

# Parkview Apartments & 17th Ward Community Listening Report

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## Report Overview

Date of Listening Session: April 30<sup>th</sup>, 2022

### Parkview Listening Session:

The goals of the tenant listening session at the Parkview Apartment building were to gather data on the following:

- Tenant feedback regarding the accessibility to supports located within the Parkview Apartments
- Tenant feedback regarding quality of life at the Parkview Apartment building
- Tenant feedback regarding:
  - Building security and security related concerns
  - Building maintenance
  - Process flow of addressing building and case management challenges

Categories and primary concerns of residents:

- Administrative
  - Communication among HUD, The Habitat Company, and residents
  - Turnover and resident treatment by on-site management staff
  - Workorder process
  - Rent receipts
- Community
  - Lack of resident activities on site
  - Non-resident tenants living on property
  - Lack of communication from Tenant Advisory Board (TAB)
  - Having a mixed family building instead of all senior property
- Maintenance
  - Pest control (mice, rats, cockroaches, bed bugs)
  - Shortage of maintenance staff
  - Overflowing trash
  - Exposed wires
- Safety and Security
  - Not enough security
  - People can come and go from building unencumbered
  - Greater law enforcement presence but requests they are respectful
  - Substance use on the premises
  - Residents fear leaving apartments

- Services
  - More social services on property
  - On site access to substance use treatment and support
  - Technology – Wi-Fi and access to computers
  
- Recommendations
  - Models
    - Trauma Informed Community Building and Engagement Model
      - Principles
        - Do no harm
        - Acceptance
        - Community empowerment
        - Sustainability
        - Sociocultural Relevancy
  
      - Strategies
        - Community driven research
        - Peer-to-peer approaches
        - Creative/personal expression and placemaking
        - Grief work, emotional support, and restorative justice
  
      - Practices
        - Acknowledge harm and promote consciousness
        - Honor history and celebrate culture
        - Never over promise
        - Make community growth and accomplishments visible
        - Ensure consistency
        - Support meaningful community engagement structures
        - Promote safety
        - Remove participation barriers
        - Provide compensation
        - Foster social cohesion
        - Reflective process
  
    - Public Health Model to Crime Prevention
      - Define and monitor the problem
      - Identify risk and protective factors
      - Develop and test prevention strategies
      - Assure widespread adoption

## 17<sup>th</sup> Ward Listening Session

### Topics

- Criminal Justice
  - Criminalization of substance use
  - Prohibition of safe injection sites
  - Prohibition of fentanyl test kits and strips
  - People living in prison detoxing without assistance
  - Lack of support for people recently released from carceral spaces
  
- Barriers to Treatment
  - Systemic barriers
    - Funding
  - Individual barriers
    - Family
    - Employment
    - Denial
  - Prioritized access to bed space
  
- Broader Social and Community Context
  - Risk factors associated with substance use and abuse disorder
    - Housing
    - Income inequality
    - Food insecurity
    - Crime
    - Unemployment
    - Mental health
  
- Recommendations
  - Develop a coalition of like-minded agencies to form grassroots ballot initiatives.
  - Partner with other agencies, combine services and remove barriers to services by visiting community locations to which people do not have to travel.
  - Collaborate with agencies on joint grants and funding projects.
  - Partner with local universities for possible funding options and volunteer support

## The Parkview Apartments

### Overview

The Parkview Apartment Complex at 4451 Forest Park Avenue in St. Louis's eclectic Central West End neighborhood was constructed in 1972. This building features a total of 295 residential units; these units consist of studio, and one-bedroom units. Combined, the units total 175, 950 square feet.

The U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) own the Parkview Apartments and The Habitat Company with headquarters in Chicago Illinois is responsible for property management.

***“It shouldn't take a death at the Parkview to get people's attention.” - Tenant***

HUD inspects its properties through the Real Estate Assessment Center (REAC), which is responsible for evaluating financial and physical condition of all HUD public and assisted developments. Major inspectable areas are as follows:

**Site**: fencing & gates, grounds, mailboxes/project signs, market appeal, parking lots/driveways/roads, play areas & equipment, refuse disposal, retaining walls, storm drainage, and walkways/stairs.

**Building Exterior**: doors, fire escapes, foundations, lighting, roofs, walls, and windows.

**Building Systems**: domestic water, electrical system, elevators, emergency power, exhaust system, fire protection, heating/ventilation/air conditioning, and sanitary system.

**Common Areas**: basement/garage/carport, closet/utility/mechanical, community room, day care, halls/corridors/stairs, kitchen, laundry room, lobby, office, other community spaces, patio/porch/balcony, pools & related structures, restrooms/pool structures, storage, and trash collection areas.

**Unit**: bathroom, call-for-aid, ceiling, doors, electrical system, floors, heating/ventilation/air conditioning, hot water heater, kitchen, laundry area (room), lighting, outlets/switches, patio/porch/balcony, smoke detectors, stairs, walls, and windows.

**Health & Safety**: air quality, electrical hazards, elevator, emergency/fire exits, flammable materials, garbage and debris, hazards, infestation.

## PARKVIEW APARTMENTS & 17TH WARD COMMUNITY LISTENING REPORT

REAC inspections are scored using a scale of 1 to 100, the scale is interpreted as follows:

- A score of 90 to 100 is a great score and the property will be inspected every 3 years.
- A score of 80 to 89 is a good score and the property will be inspected every 2 years.
- A score of 79 or below means there were several areas of concern and will be inspected annually.

(Southwest Housing Compliance Corporation, 2021)

There are three letters, a-c, that may follow the score, in addition to an asterisk. The definition of these characters is as follows:

a - no health and safety deficiencies noted

b - non life-threatening health and safety deficiencies noted

c - at least one life-threatening health and safety deficiencies noted

\* - at least one inoperable smoke detector noted (Southwest Housing Compliance Corporation, 2021)

According to the May 2022 REAC report, scores for the Parkview Apartments are as indicated:



While the Parkview Apartments numerically passed two of the past three inspections, it is notable that also on two occasions there were life-threatening health and safety deficiencies indicated during the inspection with one of the deficiencies consisting of an inoperable smoke detector on the property.



