

Expanded Shared-Use in the Roosevelt School District: A Health Impact Assessment

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Executive Summary

The Southwest Interdisciplinary Research Center's (SIRC) Office of Evaluation & Partner Contracts at Arizona State University (ASU) collaborated with the Maricopa County Department of Public Health in their assessment of the potential health impacts associated with expanding shared use (i.e., community access to district-owned properties) within the Roosevelt School District (RSD). Geographically, RSD includes approximately the area in Phoenix, Arizona between 35th Ave. and 40th St. from Lower Buckeye Rd. to the South Mountain Preserve. This study was part of a health impact assessment funded through a grant from the Health Impact Project, a collaboration between the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation and the Pew Charitable Trust, with funding from the de Beaumont Foundation.

Specifically, this study examined the extent to which expanding shared use within RSD would affect health outcomes such as mental health, chronic disease, injury, and stress along five primary pathways of change:

- 1) Community enrichment/Civic pride
- 2) Health eating
- 3) Physical activity
- 4) Neighborhood/Public safety
- 5) Maintenance/Operations

Methodology & Samples

Data were collected through a multi-method approach consisting of archival data, focus groups, surveys, key informant interviews, and community mapping sessions.

Archival Data

Data were collected from the research literature regarding the expected community, health, and fiscal impacts associated with community use of school properties and facilities before and after normal school hours. Existing research studies, reports, and documentation from comparable school districts within Phoenix were collected and used to further elucidate the potential impacts of expanding shared use within RSD.

Focus Groups

One youth and two adult focus groups were conducted, one in English and one in Spanish. Participant characteristics were as follows:

Youth (n=10)

Ages 11-16 (average = 13 years)

80% Female

80% Latino

10% Black/African-American

Community members (n=13)

Ages 22-49 (average = 43 years)

85% Female

85% Latino

15% Black/African-American

Surveys

Paper questionnaires were administered in both English and Spanish to youth and adults living or working within RSD boundaries. Due to limited youth participation, results from youth surveys were excluded from this report.

The adult sample consisted of 225 participants with the following characteristics:

Ages 19-92 (average = 42 years)

86% RSD residents

76% Female

73% Latino

15% Black/African-American

70% Parents (of children under age 18)

Key Informant Interviews

Nineteen key informants participated in face-to-face, telephone, or online interviews. These informants represented the positions/organizations listed below. All informants worked within the Roosevelt School District (RSD) or its geographic boundaries, except the individual representing Washington Elementary School District, a comparable school district in northwest Phoenix.

City of Phoenix Fire Department	Parent Education Resource Center
City of Phoenix Parks & Recreation (2)	Roosevelt School District
City of Phoenix Police Department (2)	School Principals (2)
Community Youth Development Program	South Mountain WORKS! Coalition
Health Improvement Partnership of Maricopa County	Southwest Behavioral Health Services (2)
Maricopa County Department of Public Health	Teacher/Former student council sponsor
	Unlimited Potential
Orchard Community Learning Center	Washington Elementary School District

Community Mapping Sessions

Community members (ages 18 or older) were recruited to participate in two community mapping sessions with a total of 39 individuals participating. Large scale maps of the Roosevelt School District were printed and displayed on three to six different tables per session. Community members sat around the maps and used tokens to mark their responses to a series of questions about their behavior, their families' behavior, and their community on the maps. Each participant also completed a complementary questionnaire.

Summary of Findings

Residents within the Roosevelt School District care for their community and value expanded shared use, particularly for the opportunities it might open up to increased activity among youth. Additionally, residents noted a desire and commitment toward improving their community for current and future generations. However, residents, leaders, and district personnel emphatically emphasized that a number of **barriers, concerns, and needs must be addressed** before expanded shared use could be successfully implemented.

Barriers, Concerns, and Needs Regarding Shared Use

The primary barriers and concerns expressed by the RSD community regarding shared use included the following:

- Safety, Security, and Crime
- Lack of Proper Supervision, Staffing, and Volunteers
- School District Infrastructure and Maintenance
- Costs
- Leadership and Transparency
- Communication between the District, School, and Community

Perceived Benefits of Shared Use in RSD

RSD stakeholders also identified a number of benefits that shared use could provide to students, staff, and families in the RSD district, **primarily in the areas of community enrichment/civic pride and physical activity**. Notably, they emphasized that these benefits could only occur if all of the above concerns, barriers, and needs were addressed. Still, they expressed hope and demand for the success of shared use.

- **Community Enrichment through Collaboration and Partnership**

Shared use likely can **enrich** the good work of both school and community leaders and partners in the RSD community. A direct outcome of shared use that was discovered is that shared use will increase access to community meeting and gathering spaces. Another outcome, if the above concerns are addressed, are more open communication channels between community organizations, the local schools and the school district. Overall, there was a strong interest expressed by community leaders to enter into greater **collaboration** and **partnership** with local schools through hosting programs, classes, and events outside of normal school hours. Such collaboration and partnership may help indirectly inspire a sense of ownership over the school spaces, which could lead to cleaner and safer schools during off hours.

- **Physical Activity Improvement**

Shared use likely can **improve physical activity** in the RSD area by directly providing increased access to recreational spaces. This notion is especially more salient for youth rather than adults. Youth were seen to be more likely to take advantage of open schools, especially if they lived in neighborhoods where local

parks were not close. A strong emphasis was placed on the need for structured and planned physical activities for local youth so that improvement in physical activity could actually occur.

Recommendations

- 1) Address safety, security, and vandalism/graffiti issues within RSD in order to encourage residents to become more active and involved within their community and schools
- 2) Identify or hire a centralized staff person whose primary responsibilities include facility-use scheduling, outreach, and volunteer recruitment and coordination
- 3) Work with schools, the district, and community organizations to identify and schedule structured activities in support of community health and wellbeing prior to implementation of expanded shared use policies
- 4) Improve communication among schools, the district, community organizations and residents
- 5) Enhance efficiency and understanding of the facility rental process by providing easy, online access for community members and organizations
- 6) Identify additional funding sources and partners to alleviate the burden of potential increases in expenses associated with expanded shared use
- 7) Collaborate with City of Phoenix police to identify and target schools for expanded shared use that most closely align with CPTED guidelines and are in areas not already served by high quality parks
- 8) Join the Arizona Community Education Association (AzCEA) to network and receive support from other facility use coordinators statewide

Expanded Shared Use in the Roosevelt School District: A Health Impact Assessment

Overview

The Southwest Interdisciplinary Research Center's (SIRC) Office of Evaluation & Partner Contracts at Arizona State University (ASU) collaborated with the Maricopa County Department of Public Health in their assessment of the potential health impacts associated with expanding shared use (i.e., community access to district-owned properties) within the Roosevelt School District (RSD). Geographically, RSD includes approximately the area in Phoenix, Arizona between 35th Ave. and 40th St. from Lower Buckeye Rd. to the South Mountain Preserve. This study was part of a health impact assessment funded through a grant from the Health Impact Project, a collaboration between the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation and the Pew Charitable Trust, with funding from the de Beaumont Foundation.

Specifically, this study examined the extent to which expanding shared use within RSD would affect health outcomes such as mental health, chronic disease, injury, and stress by increasing access to recreational spaces, school and community gardens, and community gathering/meeting spaces among RSD residents. The theory of change suggested that these potential health impacts could occur along five primary pathways of change (identified in Figure 1 as intermediate outcomes):

- 1) Community enrichment/Civic pride
- 2) Health eating
- 3) Physical activity
- 4) Neighborhood/Public safety
- 5) Maintenance/Operations

This report details study findings separately for each of these five pathways. The degree of expected change within each pathway was determined by answering a series of individual research questions identified by the project's Insight Committee as collectively measuring each intermediate outcome. While results are presented by individual research question, it must be noted that this study was a truly collaborative effort. As such, multiple project partners were responsible for completing different aspects of the study, and the results presented herein, therefore, may not always fully answer each question. This report solely includes the results and conclusions associated with SIRC's assigned components of the project and must be combined with the findings presented by other study partners in order to be deemed comprehensive.

Methods & Samples

Data were collected through a multi-method approach consisting of archival data, focus groups, surveys, key informant interviews, and community mapping sessions.

Archival Data

Data were collected from the research literature regarding the expected community, health, and fiscal impacts associated with community use of school properties and facilities before and after normal school hours. Existing research studies, reports, and documentation from comparable school districts within Phoenix were collected and used to further elucidate the potential impacts of expanding shared use within RSD.

Focus Groups

Three focus groups were conducted consisting of 6 to 10 participants each. Focus groups were conducted with youth and adults separately to better facilitate discussion, and adults (community members) were further separated by preferred language (English or Spanish). SIRC staff conducted the youth and community member focus groups in English; Unlimited Potential conducted the community member focus group in Spanish. Participant characteristics were as follows:

- 1) Youth (n=10)
 - Ages 11-16 (average = 13 years)
 - 80% Female
 - 80% Latino
 - 10% Black/African-American
- 2) Community members (n=13)
 - Ages 22-49 (average = 43 years)
 - 85% Female
 - 85% Latino
 - 15% Black/African-American

Groups were 90 minutes in length and were facilitated using a common written protocol distributed to each facilitator and a standard set of questions reviewed in advance by the project's Insight Committee. Questions centered on:

- Healthy eating behaviors
- Neighborhood characteristics and perceptions
- Community/school collaboration, and
- Support for an expanded shared use policy

Surveys

Paper questionnaires were administered in both English and Spanish to youth and adults living or working within RSD boundaries. All data collection followed consent procedures as required by ASU's Institutional Review Board (IRB); however, given the enhanced consent requirements for youth participation (signed parent consent + signed youth assent), only five youth completed the questionnaire. Results from youth surveys were thus excluded from this report.

The adult sample consisted of 225 participants with the following characteristics:

Ages 19-92 (average = 42 years)

86% RSD residents

76% Female

73% Latino

15% Black/African-American

70% Parents (of children under age 18)

Key Informant Interviews

Nineteen key informants participated in face-to-face, telephone, or online interviews. These informants represented the positions/organizations listed below. All informants worked within the Roosevelt School District (RSD) or its geographic boundaries, except the individual representing Washington Elementary School District, a comparable school district in northwest Phoenix.

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City of Phoenix Parks & Recreation (2)

City of Phoenix Police Department (2)

Community Youth Development Program

Health Improvement Partnership of Maricopa County

Maricopa County Department of Public Health

Orchard Community Learning Center

Parent Education Resource Center

Roosevelt School District

School Principals (2)

South Mountain WORKS! Coalition

Southwest Behavioral Health Services (2)

Teacher/Former student council sponsor

Unlimited Potential

Washington Elementary School District

Community Mapping Sessions

Community members (ages 18 or older) were recruited to participate in two community mapping sessions with a total of 39 individuals participating. Large scale maps of the Roosevelt School District were printed and displayed on three to six different tables per session. Community members sat around the maps and answered a series of questions about their behavior, their families' behavior, and their community.

