

Neighborhoods First; The Greater Bond Community – The Argument for a Place Based Initiative for UUCT's First Environmental Justice Project

The Greater Bond Neighborhood Initiative

A Priority Area Team, comprised of neighborhood residents, stakeholders, and City staff, was organized to lead the work for each neighborhood priority area. The Action Team also identified a chair for each Priority Area Team. Each chair subsequently recruited residents and interested stakeholders to serve on his/her team. Each Priority Area Team worked through a facilitated “issue-cutting” process to establish a goal, identify and define the neighborhood concerns, and identify an overall desired outcome for each respective priority area. Concurrent to this process, the Action Team conducted^[11] the Greater Bond Community Survey to gather additional resident and stakeholder input on the identified neighborhood priorities and solutions to address them. The results from the survey further guided each Priority Area Team’s work as neighborhood concerns and desired outcomes were refined.

On September 13, 2018, the Action Team presented a draft of the plan at the Greater Bond Neighborhood Community Showcase held at the Southside Farmers Market. At the market, attendees had the opportunity to provide additional input and feedback. Following the market, the Action Team hosted an open house where attendees had another opportunity to provide input and feedback, which was used to further refine the plan.

At its regular meeting on September 24, 2018, the Greater Bond Neighborhood Association adopted the plan. Seven issue-focused implementation plans were derived from the overall Greater Bond Neighborhood First Plan. These subject issue areas are Housing, Neighborhood Cleanup, Neighborhood and Business Opportunity Promotion, Resident Empowerment, Streetscaping and Curb Appearance, Neighborhood Crime Watch and Neighborhood Cleanup.

The Greater Bond Neighborhood First Plan was a program adopted to addresses the neighborhood’s top priorities and concerns:

- Community Beautification
- Land Use
- Economic Development and Resident Empowerment, and
- Neighborhood Safety & Crime Prevention

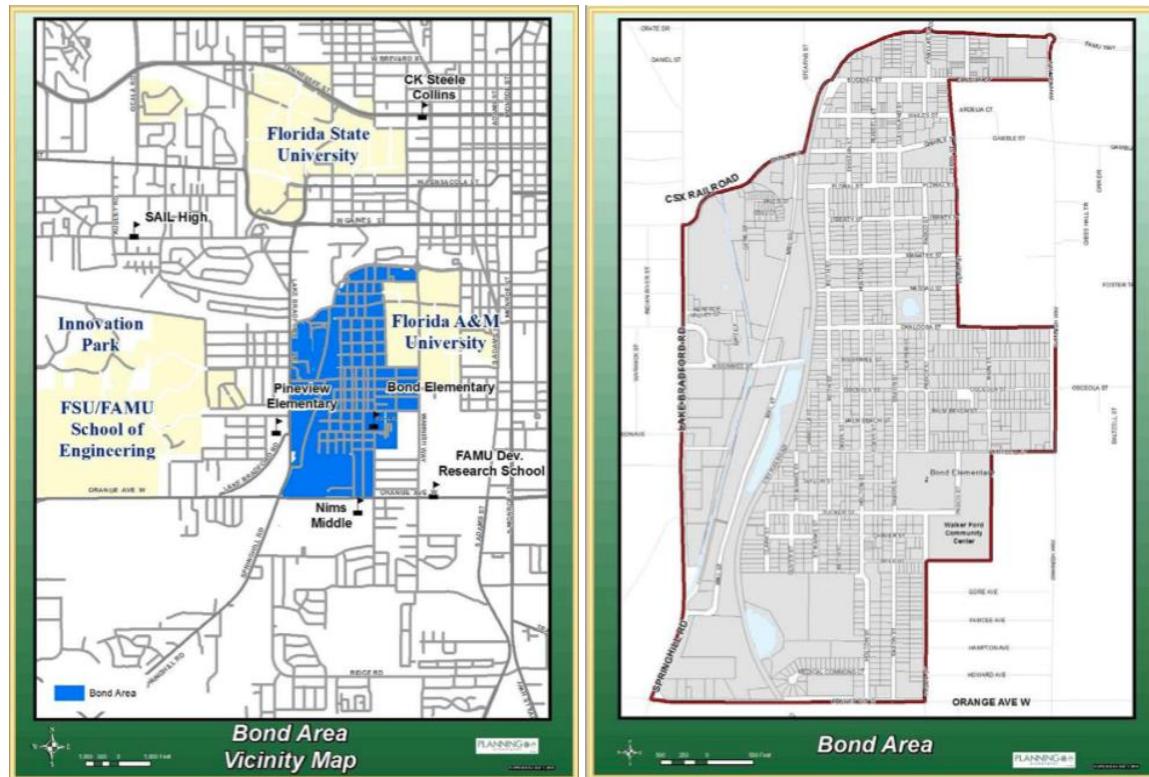
The plan identifies strategies and action items to address residents' concerns within these four priority areas and its exclusive focus is to make the Greater Bond neighborhood a better place to live, work, and play. It is the cumulative work of a yearlong collaborative process led by the neighborhood association's community action team, residents, various interested stakeholders and supported by the City of Tallahassee.