## Parkview Listening Sessions

### Background

On or about February 5<sup>th</sup>, 2022, seven residents of the Parkview apartments succumbed to opioid toxicity. This incident resulted in the arrest of a Parkview resident for the distribution of controlled substances (United States of American v. Chuny Ann Reed, 2022). While this tragic incident culminated in a criminal justice response, the events themselves was a manifestation of concentrated community trauma to which people in under resourced, particularly public housing communities are exposed.

People living in under-resourced communities are subject to more significant trauma such as violence exposure and unresolved community trauma such as homelessness, housing insecurity, insufficient housing, poverty, historical community divestment, and social isolation.

The latter may occur partly due to actual or perceived stigmatization and discrimination related to race or socioeconomic status. Correlations exist among people with higher instances of personal and community trauma and higher rates of substance abuse disorder.

As a result of the February 5<sup>th</sup> incident and the following:

- Periodic visits to the Parkview property by MO State Representative, 77<sup>th</sup> District , Kimberly-Ann Collins
- Articulated concerns about suspicious activity at the Parkview Property from surrounding neighborhood associations

17th Ward Alderwoman Tina “Sweet-T” Pihl, Representative Kimberly-Ann Collins, and Assistant Professor Kenya Brumfield-Young, MLS, MSCJ of the Criminology and Criminal Justice program at St. Louis University’s School of Social Work coordinated two community listening sessions regarding these concerns. They also invited Congresswoman Cori Bush of Missouri’s First District to attend. While unable to join personally, Danielle Spradley, the Outreach Director for the Office of Congresswoman Cori Bush was also in attendance. The organizing group facilitated the listening session and representatives from Housing and Urban Development (HUD), Habitat, attended the session to gather information and provide information and clarity to tenants on more nuanced questions as they arose. A City of St. Louis representative (aside from the Alderman Pihl) joined toward the end of the session. This session was not to be an open question and answer session but an opportunity for decision-makers

at the Federal, State, and local levels to engage the Parkview Apartment tenant community and hear about their experiences living at the Parkview. It also allowed decision-makers to hear how the incident of February 5th impacted the tenant community and their concerns and ideas related to living in the Parkview Apartments. This session was intentionally offered separately to ensure that tenants had the opportunity to process their concerns within their own space and to acknowledge that a history of broken promises by system actors and transportation barriers might present challenges to tenants attending a listening session off-site.

Approximately 30 tenants attended the two-hour listening session. An exact count was challenging to obtain as the facilitators did not ask residents to sign in. By not asking tenants to sign in, tenants felt more comfortable to speak openly without feeling “tracked” indicated one tenant. Organizers provided tenants with their contact information for later use. Tenants also had the opportunity to share their information if they chose.

### **Goals**

The goals of the tenant listening session at the Parkview Apartment building were to gather data on the following:

- Tenant feedback regarding the accessibility to supports located within the Parkview Apartments
- Tenant feedback regarding quality of life at the Parkview Apartment building
- Tenant feedback regarding:
  - Building security and security related concerns
  - Building maintenance
  - Process flow of addressing building and case management challenges.

While there are systems in place to address concerns such as building maintenance and security, it is essential that all parties view the accessibility to these mechanisms from the standpoint of the tenants; these include strengths in these systems and what tenants perceive to be barriers to accessing these mechanisms. When tenants perceive their support mechanisms as being responsive and timely, relationships among tenants, property owners, and managers are strengthened as trust increases

exponentially and becomes the critical component of the relationship. The converse is true when tenants perceive the process as confusing, delayed, or unreliable.

The data collected at the Parkview Apartment listening sessions was used to determine resident priorities, and to help inform empirically based recommendations to meet tenant needs using empirical and trauma-informed approaches.

## Observational Findings

### Data Capture

Two undergraduate students from St. Louis University volunteered to collect the data from the listening session using qualitative and quantitative methods. Students tracked comments and the number of statements to which participants concurred. Post the listening session; the SLU team coded the data into five categories:

**Administrative** – Interactions with building management and systems such as rent payment, maintenance requests, and communication with property management.

**Community** – When people are in a state of cohesion and members have connections which link them to one another and the group as a whole (Friedkin, 2004) .

**Maintenance** – Fixing ordinary wear and tear, repairing existing facilities, restoring mechanical equipment to operating condition, and janitorial services within the building (Law Insider, Incorporated, 2022).

**Safety and Security** - Safety is being free from conditions caused by a human or mechanical error that may facilitate injury or loss. At the same time, security is a state of feeling protected from human behavior that may result in injury or harm (Miriam-Webster, Incorporated, 2022).