At the outset, the community members were thanked for their participation and informed that their answers would be used for future development decisions in their community. Participants were given three different types of tokens to use to make their marks on the maps; tokens were grouped by color with each participant at each table using a unique color. With some questions, participants were able to use two to four tokens to mark their responses on the maps, while on others they were asked to just use one. Questions asked residents to indicate where they and their families were most active in their community, where they purchased healthy food, where they felt safe and unsafe, and about other neighborhood service/activity locations within RSD.

After each participant indicated his or her answer to the respective question, two photos were taken of each table's map to serve as the data record. These locations were later translated into addresses and were mapped using Geographic Information Systems technology.

A single facilitator guided the session by introducing the question and ensuring that photos were taken of the participants' answers. Additional facilitators were available to help the participants read the maps, to translate questions and instructions into Spanish, and to repeat and clarify the questions as needed.

SHARED-USE ROOSEVELT HEALTH IMPACT ASSESSMENT PATHWAY DIAGRAM

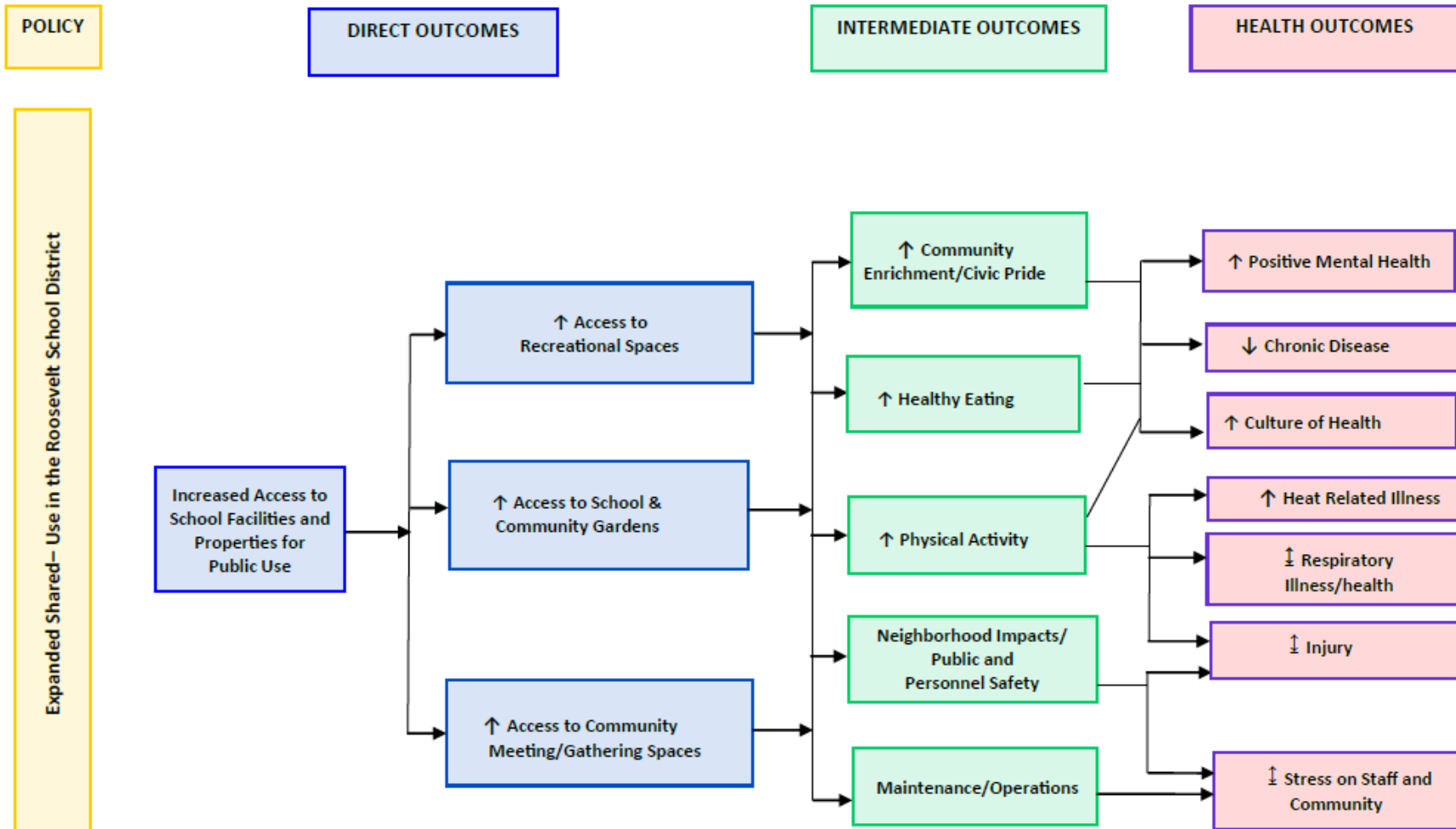


Figure 1. Pathway diagram: Shared use in the Roosevelt School District.

Background Research

What is shared use?

Schools in our communities often serve as our laboratories of place-based change (Ogilvie, 2014). This change is not only reserved for the principals, pupils, and teachers during school hours. Community places that may seem ordinary, like schools, are often are our primary hubs of engagement; that is, the places where great community change can occur (Oldenburg, 1999).

There appears to be demand for the utilization of schools outside of their normal hours of operation. A prime example is the establishment of and continued demand for the after-school program movement. For example, Bassett and colleagues (2013) found that while 8.4 million children in the U.S. attend afterschool programs, another 18.5 million children would attend if they had access to suitable programs. Schools have a history of sharing resources with our communities, specifically the children in our communities, outside of their normal hours; however, a larger movement of opening up our schools to the public has been slow to emerge (Spengler, 2012). This slowness is especially more salient in communities comprised of lower-income families (Spengler, 2012). Still, change may be coming.

A new strategy termed **shared use**, sometimes called joint use, has arisen in our communities. Shared use is defined as “opening school buildings and grounds during non-school hours for community use” (Young et al., 2014, p. 1586). School buildings and grounds provide established indoor and outdoor spaces for children and adults to gather, to play, to exercise, or to engage in many other individual, group, or community activities. These activities may range from informal, unstructured, unsponsored, and unsupervised to formal, structured, community-sponsored, and supervised. Shared use of schools does not require formal written contracts, but many schools and school districts do require such contracts of individuals or groups for liability and expense reasons (Young et al., 2014).

What are the benefits of shared use?

Schools and school districts that have implemented shared use strategies have identified a number of its benefits. Primarily explorations of the benefits of shared use have focused their impact on the physical activity and overall health of local community members (e.g., Spengler, 2012; Spengler, Connaughton, & Carrol, 2013; Young et al., 2014). Communities that show high risk factors for obesity often lack recreational facilities for their members. Through shared use, schools have been shown to be worthy substitutes when such recreational spaces for physical activity are lacking (Spengler, 2012; Spengler et al, 2013).

Both children and adults can benefit through physical activity regarding shared use school facilities. Spengler (2012) highlighted that access outside of school hours to recreational opportunities on school campuses positively influences children’s physical activity levels. In particular, low-income areas and those with high racial/ethnic minority populations hold a greater need for shared-use programs as they are less likely to engage in physical activity (Spengler et al., 2013). Finally, Lafleur and colleagues (2013) note the back-and-forth relationship between opportunity and activity write: “Joint-use agreements are a promising strategy for increasing moderate to vigorous physical activity among adults and children in

under-resourced communities. Providing physical activity programs may substantially increase after-hours use of school facilities by community members,” (p. 1).

The benefits to community health and wellbeing extend beyond physical activity. Young and colleagues (2014) noted that schools and school districts might enact shared use as strategy to garner goodwill in the community and better support their academic missions of lifelong learning. Community places and spaces of lifelong learning have been linked to greater community health, quality-of-life, and wellbeing (Hammond, 2004). For example, schools, as lifelong learning community centers or hubs, might offer community members educational opportunities such as nutritional classes, cooking classes, or community gardening projects (Ogilvie, 2014).

More indirectly, shared use through its potential for lifelong learning and physical activity may promote greater social cohesion in communities (Lafleur et al., 2013). Past research has demonstrated that physical activity in communities strongly influences social cohesion (Cradock et al., 2009; Lafleur et al., 2013). Schools may also serve as social actors for communities, such as they act as places where social cohesion can be built (Clopton & Finch, 2011).

A final benefit worth noting regards increase funding for schools and communities. Schools that enact shared use may be eligible to apply for additional funding from foundations and government agencies (Warren, 2005; Young et al., 2014). Outfits like the Prudential Foundation, smaller foundations, and federal initiatives have begun to provide funding for many shared use projects (Warren, 2005).

What barriers or concerns arise regarding shared use?

Sustainability and success with shared use is dependent on addressing a number of barriers and concerns (Burbage et al., 2014). Operational issues such as maintenance, sanitation and security must be addressed prior to implementing shared use (Burbage et al., 2014; Spengler, 2012; Young et al., 2014). Spengler (2012) noted that maintenance, staffing, liability, and cost are major concerns regarding shared use among school administrators in lower-income and racial/ethnic minority communities.

Staffing and supervision of activities after school hours are additional concerns that must also be carefully considered (Warren, 2005). Many shared use providers have recruited parent volunteers to supervise after school activities (Warren, 2005). Successful recruitment of parents involves treating parents as a collective group which fosters a sense of community and shared responsibility (Warren et al., 2009).

Liability regarding persons and property is a notable concern regarding implementing shared use (Burbage et al., 2014; Spengler, 2012). Vandalism and safety have been noted as specific barriers to level activity if shared use was implemented (Burbage, et. al. 2014). Drawing on lessons from parks and recreation, graffiti, poor lighting and damaged equipment appear to be uninviting and lesson use of community spaces (Slater & Colabianchi, 2014). Contrarily, Spengler, Connaughton, and Carroll (2013) have suggested that access to shared-use

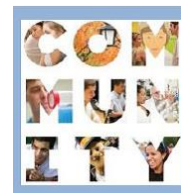
programs may actually lesson vandalism through creating a sense of community. Furthermore, the presence of groups of people at schools during hours they are closed (evenings and weekends) can reduce the opportunity for violence and crime to occur (Spengler, et al., 2013). Finally, Burbage and colleagues (2014) found that while safety, vandalism and liability were significant concerns, budget and associated costs of shared-use were even greater concerns.

