

Southeast Sustainability Communities Fund: Hoffman Triangle Outreach Summary Report



Prepared for



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PROJECT CONTEXT

“New Orleans experiences persistent subsidence, frequent localized flooding, and nonpoint source pollution that impacts water quality in Lake Pontchartrain. Only with the design of a complex municipal drainage system has the city been able to develop on what was previously uninhabitable wetlands. Unfortunately, this single approach to water management coupled with the spread of impervious surfaces has only increased the city’s susceptibility to flooding from regular rain events. The very pumping system that works to keep the city dry is also the leading cause of our sinking. Cracking foundations, ‘rollercoaster roads’, and crumbling infrastructure are just a few of the many issues associated with our current approach to water management. Those most vulnerable to repetitive flood loss are often least able to prioritize green infrastructure retrofits over other financial demands” (excerpt from SSCF Award Letter).

The Southeast Sustainability Communities Fund project in Hoffman Triangle (HT) aims to implement residential green infrastructure installations, while identifying neighborhood challenges and assets. The project partners include The City of New Orleans Office of Resilience and Sustainability (ORS); Urban Conservancy; Green Light New Orleans (Green Light); Launch NOLA Green, Sustaining Our Urban Landscape (SOUL); and WATER BLOCK LLC. This project is based in the Hoffman Triangle neighborhood, a 44-block area bounded by S. Broad Avenue, S. Claiborne Avenue, Washington Avenue, and Martin Luther King Boulevard in New Orleans, LA.



Map of Central City limits and Hoffman Triangle neighborhood in New Orleans

OUTREACH OVERVIEW

Between January and April 2019, WATER BLOCK, LLC worked with project partners, residents, local nonprofits and faith based organizations to collect qualitative and quantitative information about Hoffman Triangle, and the flooding concerns in the area. This data was then used to inform the survey instrument (*see Appendix A*), which was used for canvassing in the neighborhood. The survey was edited and finalized through two focus group sessions with small groups of neighborhood residents.



Flooded Street at the Intersection of Third Street and S. Johnson Street

Alongside neighborhood leaders and volunteers, we held five canvassing sessions, where we knocked on every occupied unit within the project boundary and collected answers to the survey questions. Through this activity, we were able to collect 115 surveys. We also held an additional outreach session that identified 60 illegal dumping sites in the area, and notified residents of the “Green Your Neighborhood” party, which served as the community kick off event for the project. More information about the focus group sessions, neighborhood leaders and volunteers, and community kick off event can be found below.

Focus Group Sessions

The first focus group, also known as the Pastor's Breakfast, was held on January 24th at Launch NOLA. The aim of this meeting was to better understand the history, people, assets and challenges of Hoffman Triangle; share information about the project; and further develop relationships with the faith based leaders in the community who serve a vital role in bridging the gap between project partners and community members. During this session, a draft survey that would be used to collect information for the project was presented, and attendees provided feedback. A SWOT (Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities and Threats) analysis of the neighborhood was also completed. The results from the analysis are listed below.

- Strengths
 - good police response and relationship, churches support one another, good neighborhood connections, increases in education about green infrastructure
- Weaknesses
 - slumlords, police is responsive but not preventative, too many crime hot spots, lack of home maintenance, too much concrete in church parking lots makes flooding worse, lack of affordable housing, illegal dumping
- Opportunities
 - street construction (opportunity for more green infrastructure to be included), tree plantings (health benefits and opportunities it leads to), permeable paving, building neighborhood relationships, workforce development around green infrastructure, possible re-uses of tires from illegal dumping sites
- Threats
 - too much concrete - increased size of parking lots for churches (i.e. members won't come if there isn't anywhere to park), loud noise (i.e. dirt bikes, boom boxes), empty and overgrown lots, an influx of crime and drugs, a lack of affordable housing, predatory lending (i.e. PayDay Loans)

The second focus group was held with a small group of neighborhood residents on January 31st at Stronger Hope Baptist Church's Meeting Room in Hoffman Triangle. The aim of this meeting was to continue building relationships with community members and gather more feedback to revise the survey instrument, while presenting the paid opportunities for residents to have a leadership role in the project.

Neighborhood Leaders and Volunteers

In the beginning of the project, we worked with faith based leaders, local non profits and residents to recruit 4 neighborhood leaders that would be paid to help lead canvassing efforts. These leaders helped oversee volunteers, provided invaluable knowledge about the history of the neighborhood and helped make connections with those living in Hoffman Triangle. During the canvassing sessions, we worked with volunteers from Americorp, students from the University of New Orleans, and local residents in the city.



Some of the faith based leaders at the “Pastor’s Breakfast”

“Green Your Neighborhood” Kick Off Event

The “Green Your Neighborhood” party served as the kick off event for the project, and was held on April 6th at Taylor Park, which was the most mentioned community space during canvassing. In partnership with Hoffman Early Learning Center’s (HELC) Beautification Day, this event introduced community members to the project partners and provided educational resources about better managing water. Throughout the day, residents were able to paint 5 rain barrels with Green Light and Americorps volunteers (*4 would be installed at the HELC site at a later date*); and volunteers from Eurofins Central Analytical Laboratories, Xavier, UNO, Harrah's Casino, Ricoh, Hoffman Early Learning Center, Southeastern University, and SOUL planted 26 15-gallon trees at the HELC site. Food, music and bouncy houses were also provided. The partner organizations and groups in attendance included NOLA Ready, the Sewerage and Water Board, ORS, the Neighborhood Development Foundation, Groundwork New Orleans, SOUL, Green Light, Urban Conservancy, Launch NOLA, Hoffman Triangle Neighborhood Association, Lawrence D. Crocker College Prep’s Band, New Orleans Recreation Development Commission and WATER BLOCK. Compost stations and eco-friendly utensils were supplied

with an attempt to make this a “No Trash” event. Intentional efforts were also made to ensure that minority owned companies were hired for the event. These included Imagine Dat Inflatables, NOLA Creative, Tott’s Deli and Catering, and Five Star Creole Dishes.



“Green Your Neighborhood” Kick Off Event



Tree Planting at HELC site, part of “Green Your Neighborhood” Kick Off Event

Photo Credit: New Orleans College Prep



“Green Your Neighborhood” Kick Off Event

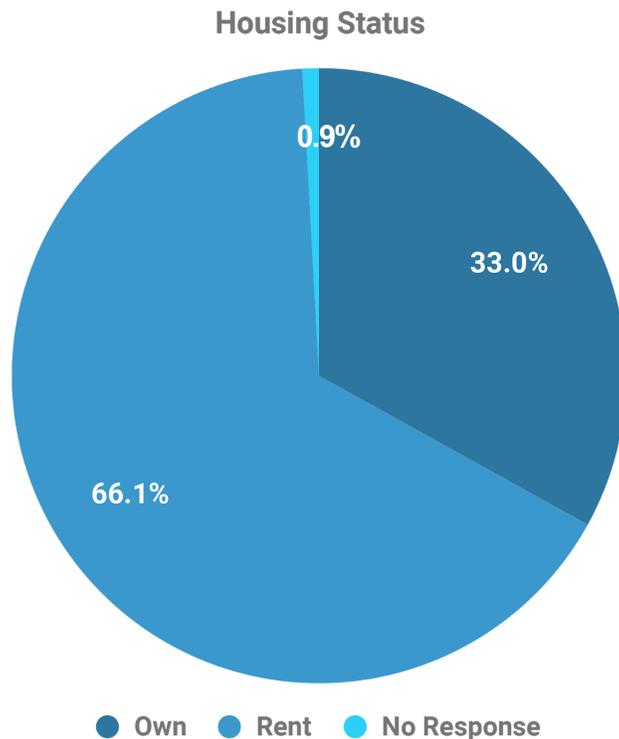
SURVEY RESULTS

The following questions were asked during the five canvassing sessions in Hoffman Triangle. Volunteers were instructed to record a response for each question, but inconsistencies may exist in these attempts. Also, residents had the option to opt out of any questions they did not want to answer. The phrase “responses were not recorded” in the following texts account for either of these situations.