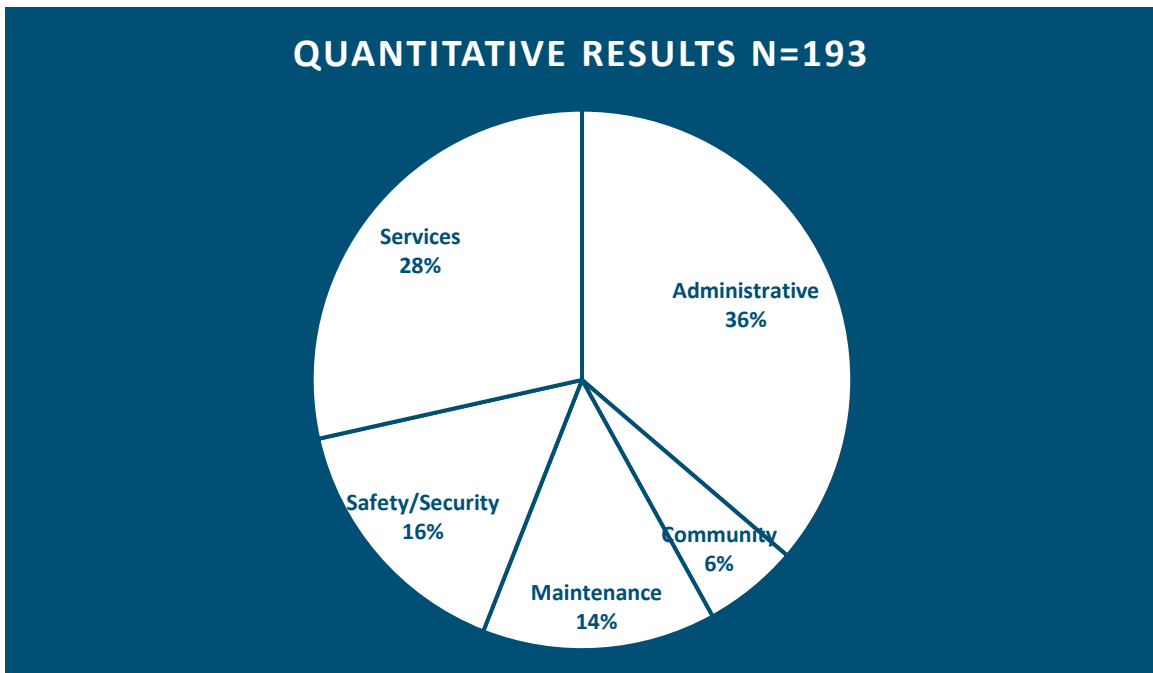
**Services** – Activities that assist tenants to understand and manage personal, emotional, and health related concerns (Law Insider, Incorporated, 2022).

**Miscellaneous** – For the purposes of this report, miscellaneous represents comments made regarding the demographics of the Parkview tenant community.

**Quantitative Analysis**

The quantitative analysis captured a total of 193 comments and concurrences in the five categories outlined. The following were recorded

Category	Count
Administrative	70
Community	11
Maintenance	27
Safety/Security	30
Services	55
<b>Total</b>	<b>193</b>



## Qualitative Results

### Administrative

Tenant interactions with building management and systems such as rent payment, maintenance requests, and communication with property management influence the relationship among tenants, the property management company, and the property owners. The foundation of trust among all parties reside at this level. Residents commented on the consistency and high turnover of building management personnel and on the level of disrespect they believed they encountered from previous building managers, citing that there had been incidents of verbal altercations between property managers and senior residents. One resident described the relationship between residents and building management as, “the only thing consistent is smack talk and disrespect”. At the time of the listening session, a new property manager started at the Parkview and during the session was introduced to the residents. Consistent turnover is a challenge in spaces where people depend on the development of a relationship to get needs met.

Another administrative concern for tenants relates to communication between building management and tenants. One example several tenants seemed to agree on was the processing of maintenance requests. Residents stated that they completed work orders, did not receive copies, the work was not completed, and there was no follow-up communication from management. Residents indicated that they had requested periodic memorandums to keep them apprised of events such as tenant functions, maintenance plans, and outages (such as elevators). However, tenants do not think an adequate information dissemination system exists.

Additionally, tenants expressed challenges related to receiving timely receipts for rental payments. Several tenants articulated that on some occasions, it might take days to receive a receipt for rent paid in the building office, if the tenant received one at all. According to information documented at the listening session, when this occurs, tenants do not have documentation that they paid rent in the event of a clerical error. One tenant stated that an analogous situation resulted in them receiving an eviction notice after paying rent. The tenant remarked that they were fortunate to have the problem resolved and expressed concern and frustration that it happened from the onset.

### **Community**

People are social beings and are not meant to live in isolation (National Alliance on Mental Health, 2022). A strong sense of safety and security, improved well-being, and increased participation in community recreation and governance activities have all been associated with a strong sense of community (Michalski, 2020). Furthermore, a correlation exists between weaker community belonging and poorer overall general and mental health. Although, a stronger relationship between weaker community belonging and poorer overall mental health outcomes seem to exist (Michalski, 2020).

While the quantitative data for the community category was not substantial, the results indicate a community facing challenges obtaining and maintaining social cohesion. Social cohesion references the continuous process among group members to achieve levels of solidarity, shared values, and mechanisms to solve conflicts. The presence of social cohesion can bring about an environment where people feel a sense of belonging, inclusion, participation, and legitimacy.

Tenant discussions regarding a sense of community revolved around social cohesion. During the lockdown phase of the COVID-19 pandemic, social activities such as bingo and game night were discontinued to control the spread of COVID infection. These activities, which included the billiard room and outdoor grilling facilities, remained closed, even when the Center for Disease Control, The State of Missouri, and the Acting Health Commissioner for the City of St. Louis issued guidance related to social distancing allowances. Residents expressed that these activities and other social activities had not resumed. Additionally, residents remarked that post a fatality in the exercise room several months prior to the listening session, the exercise facility also has not reopened.

Residents remarked about the need for a neighborhood or tenant association to represent their interest to Habitat Corporation and HUD. Unbeknownst to many residents, Parkview Apartments has a resident council referred to as the Tenant Advisory Board or "TAB ." The TAB is established under Title 24, Volume 4, Part 946 of the Code of Federal Regulations. The council's primary function and the TAB is "to improve the quality of life and resident satisfaction and participate in self-help initiatives to enable residents to create a positive living environment for families in public housing. Resident councils

may actively participate through a working partnership with the HA to advise and assist in all aspects of public housing operations" (National Archives and Records Administration, 2021).