Costs will be incurred while addressing the above barriers and concerns. Costs for shared use vary, but common costs include maintenance, cleanup, repairs, staff, security and utilities (Young, Spengler, Frost, Evenson & Vincent, 2014; Warren, 2005). While costs vary among shared-use, incremental costs do not need to be high (Warren, 2005). Kanters and colleagues (2014) found that utility usage does not necessarily significantly impact overall costs of shared use; however, the costs repairs and improvements due to facility use over time were significant cost inflators. These costs can and may need to be split between schools and community organizations (Lees, Salvesen & Shay, 2008; Spengler, et al., 2013).

Do the benefits of shared use outweigh concerns?

The benefits can outweigh the concerns. Young and colleagues (2014) write regarding shared use: “Challenges exist, which include funding, communication, decision-making authority, adequate facilities, and liability concerns, but they are not insurmountable” (p. 1587). Congruently, Kanters and colleagues (2014) found that despite perceptions of increased costs, shared use facilities increased afterschool program participation without significantly increasing the expenses. Sustainability and success in shared use strategies can only occur if costs are managed and barriers are addressed (Burbage et al., 2014). It appears that communities must assess their own needs for shared use and shared use assets to decide for themselves whether shared use is feasible and in their best interest.

Research Findings by Pathway



Pathway 1: Community Enrichment/Civic Pride

Schools can act as community hubs of engagement, whereby they create additional spaces for recreation, learning, and gathering for community members (e.g., Ogilvie, 2014). Through shared use, communities can be enriched by schools that open their doors to the public and become community spaces. These spaces may serve as centers for lifelong learning, which have aided improvements in community health, quality-of-life, and wellbeing (Hammond, 2004; Ogilvie, 2014). Specifically, activities held by local community organizations in schools may help to build a sense of cohesion, belonging, community, and trust (Clopton & Finch, 2011; Cradock et al., 2009; Lafleur et al., 2013). Trust and efficacy are the keys to empowerment; together, they can lead to greater community participation (Perkins et al., 2002). Collaborations and partnerships based on accountability and trust can help foster a greater sense of care and abundance in communities (McKnight & Block, 2011).

Where are community center activities occurring for lifelong learning? What impact would expanded shared use have on utilization of existing community centers?

How we answered the question:

Community mapping
Focus groups
Key informant interviews
Surveys

What we found:

Shared-use provides additional advantages for lifelong learning in the Roosevelt School District community. Particularly, shared use can open up the schools to serve as community spaces, or hubs, for the many community organizations in the area to host programs, trainings, and other educational opportunities. The different locations of the schools allow for a broader spread of spaces likely giving the community organizations greater access to resources near their own homes. Events hosted at local schools after normal school hours can also be used to promote and draw community members to the community organizations' primary locations so that community members can access the particular educational resources they desire.

There are number of community centers operating vigorously in the school district area. In particular, the community mapping sessions revealed a number of key centers for lifelong learning:

- Unlimited Potential/Brooks Academy
- K-12 Schools
- South Mountain Community College
- Libraries
- Churches
- HOAs
- Service centers

Specific programs and centers mentioned in focus groups and key informant interviews included:

- 1) South Mountain Works Coalition, which was highlighted for its promotora program and Teen Outreach Programs, and addresses underage drinking, (youth) substance use prevention, youth leadership, life skills training, and parent education through their FAST (Family and Schools Together) program.
- 2) Unlimited Potential, which helps empower children, parents, and families through education. UP works with parents who have children in the school district providing ESL, GED classes, a promotora program that supports wellness, Abriendo Puertas, and other parent education and support groups.
- 3) Mentor Kids, which provides after school tutoring and programming for youth.
- 4) Orchard Learning Center, which works with Valley View parents and youth on community gardening and STEAM activities.
- 5) The TigerMountain Foundation, which engages youth and families in community gardening.
- 6) Girl Scouts, which promotes leadership among girls.
- 7) Southwest Behavioral Health Services, which provides school-based counseling services and facilitates the SM WORKS! Coalition.
- 8) Padres Promotores de South Mountain, which focuses on community education.
- 9) The Maricopa County Juvenile Court, which provides parent education on juvenile justice.
- 10) The Be a Leader Foundation, which works on college readiness.
- 11) First Things First, which aims to provide quality early childhood education.
- 12) The University of Arizona, which holds programs at the early childhood learning center.
- 13) The Phoenix Police Department, which conducts its Wake up Program focused on youth development.

- 14) Community Youth Development Program, which provides school based counseling, outpatient referrals, prevention programs and is run by Southwest Behavioral Health Services.
- 15) Travis L Williams service center, which provides referrals, offers financial assistance for families, and is a safe place for teens.
- 16) Block watch programs, which provide neighborhood watch services through volunteers.
- 17) Cultivating South Phoenix (CUSP), which works to support and improve the wellness of families and children.
- 18) Preventive Health Collaborative, which aims to increase collaboration and community capacity within the health system.
- 19) Father Matters, which helps men to be more involved in their roles as fathers.

Other organizations include the Friendly House, Chicanos por la Causa, and other health organizations that partner with the district or individual schools for health fairs and bring resources to families in RSD.

Regarding spiritual and religious learning, it appears that 39 percent of residents *often* or *very often* attend church, 33 percent *rarely* or *sometimes* attend church, and 18 percent *never* attend church.

Key informants felt that expanding community use of district properties would have a positive impact on utilization of existing community centers and expressed no concern that community center use would decrease as school properties became more available.

Are current community center activities being utilized? If so, when and how often? Will this project increase or decrease utilization of community centers?

How we answered the question:

Community mapping
Key informant interviews
Surveys

What we found:

There appears to be a strong desire for greater access to community spaces within RSD. This greater access not only concerns schools but also concerns local community centers.

The majority of residents surveyed reported visiting community centers within their neighborhood. Two-thirds of residents reported going to community center *sometimes* (38%), *often* (21%), or *very often* (7%), while the remaining third reported *never* (12%) or *rarely* (21%) using them.

Mapping participants most frequently mentioned utilizing the following types of community centers within RSD boundaries (listed in order of popularity):

- Parks
- Libraries
- Community Centers (incl. Kroc)
- Churches
- K-12 Schools
- Family Service/Resource Centers

A number of community centers were specifically mentioned in our key informant interviews as well, including:

- Sierra Vista (Parent Education Resource Center)
- Brooks Academy
- KROC Center (Salvation Army)
- Boys and Girls Club
- South Phoenix Youth Center
- Roosevelt Wellness Center
- Alta Vista Community Center
- South Mountain Community Library

Common concerns regarding utilization of these centers include affordability and desires for these centers to be used to their full potential. Among our key informants, the interviewees noted they would use three community centers more frequently if they were made more available: Sierra Vista, Brooks Academy, and the Roosevelt Wellness Center. They also noted great interest in using school facilities more if they were made more available and if coordination were easier.

What is the demand of community partners interested in utilizing RSD facilities? What community partners are willing to partner or participate and use school facilities?

How we answered the question:

Key informant interviews

Surveys

What we found:

Many community partners appear ready to use the schools should expanded shared use strategies be implemented. The greatest advantages the schools appear to have is their proximity, familiarity, and space available to community organizations and members who might attend their programs. A place to begin to look at demand for

shared use is to look at current use of schools by adults outside of normal school hours. This section also addresses demand by looking at what community programs might be held at the schools outside of normal hours.

Just under half of residents surveyed indicated that they currently use school properties outside of school hours *sometimes* (29%), *often* (11%), or *very often* (8%) use school properties outside of school hours. A slight majority of survey respondents (52%) reported *rarely* (22%) or *never* (30%) doing so.

Parent participation in school activities appears fairly common among RSD residents. The majority of the residents surveyed reported participating in meetings or events at their child's school *often* (29%) or *very often* (25%), with an additional 29 percent participating *sometimes*. Less than one quarter of residents *never* or *rarely* participate in such events.

Further, the vast majority of residents surveyed (72%) indicated that if shared use was implemented they would use the shared school properties at least sometimes, with approximately one-third expecting to do so *often* or *very often*.

Overall, the key informants highlighted a strong demand for greater availability of schools as community spaces. They felt the spaces could be used for a variety of meetings, classes, and programs, including physical and sports activities, cooking and nutrition classes, adult education classes, ESL classes for parents, computer classes, general youth and family programs, peer leadership, drug and alcohol abuse education, teen pregnancy education, arts activities, theatre and drama, psychological and spiritual growth, and professional networking and training.

The schools were also discussed as prime locations for community health care programs and activities. Health advisory councils could meet at the local schools. Events such as health fairs – hosted already in the district – were also suggested.

A few individuals also suggested that schools could be good locations for community gardens or farmers markets. These options are further discussed in the next section on Pathway 2: Healthy Eating.

What is the current level of interaction/collaboration between community-based organizations (CBOs) and schools? Will interaction/collaboration increase or decrease?

How we answered the question:

Focus groups

Key informant interviews

What we found:

According to key informants, many different types of programs currently take place at RSD schools via community partners, including: Zumba and karate classes, boxing and volleyball clubs, dance groups, block watches, and general afterschool and student leadership programs. Collaboration appears most prevalent at Brooks Academy, which has been identified as a vital activity and service center for the community. Additionally, it was noted that some community organizations had long

standing relationships already in place with the schools, although certain schools (and school principals in particular) were pinpointed as being more or less collaborative than others.

Despite these long standing relationships, a number of social and communication barriers precluded access to the local schools for greater community use. The gatekeepers for school use have been suggested to bar use by community organizations over perceptions that community programs offered after hours might be of low quality or incompetently run. A lack of trust, respect, and adequate communication between the school personnel and community leaders was noted. Community organizations also seem unclear on who the proper gatekeepers to school access are; while the school and administrative staff appear to be the best ways to get in touch with parents and families, they appear to not have the time or dedication to assist community organizations in disseminating resources or information.

Other issues hindering use of school spaces were even more logistical in nature. Issues regarding the scheduling and cost of school spaces for afterhours use were also noted as challenging. Some schools appeared to need improved lighting and better grounds-keeping to improve walkability and safety of spaces. Liability, regulations, and lack of resources appear to be additional inhibiting factors.

The key informants believed that these barriers could be overcome and collaboration could be improved. One strategy would be for the district to increase its involvement and awareness of the happenings at the individual schools in the district. The district could help facilitate collaborations between administrative staff and community leaders so that both parties could benefit, feel valued, and communicate more effectively. Part of such a strategy might include regular meetings between school/district staff and community partners. One interviewee noted, "Knowing who works there and what they are responsible for within the district, this will make it easier to form relationships with the right people to provide services and opportunities to the school district."

