

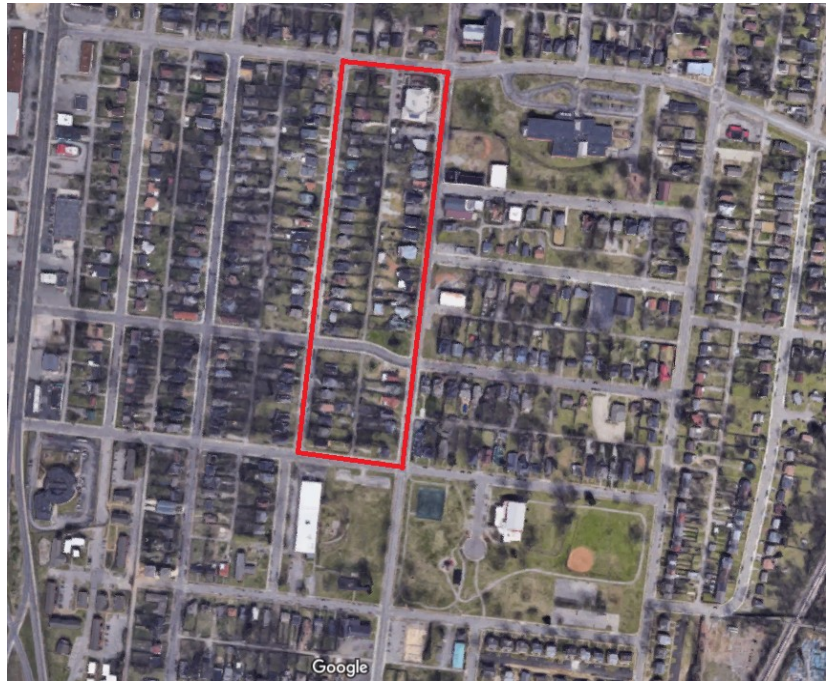
# MINI WALKING AUDIT

ULI Health Leaders Network | Assignment 1 | Sara Cox

## INTRODUCTION

I live in a former street car suburb of Nashville, Tennessee about three miles from the heart of downtown's tourism and business districts. It is bound to the west by a large arterial road, to the south by an interstate interchange, to the east by railroad tracks, and to the north by a collector road. My walking audit covers four blocks to the south and east of my house.

Considered the new up and coming part of East Nashville, the McFerrin Park community is equipped with sidewalks on both sides of the road, a local park, two schools, and a small neighborhood business district. The neighborhood is serviced by two bus lines, one through the heart of the neighborhood, and the other along a peripheral road.



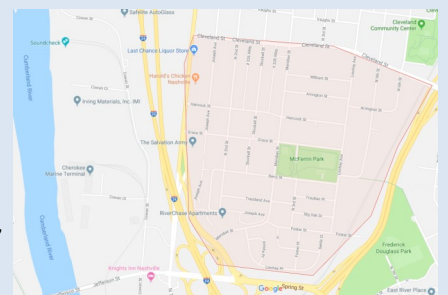
From left to right: recording studio, BarkPark (membership-based dog park), neighborhood business district, Fire Station, local restaurant under construction, redevelopment site of local plumbing company headquarters

## INCORPORATE A MIX OF LAND USES

While my neighborhood is predominately residential, there is a small neighborhood business district, which is home to two restaurants, a tavern/dive bar, an event space, a barbershop, and a historic theatre currently under renovation to become a new music venue. The main local street also hosts a recording studio and membership-based dog park. There is also a local park with walking track and community center, as well as an elementary school.

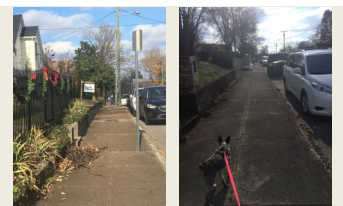
## DESIGN WELL-CONNECTED STREET NETWORKS AT THE HUMAN SCALE

Within my neighborhood, the traditional street grid is standard, although in some instances, the block sizes are not uniform. The connectivity issues, especially for pedestrians and cyclists, are more significant when looking at the connections between the neighborhood and the rest of the city due to the interstates along the neighborhood's borders.