The discussion of the need for a neighborhood or tenant association speaks to the resident's sense of access and connectedness to the TAB. Residents indicated that they did not know who the TAB members were and were unclear about the process of engaging in membership. Residents further commented that they did not feel adequate communication existed between the TAB and the rest of the Parkview community. Habitat representatives informed residents that the names of TAB members are posted and that the board meets "among themselves." The TAB has not been meeting due to COVID precautions. Before the COVID-19 pandemic, Habitat representatives articulated that the TAB had not established a consistent meeting schedule. A TAB representative was unable to attend the listening session.

Many residents voiced their frustration about people living in the building without the proper legal documentation. There was also a discussion about the change in building dynamics since the population of the building varies in ages versus residency being limited to seniors as it has been in the past. Current data suggests mixed-age residency has benefits across age groups and its often feelings of vulnerability and perceived neighborhood disorder generate feelings of discomfort (Hanslmaier, 2017). The issues discussed by residents at the listening session are adequate to generate such feelings.

### **Maintenance**

Housing quality, including structural and environmental factors, has been associated with multiple adverse health outcomes such as physical injury and asthma (Bennett-Fripp et al., 2018). Maintenance was a topic on which residents spoke openly. Residents reported concerns of pest control servicing the property infrequently, allowing for the continued presence of cockroaches, rats, and mice. Cockroach and rodent infestations are frequently manifestations of diminished housing quality (Bennett-Fripp et al., 2018). For this report, housing quality utilizes the definition of social determinants of health, including the physical condition of the living space and/or the social and physical environment in which the home is located (Bonney, 2007). Indicators of housing quality

include but are not limited to home safety, air quality, space per individual, and the presence of mold, asbestos, or lead (Bonney, 2007).

According to the collected information, another issue raised that impacts the housing quality is the presence of bed bugs. Low-income housing properties experience bed bug infestations at disproportionate rates (Wang et al., 2019). In 2014, Rutgers University conducted research on bed bugs in HUD properties. While 26% percent of the respondents reported having experienced past bed bug infestations, 12% of the respondents were experiencing an infestation at the time of the study, and cumulatively, only 47% of respondents were aware that an infestation existed, allowing the infestation to spread throughout the property (Wang et al., 2019). While bed bugs do not spread disease, their presence can lead to secondary skin infections through scratching (Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, 2020). In addition, bed bugs are blood feeders, and their bites may result in itching, welts (Wang et al., 2019), an allergic reaction requiring medical attention (Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, 2020), or emotional distress.

Tenants engaged in the discussion about what they perceived to be a shortage of maintenance staff. They believed that if more maintenance staff were available, the floors would remain clean, and tenants, such as those on the 11th floor, would not feel responsible for mopping their shared areas. Residents also indicated that some rental units contained mold and mildew. While molds are often common in homes, mold tends to cultivate in areas where moisture is present such as around leaky windows or pipes (Center for Disease Control and Prevention, 2020). The mold and mildew condition is consistent with reports of water leaks in restrooms and kitchens. Those with allergies are most affected by mold and mildew, but both pose a particular risk for those living with Asthma (Husman, 1996). People with underlying lung disease or suppressed immune systems are also hyper-susceptible to mold and may experience adverse reactions.

Residents with mobility issues brought forth challenges relative to living on upper floors and elevators consistently being inoperable. They stated that approximately two and a half years ago, residents claimed to be told by the housing board that monies were allocated to fix the elevator, but the work was not completed due to a lack of parts. Besides the elevators, tenants relayed that overflowing trash



in disposal areas created challenges to controlling pests such as mice, rats, and insects when debris was sitting in collection areas.

### **Safety and Security**

Resident perception of and actual vulnerability to crime is common; however, the actual exposure is comparable to those living in average rentals located in areas of economic divestment (Lens, 2011). That said, substantial public safety risks exist, and people living in higher crime areas are disproportionately likely to be victims of crime that results in emotional, physical, or financial harm or trauma (Lens, 2011). While each traumatic experience produces individual manifestations, left unaddressed, those manifestations can contribute to a neighborhood's lack of collective efficacy, the social cohesion necessary among neighbors, and their willingness to intervene on behalf of the common good. Collective efficacy allows neighbors to feel comfortable enough to self-govern in areas within their control in accordance with shared community values

During the listening session, residents expressed a desire for collective efficacy by describing that the ability to "take care of their own problems" should exist. Residents stated that some barriers to collective efficacy were beyond their control. Residents shared that on March 14th, 2022, a resident was assaulted on the 14th floor of the building, and the incident went unaddressed. Residents stated that security is often inattentive, and they [residents] felt unsafe as non-residents can enter the building without encumbrance. Residents voiced that the non-residents "cause problems" in the building. Residents articulated a desire for a greater law enforcement presence and also shared frustrations their frustrations that when law enforcement is called, the response time is slow and responding officers are often "disrespectful".

Residents also voiced their concerns regarding the use of substances. Residents acknowledged that the substance use issue is of more significant community concern, but their focus is on their immediate living space. Residents communicated that substance use occurs on the parking lot among residents and non-residents who are "hanging out ."To residents, the parking lot is an area of security and safety concern. Non-residents often park in the lot resulting in residents having to park elsewhere. Residents expressed interest in working together to eradicate some of their problems but said that many

residents are afraid to leave their apartments, particularly aging residents who feel they are “easy victims or are being taken advantage of”.

### **Services**

Residents were clear regarding the need for services and the accessibility of current services in place. Residents requested a social worker or case manager to assist with TANF, disability, Housing, SNAP, and other related concerns. Habitat Corporation advised tenants that there is a licensed clinical social worker (LCSW) at Parkview two days per week and accessible by other means on the additional days to assist residents. Accessibility to the Parkview social worker is challenging to residents for two primary reasons: many do not know the resource is available. The second challenge is the 1:238 ratio with a two-day on-site schedule. This schedule makes it difficult to “carry a reasonable caseload that allows the case manager to effectively plan, provide, and evaluate case management tasks related to client and system interventions” (National Association of Social Workers Board of Directors, 2006) social work standard nine, as outlined by the National Association of Social Workers (NASW).