The process of accessing, reserving, and using spaces appears to need greater transparency and clarity. Community organizations are also unaware of which spaces have been designated for access by the community, even though district administrators report that all properties are available for community use within the stated policy guidelines. Additionally, informants noted that it would be helpful if the district and school websites contained more updated information.

Both community organizations and school personnel seem largely unaware of the benefits of shared use with the community. One of the interviews suggested incentive programs for sharing use might be beneficial (e.g., funds or rewards). There appears to be a need for documenting, funding, and championing success stories, as well as for reassuring school staff that shared use does not necessarily mean more work for them (especially more work that would not be compensated).

What is the current level of care for the community by residents? Will care for the community change?

How we answered the question:

Focus groups

Surveys

What we found:

Based on the level of care shown for community parks and the community in general, it appears there is a great deal of care present in the community. Residents expressed a certain amount of pride that they resided in an older, more established area of Phoenix. Pride for their neighborhoods was also quite prominent among youth.

Adults often liked their neighbors and felt they took care of one another. Residents liked that everybody knows everybody and that they greeted one another on the street. Those who had a park in the neighborhood liked being able to play there; one participant characterized it as *worry-free*. Those that lived near a park (particularly the larger, more popular parks) enjoyed using it on a regular basis.

Parks, in particular, were a point of pride in the RSD area. Approximately two in five residents surveyed (just over 39%) noted that they *often* or *very often* visited community parks, while an additional two out of five (40%) reported doing so at least *sometimes*.

Expanded shared use efforts within RSD could build upon and enhance this base level of community care and pride by encouraging greater community buy-in and involvement in schools, as well as greater engagement among residents. However, doing so successfully will require organizing structured community activities and enhancing communication between the schools or district and community residents.

What is the level of community buy-in/support for this project? Will the community continue to be supportive of shared-use?

How we answered the question:

Focus groups

Key informant interviews

Surveys

What we found:

There appeared to be a strong buy-in for shared use in community, so long as shared use addresses the different operational concerns highlighted through this document and in the earlier literature review. Of stakeholders interviewed, 90 percent support shared use, and 100% felt it was important to expand school access in the community (80% *very important*). Of residents surveyed, 84 percent support shared use, while the remaining 16 percent do not. Nearly three-quarters of

residents surveyed (73%) indicated that shared use was *important* or *very important* (18% *somewhat important*; 9% *not important*).

The notion of continued buy-in and support is harder to answer, but sustainability does seem possible so long as the benefits of shared use are continually made visible and the operational issues/concerns continue to be addressed. Relationships and communication between the schools, district, and community organizations need to be strengthened in order to maximize the potential for this project.

While parks were seen as the primary sources for physical activity in the community, residents were open to having the schools as places for activity as well (not only physical activity), so long as adequate supervision was provided. Residents were adamant that the schools needed to be safe after hours for their children and for them. Accountability between the community and schools was also desired.

Interviewees highlighted the notion that shared use might make the community safer and healthier. Community programs and activities could promote healthy habits and decrease vandalism, drug and alcohol use. One particular informant noted that shared use might lead to “happier community members.”

Shared use was also noted as a desired mechanism to better connect community members to programs and resources. One interviewee responded, “Residents of this community lack a lot of resources or knowledge of resources in the area.” Key informants believed that school spaces could be used to cultivate a welcoming sense of community and cohesion. One interviewee commented, “Schools are at the heart of communities...[Shared use] will reinforce a sense of belonging and create community attachment.” Shared use was posited to help better connect families, enhance parent-child relationships, enrich school-community partnerships, increase parent involvement in schools, and promote lifelong learning. One interviewee thought that shared use might even improve school attendance.

Community organizations, however, were also worried about increased costs that might be incurred and/or prohibitively high fees that the district might charge to recoup these costs. Interviewees emphasized the need for low- or no-cost programs for children and adults outside of school hours. Clear estimates of costs may be needed in order to alleviate concerns of both community partners and school personnel.

Other concerns or comments related to shared-use buy-in included:

[Shared use] requires a commitment from the school, and I am not convinced the district would commit necessary resources to ensure opening properties is done safely.

The overall condition, image, and reputation of the district and its schools, both academically and administratively, needs to be addressed first before successful expansion of community access can be done.

Despite their concerns, the majority of RSD residents and community organizations are supportive of an expanded shared use policy.

What is the current level of community empowerment? Will levels of community empowerment increase or decrease?

How we answered the question:

Focus groups

Surveys

What we found:

Empowerment was both felt and observed among many community members and groups involved in the focus groups and surveys. Among survey respondents, approximately 63 percent indicated a strong sense of community empowerment, while only 14 percent indicated a lack of empowerment. On a 0-4 scale, the average score was 2.6, which indicates that the majority of residents do indeed feel empowered.

Most RSD residents believe they can get a variety of things accomplished within their community if they put their minds to it.

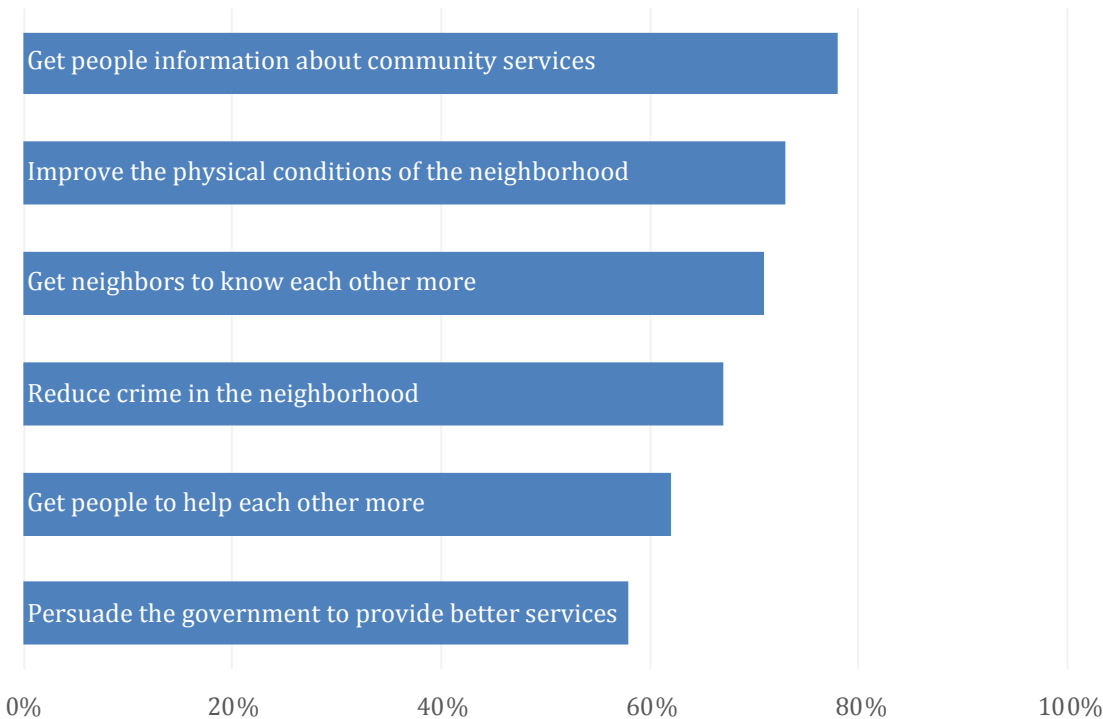


Figure 2. Community empowerment in the Roosevelt School District.

Note: Percentages displayed include RSD residents who felt it was *likely* or *very likely* that they could get each of these items included in the empowerment scale accomplished by working together.

More details regarding empowerment were apparent in the focus groups. Some residents discussed how they watched out for one another, with special attention given to children and the elderly. Some residents were involved in neighborhood groups such as (e.g., Block Watch and GAIN). Some participants believed that peer pressure helped to keep neighbors from acting up and they work together to keep their neighborhood nice. Moreover, some residents suggested their churches had activities and were places where residents could get together and support one another. Yet, there were several others who did not have much interaction with their neighbors at all.

What is the current sense of social cohesion or sense of belonging? Will residents gather at new space as a result of this project?

How we answered the question:

Focus groups

Surveys

What we found:

The level of community interactions and get-togethers between community residents appears low in the district area; however, these figures are comparable to state and national level averages. Almost 20 percent of community residents indicated that they *often* or *very often* get together with other community residents, while an additional 37 percent reported doing so *sometimes*. Just over one-third of those surveyed *never* or *rarely* get together with other residents.

The community youth, in particular, shared interesting insights regarding belonging and cohesion. Several youth expressed a sense of community with their neighbors and discussed various activities among their neighbors. These activities included barbeques, events for children (Halloween, Easter, birthdays), and generally hanging out to cook together, watch movies, or fix cars.

Overall, sense of belonging, community, and cohesion appear lower than empowerment; however, very few community members expressed feelings that they *did not* belong in their community. Among survey respondents, approximately 20 percent indicated a strong sense of cohesion within their community, while 11 percent indicated a lack of cohesion. On a 0-4 scale, the average score was 2.2, which indicates that the majority of residents rate their community as somewhere in between cohesive and not cohesive.

The majority of residents surveyed indicated that they were willing to help their neighbors, but other markers of belonging and cohesion fell below the majority.

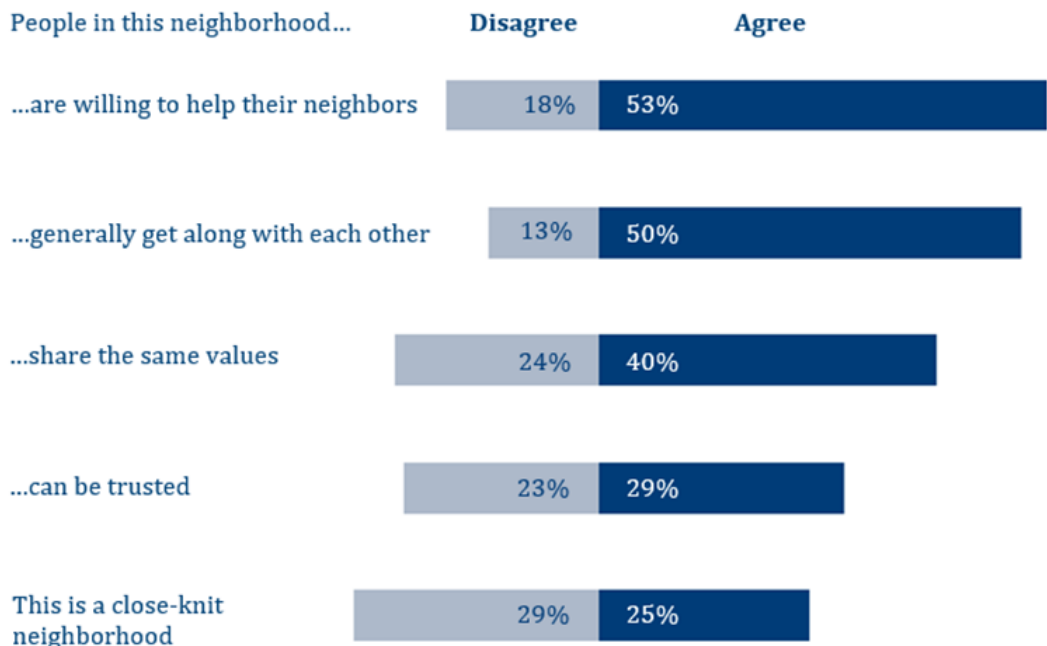


Figure 3. Social cohesion in the Roosevelt School District.