On the same date, September 24, 2018, the Tallahassee Community Redevelopment Agency voted unanimously to fund the plan to the tune of \$6.4 Million, with an initial funding of \$500,000 and a commitment of an additional \$5.9 million over the next three years. The initial \$500,000 funding has been allocated to fast track the following projects:

- Development and Construction of a Linear Park: \$300,000
- Residential Housing Façade Program: \$150,000
- Enhancements at Speed-Spencer-Stephens Park: \$30,000
- Engagement Around Community Infrastructure: \$20,000

The Greater Bond Neighborhood and its Demographics

Just where is the Greater Bond Neighborhood? The Greater Bond neighborhood is 0.73 sq. mi. in the southwestern quadrant of the City of Tallahassee, Florida. The neighborhood is bounded by FAMU Way to the north; Orange Avenue to the south; Pasco Street, Wahnish Way, Perry Street, and Eugenia Street to the east; and Lake Bradford Road to the west. The neighborhood encompasses several subdivisions, including Medical Commons, Villa Mitchell, Normal School, Saxon Street, Cherry Hill, and Leon Arms. The maps below show the boundaries.



COMMUNITY PROFILE: GREATER BOND AREA

KEY FACTS

3,147

Population



2.4

Average Household Size

25.8

Median Age

\$17,295

Median Household Income

BUSINESS



80

Total Businesses



570

Total Employees

INCOME



\$17,295

Median Household Income



\$11,725

Per Capita Income



\$9,549

Median Net Worth

EDUCATION



No High School Diploma



38%
High School Graduate



21%
Some College



20%
Bachelor's/Grad/Prof Degree

EMPLOYMENT



White Collar

55%



Blue Collar

11%



Services



18.9%
Unemployment Rate

Households By Income

The largest group: <\$15,000 (41.9%)

The smallest group: \$200,000+ (0.3%)

Indicator	Value	Difference	Bar
<\$15,000	41.9%	+25.1%	
\$15,000 - \$24,999	24.1%	+13.0%	
\$25,000 - \$34,999	8.9%	-0.9%	
\$35,000 - \$49,999	11.2%	-2.0%	
\$50,000 - \$74,999	5.4%	-9.9%	
\$75,000 - \$99,999	5.3%	-4.3%	
\$100,000 - \$149,999	2.2%	-10.6%	
\$150,000 - \$199,999	0.5%	-4.2%	
\$200,000+	0.3%	-4.2%	

Bars show deviation from
Lean County

Source: 2013-2014 American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates. Data for all race and ethnicity groups are included in the total population.

Questions of Relevance for Our Congregation

Who is working on it locally? Is this a multicultural effort? List organizations and individuals

On March 3, 2016, the group held an organizational meeting with the City of Tallahassee Neighborhood Affairs division. The Greater Bond Neighborhood Association was formed, and officers were elected Talethia Edwards, who had previously served on several community boards and is an avid volunteer, was elected as the first association president, and Angelise Card, a lifelong community resident, was chosen as the vice president.

John Baker and Leann Watts-Williams provided guidance and facilitation of this process, as well as the entire Neighborhood Affairs division. Also the Tallahassee City Commission, Assistant City Manager Cynthia Barber, and the Tallahassee Police Department (especially those officers who work in the Greater Bond neighborhood) were involved. Recognition also goes to the community action team committee chairs: Talethia Edwards, Wileen Footman, Jacqueline Perkins, and Rhett Turnquest. The Florida A&M University Department of Social Work master's program and Alpha Rho Chi architectural fraternity provided their support and countless hours of hands-on participation.

We Greater Bond's native sons Dr. Henry Lewis III and Chalmus Thomas provided invaluable contributions to this effort.

What has been done so far?

- In 2016, GBNA hosted the first annual Community Walk and Family Health Day in partnership with MOVE Tallahassee, the Florida Department of Health, and Bond Elementary School. The event won the Leon County School District's Community Involvement Award and continued to the state level competition.
- GBNA raised funds for the "Leaping for Literacy" program that provided financial incentives to students for meeting their reading goals.
- Initiation of a Mentoring Program for Elementary Grade School Children
- Development and Construction of a Linear Park: \$300,000
- Residential Housing Façade Program: \$150,000
- Enhancements at Speed-Spencer-Stephens Park: \$30,000

- Engagement Around Community Infrastructure: \$20,000

What needs to be done?

- Mentors for Mentor Program
- Books for Leaping for Literacy
- Assistance filling out applications for Façade Improvement
- Suggestions for Land Use Protection

How will it nurture beloved community beyond our congregation?

Does it have multiple access points for participation?

Yes, it appears that there will be multiple access points to engage with the community. The mentoring program and the Leaping for Literacy programs stand out as possibilities. Also work volunteering with the Southside market. Also helping residents fill out applications for façade improvement grants.

Is this for all generations?

Yes, there will be opportunities for young and old to get involved with the projects listed above.

Is this for those with only a little time to give and those with a lot of time to give?

There should be activities and opportunities for those with a lot of time on their hands and those that only want to get involved with one target activity. The realities of these opportunities will play out as we get more information from the community leaders or the Neighborhood Association and the planning team for the Neighborhood First Plan for the Greater Bond Neighborhood.

Is this for doers and for thinkers?

In addition, there should be ample opportunities for doers and thinkers or hands-on folks and behind-the-scenes folks as well as we explore where we might best put our efforts.

Will UUCT's participation help make a tangible impact?

It all depends on how things play out but I can envision our efforts making a tangible difference in the community and one that we can be proud of to have participated in.

Does it have opportunities to expand beyond initial efforts?

Again it is hard to see where things will lead but there is a distinct possibility that other opportunities will open up to the congregation as a whole. Perhaps similar activities can be initiated in other neighborhoods as well