Another service area mentioned by residents was that of substance use and abuse. Residents believe that on-site access to treatment and support people and programs would help treat those living with diagnosed and undiagnosed substance use disorder. Seniors are at particular risk for substance use disorder due to depression and subsequent self-isolation. Resuming senior programs like the “senior boxes” and creating social opportunities for seniors was a service that residents also requested.

Last on the list of services were items related to technology. Residents remarked that Wi-Fi is not available in each rental unit. The technology barrier became an in-depth discussion as the HUD neared the official launch of the “Rent Café” self-service tenant portal. Residents remarked that having a computer space with computers would increase access to the portal, employment opportunities, and other online services.

### **Findings Conclusion**

As previously mentioned, people living in under-resourced communities are subject to more significant trauma such as violence exposure and unresolved community trauma such as housing insecurity, insufficient housing, poverty, historical community divestment, and social isolation.

## PARKVIEW APARTMENTS & 17TH WARD COMMUNITY LISTENING REPORT

The latter may occur partly due to actual or perceived stigmatization and discrimination related to race or socioeconomic status. Correlations exist among people with higher instances of personal and community trauma and higher rates of substance abuse disorder.

The listening session provided residents with an opportunity to be heard, and have them at the center of the solutions. As issues are resolved, the Parkview can become a place where people feel more safe, included, and willing to be more involved in their community space.

## Recommendations

### Models

The recommendations herein provide a foundation to accomplish two main goals; the first is to improve collective efficacy, housing quality, and the overall well-being of the residents of the Parkview Apartments. These goals are accomplished by integrating two existing empirically-based frameworks. The second goal is to help reduce the stigma associated with the residents living in public housing and at the Parkview Apartments by collaborating with the community in an effort to address neighborhood issues as a whole.

First, the Trauma-Informed Community Building and Engagement (TICBE) model takes into consideration the community trauma experienced by residents in public housing and other low-income, marginalized communities experience and the additional stressors faced by people in these communities (Falkenburger, 2018). As a trauma-informed model, the TICBE model is aware that the vast history of unfulfilled promises by those intervening in marginalized communities contributed to the community trauma and is cautious about overpromising (Elsa Falkenburger, 2018). The goals of this model are to de-escalate chaos and stress, build social cohesion and to encourage community resiliency. This model is one of community engagement that respects a resident's experiences, prepares residents and partners, and other stakeholders for changes and helps to form the institutional infrastructure needed to sustain community improvements (Falkenburger, 2018).

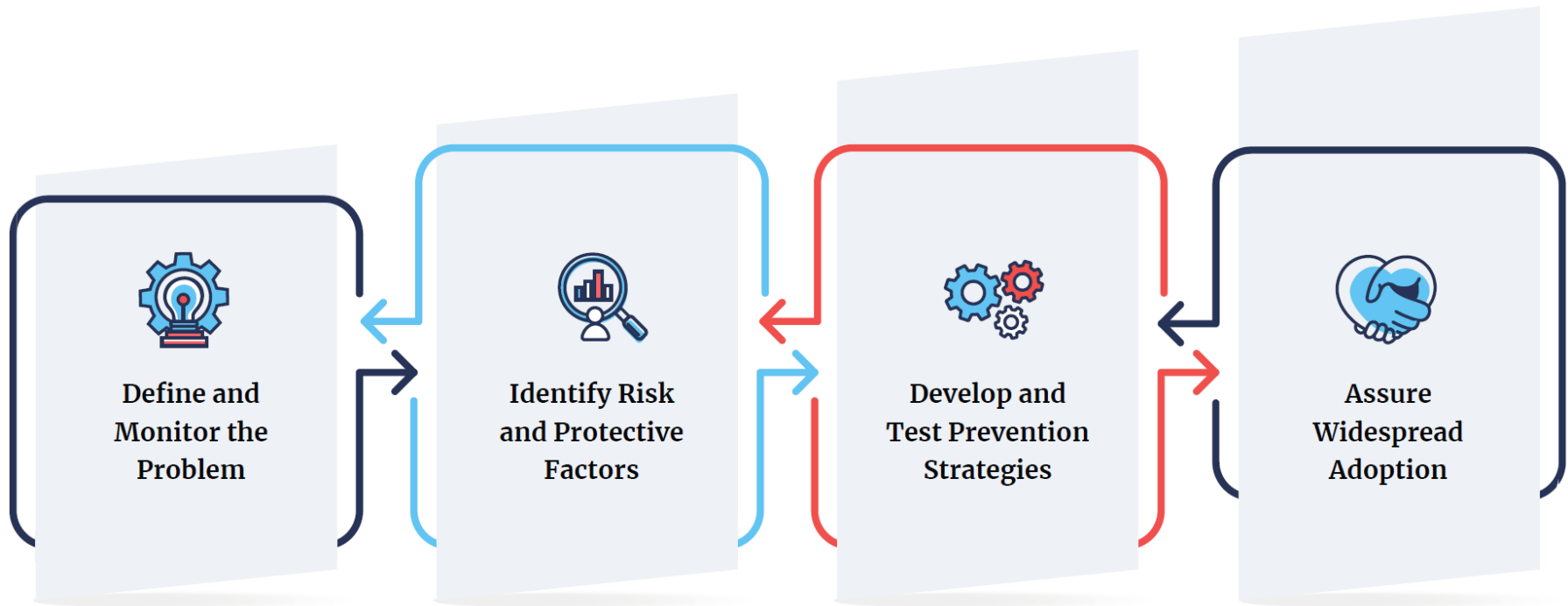
The second approach involved in this framework is the Epidemiological Criminology framework. This framework takes a public health approach to address illegal behavior by integrating public health theories, models, and practices into an epidemiological criminology paradigm (Akers, 2013). Epidemiological Criminology considers that risk factors such as housing quality, poverty, food insecurity, substance use, and other social determinants of health increase the possibility of crime (Akers, 2013). Epidemiological Criminology also plays a fundamental role in prevention of public order offenses and the development of collective efficacy by helping to understand how the criminological risk factors impact the community environment and overall health (Akers, 2013)