Question 1

Question one asked residents to identify if they own or rent their home. A summary of these responses is included below.

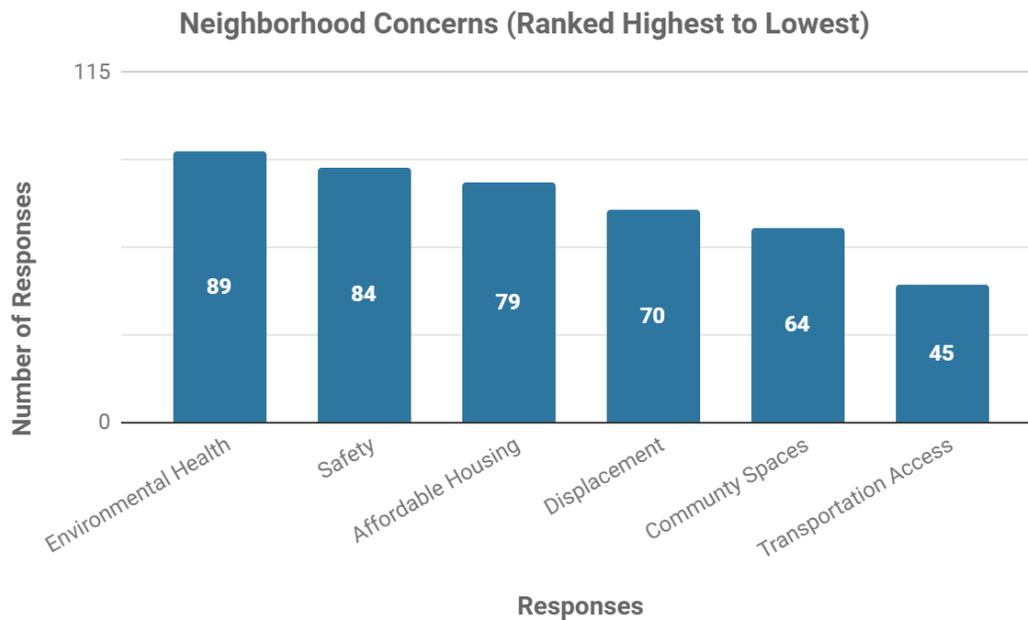
- Out of the 115 residents surveyed, 76 identified as renters, 38 identified as homeowners and 1 response was not recorded. Residents identifying as renters included those receiving governmental rental assistance and subsidized housing. Some of the residents identifying as homeowners mentioned living in homes that were passed down from generations. The percentages for each response are shown in the chart below.



The percentages above have been rounded to the nearest tenth decimal

Question 2

Question two asked residents to respond “yes” or “no” if safety (i.e. crime, drugs), affordable housing, community spaces (i.e. parks, libraries), environmental health concerns (i.e. flooding, overgrown lots, illegal dumping), transportation access and the displacement of existing residents (i.e. displacement/gentrification, loss of culture) were neighborhood concerns. Based on the responses, the top concerns identified were environmental health, safety and affordable housing. A summarized ranking of the concerns from highest to lowest is exhibited in the graph below.



The summarized responses for each neighborhood concern are included below.

- Out of the 115 residents surveyed, 84 said safety is a concern (roughly 73 percent), 26 said it is not (roughly 23 percent), and 5 responses were not recorded (roughly 4 percent). Some of the residents identifying safety as a neighborhood concern mentioned car theft as a burgeoning issue.
- Out of the 115 residents surveyed, 79 said affordable housing is a concern (roughly 69 percent), 29 said it is not (roughly 25 percent) and 7 responses were not recorded (roughly 6 percent). Many residents also mentioned poor housing conditions as a concern referencing rodent bite marks and living in or near neglected structures.
- Out of the 115 residents surveyed, 64 said there are enough community spaces (roughly 56 percent), 40 said there are not (roughly 35 percent), and 11 responses were not

recorded (roughly 9 percent). Many of the residents referenced Taylor Park as their main community space, and others wished they had more in the neighborhood.

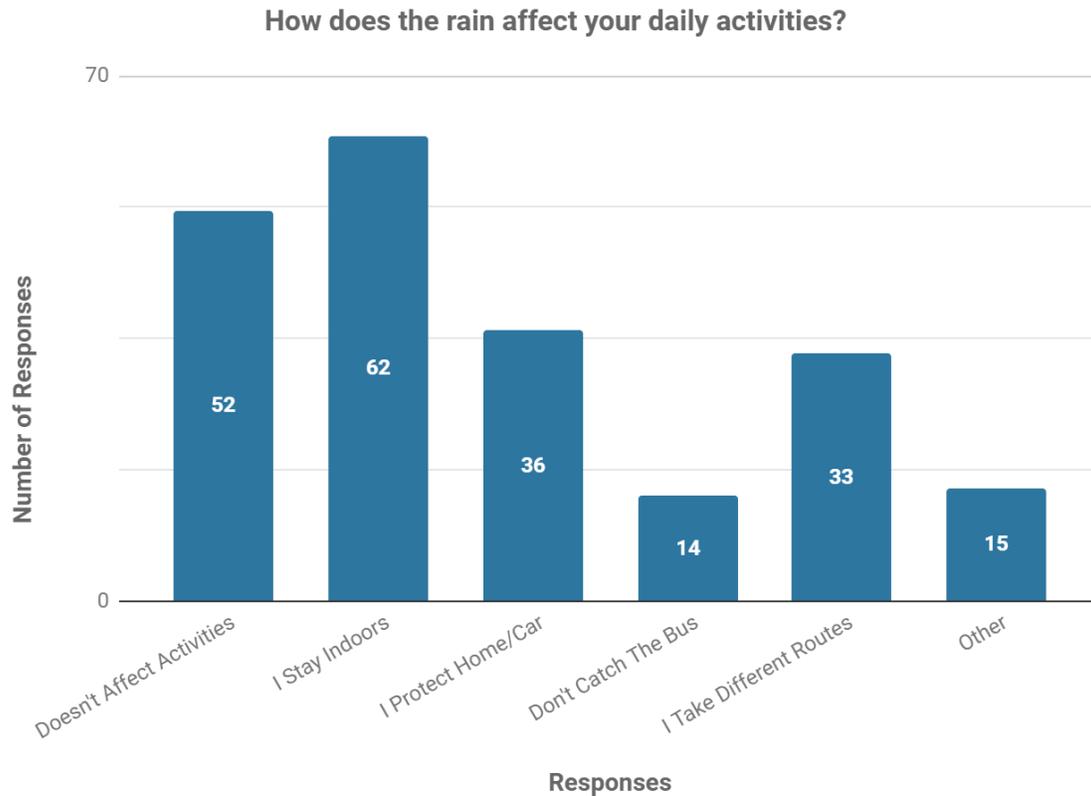
- Out of the 115 residents surveyed, 89 said environmental health is a concern (roughly 77 percent), 18 said it was not (roughly 16 percent), and 8 responses were not recorded (roughly 7 percent). Many of the residents identifying environmental health as a concern mentioned an abundance of lots with overgrown grass and illegal dumping scattered throughout the neighborhood.
- Out of the 115 residents surveyed, 45 said transportation access is a neighborhood concern (roughly 39 percent), 56 said it is not (roughly 49 percent), and 14 responses were not recorded (roughly 12 percent). Many of the residents referenced the bus lines along S. Claiborne Avenue and S. Broad Avenue as viable transportation options.
- Out of the 115 residents surveyed, 70 said that displacement of existing residents is a concern (roughly 61 percent), 34 said it is not (roughly 30 percent), and 11 responses were not recorded (roughly 9 percent). Many of the residents identifying displacement as a neighborhood concern mentioned an increase in new homeowners and tenants in the neighborhood.

