry and Old First Ward participants wanted to see the revitalization of the historic South Park commercial district. Participants from all three communities wanted to see more small businesses and more neighborhood-oriented shopping within a close distance. Most importantly, participants in all three communities wanted to see a high quality grocery store available to them.

Physical condition of housing was a major problem for Perry residents, who complained of collapsing ceilings and failing utilities that were in desperate need of maintenance. Perry residents were also concerned about the high number of vacant and boarded public housing units, which attracted squatters. Old First Ward residents also complained about poor maintenance and vacant property, blaming these issues on absentee landlords. Both seniors

and youth in Perry improved physical conditions of the housing stock and landscaping in the neighborhood.

VII. Recommendations for Service Delivery in Perry Choice Neighborhood

The recommendations for the planning of a new support service system in the Commodore Perry District and the Perry Choice Neighborhood are based on several sets of data that was collected during the first phase of the BMHA Perry Choice Neighborhood Planning project. This information that was compiled during this work period includes (1) the location of service organizations throughout the target area through the use of primary and secondary information, as well as field work, (2) information on types of services these organizations offer, (3) information generated from interviewing select service organizations and sites where the BMHA offer services, and (4) the comments made by the individuals who participated in each of the focus groups.

After analyzing all of this information, the following recommendations are made to guide the planning process for the supportive service system in the Perry Choice Neighborhood going forward:

1. **There is a need to locate services in the Commodore Perry District.** Currently, there is a limited amount of services available in the Commodore Perry District. At one time, computer classes, training programs, and other types of services were located in the district. Today, however, there is a limited amount of services available to residents in and around the neighborhood.

2. **For services that are not located in the Commodore Perry District, there needs to be a place, or a program, that links residents to Information on the location of services in the Perry Choice Neighborhood and the throughout the Western New York region.**

3. **A system or program needs to be developed to assist neighborhood residents on how to properly access services available to them.** By this, we mean help on how to navigate the supportive service system. This would involve making the residents of the neighborhood aware of the type of assistance they may need so that they understand the nature of the problem and the place where they may go to in order to solve that problem.

4. **A transportation system should be developed to get residents around the Perry Choice Neighborhood and the metropolitan region so they may access services that they currently are unable to at this time.** Throughout each focus group with Perry residents, it was made apparent that lack of transportation and the cost of transportation prevent residents from getting the services they need. Interviewee's also mentioned that transportation was a barrier to their services. The spatial analysis of the location of services, and the fact that Perry is an isolated community that isn't walkable adds to this need.

5. **A plan for the redevelopment of the South Park commercial corridor/district which could serve both Perry and Old First Ward residents would fill an important void.** Both Perry and Old First Ward residents remember when South Park Avenue was a thriving commercial district where you were able to get anything you needed. Both population groups expressed their desire for South Park Avenue to once again serve this purpose. Investments in the waterfront, the Canal Side area, the Cobblestone District, and the Seneca Casino will bring visitors to the neighborhood and the potential to support increased commercial activity in the area.

6. **The Commodore Perry District needs to be redeveloped with issues of safety and security as one of the most important design features.** The safety of residents who live in the neighborhood will be one of, if not the most important consideration for people who choose to live in the Commodore Perry District. Making the Perry development a safe place for youth, families, and seniors will positively influence the connections with the Old First Ward; will attract visitors from the outside to the neighborhood and local attractions; and will encourage investors to make investments in the neighborhood.

7. **A community policing system or a police/resident committee that looks into the relationship between residents and the police should be established.** Currently, there are trust issues between residents and the police. Residents believe the police use excessive force on the youth and residents of the development and do not trust the security camera system on the site. By strengthening the relationship between these groups, opening lines of communication, and sharing responsibility, issues of safety and security may be minimized in the neighborhood.

IX. Appendix

- Focus group analysis reports (See PDF)
- Focus group raw notes (See PDF)
- Service Delivery interview reports (See PDF)
- Bibliography (to be included later)