**Trauma-Informed Community Building and Engagement Model Diagram**



(Elsa Falkenburger, 2018)

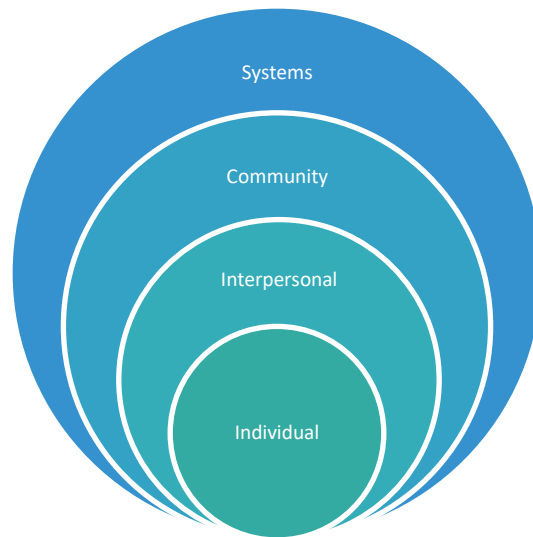
Public Health Model to Crime Prevention Diagram



(Center for Disease Control and Prevention, 2022)

**Principles**

The diagram below represents the social-ecological model representing the various layers of communities and how systems affect communities, affecting interpersonal relationships that then impact individuals (Falkenburger, 2018). Hence, the strategies developed as a result of the framework reflect these domains in the forms of system, community, interpersonal, and individual strategies.



This framework is developed around five core principles that that are reflective of this resident-centered approach. Four of the principles are foundational to trauma informed work, the fifth principle is rooted in the public health approach to crime prevention. The principles central to this model are:

- Do no harm
- Acceptance
- Community Empowerment
- Reflective Process
- Socio Cultural Relevance
- Sustainability

The first four principles of this framework are not designed to be procedural but are guiding fundamental values upon which the work is informed. “Do no harm,” “acceptance,” “community empowerment,” and “reflective process” are core tenets of trauma-informed work and emphasize the importance of acknowledging the historical context of marginalized communities, their structural realities, and the history of harms experienced by people within those communities (Falkenburger, 2018). People involved in this work should remain conscious that change is not sudden and requires patience, tolerance, and the belief that change is possible. Additionally, community (particularly resident) knowledge and experience are valuable sources of expertise. Therefore, a commitment of resources by community stakeholders and partners will be demonstrative of a willingness to address some of the factors that lead to the stigmatization and isolation of marginalized communities.

The principle of socio cultural relativism is the understanding that a history of systemic behaviors and policies have created community conditions, economic inequality, racial segregation, and public housing as it is today (Falkenburger, 2018) versus the individual behaviors of those who are affected by those conditions. The trauma-informed approach views behavior through the lens of “what happened to you”, versus “what is wrong with you”, this view helps to destigmatize poverty and empowers people to engage in work to help improve their community (Falkenburger, 2018).

The final principle of sustainability is a common source of community trauma as it often stems from the lack of commitment and long-term sustainability of resources, programs, and other initiatives. In addition to financial resources, the need for social capital, resident and community input, and commitment to remain in place after short-term funding opportunities cease is significant. Without the long-term commitment from residents, community stakeholders, and partners, once short-term funding ends, residents and community members may feel used and abandoned by individuals and organizations with a professional stake in the community (Falkenburger, 2018), thereby increasing the level of existing community trauma.



**Strategies**



Residents



Peer-to-peer approaches



Creative, personal expression and placemaking



Grief work, emotional support and restorative justice

**Strategy 1: Resident-Driven Research toward Resident Organizing and Policy Change**

Resident-based participatory research enables residents to engage in the process of listening and examining issues of importance to them. This is seminal piece of the community healing process. Linking collaborative and empowering approaches to meaningful change at the structural and policy level, community healing is encouraged. Furthermore, residents are empowered to engage in change throughout the process (Wolff et al., 2017).

**Strategy 2: Peer-to-Peer Approaches**

Peer-to-peer approaches can provide role modeling and allow residents to invest in their community leadership. Residents can advocate for service needs, facilitators of resident action, organizers, and facilitators of building activities. Overall, increased social support, social cohesion, collective efficacy, and meaningful service engagement can result (Falkenburger, 2018).

**Strategy 3: Creative or Personal Expression and Placemaking**

Creative practices to promote the healing of community harm are an effective change mechanism. Some residents of low-income and other public housing models see creating art as a way to cope with stress (Wolin, 2013). Creating opportunities for residents to reframe narratives about their space and express a collective pride and shared experience counteracts the consistent focus on harms, and messages about damage and trauma (Falkenburger, 2018).

**Strategy 4: Grief Work, Emotional Support, and Restorative Justice**

It is common for community trauma to cooccur with a sense of loss and stress at the individual and community levels (Falkenburger, 2018). Social support groups that address topics such as grief,

substance use disorders, issues related to aging, parenting concerns, stress, and other topics help residents cope with individual concerns and those that occur from racism and other structural harms. Restorative justice is a response to rule-breaking behavior that considers the harm perpetrated upon the victim and the community, understanding that wholeness should be restored to both. This strategy focuses on accountability and affords the residents an opportunity to take steps to bring together people, establish accountability, make amends, and repair relationships. Nonviolent communication skills reinforce and provide mechanisms for residents to resolve interpersonal conflict to promote reconciliation, resiliency, and stronger social connections within their living space (Falkenburger, 2018).