Question 3

Most residents made associations to “drainage” systems (i.e. lack of routine maintenance, lack of capacity, broken pipes) and “street conditions” (i.e. unleveled streets, potholes, clogged catch basins) when asked to name two causes of flooding in the city. Responses for “severe weather” included hurricanes and residents saying it rains too much. Responses for “other” included those associating flooding to levee failure, overgrown lots, their personal properties needing repair, and responses saying it doesn’t flood at all. Responses for “government” included those associating flooding to specific governmental agencies such as the Sewerage and Water Board of New Orleans. The responses are shown in the bar graph below.

Question 5

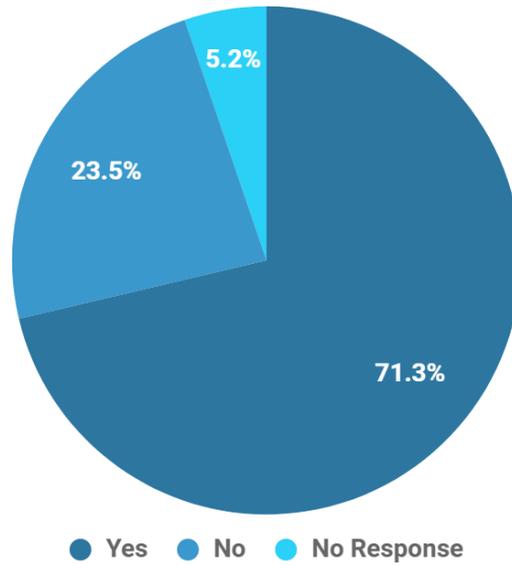
Residents were asked how rain events affect their daily activities. There was a split in responses between residents that said they stay indoors when it rains, and those that said rain events don't affect their daily activities. The responses are shown in the bar graph below.



Question 6

Residents were asked if they noticed pooling water in their neighborhood or on their block. Out of the 115 residents surveyed, 82 said "yes" (roughly 71 percent), 27 said "no" (roughly 24 percent), and 6 responses were not recorded (roughly 5 percent). Many residents responding "yes" identified pooling water around and inside of Taylor Park; in potholes; in their yards; and on parts of Third Street, Johnson Street, First Street, S. Derbigny Street, S. Prieur Street, Second Street, and S. Johnson Street. The responses are shown in the chart below.

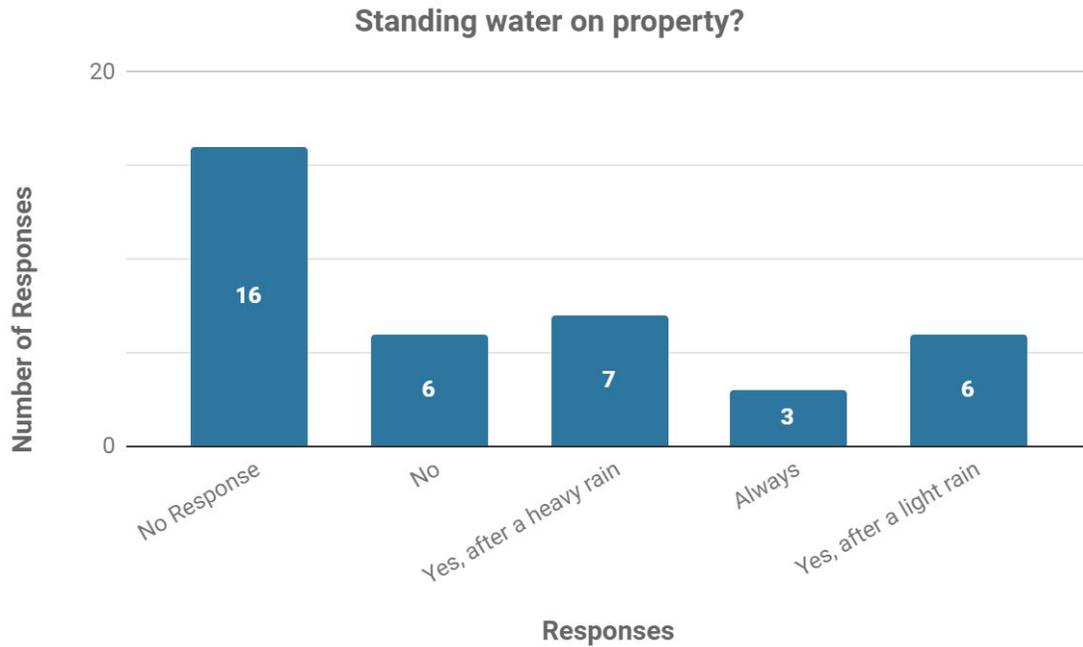
Do you have pooling water in your neighborhood or on your block?



