November 22, 2008 Public Safety Town Hall/Forum Summary

Jefferson Avenue Revitalization



Public Safety History

Concentrated poverty rose in city, study shows From Democrat and Chronicle

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Staff writer

A Brookings Institution study released this week shows the U.S. economic decline from 1999 to 2005 has produced higher concentrations of poverty in Rochester and in cities across the country.

Rochester has the fourth greatest increase in the level of concentrated working poverty of the 58 cities and metropolitan areas studied and is among 10 cities with the highest rates of concentrated working poverty in the United States, the report says.

Only three other metropolitan areas had greater increases in concentrated working poor: Allentown-Bethlehem-Easton, Pa.; Detroit-Warren-Livonia, Mich., and Augusta-Richmond County, Ga.

exceeds the amount of taxes owed.

"Reversal of Fortune: A New Look at Concentrated Poverty in the 2000s," shows a 21 percent concentrated working poverty rate in Rochester.

Breakdown by ZIP code

The number of city ZIP codes in which high percentages of residents live in poverty expanded from two areas to five.

In 1999, high concentrations of working poor lived within ZIP codes 14605, which includes parts of Joseph and North Clinton avenues, and 14608, which includes the Lyell Avenue-Jay Street area.

In 2005, those two areas were joined by ZIP codes 14611, in the Jefferson Avenue area; 14621, which includes the Hudson Avenue area, and 14613, which includes areas around Driving Park and Dewey Avenue.

All five ZIP codes are within city limits.

According to 2000 U.S. census data, 97,609 people lived within these five ZIP codes, 47 percent of the city's then 209,662 population. That means, based on eight year-old data, almost half of Rochester's residents live in areas of concentrated poverty.

The percentages of EITC filers by ZIP code are: 62 percent (14605), 47 percent (14608), 46 percent (14611 and 14621) and 42 percent (14613).

Rochester Mayor Robert Duffy said poverty is often a downward spiral, and a driving factor behind high school dropout rates, drug sales, street crime, job loss and disinvestment by businesses in city neighborhoods, which result in fewer economic opportunities in neighborhoods with the highest economic need.

"I think poverty has a huge impact on some of the many challenges we are facing here in Rochester. It has a dramatic impact on our city government, how we apportion money and what we focus on in city government," Duffy said Wednesday.

More funding for public safety, housing and emergency assistance must go into high poverty areas, Duffy said. Long-term change will take commitment by government, business, support agencies and residents.

Top 10

Cities with greatest percentage change in working poor populations 1999-2005:

- 1. Allentown-Bethlehem-Easton, Pa. (18.2)
- 2. Detroit Warren-Livonia. Mich. (16.1)
- 3. Augusta-Richmond County, Ga. (14.8)
- 4. Rochester, N.Y. (13.2)
- 5. Columbia, S.C. (11.2)
- 6. Philadelphia, Pa.-Camden, N.J.-Wilmington, Del. (10.4)
- 7. Little Rock-North Little Rock, Ark. (8.4)
- 8. Toledo, Ohio (7.7)
- 9. Cleveland -Elyria-Mentor, Ohio (7.2)
- 10. Miami-Fort Lauderdale-Miami Beach, Fla. (7.0)

What's at stake

Concentrated poverty leads to a lack of private-sector investment, inflated prices for goods and services, hindered educational opportunity, higher crime rates and negative health outcomes; and is quite likely to impact the quality of life of all city residents.

Meeting Agenda

- Welcome (Minister Mohammad & County Legislator Lightfoot)
- Mayor Duffy speaks on Jefferson Avenue efforts
- Jefferson Avenue Public Safety concerns addressed by Police Chief Moore
- Focus Groups Breakout (Process explained)
 Each group has five (5) minutes to prepare written responses to a specific question. Each group will elect a spokesperson to present the responses.
- Group Presentations
- Meeting Wrap-up
- City of Rochester Update on Revitalization process
- Questions and Answers
- Meeting adjournment next meeting date announcement

Meeting Attendees

- Mayor Duffy
- Police Chief Moore
- Willie J. Lightfoot
- Minister James Muhammad
- Trionna Moore
- Ivelise Allen
- Baeuz Hamilton
- Cheryl Lester
- Rev. Arthur Dilbert
- Deputy Chief Teresa Everett
- Gary Davis
- Kelvin Knight

- Venita Jackson
- Avis Hill
- Kareem Walker
- Willie Muhammad
- Samig Abdulla
- Nelson Baldwin Sr.
- Raleigh McGill
- Rodney Muhammad
- Sylvia Barker
- Jonnie Shaw
- Wallace Shaw

Group Questions

- **Group One**: What are your main concerns regarding public safety on Jefferson Avenue? What are the group's recommendations to these concerns?
- Group Two: What are your perceptions regarding police relations and conduct on Jefferson Avenue? How could these relationship be improved?
- Group Three: How can the community and RPD develop/build better relationships? Give examples of programs and/or training.

Group One Responses

(What are your perceptions regarding police relations and conduct on Jefferson Avenue? How could these relationship be improved?)

- Review activities on Champlain and Bartlett
- Make police present consisted during the day and night
- Revisit the intent of Zero Tolerance
- Investigates complaints from the community
- Make sure RPD is committed to the revitalization of Jefferson Avenue
- The community must be a part of the solution to reduce crime
- Police must address the issue of drugs on the streets
- The City School District should review the dropout situation and their contribution to the crime problem

- Police need more training in race relations
- Police not sensitive in dealing with area residents
- Police officer attitudes are negative towards residents and youth
- A more diverse group of police officer would improve community relations
- More opportunities for positive interaction with police officer should be created
- Have meetings to deal with police conduct and crime solutions
- Establish a "pubic safety committee" to promote positive police relationships
- More public education and community safety activities from Rochester Fire Department

Group Two Responses

(What are your main concerns regarding public safety on Jefferson Avenue? What are the group's recommendations to these concerns?)

- There are too many or just enough police officers
- There are some issues with police relations
- There is no diversity among the officers assigned to the area
- Business owners have a good relationship with RPD but, there is room for improvement
- RPD's relationship with you needs a lot of improvement-the effort must begin in the home/school
- Lack of jobs/job training/family support services contributes to crime problem

- Not enough available social services
- School drop-outs have nothing to do
- Vacant houses should be torn downthey draw crime and fires
- Need more people monitoring the cameras
- Reinstitute police substations
- Need more afterschool programs for youth
- Give grants to help people obtain housing to create sense of ownership

Group Three Responses

How can the community and RPD develop/build better relationships? Give examples of programs and/or training.)

- Treat residents with respect
- Provide officers with more cultural/diversity training
- Police officer should become more familiar community activities
- Promote positive interactions through posters and TV ads
- Bicycle shops should have information on the laws on riding bicycles
- Police officers should receive sensitivity training on dealing with females (body searches)



Meeting Wrap-up

- The start to correcting the crime and youth problem begins at home- parents and family must do their part
- Parents/guardians need training on positive family development
- The Rochester City School District must be a part of the solution/planning process
- Property owners must enforce the laws
- Loitering in playground areas must be stopped
- Review whether the cameras are actually deterring crime and demonstrate the results to the community
- We need more vocational training programs/training center on Jefferson avenue
- The community needs more information on available resources
- There must be more trust among community residents and with RPD

Announcement of Next Meeting Date

TBD by Jefferson Avenue Business Association, Public Safety Committee.

Committee Leader: Kareem Walker 585-905-2741

PS committee members:

Willie Lightfoot

Avis Hill

Minister James Muhammad

Teresa Everett