### **Practices**

Practices are more concrete ways to implement ideas and guidance into programming for a variety of stakeholders.

- Acknowledge harm done and promote consciousness
  - Ensure consistency
  - Never over promise
  - Support meaningful community engagement structures
  - Reflective process
  - Promote safety
  - Honor history and celebrate culture
  - Foster social cohesion
  - Remove participation barriers
  - Provide compensation
  - Make growth and accomplishment visible
- (Falkenburger, 2018).

### **Practice 1: Acknowledge Harm Done and Promote Consciousness**

Providing opportunities for residents to participate in discussions and training promotes an in-depth level of consciousness of how systems, policies, or groups have caused their community harm over time is vital to working through blaming individuals and their behaviors for community harms. It is extremely important for stakeholders to acknowledge how their own institution may have contributed to these harms. Simple actions such as engaging in discussions to resolve concerns or engaging resources as a partner may assist with establishing relationships (Falkenburger, 2018).

**Practice 2: Honor and Celebrate Culture**

The goal is to create a space that includes visible markers of the place and its residents. Create opportunities for residents to be active participants in creating art or décor that are displayed in public spaces (Falkenburger, 2018).

**Practice 3: Never Overpromise**

The goal is to create a space that includes visible markers of the place and its residents. Create opportunities for residents to be active participants in creating art or décor that are displayed in public spaces (Falkenburger, 2018).

**Practice 4: Make Community Growth and Accomplishments Visible**

Critical to fostering the belief that healing and change are possible, making visible both counter-narratives. Resident successes and positive efforts should be promoted. Opportunities for effective interventions and engaged community involvement would help motivate staff, stakeholders, and others to reinforce that change is occurring. (Falkenburger, 2018).

**Practice 5: Ensure Consistency**

To avoid feelings of disconnectedness among the residents, consistent and dependable communication channels need to exist. This applies to tenant organizations, management, community partner, and stakeholders. Lack of communication exacerbates feelings of distrust and confusion, and consistent communications can support a sense of structure and reliability. Multiple interactions, a regular and dependable schedule that is well known, extensive outreach, and repeated attempts to engage may be needed to secure trust and participation. (Falkenburger, 2018).

**Practice 6: Support Clear and Meaningful Community Engagement Structures**

As mentioned in the findings, Parkview residents expressed the desire to manage some of their own community affairs. There is an existing structure for this within the Tenant Advisory Board. It is essential for these engagements structures to be meaningful. Remembering to include people and their stories and being conscientious of all their identities and strengthen community engagement. Community engagement efforts should be transparent, accepting, and committed to empowering all residents (Falkenburger, 2018).

**Practice 7: Promote Safety**

A significant cause of ongoing community trauma is community and interpersonal violence. Regardless of the activity, which includes day-to-day living, ensuring the safety of residents is paramount. Location, time, and other aspects of implementing activities must always be considered with a commitment to providing for the safety of all participants (Falkenburger, 2018). Safety needs were articulated as a concern among the tenants, and incorporating safety initiatives is essential. These initiatives can incorporate community stakeholders and be proactive.

**Practice 8: Remove Participation Barriers**

To encourage resident participation in activities, provide incentives and remove barriers consistently and without judgment. Considering the time of day, location, or format of meetings, activities, and events can help remove practical and personal barriers to participation. Providing food, financial resources, and childcare, are some ways to foster resident participation (Falkenburger, 2018).

**Practice 9: Provide Compensation**

Residents who dedicate time and energy to community-building activities should be financially compensated for their participation. Fair and transparent compensation with mechanisms that are not prohibitive or cumbersome are critical. Often, compensating residents may include changing systems to meet the needs of residents rather than asking residents to change to meet the needs of bureaucracy. Conversations around income restrictions on financial and housing benefits that may be affected as a result of the income is necessary to prevent unintended or unanticipated consequences. (Falkenburger, 2018).

**Practice 10: Foster Social Cohesion**

Social support is a core coping and healing practice that is key to counteracting the damages of trauma over time. Engaging residents in activities that promote “tending and befriending” allows for healing and connection. Shared experiences of pleasurable activities, such as Zumba, yoga, walking groups, card, and board games, promote physical and emotional well-being that is essential to community healing. (Falkenburger, 2018).

**Practice 11: Reflective Process**

Building in a process or system for ongoing reflection on current events and experiences allows for continual improvement and adjustments to resident needs as they evolve. Iterative input and feedback helps ensure long-term meaningful impact, as improving outcomes in a trauma-affected community requires a sustained approach over multiple generations. (Falkenburger, 2018).

**Parkview Apartments Report Conclusion**

Initially designed for a much larger community area, the adaptation of the TICBE and public health crime prevention framework is ideal for a tenant community the size of the Parkview Apartments. Attending the listening session at the Parkview Apartments were invested tenants who had lived in the property for over ten years. While the recommendations are clearly designed to be collaborative, it would be remiss not to mention the needs of the staff who work with the residents in the Parkview Apartments or any other public, low-income, or supportive housing community. Staff must be trained to understand and work with people living with individual and community trauma. The building manager is an integral part of the Parkview Community. Understanding the community trauma and engaging with residents with empathy may help reduce the turnover and sustain a longer relationship between residents and on-site management.

While the repairs to the Parkview Apartments are the responsibility HUD, the Parkview Apartments has the potential to be model public housing. As stated in the framework, it will take time, commitment, consistency, consideration, and partners who can embrace the tenant's view of what they want the Parkview Apartments to be.