Questions 7-11

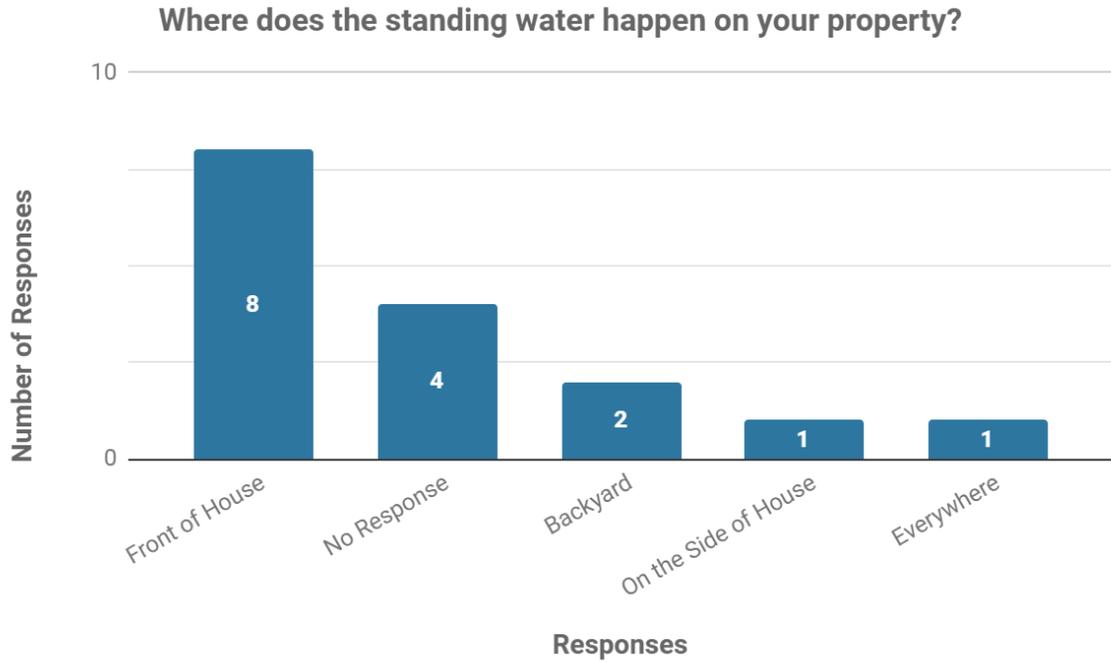
The following questions were asked to the 38 residents who identified as homeowners. The responses for each question are shown in the graphs below.

- Question 7
Out of the 38 homeowners surveyed, 16 said that their property floods. 7 said that their property floods “after a heavy rain” (roughly 18 percent), 6 said “after a light rain” (roughly 16 percent), 3 said their property “always” floods (roughly 8 percent), 6 said “no” their property doesn’t flood (roughly 16 percent), and 16 responses were not recorded (roughly 42 percent). Many residents associated the cause of flooding to drainage systems (i.e. lack of routine maintenance, lack of capacity, broken pipes), severe weather (i.e. too much rain), and “street conditions” (i.e. unlevelled streets, potholes, clogged catch basins). The responses are shown in the graph below.



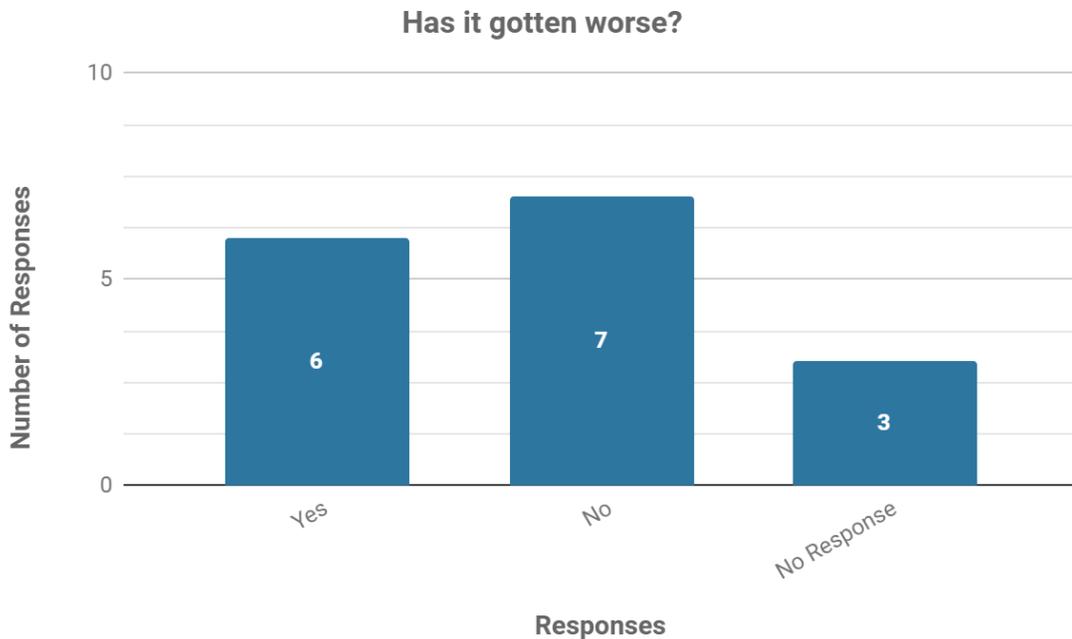
- Question 8

Out of the 16 homeowners that said their property floods, 8 (roughly 50 percent) said it happens in the front of their home (i.e. on the sidewalk, street, front yard), 2 said it happens in their backyard (roughly 13 percent), 1 said it happens on the side of their home (roughly 6 percent), 1 said it happens everywhere (roughly 6 percent) and 4 responses were not recorded (roughly 25 percent). The responses are shown in the graph below.