What is the current level of attendance in schools? Will attendance decrease or increase?

How we answered the question:

- Archival data
- Key informant interviews

What we found:

One interviewee felt shared use would improve school attendance. Another expressed the need and potential for increased attendance at Parent Teacher Organization (PTO) meetings.

Attendance Rates (All Grades)						
	All Students	African American	Native American	Asian	Hispanic	White
District Rate	94%	94%	92%	95%	95%	93%
State Rate	-	95%	93%	97%	95%	95%

Source: <https://azreportcards.com/AcademicIndicators/AttendanceRate>

Overall, key informants agreed that while some students and parents were active at various schools across the district, many were not. Family and community involvement in schools has been shown to have a positive impact on student attendance (Epstein & Sheldon, 2002) and achievement (Jeynes, 2007), so extending shared use should be able to have a positive impact on student attendance provided a concerted effort is made to improve communication and coordination among families, schools, community organizations and the district through the implementation process.



Pathway 2: Healthy Eating

Schools serve as primary actors in the health and wellbeing of children and, in some ways, communities (Story et al., 2006). Especially in low-income communities, schools can feel pressured to take on poverty issues, such as access to health care and healthy foods (Filardo et al., 2010). Some schools have started to pursue community gardening as a mechanism to aid these pertinent social issues, which has shown some promise (Blair, 2009). For example, some community gardens, like those in California, incorporated physical activity and nutrition in their programs, resulting in a 6 percent increase of physical activity among youth and a 10 percent increase in youth's consumption of fruits and vegetables (Twiss et al., 2003). Additionally, gardens can often be sustained naturally by collecting and funneling storm water into them, which helps reduce associated costs (Lister, 2000). Additionally, gardens can act as relatively inexpensive projects to facilitate school-community partnerships.

What is current community/urban garden capacity? Will this project yield increased capacity for gardens?

How we answered the question:

Key informant interviews

What we found:

There are already several community gardens in the Roosevelt School District. Expanding shared use within RSD could increase the capacity for gardens but individual assessments should be conducted with each school (including administration, staff, students, parents and community stakeholders) to determine if gardening is a top priority for use of the space and if sufficient space is available for such an endeavor.

Interviews with community organizations and school administrators suggest that while some community groups would like to see school properties used for gardening and would be interested in leading those efforts, some schools may not have the space or resources available to host gardens. One school principal specifically requested that the space be used for activities other than gardening as the landscape was already being used at capacity.

Nonetheless, 10 out of 11 stakeholders who completed the online interview felt that expanded access to district properties would have a *slightly positive impact* (50%) or *very positive impact* (50%) on the availability of community or urban gardens.

What are residents' current knowledge, behavior, and acceptance of gardening? How will this project affect knowledge, behavior, and acceptance of gardening?

How we answered the question:

Community mapping

Focus groups

Key informant interviews

What we found:

Few adult residents of RSD indicated a desire to be involved community gardening. Only five percent (n=7) of adult survey respondents who live in RSD reported purchasing or using food from a community garden in the past year. When asked how often they work in or receive food from a community garden in their neighborhood, only seven percent (n=9) said *often* or *very often*, while more than three-quarters said *never* (60%; n=78) or *rarely* (18%; n=24); the remaining 15 percent reported doing so *sometimes*. None of the community mapping participants reported buying food from community gardens.

Overall, RSD residents seem to know that there are several community gardens in the area and are happy that they are there and that other people are keeping them up but, for the most part, they are not interested in working in them or buying food from them themselves. As one focus group participant stated, the garden would have to be right next to the grocery store or her house in order for her to buy food from it; otherwise, it is inconvenient because she has to go to the grocery store anyway for everything else.

In addition to inconvenience, lack of time was listed as a barrier to community garden participation as well as to home gardening. Other barriers to home gardening included lack of space, the cost of water, the amount of water wasted, pets that might destroy them, and lack of a green thumb. However, some focus group participants, particularly those with younger children, did indicate an interest in learning more about how to use produce and cultivate foods at home within these constraints, so offering cooking classes, recipes, or practical home gardening techniques, and providing the initial supplies to get started might be useful. Residents with children seemed particularly motivated to set a good example for healthy eating for their children, which may be a good starting place for healthy eating efforts.

Overall, youth expressed much more interest in gardening than did adults. About two-thirds expressed a desire to participate in a community garden. Many of them had experience growing their own food both at home and at school, but did not know what happened to the food grown in their school gardens. School gardens have been shown to have a positive impact on health and community involvement among youth, so perhaps they are something to consider. However, they also

require a “champion” to take ownership and sustain, and the distribution of food from the gardens would need to be considered (e.g., who will get the food? will there be a fee? if so, how much? etc.).

What is the current capacity for cooking classes/demonstrations in the community? Will there be a greater number of cooking classes at RSD facilities?

How we answered the question:

Key informant interviews

What we found:

There are some cooking classes already taking place within RSD on occasion and community organizations active within RSD have expressed an interest in offering more of them were the space within schools to be made more available. It seems that intentions toward cooking classes are somewhat high; yet, in the Washington Elementary School District, which has a strong shared use program, no community groups have asked to use their facilities for that specific purpose, which limits expectations for such uses in RSD.

Nevertheless, most stakeholders interviewed believed that expanded shared use would have positive impact on the availability of cooking classes. Among respondents to the online interview, 36 percent thought it would have a *slightly positive impact* and 45 percent thought it would have a *very positive impact*.

What are current RSD nutrition-related practices and policies? Will healthy eating habits be introduced and/or improved?

How we answered the question:

Key informant interviews

What we found:

RSD has a wellness policy that covers nutrition. It is available on their website at http://www.schoolnutritionandfitness.com/schools/rsd_1506091857328281/WellnessPolicy.pdf.

Healthy eating is already encouraged in the district schools through federal meal guidelines and the district’s wellness policy. Expanded shared use, however, could help to improve the culture of food within the district if school properties were used for gardening, cooking classes or recipe demonstrations.

Nine of 11 respondents to the online interviews felt that expanded shared use would indeed have a positive (45% *slightly positive*; 36% *very positive*) impact on residents’ eating behaviors. However, some schools do not want their properties

used for gardening; others do not have the proper space or facilities for gardening or cooking programs; and some community residents are just not interested in spending their time and effort in these types of endeavors. Thus, it would take a large, comprehensive effort to change residents' overall eating behaviors and to move the needle on healthy eating for the majority of district residents through shared use.

What is the current access to healthy food? Will residents' accept and eat the new healthy food? (e.g., yield from garden)

How we answered the question:

Community mapping

Focus groups

Surveys

What we found:

Most adult residents were aware of multiple places to obtain healthy food within the RSD area. These places included large grocery store chains (e.g. Fry's, Safeway, Wal-Mart, Ranch Market), smaller chains (Fresh & Easy, Dollar Store), farmer's markets, and Produce on Wheels With Out Waste (POW-WOW), a food recovery and distribution program run through Borderlands Food Bank. Several residents felt that Fresh & Easy was the best place to obtain healthy food, preferring this grocery to other chains. However, many residents traveled outside of the area to obtain healthy food at Sprouts, Whole Foods, Costco and Sam's Club, and expressed the need for one of these types of stores in South Phoenix.

While residents were not very satisfied with the quality of the fresh food available at their local grocery stores, they discussed several strategies to improve the quality of fresh foods. For example, one person found that store managers will respond to complaints; another person suggested going earlier in the week to get the "good stuff." While a few people wanted the produce to be ripe, others preferred getting less ripe produce because they knew they would not eat it right away. Residents generally agreed that, "You get what you pay for" and tried to strike the right balance between higher quality and lower price.

Yet, most youth and adult participants admitted to eating more unhealthy food than they would like. Youth and adults were likely to concede that they often made poor dietary choices even when a healthy option was readily available. They had good intentions but lacked will-power, ignoring the healthy foods in favor of something "better." Adults generally agreed with the sentiment suggested by one gentleman who reported going through "periods of eating good and then I'm bad."

Participants seemed to believe that healthy food is more expensive as well, citing, "ramen is cheap." Some admitted they had a preference for the taste of unhealthy options (e.g. Flaming Hot Cheetos, empanadas). One youth explained that her family wanted to eat healthy and then her dad started bringing lots of Cheetos and cookies

to the house, which sabotaged their efforts. Another stated that they tried eating salads but still felt the need for grease so they would go out and get a burger after eating the salads.

Time was often cited as a barrier to healthy eating among focus group participants. Adults often skipped meals because they had no time for breakfast, were too busy during the day for lunch, or it was late and they were too tired for dinner. Adults stated it was time consuming to prepare a healthy meal and often picked up dinner instead. Some had very long days that did not allow for eating a healthy lunch and by the time they returned home at night they were too tired to fix a healthy meal, opting for quick comfort foods instead. While many agreed that eating breakfast provided more energy during the day and was healthy, it was often skipped.

Women who raised families agreed that they prioritized healthy eating and family dinners when their children were at home. One family agreed that they were more mindful to set an example for their young children. They had the children help with meal preparation, which encouraged the children to eat a healthier diet. Mothers were careful to include a variety of fruit and vegetables and avoided greasy foods and soda. Most participants agreed that eating a healthy diet is a process of learning more about nutrition and incorporating those foods in the family diet.

Despite parents' motivation toward healthy eating, among the youth that participated in the focus group, only two out of ten believed their family ate a healthy diet. The youth defined a healthy diet as foods that had several different food groups in them; for example, lasagna (meat, cheese, tomato sauce) and sandwiches (meat, cheese, lettuce, and tomato) were deemed healthy. In addition to these foods, the youth agreed that fruit and vegetables were healthy choices. Water, milk, and juice were the preferred healthy drinks; all youth agreed that soda was not a healthy option.

Just under half of the survey respondents (45%) felt that they already ate healthy. On average, participants indicated eating fruits and vegetables twice per day. The most commonly selected barriers to healthy eating among survey respondents are displayed in Figure 4.