## 17<sup>th</sup> Ward Listening Session

### Introduction

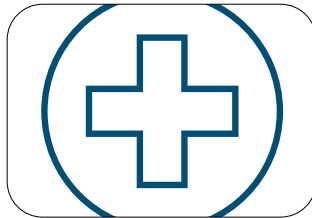
Initially planned as a listening session for the residents of St. Louis’s 17<sup>th</sup> ward to receive their input regarding their input and experiences with the current overdose epidemic in St. Louis, many attendees represented community based service providers and policy makers. This session occurred on April 30<sup>th</sup> at the Cortex Complex in the Central West End. The intent was to have an open forum, similar to that at the Parkview Apartments. The policy makers at this session included 17th Ward Alderwoman Tina “Sweet-T” Pihl, Missouri 77<sup>th</sup> District Representative Kimberly-Ann Collins, Dr. Yusef Scoggin, Director Human Services for the City of St. Louis, and Dr. Matifadza Hlatshwayo Davis, MD, MPH, the Director of Health for the City of St. Louis. Additionally, Danielle Spradley, Outreach Director for the Office of Congresswoman Cori Bush of Missouri’s First District and Assistant Professor Kenya Brumfield-Young, MLS, MSCJ of the Criminology and Criminal Justice program at St. Louis University’s School of Social Work attended. Quantitative data was not captured for this session.

### Discussion Topics

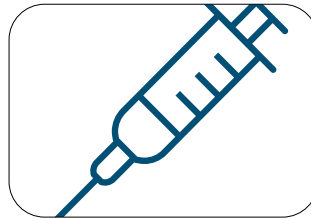
Discussion during this session revolved around four primary topics:



Criminal Justice



Barriers to Treatment



Issues related to substance use



Broader community and social context

**Criminal Justice** – Many during this conversation advocated for the public health approach for substance use and abuse disorder versus the criminal justice model. The common concern was that criminalizing substance use and abuse disorders were impeding recoveries, such as the prohibition of safe injection sites, needle exchange programs, and fentanyl test strips and kits (products used to test narcotics for the presence of fentanyl). Additionally, service providers voiced concerns for people living in carceral spaces who detox alone without medical or emotional support. Another issue related to incarcerated persons about which providers articulated concern was the amount of

fentanyl present in the prisons and that the facilities had not instituted a harm reduction program that included the use of Naloxone. Post-release from correctional institutions, providers discussed the higher probability of people overdosing. Data supports this premise in that people incarcerated in state prisons are 129% more likely to die from an overdose than the general public post-release (Vera Institute of Justice, 2018). Even more alarming, formerly incarcerated people are 40% more likely to succumb to opioid overdose two weeks post-release (Vera Institute of Justice, 2018).

**Barriers to Treatment and Services** – Barriers to treatment often occur at several levels. Service providers face challenges assisting clients when funding becomes scarce or nonexistent. Coupled with funding barriers, several providers reiterated concerns at the policy level about the lack of overall governmental support (not passing legislation that would allow fentanyl testing strips, needle exchanges) for “life saving initiatives”.

Another challenge to accessing treatment is sometimes the individual themselves. While treatment is widely associated with positive outcomes, elements of one’s life may indeed affect their access to treatment at the individual level (Rapp et al., 2007). Some of the most frequently occurring barriers to treatment other than financial cited by individuals are:

- Individual can “handle” their drug use on their own and does not need help.
- Individual does not think a problem is present
- Individual has encountered a negative treatment experience
- .Privacy related concerns (talking to others in groups about personal matters.)
- Employment concerns
- Family concerns (Rapp et al., 2007)

Providers explained that even after a person has navigated their barriers, the possibility exists that a treatment facility will admit someone who takes “priority”, or whose substance use disorder poses greater immediate harm to the individual or immediate family or community. Once one has been

accepted and entered treatment, should they relapse, future options become less available, although it is common for someone in recovery to relapse early during the process. Lastly, stigma still exists around the use of drugs and drug users. This also serves as a barrier to treatment.

### **Issues Related to Substance Use**

Participants discussed several issues related to substance use in the city of St. Louis, the first of major concern is that the supply of narcotics in St. Louis is laced (stepped on) with fentanyl. Many people who use drugs are not intentionally purchasing fentanyl but are buying another drug in which a the quantity of one narcotic has been lowered and the overall purchase weight has been increased by adding fentanyl. This is particularly problematic because the end user is unaware that they are taking fentanyl and they do not know the quantity or quality that they are consuming. Although this conversation focused on the St. Louis area, this is a nationwide problem. During this conversation, providers reiterated the need for programs that not accessible in Missouri at this time and the expansion of Naloxone administration training and distribution.

Providers did not overlook young people during this discussion. The need for continuous education around the use of drugs and currently available methodologies was front and center. Prevent-Ed spoke of some of the programs they provide in the attempt to reach school-age children to help educate them early on the harms and effects of drugs and the benefits of positive self-esteem and awareness.

As the topic of mental health and co-occurring disorders moved to the forefront, so did the discussion relative to the need for education about increased suicidal ideation among those with substance use and substance abuse disorders. For example, people who inject opiate-based drugs are particularly at risk for suicidal ideation as anxiety and depression increase, especially when a person is no longer euphoric and is “coming down” or in between dosages.

### **Broader Social and Community Context**

The providers discussed the risk and protective factors associated with substance use and abuse disorder. Factors such as housing, income inequality, food insecurity, unemployment, crime, and mental health were all discussed as areas where more attention is needed.



**Recommendations**

While there is no one model to address the needs raised by the providers the following are suggestions:

1. Develop a coalition of like-minded agencies to form grassroots ballot initiatives.
2. Partner with other agencies, combine services and remove barriers to services by visiting community locations to which people do not have to travel.
3. Collaborate with agencies on joint grants and funding projects.
4. Partner with local universities for possible funding options and volunteer support

**17th Ward Conclusion**

The providers' passion and frustration during the listening session could be felt throughout the room. People shared personal stories about how they are personally affected by the opiate crisis and sometimes feel rejected by the system for trying to help others. The providers in the room were representative of many people and identities and were there because they wanted to help people. To address the providers' goals will take a collaborative "strength in numbers" approach and open conversations with legislators.

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