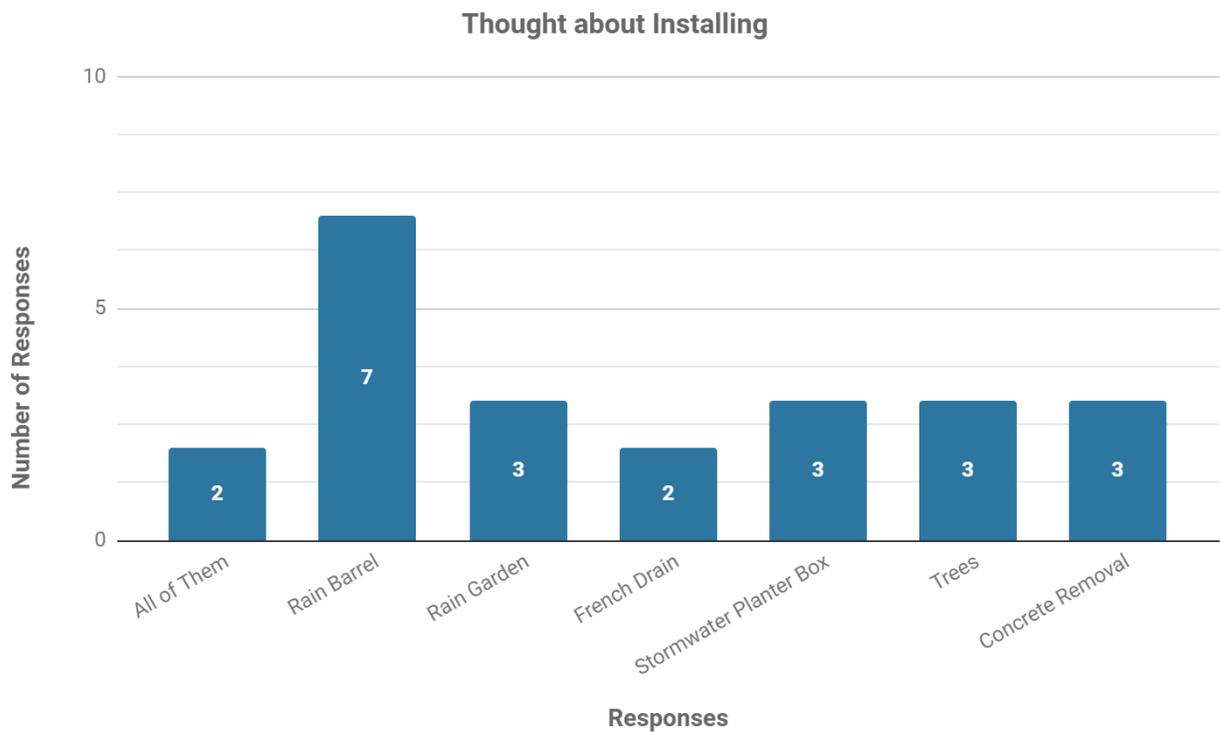
- Question 9

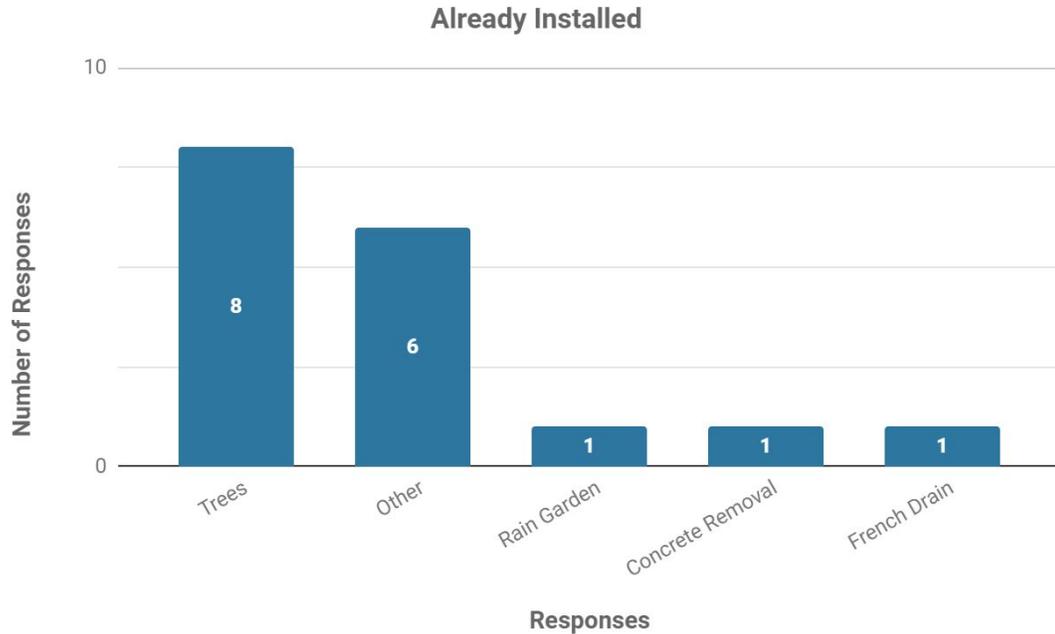
Out of the 16 homeowners that said their property floods, 6 (roughly 37 percent) said it's gotten worse in recent years, 7 said it hasn't gotten worse (roughly 44 percent) and 3 responses were not recorded (roughly 19 percent). Residents that said it's gotten worse mentioned the change happening after Hurricane Katrina, and have noticed the ground sinking more than before the storm. The responses are shown in the graph below.



- Questions 10 and 11

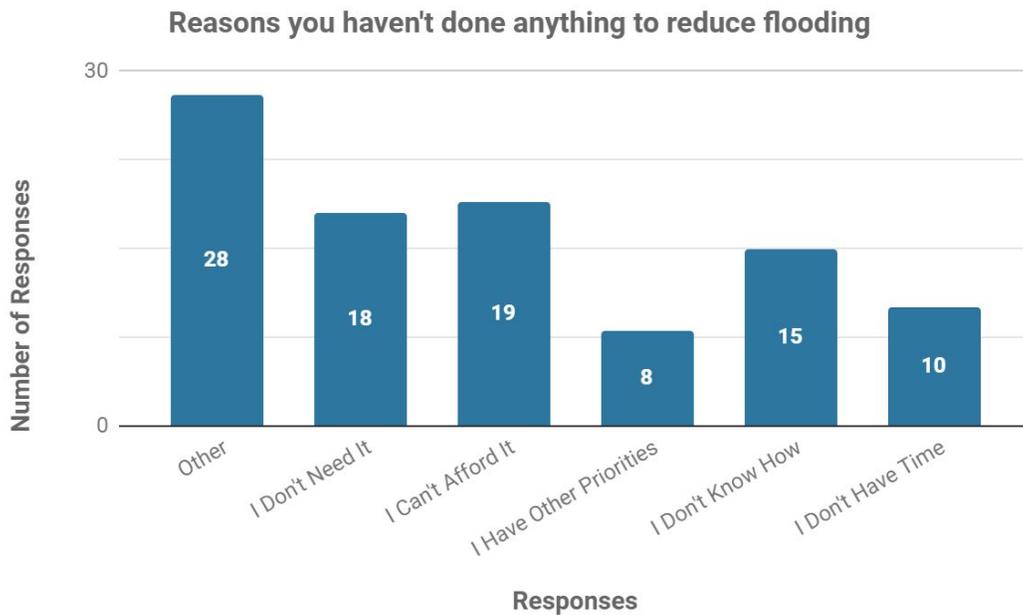
On average, homeowners said that the standing water on their property stays between 1-5 days to a few weeks. Residents were then presented with a photo index showing different green infrastructure projects, and asked if they ever considered or installed any of them (i.e. a rain barrel, a rain garden, trees, concrete removal, a French drain, a stormwater planter box). Some homeowners said they thought about installing a rain barrel, and others already planted trees around their properties. Residents responding “other” also mentioned placing rocks and bricks down to help reduce flooding. The responses are shown in the graph below.





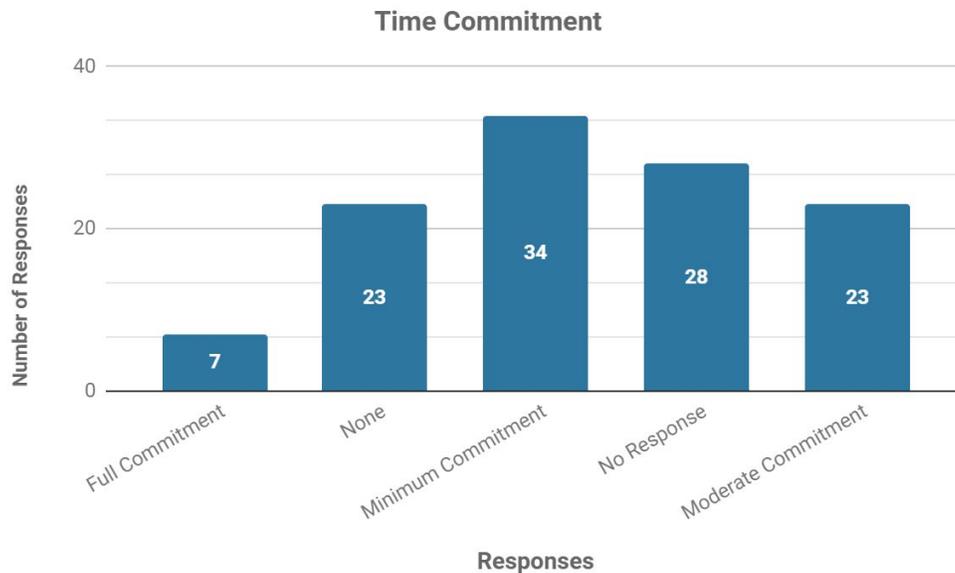
Question 12

Question twelve asked residents to identify the reason/s they may have not done anything to reducing flooding in their neighborhood. 28 responses were “other,” which included residents saying they didn’t own the property to make that decision, and they didn’t feel it was their responsibility. Other popular responses included residents saying they can’t afford it, they don’t need it and they don’t know how. The responses are shown in the graph below.