Disliking the taste of healthy foods, including fresh fruits and vegetables, was not a common barrier to healthy eating. Only six percent of RSD residents listed this barrier, which suggests that were they made more available in an appealing, convenient, and affordable manner, residents would be open to eating them.

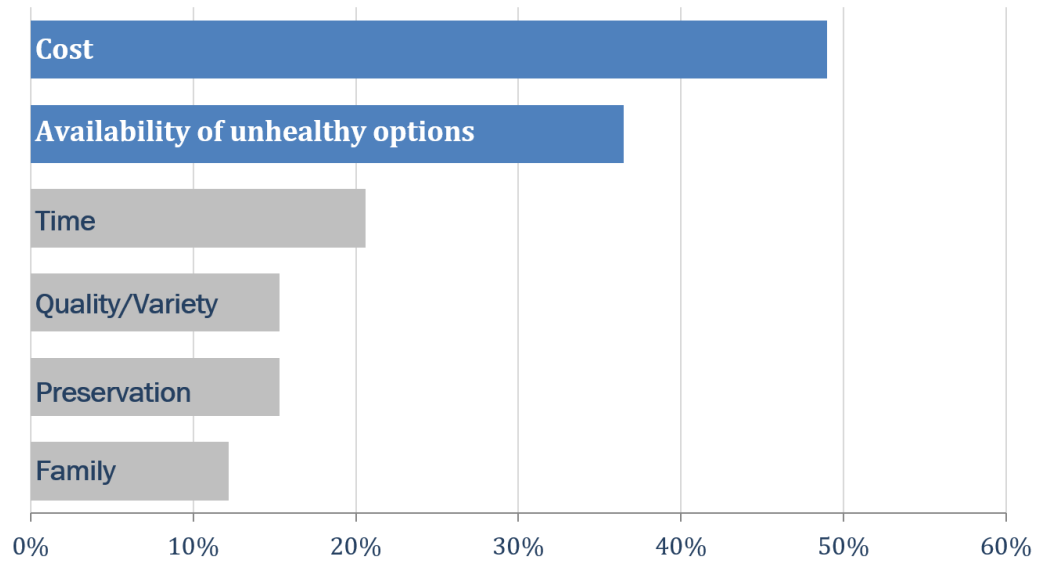


Figure 4. Barriers to healthy eating among RSD residents.

Note: "Cost" is a combination of three other variables: "Healthy foods cost too much", "Other foods are cheaper", and "Can't afford it".



Pathway 3: Physical Activity

The influence of schools on physical activity is one of the most well-researched aspects of shared use (e.g., Spengler, 2012; Spengler, Connaughton, & Carroll, 2013; Young et al., 2014). Often, communities lack recreational spaces for physical activity, and schools can serve as worthy substitutes (Spengler, 2012; Spengler et al., 2013). Youth primarily take advantage of these spaces for physical activity; however, adults can benefit as well (Spengler, 2012). Low-income and high racial/ethnic minority populations have shown particularly strong benefits through shared-use programs as, for a variety of reasons, these populations have often been suggested to engage in less physical activity (Spengler et al., 2013). Importantly, providing structured and planned programming can greatly increase community use of schools outside of normal working hours (Lafleur et al., 2013). Finally, community use of schools is more likely to occur when facilities are in good order (e.g., clean, graffiti-free, and properly lit) (Slater & Colabianchi, 2014).

What is the current condition of District-owned properties and facilities? Will the condition of the properties affect utilization/safety/health?

How we answered the question:

Key informant interviews

What we found:

Overall, informants perceived RSD schools to be sufficiently well-equipped, at least for educational purposes. The condition of the properties varies quite a bit by school; some schools are older and more in need of updates than others. These schools are probably less likely to be used by community members and groups because they are not very attractive or inviting, whereas Valley View and Greenfield schools, for example, have newer gyms/facilities that might be more appealing.

Schools located in areas without nice parks nearby might be good targets for expanded shared use as well since neighborhood children in such areas might be more in need of a place to play than others.

Perceptions of safety and neighborhood problems varies quite a bit by school and by respondent as well. Cesar Chavez Elementary, for example, seems to be of greater concern than many others. Interestingly, informants seemed to perceive the schools themselves as relatively safe when asked about the school's safety generally; yet when asked if they would let their own children play at each of the schools before or after school hours, there were many more *No's* than *Yes's*.

According to district administration, lighting is limited at most of the school playing fields, which might serve as a barrier to evening or nighttime events and sports leagues. Principals report that the schools are not constructed to provide easy access to open playgrounds, but since most children would not be allowed to play at the schools without some sort of supervised activity anyway, this may not be much of a problem.

Almost all schools have an indoor gym that could be of use for increased physical activity programming (Totura et al., 2012).

There were no concerns expressed regarding the potential for the poor physical conditions of school facilities to harm users. This makes intuitive sense as the district must maintain its facilities to a certain standard of safety for daily student use. Likewise, representatives from the fire department/EMTs expressed no concerns about the potential for increases in heat-related illnesses or injuries as a result of expanded shared use, explaining that they rarely receive calls for such issues as is. The most common calls they respond to at parks now are for allergies, which could potentially increase if children are outside more. Nonetheless, no one who participated in the study indicated being concerned about this sort of unintended consequence.

What are the current physical activity levels of RSD students? Will levels of physical activity in the students change?

How we answered the question:

Archival data

Community mapping

Focus groups

Key informant interviews

Surveys

What we found:

In a previous analysis of school-based obesity prevention policies and practices, Totura et al. (2012) reported that physical education classes were offered once per week, on average, in RSD schools, with all students receiving at least 15 minutes per day of recess. A few students in the focus group, however, indicated receiving more than this, even up to an hour of physical activity at school per day. Another student explained that the amount of activity they get at school frequently depends on the teacher. One student reported getting no physical activity whatsoever.

Some RSD schools offer afterschool physical activity programming such as Zumba and walking or running clubs with funding from 21st Century and other grants and/or with the support of community organizations. Some students reported participating in soccer leagues, weight lifting or jogging at home, or going on hikes with families. However, when asked about the general levels of physical activity they

see in their neighborhoods, students reported seeing fairly little activity due to safety issues (e.g., street fighting, gangs, drugs, etc.) and constraints placed on children by their parents as a result of this perceived lack of safety.

Informants suggested that schools might help to mitigate some of these barriers to physical activity within RSD as schools are generally perceived to be a safer alternative to neighborhood streets and parks. One teacher advocated for open use of gyms, stating, “If they had a gym available the kids would be there every day.” Again, schools as centers for physical activity among children were thought to be particularly useful in areas where access to safe, well-equipped parks was more limited. Almost all informants thought expanded access to district properties would have a *very positive impact* on children’s physical activity levels. They did warn, however, that efforts to expand use must proceed cautiously, with one informant stating, “The overall condition, image and reputation of the district and its schools both academically and administratively needs to be addressed first before successful expansion of community access can be done.” Adequate maintenance, funding, lighting, security, and commitment from the schools and district were also listed as needs/concerns that could limit the impact of an expanded shared use policy on physical activity.

Parks emerged as an important location for physical activity within RSD. Mapping session participants reported seeing children, as well as adults, using the local parks for physical activities such as basketball, volleyball, and skateboarding. Some parents expressed concerns about parks, though, including “smells of marijuana”, broken glass in sand on playgrounds, nasty bathrooms with no toilet paper, etc.

Parents reported seeing some children walking, biking or skateboarding to school, but noted that oftentimes this was infeasible or unsafe because of busy intersections or unsafe routes. Traffic was a fairly consistent concern among parents (e.g., cars coming around corners too fast; not respecting the speed limit), which limits neighborhood walkability. Other barriers to children’s physical activity according to parents included unsafe neighborhoods, general lack of time, and too much homework. The children who get the most physical activity seem to be involved in some sort of organized sports activities.

What is the current physical activity level of community members/parents living within RSD boundaries? Will levels of physical activity in parents/community change?

How we answered the question:

Community mapping

Focus groups

Key informant interviews

Surveys

What we found:

On average, survey respondents reported an average of 4-5 hours per week of physical activity, including housework and jobs involving manual labor (anything that raises their heartrate and quickens their breathing). Approximately one-third (32%) of respondents reported being “active enough”.

Barriers listed to physical activity included:

- Lack of time
- Gym/class costs & overcrowding
- Safety issues (e.g., nowhere to exercise/play after dark)
- Too tired after work/school
- Unkempt parks (e.g., dirty, drugs, broken bottles); holes in fields
- Poor lighting
- Traffic/unsafe streets

Women reported preferring to walk in groups, but even then, mentioned preferring to do so at parks rather than in their neighborhoods for safety reasons. Few people reported seeing much physical activity occurring on neighborhood streets. One focus group participant noted that if she sees someone walking in her neighborhood she wonders what they are up to and assumes it's no good.

Study participants were somewhat optimistic that expanded community access to school properties would improve adults' physical activity levels. For the most part, they felt that the biggest gains in physical activity would be among children, but that adults might use tracks or gyms if they were available. Additionally, parents (mostly mothers) expressed an interest in participating in structured physical activities at their local schools at the same time as their children were involved in structured activities at the school. With just under one in five (18%) survey respondents listing lack of child care as a barrier to their own physical activity, concomitant, structured activities for parents and children at schools could be a good opportunity to increase residents' activity levels.

Currently, South Mountain Preserve, Cesar Chavez, El Reposo, and Circle K parks appear to be the most popular destinations for physical activity within RSD, with parks clearly leading the way for both children and adults. The Kroc Center (Salvation Army) is another bright spot. Some adults report using gyms (e.g., LA Fitness, 24-hour Fitness) but the cost of gym memberships, pressure to be fit, and overcrowding serve as barriers to consistent gym use. Several residents lamented the closure of the South Mountain branch of the YMCA, noting that it was an affordable alternative for many residents.