## PROVIDE SIDEWALKS AND ENTICING, PEDESTRIAN ORIENTED STREETS CAPES

My neighborhood has a well maintained sidewalk network. The residential units are pedestrian oriented, but the business district could see improvements by limiting curb cuts and frontage parking lots.



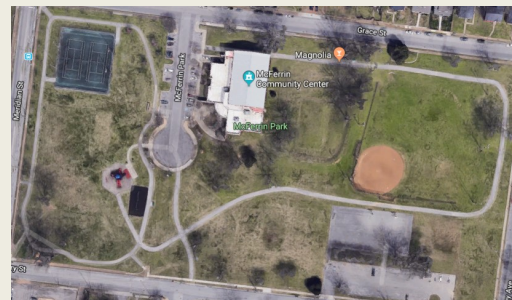
## PROVIDE INFRASTRUCTURE TO SUPPORT BIKING

The collector road that creates the northern border for the neighborhood was identified by the city's bicycle and pedestrian plan to undergo a road diet in order to incorporate bike lanes. Unfortunately, the local councilman vetoed the road reconfiguration so the road remains over-designed and under-utilized.



## BUILD PLAY SPACES FOR CHILDREN & INCREASE ACCESS TO NATURE

Within the neighborhood is a local park equipped with a walking track, playground, tennis courts, community center, and baseball diamond. The community center offers free or affordable programming for the community, from children to senior citizens. This park is heavily used and an anchor for the neighborhood.



## SOCIAL DETERMINANTS OF HEALTH

While my neighborhood does have adequate infrastructure in place to encourage and facilitate physical activity, the social determinants of positive health are lacking. As Nashville's housing prices continue to climb, the stock of affordable housing options dwindle. Homelessness has drastically increased over the last few years, as well. Transportation options within Nashville and even regionally are limited to bus service. My neighborhood is served by two bus lines, however the reliability and efficiency of Nashville's mass transit system deters riders. My neighborhood lacks a full-service grocery store, limiting food options for those who are unable to drive to the nearest grocery store.

Nashville is in the midst of a job boom, with unemployment rates below the national average. Jobs are available, but again since the city lacks a robust transit network, getting to jobs without a personal vehicle is difficult. And recently a report was released that African Americans in Nashville are profiled and pulled over at significantly higher rates than their white counterparts. The city just voted to establish a community oversight board for the police department with the hope of breaking down the discrimination and racism that currently exists within the system.

The socioeconomic conditions within the neighborhood are changing. It is currently mixed income and race, with new public and private investment taking place. Similar to what many communities are experiencing, that investment is increasing the rate of gentrification and there is an unspoken divide between the new and old residents. There is crime within the neighborhood; mostly car thefts and home burglaries but shootings are on the rise.

I think as people continued to be pushed out of the urban core of Nashville due to high housing and transportation costs, desperation takes the form of criminal activity. As a city, I don't think Nashville has protected or cared for its vulnerable populations well and I think moving forward there will be an uphill battle to create a culture of health equity for the city and its inner neighborhoods.

## CONCLUSION

Overall I think my neighborhood has the basic infrastructure in place to be a healthy and equitable community. However, I think the affects of gentrification and the rising cost of living is widening the gap between the haves and have nots. In order for my neighborhood and Nashville as a whole to build a culture of health equity, I think the city needs to develop better policies that protect residents from the ill effects of gentrification. Currently, Nashville has no mandatory inclusionary zoning policy to increase affordable housing stock. Nashville and the surrounding region are behind the curve significantly in developing and building a robust and efficient mass transit system. Unfortunately the city voted down a transit referendum in May, but as traffic congestion continues to worsen I hope it will force our city to figure out alternative and affordable transportation options. We can't just build a culture of health equity by just building more physical infrastructure in our communities, but need to also invest in the social and economic needs of residents, as well.