Question 14

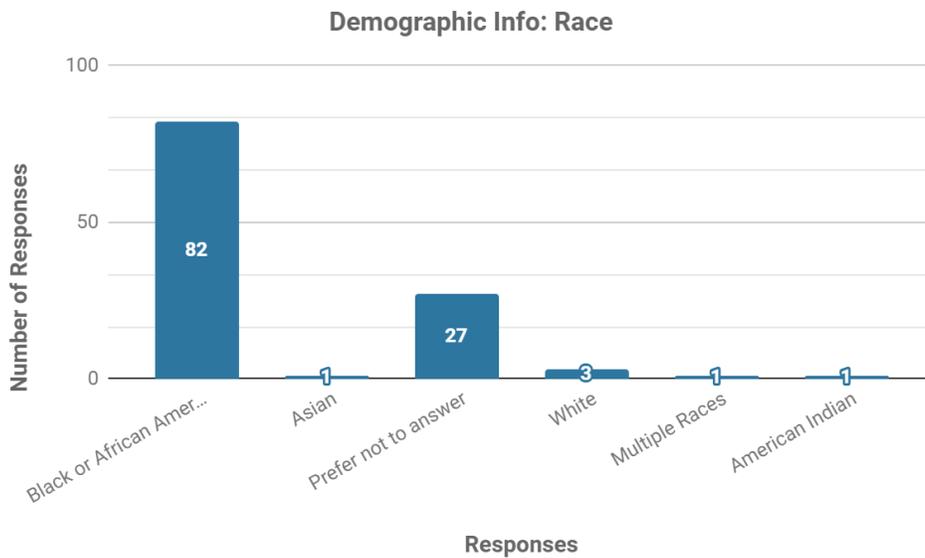
Question fourteen asked residents how much time they'd be willing to commit to a project that reduced flooding in their neighborhood. 34 residents said a minimum commitment (roughly 30 percent), 28 responses were not recorded (roughly 24 percent), 23 said moderate commitment (20 percent), 23 said no commitment (20 percent) and 7 said a full commitment (roughly 6 percent). The responses are shown in the graph below.



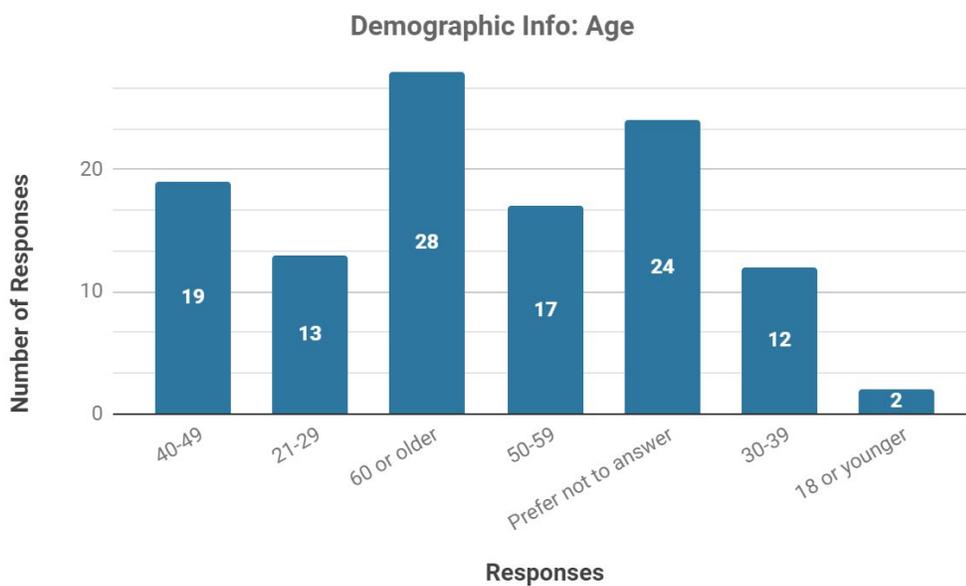
Demographic Information (optional)

The following questions were based on demographics.

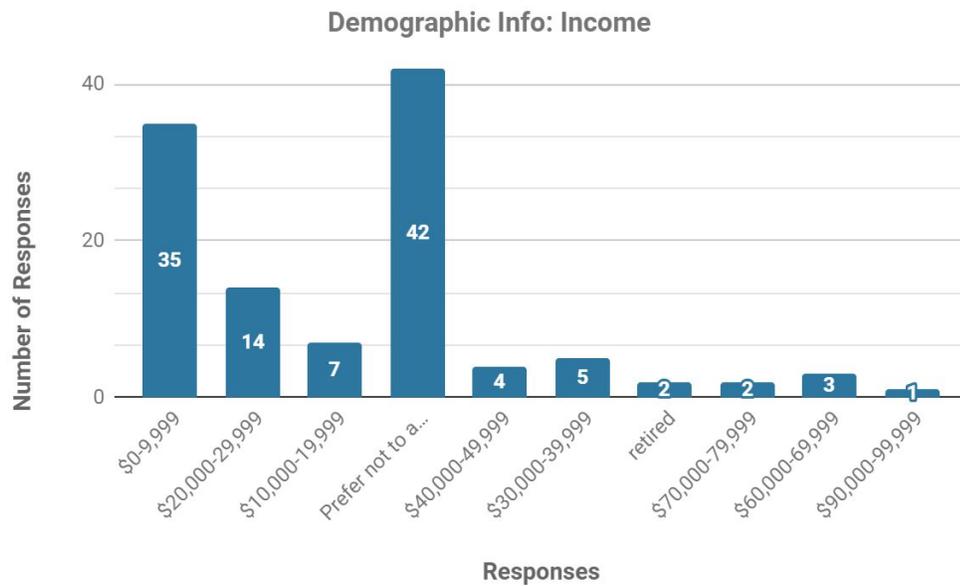
- Out of the 115 residents surveyed, 82 identified as Black or African American (roughly 71 percent), 27 preferred not to answer (roughly 23 percent), 3 identified as White (roughly 3 percent), 1 identified as Asian (roughly 1 percent), 1 identified as American Indian (roughly 1 percent) and 1 identified as Multiple Races (roughly 1 percent). The responses are shown in the graph below.