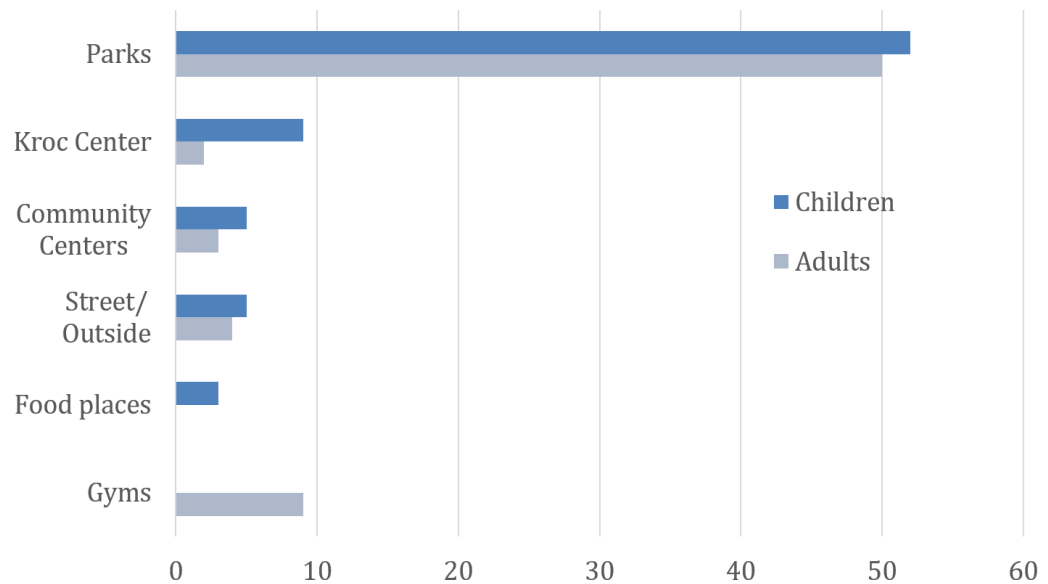


Figure 5. Where RSD residents are currently active.

Note: Numbers displayed indicate how many times each location or category was listed by participants in community mapping sessions.

What is the current environment for recreational facilities/parks outside of district-owned properties? If a school playground were made available, would the public and the kids use it?

How we answered the question:

Community mapping
Focus groups
Key informant interviews
Surveys

What we found:

There are many parks available within RSD but none that residents feel safe using after dark, and many that residents do not feel particularly safe using during the day. Yet, more than 40 percent of RSD residents report using parks within their neighborhood *often* or *very often*; an additional 38 percent report doing so *sometimes*, with only one in five saying they *never* or *rarely* go to parks. Nearly one-third of RSD residents report using community centers or recreational facilities frequently, with slightly more than that reporting *rarely* or *never* doing so.

Few RSD residents report using school properties before or after school hours currently, but use could increase if structured activities were more available. Additionally, informants felt that school playgrounds could serve as good places for children “to have somewhere to stretch their legs,” particularly in areas with limited access to nice, safe parks. Informants felt that opening up school fields (and charging

low usage fees) might also encourage more local sporting leagues. Adults, however, would not benefit much from just the opening of school playgrounds, as only children would be likely to use them, and would only be allowed to do so under adult supervision.



Pathway 4: Neighborhood/Public Safety

Safety and security are key issues that must be addressed if schools are to be shared by the public (Burbage et al., 2014; Spengler, 2012; Young et al., 2014). In communities, perceptions of safety have been linked to property values and vacancy rates (see Sampson, 1996). Perceptions of safety are particularly influenced by the amount of staffing and supervision provided for non-school hours activities (Warren, 2005). Supervisors of such activities can vary between parents, volunteers, community organization staff, or school staff, so long as they are vigilant and responsible (Warren et al., 2009). Supervisors and community members who hold a sense of ownership and responsibility over school spaces are likely the first defenses against vandalism or safety issues (Burbage, et. al. 2014; Spengler et al., 2013; Warren et al., 2009). Additionally, prevention of damage or injury has to do with adequate equipment, infrastructure, and lighting of school areas, so that there are not hidden or more dangerous areas on campuses (Slater & Colabianchi, 2014). Schools can be designed or reconfigured to feel safer with proper lighting, clear views from the streets, and general upkeep (Spengler & Baber, 2014). To elucidate the benefits of shared use (e.g., physical activity), police may need to be both more present and more effective (Zieff et al., 2012). Additionally, an increased presence of community groups on campus can decrease the opportunity for violence and crime to occur (Spengler et al., 2013). Overall, children are more likely to walk to school if their parents feel that their neighborhood areas are safe (Kerr et al., 2006). Finally, noise and parking issues have not been found to be frequent complaints in the research literature on shared use.

What is the existing physical infrastructure of the project area? Will this project improve the infrastructure or make it worse?

How we answered the question:

Community mapping
Focus groups
Key informant interviews

What we found:

Adults shared concerns about schools being in need of repairs. Some adults who grew up in the RSD area stated that they did not notice the poor condition of their neighborhood school until they saw other schools that were in much better condition. Common concerns included flooding when it rains, mold, and ceiling tiles in disrepair. Adults noted the sidewalks on the way to school were in need of repair

as well and that the routes to neighborhood schools often required children to cross at busy intersections. They would like to see walking bridges built across main roads.

Some parents in the focus groups often did not send their children to RSD schools because they felt the schools were not safe or clean, and the facilities were old. However, parents that have children at RSD schools reported good relationships with the staff and teachers. Their primary concerns were with fighting on campus.

The youth rated their schools about a seven out of ten overall with a range of 5-9. Students were particularly concerned about the condition of school restrooms and noted that they were often dirty, there were no mirrors, and some stall doors did not lock to allow adequate privacy. However, students also mentioned that the rest of their schools were generally clean, and that there were a lot of windows and plenty of space in classrooms and common areas.

One interviewee noted: "One must let the district know how the district benefits directly and how costs, infrastructure, and safety will be mitigated. In addition, how the work load of site administrators will not be impacted greatly."

What is the current noise level in the project area? Will this project increase the noise level for those homes surrounding the school?

How we answered the question:

Archival data

Surveys

What we found:

Increased noise does not appear to be an important concern in this study or in the broader research literature on shared use. Less than seven percent of residents surveyed were concerned about increased noise if expanded shared use were implemented.

What is the current number of traffic incidents in the area? Will traffic incidents increase or decrease?

How we answered the question:

Community mapping

Focus groups

Key informant interviews

What we found:

Residents who lived on main roads noted in the focus groups that the main roads make it hard for children to play and ride their bikes, as the traffic can be a safety issue. Adults see many children daily skateboarding, biking, and playing basketball in their neighborhood. Women felt safer walking with someone or with a group. Some discussed seeing people carry golf clubs to protect themselves from stray dogs. One resident noted that if she sees someone walking in her neighborhood, she wonders what trouble they are up to. However, many stated they did not see people walking in their neighborhood, as it is not safe; they only observed walking at nearby parks.

In general, mapping participants noted traffic incidents at major intersections and did not feel that any roads within their community were very safe for cars, pedestrians, or bikes. As such, residents prefer to go to parks to recreate rather than doing so on neighborhood streets.

Is the current police level adequate in handling the current crime level in the community? Will this project create a need for additional police or will it lessen the burden on the Phoenix Police Department?

How we answered the question:

Key informant interviews

What we found:

Police did not express much concern that their work or costs would increase as a result of expanding shared use within RSD. As one informant stated, “Police can adapt to how the community grows.” While opening up new places for community members to congregate would certainly affect them, they were able to provide many examples of preventative measures that schools or the district could put into place to minimize these impacts. For example, ensuring that school properties follow the Crime Prevention through Environmental Design (CPTED) guidelines and that adequate signage is posted would improve the ability of police to reduce crime on school properties and keep community members safe.

Interviewees questioned the district’s readiness for expanded shared use efforts, asking:

Is the school district prepared to deal with the possible increase in certain types of crimes that come with having a public place open after hours?

Is the district going to aid in the prosecution of crimes that occur on that property?

City of Phoenix police were open to further collaboration with RSD schools and district administrators in expanded shared use efforts, and noted that additional involvement and communication from the district would be helpful.

What is the perception of safety in the district/neighborhoods? Will this project increase or decrease that perception?

How we answered the question:

Community mapping

Focus groups

Surveys

What we found:

Shared use. Safety was a common concern among community members. Some parents in the focus groups often did not send their children to RSD schools because they felt the schools were not safe. These concerns regarding safety were centered on incidents of fighting at schools. Yet, parents were open to the idea of having activities at neighborhood schools if supervision and safety concerns were adequately addressed. Residents, in general, had concerns regarding safety, supervision, crime and vandalism that they wanted to be addressed. Approximately one half (51%) of residents surveyed remarked that they had safety concerns about shared use while another 50 percent expressed concerns about adequate supervision. Potential increases in incidences of vandalism were a concern to 35 percent of residents surveyed.

Neighborhood perceptions. Adults discussed a desire to improve the safety and appearance of their neighborhood. Some residents discussed how they watched out for one another, with special attention given to children and the elderly. Others did not have much interaction with their neighbors. Some neighborhoods had active Block Watch programs, held regular Block Watch Meetings, organized a Getting Arizona Involved in Neighborhoods (GAIN) night, and were encouraged to report graffiti to Graffiti Busters. Some participants believed that peer pressure helped to keep neighbors from acting up, and indicated that they work together to keep their neighborhoods nice. Moreover, some residents suggested their churches had activities and were places where residents could get together and support one another.

Youth expressed significant safety concerns within their neighborhoods. Youth described what it was like to live in their neighborhood as *horrible* and *ghetto*, with lots of rapists, drug dealers, and kidnappers. However, they also described some positive aspects of their community, such as knowing your neighbors, going to neighbors' barbeques, and having friends around to play with. Improvements youth suggested included *less fights on the streets*, and *less drug dealing and drive-bys*. When describing the importance of these improvements, one 13 year-old girl explained:

We need to change things for the next generation. I can take care of myself, but the little kids don't know what's going to happen (such as when a car pulls up slowly).

Where are there existing Neighborhood Watch programs? Will there be a need to increase these or will this project ease the burden on these programs?

How we answered the question:

Archival data

Focus groups

What we found:

There are over 100 neighborhood organizations, including Block Watches, recognized by the City of Phoenix in the vicinity of RSD. Safety and supervision were the primary concerns of residents regarding shared use, but they felt shared use spaces would be helpful for holding neighborhood organization (e.g., Block Watch) meetings.

In the focus groups, individuals mentioned that they were active in their local Block Watch programs and had regular Block Watch meetings. In the interviews, Block Watches were noted as important and, often, respected organizations that operated within the school district's boundaries.

The police precinct that is affiliated with the local Block Watches is the South Mountain Precinct; 400 West Southern Avenue; Phoenix, Arizona 85041; 602-495-5004. For more information about those organizations are available at <http://jphxprd.phoenix.gov/NSDAssoc/>

What are the current property values for homes in the district? Will this project raise or lower those values?

How we answered the question:

Archival data

What we found:

Neighborhoods and housing quality can vary quite a bit block-to-block with RSD. There are pockets of "nice" (often gated) housing mixed in to otherwise unappealing or seemingly rundown areas.

According to the American Community Survey 2013 (5-year estimates), there are approximately 34,657 housing units within the RSD boundaries, the median value of which is \$112,900 (+/- \$3,879). Housing values can be further broken down as follows:

- Less than \$50,000: 15%
- \$50,000 to \$99,999: 27%
- \$100,000 to \$149,999: 24%
- \$150,000 to \$199,999: 16%
- \$200,000 to \$299,999: 12%
- \$300,000 or above: 5%

There is little evidence that expanded shared use will increase home values in the near-term, but it has the potential to do so (indirectly) over time if it does indeed lead to some of the expected improvements in community enrichment and resident health and wellbeing.