- Out of the 115 residents surveyed, 28 said they were 60 or older (roughly 24 percent), 24 preferred not to answer (roughly 21 percent), 19 said they were 40-49 years old (roughly 17 percent), 17 said they were 50-59 years old (roughly 15 percent), 13 said they were 21-29 years old (roughly 11 percent), 12 said they were 30-39 years old (roughly 10 percent) and 2 said they were 18 or younger (roughly 2 percent). The responses are shown in the graph below.

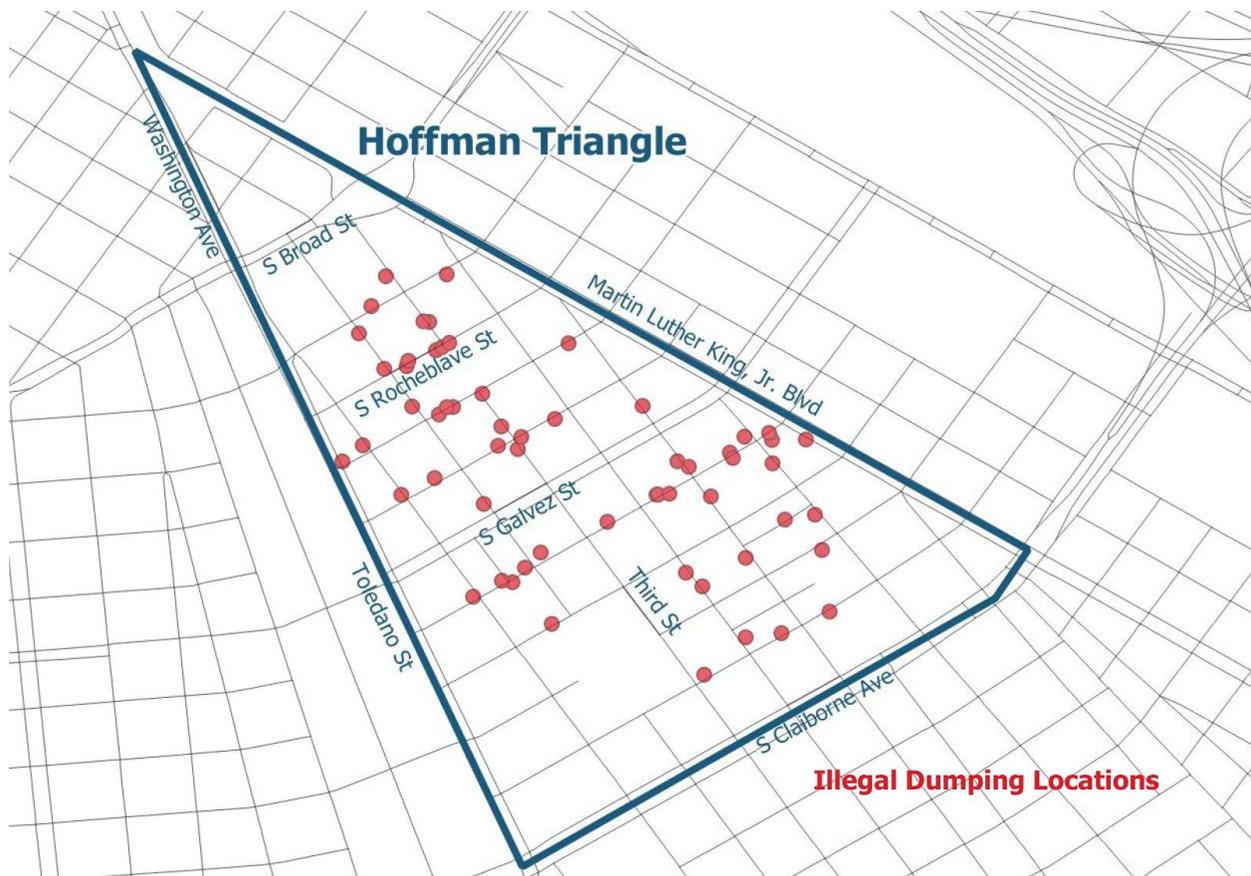


- Out of the 115 residents surveyed, 42 preferred not to identify their income (roughly 37 percent); 35 said they make \$0-9,999 (roughly 30 percent) annually; 14 said they make \$20,000-29,999 (roughly 12 percent) annually; 7 said they make \$10,000-19,999 (roughly 6 percent) annually; 5 said they make \$30,000-39,999 (roughly 4 percent) annually; 4 said they make \$40,000-49,999 (roughly 3 percent) annually; 3 said they make \$60,000-69,999 (roughly 3 percent) annually; 2 said they make \$70,000-79,999 (roughly 2 percent) annually, 1 said they make \$90,000-99,999 (roughly 1 percent) annually and 2 said they were retired (roughly 2 percent). The responses are shown in the graph below.



Illegal Dumping

While surveying and talking with residents, many expressed concerns about the amount of trash in the neighborhood. After the last canvassing session, student volunteers from the University of New Orleans and Sponge City L3C worked with us to geo-locate all of the illegal dumping sites in the area. 60 sites were identified within the project boundaries, which included items such as concrete pieces, wooden planks, furniture, trash, cars and bikes. The most noted item was tire piles. A map and list of the general locations of the sites are included below.



Map of Illegal Dumping Sites in Hoffman Triangle

ILLEGAL DUMPING SITES	LATITUDE	LONGITUDE
1	29.947298	-90.09417
2	29.947301	-90.094199
3	29.948145	-90.092447
4	29.947157	-90.09689
5	29.950674	-90.098398
6	29.950212	-90.098623
7	29.94979	-90.098814
8	29.949977	-90.09782
9	29.945306	-90.095841
10	29.946096	-90.093774
11	29.949638	-90.095582
12	29.947299	-90.098161
13	29.946407	-90.096012
14	29.945949	-90.096447
15	29.945495	-90.091559
16	29.947557	-90.097647
17	29.949967	-90.097731
18	29.950701	-90.097461

19	29.945971	-90.09661
20	29.948153	-90.091924
21	29.9473	-90.094228
22	29.947816	-90.093904
23	29.946325	-90.092852
24	29.949283	-90.098079
25	29.948353	-90.096619
26	29.948063	-90.098755
27	29.947949	-90.093096
28	29.945725	-90.097053
29	29.948671	-90.094441
30	29.946447	-90.091676
31	29.94953	-90.097626
32	29.949577	-90.097534
33	29.946991	-90.091785
34	29.947866	-90.09305
35	29.945884	-90.093521
36	29.949368	-90.098053
37	29.947785	-90.092438
38	29.948195	-90.092871
39	29.948469	-90.095793
40	29.944521	-90.093492
41	29.948004	-90.096365
42	29.946175	-90.096255
43	29.94773	-90.093729
44	29.948055	-90.096669
45	29.948859	-90.096913
46	29.945163	-90.092301
47	29.946916	-90.092247
48	29.945098	-90.092852
49	29.948654	-90.097363
50	29.947315	-90.094029
51	29.948661	-90.097994
52	29.947273	-90.093389
53	29.948539	-90.097581
54	29.949644	-90.097422
55	29.949244	-90.098425
56	29.948191	-90.096311
57	29.946882	-90.094985
58	29.947813	-90.099069
59	29.948652	-90.09746
60	29.948254	-90.092491

Geo-locations of the 60 Illegal Dumping Sites in Hoffman Triangle

RECOMMENDATIONS

The following recommendations are based on conversations, information from surveys and community events (i.e. Hoffman Triangle Neighborhood Association meetings, Central Circle meetings), and observations gathered in Hoffman Triangle.

Communication

Many relationships were built during this initial outreach portion of the project. Going forth, we recommend hosting quarterly meetings with a neighborhood advisory group to further develop these relationships, champion and support community happenings, and provide project updates. This will also serve as a measure of accountability as the project develops. We also recommend having future materials in English and Spanish, and providing regular updates to the larger Hoffman Triangle community, while keeping in mind many residents identified “phone” as their preferred method of contact.

Future Workshops and Implementation

While canvassing, many residents had general questions about green infrastructure and the overall health and cost benefits it can provide. In the near future, we recommend hosting workshops and demonstration projects in the neighborhood to build upon this understanding. Some notes and possible demonstrations are included below.

- There were a few residents who placed stones, bricks and/or concrete around their homes with the aim of reducing flooding. A clear understanding of materials that help reduce and perpetuate flooding would be useful - basing this discussion on site and at properties that have repeat flooding would be ideal.
- Many residents identified clogged catch basins as a cause of flooding and were interested in installing rain barrels, which could serve as the focal point for a day of service in the neighborhood. There were also ideas to involve the faith based leaders and organizations by making this day of service a friendly competition within the neighborhood.
- Many residents noted that the majority of flooding and standing water happens on Third Street, First Street, S. Derbigny Street, Second Street, and S. Johnson Street, which will be helpful in prioritizing intervention areas.

As implementations move forth, it’s important to note that roughly 30% of respondents said they make between \$0-9,999 annually. The financial obligations needed to maintain any green

infrastructure project should be clearly communicated ahead of time. Roughly 30% of respondents also said they have minimum time to help reduce flooding in their neighborhood, which should be considered when assessing the maintenance time associated with the different green infrastructure projects.

Homeowners and Renters

Roughly 66% of those surveyed identified as renters. While these residents may not have the authority to implement a green infrastructure project on their property, it would be worth examining ways to improve tenant-landlord relationships; advocating for improved housing conditions and exploring other communal spaces, public spaces and institutional options (i.e. churches, schools, parks) to manage water that would still provide environmental health benefits to the neighborhood. Some renters also expressed interest in owning a home. It would also help to provide resources to those interested in this pursuit.

APPENDIX A

SSCF: Hoffman Triangle Survey

Please circle and answer the following questions.

1. Do you:
 - a. Rent your home
 - b. Own your home
 - c. Have subsidized housing or governmental rental assistance (i.e. Housing Choice Voucher (Section 8), Privately owned subsidized housing)
 - d. Other _____

2. Do you see the following as community concerns? Please circle "yes" or "no".
 - a. Safety (crime, drugs): **YES or NO**
 - b. Affordable Housing: **YES or NO**
 - c. Community Spaces (parks, libraries): **YES or NO**
 - d. Environmental Health (flooding, overgrown lots, illegal dumping): **YES or NO**
 - e. Transportation Access: **YES or NO**
 - f. Displacement of existing residents (gentrification, loss of culture): **YES or NO**

3. Please name 2 causes of flooding in the city.

4. How do you feel when it rains hard?

5. Please check all that apply.
 - a. ___ The rain does not affect my daily activities. I do what I'm going to do regardless of the weather.
 - b. ___ I stay indoors when it rains.
 - c. ___ I try to protect my home or car when it rains (i.e. I'll park my car on the neutral ground, place sandbags down, etc).
 - d. ___ I won't catch the bus when it rains.
 - e. ___ I take different routes home
 - f. Other _____

6. Are there places on your block or in your neighborhood where you see standing (pooling) water?
 - a. Yes
 - i. Where?

 - b. No

QUESTIONS 7-11: FOR PROPERTY OWNERS ONLY

-
7. Do you ever have standing (pooling) water on your property?
- a. Yes, after a light rain
 - b. Yes, only after a heavy rain
 - c. Always
 - i. What do you think may be the cause (i.e. broken pipe/bad street maintenance)?

 - d. No

8. Where does the standing (pooling) water happen on your property?
- _____

9. Has the standing (pooling) water on your property gotten worse in recent years?
- a. Yes
 - i. Do you remember when it changed?

 - ii. Why do you think it changed?

 - b. No

10. How long does the standing (pooling) water stay? (# hours, # days, # weeks)

ALLOW RESIDENTS TO LOOK THROUGH PHOTO INDEX.

11. **Using the photo index, please check all that apply.**

- a. Yes, I've thought about:
 - i. ____ Installing a rain barrel
 - ii. ____ Installing a rain garden
 - iii. ____ Planting trees
 - iv. ____ Depaving
 - v. ____ Installing a French drain
 - vi. ____ Installing a Stormwater Planter Box
 - vii. ____ Other: _____

- b. I have installed:
 - viii. ____ Rain barrel
 - ix. ____ Rain Garden
 - x. ____ Trees
 - xi. ____ Depaved
 - xii. ____ French Drain
 - xiii. ____ Stormwater Planter Box
 - xiv. ____ Other: _____

12. What is a reason you haven't done anything to reduce flooding on your property? Please circle all that apply.

- a. I don't need it
- b. I don't have time
- c. I have other priorities (i.e. providing for my family)
- d. I don't know how
- e. I can't afford it
- f. Other: _____

13. Would you like to participate or learn more about projects that can reduce flooding in your neighborhood or on your property?

- a. Yes
 - i. **Name, Phone Number, Email:** _____
- b. Maybe
 - i. **Name, Phone Number, Email:** _____
 - ii. _____
- c. No

14. How much time would you be willing to commit to maintain a project that reduced flooding in your neighborhood or on your property? Please check one.

- a. _____ None
- b. _____ Minimum Commitment: water trees and plants, empty rain barrels after rainstorms
- c. _____ Moderate Commitment: rake leaves, weed, apply mulch, plant things
- d. _____ Full Commitment: I'd like to be a leader in my neighborhood to reduce flooding

Optional:

Are there any upcoming community events happening in the neighborhood?

Demographic Information

Race:	Age:	Income:
a. Black or African American	a. 18 or younger	a. \$0-9,999
b. White	b. 19-20	b. \$9,999-19,999
c. Asian	c. 21-29	c. \$20,000-29,999
d. American Indian or Alaskan Native	d. 30-39	d. \$30,000-39,999
e. Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander	e. 40-49	e. \$40,000-49,999
f. Multiple Races	f. 50-59	f. \$50,000-59,999
g. Prefer not to answer	g. 60 or older	g. \$60,000-69,999
	h. Prefer not to answer	h. \$70,000-79,999
		i. \$80,000-89,999
		j. \$90,000-\$99,999
		k. \$100,000 or higher



		I. Prefer not to answer
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Number of people in your home (including yourself): _____