What is the current vacancy rate for homes/apartments in the district? Will this project raise or lower the vacancy rate?

How we answered the question:

Archival data

What we found:

According to the American Community Survey 2013 (5-year estimates), the homeowner vacancy rate within RSD is 4.4% (+/-1.2%), and the rental vacancy rate is 9.2% (+/-2.0%). Expanded shared use is unlikely to have a measurable impact on these rates in the short- or medium-term.



Pathway 5: Maintenance/Operations

Maintenance and liability, and their associated costs, for before- and after-hours usage are common concerns surrounding shared use (Burbage et al., 2014; Spengler, 2012). Vandalism is often a noted concern, but it can also be lessened through shared use, specifically from a greater sense of ownership by the community and increased supervision of school properties (Spengler et al., 2013). Volunteers may also sufficiently substitute for school personnel during non-school hours (Warren, 2005; Warren et al., 2009). Overall costs for shared use will vary, but common costs include maintenance, cleanup, repairs, staff, security, and utilities (Warren, 2005; Young, Spengler, Frost, Evenson and Vincent, 2014). These costs can and may need to be split or shared between schools and community organizations (Lees, Salvesen & Shay, 2008; Spengler, et. al., 2013). Some have even noted that despite perceptions of increased costs, shared use facilities can increase afterschool program participation without significantly increasing expenses (Kanters et al., 2014).

What is the current status of funds available in the Roosevelt School District? Would there be a need for additional funding to maintain/upkeep equipment, infrastructure, inventory, etc.?

How we answered the question:

Key informant interviews

What we found:

According to an RSD administrator, there are no funds available within the existing RSD budget to support expanded shared use. Specifically, the administrator stated:

The district does not have state budget authorization available to accommodate additional use and related expenses without having a negative effect on educational programming. In addition, RSD cannot expend funds without reimbursement.

The point about reimbursement was corroborated by the Facility Use Coordinator at the Washington Elementary School District (WESD), who explained that WESD initially charge an extremely nominal fee (e.g., \$1.00/hour) for community use of their facilities. However, the State subsequently passed a law mandating that districts recoup any costs associated with external use of their facilities; thus, they had to raise their rates to cover extra energy use and custodial staff time. Still, they

work hard to keep the costs very reasonable in order to encourage community use, and generally feel that the costs balance out over time.

Additional costs are of major concern to RSD and individual school principals. One school principal explained that while he does his best to make his school very open to the community, “it is having an impact on [their] ability to maintain and control the costs to [their] facility,” such that, while the school is still open to the community, “it is becoming less each year.” Funding to sustain community access is a necessity for schools, and some RSD/school administrators expressed little optimism that such funding would become a reality, particularly since student education is their number one priority when it comes to both funding and facility use.

Facilitating successful expanded community use of school facilities and fields, at a minimum, would likely require additional funding to install adequate lighting and maintain the safety and quality of the playing fields. Any groups using the fields/facilities could bring in their own equipment, as is required for community use in WESD.

What are the current costs/expenditures related to grounds upkeep in the school district? How will costs/expenditures related to grounds upkeep change?

How we answered the question:

Key informant interviews

What we found:

At least one school principal expressed concern that community use of school facilities is costing more money (particularly in maintenance costs) than the school has available to spend. He clearly felt that these costs would continue to increase with increasing community use. However, the Facility Use Coordinator for WESD felt that the actual costs of shared use actually balance out over time, even though the district has to pay for improvements or damages on occasion. The Coordinator explained:

Occasionally groups that are consistently using the fields put their own necessary equipment (e.g., lighting, soccer goals) in and the district either has to pay to maintain it or to take it out once it is beyond repair. This can be costly, but generally the costs balance out over time. For example, schools often like when little leagues use the fields because the teams drag the fields and schools do not have to do it, which saves time and money, in addition to the seasonal use fees the teams pay. Generally, the sports teams take very good care of the fields because they want them in good condition for their continued use. We have a few soccer teams that used to tear up the fields, so we had to talk to them and pull back on their usage a bit. Overall, it depends on the group how well it works as a reciprocally beneficial arrangement.

When asked about specific costs, or changes in cost, associated with shared use, the WESD Coordinator stated that they have had no costs or changes associated with equipment or infrastructure because they do not rent out equipment and have not changed existing infrastructure much. Insurance costs are already covered by the district at an adequate level; no additional insurance was needed. Additionally, most community groups are required to provide evidence of their own insurance prior to using the space (per the facility use form), so individual groups pay for any damages assumed during their assigned usage times. Anything that community groups do not pay is paid for using the facility use fees.

What is the current insurance held by the school district? Would a change in insurance policy be required or would the current policy remain sufficient?

How we answered the question:

Key informant interviews

What we found:

The district's current insurance policy should be sufficient to cover any expanded use of district facilities, especially following the passage of recent state-level legislation limiting districts' liability related to community use of their facilities. Indeed, the WESD Coordinator was not even aware of the most recent limited liability legislation (SB 1336, passed in 2014), yet remarked that, regardless, WESD has not had to change any of its insurance coverage levels to accommodate community use. She further stated that when the 2012 legislation passed (SB 1059), they checked with the district's legal counsel to see if it changed anything for them regarding liability but the counsel determined that it did not.

Since community groups are also required to provide their own proof of insurance (i.e., Certificate of Liability Coverage), insurance costs should not be an issue for expanding shared use within RSD.

What is the current level of staffing? Would an increase in staff be required?

How we answered the question:

Archival data

Key informant interviews

What we found:

Currently, the Student Support Services Secretary at RSD is the primary point of contact regarding community use of district-owned properties. However, since Student Support Services oversees the operations of so many departments (Business Services, Child Nutrition Services, Custodial Services, Internal Audit, Maintenance, Technology and Transportation), coordinating use of facilities with community groups in a timely manner can be quite a challenge. Several community

groups expressed frustration with this process and a desire to create a more streamlined process in which community groups are given higher priority. However, with staffing and resources already spread so thinly within RSD, and because district use of facilities and resources necessarily remains the top priority, it is unlikely that this barrier to shared use will be overcome without an increase in staff.

Comparable school districts in Phoenix that are perceived as fairly successful with their shared use policies (e.g., Tempe, Kyrene, Washington), all have a clear point of contact (often a separate community education or engagement coordinator) who helps to facilitate and streamline the facility use process. The job duties of many of these coordinators often specifically include community outreach and education. For example, the primary person responsible for shared use at the Washington Elementary School District holds the position of Enrichment and Facility Use Coordinator in the district office. Part of her job entails travelling out to the individual schools within the district to educate office staff about the facility rental process and to answer any questions that these staff might have. She finds this part of her job to be particularly important since inquiries about facility use usually start at the individual schools.

RSD does not currently have an electronic facility request system in place, which further increases the staff time needed to successfully facilitate the shared use process and increases the process duration. The WESD Coordinator started a facility use website as a way to make the process more accessible, convenient, and efficient, which not only makes the process easier for both the district and the community, but also helps to save paper. Prior to the electronic process, she explained, paper forms had to pass through many hands to get from the community to the schools to the district with all the necessary signatures, which took much longer than necessary. Thus, adding the necessary technology to implement an online facility rental process within RSD might help to reduce the ongoing staffing needs and costs required to facilitate shared use, but may involve some additional costs up front as the district works to get the technology into place.

Community use of district facilities sometimes involves additional custodial needs as well, particularly for large or indoor events. In such cases, districts tend to incorporate these additional costs into the facility use agreement and rental charges. WESD, for example, requires community groups to pay for any additional custodial staff time necessary to supervise or clean up from their events on top of the groups' hourly or seasonal usage fees. These additional staffing needs may have an upside though. As the WESD Coordinator explained, the custodians, who are often residents of the local community, often appreciate the extra overtime pay, especially when they are on a 10-month contract.

How many volunteers and community service programs are currently available to assist with shared use? Would outreach be needed to identify additional volunteers and community service programs?

How we answered the question:

Archival data

What we found:

There are over 100 community organizations registered with the City of Phoenix within the boundaries of RSD, at least 20 of which were specifically mentioned by study participants as being active within the community. Schools and the district could lean on these community organizations to assist with shared use needs. Additionally, students/youth are often required, or at least encouraged, to contribute a designated number of community service hours as part of their participation in various programs (e.g., Southwest Behavioral Health Services' Community Youth Development Program); schools could partner with community organizations to engage their youth in community service that supports expanded shared use.

Involving volunteer and community service programs will require some concentrated outreach on the part of the district, but could be as simple as working with HandsOn Greater Phoenix or the Valley of the Sun United Way to recruit volunteers on an as needed basis. Additionally, for schools that are interested in adding school or community gardens, the Maricopa County Cooperative Extension operates the Master Gardener program, from which the district or individual schools could recruit volunteers as well. Master Gardeners must contribute a certain amount of volunteer hours to maintain their designation.

The Tiger Mountain Foundation, which runs several community gardens within RSD, has been very successful at involving volunteers from corporations and groups outside of the RSD community, and may be able to provide suggestions on how the district could do this successfully as well.

What are the current levels of vandalism experienced in the district and community? How will the levels of vandalism change?

How we answered the question:

Key informant interviews

What we found:

All schools within the RSD experience issues with vandalism and graffiti, some more than others. Community groups and police, as well as district administrators and school principals, expressed a concern that such incidences would increase with expanded shared use. More than one-third of survey respondents (35%) expressed a similar concern.

Police representatives reported lots of tagging and graffiti within RSD, as well as vandalism in the form of kids hitting signs with rocks, cutting fences, breaking windows and cutting copper wire from water meters – all of which were expressed as consistent issues experienced by local parks representatives as well. However, as on police interviewee stated, while “the increase in crime is kind of a given, [it] is more of a City of Phoenix police problem” than a problem for the schools and, overall, the police are not too worried about it.

Contrary to concerns expressed within RSD, the WESD experience with shared use suggests that incidences of vandalism and graffiti could actually decrease as community use of district properties increases. Since all community use of facilities outside of normal school hours requires a supervisor or responsible adult on site, greater use keeps more eyes on the properties and decreases the amount of time available for crimes and other delinquent activities to occur.

What are the current costs/expenditures associated with vandalism in the school district? How will costs/expenditures associated with vandalism change?

How we answered the question:

Key informant interviews

What we found:

The costs/expenditures associated with vandalism within RSD as a result of expanding shared use will depend greatly on the types of policies and practices that are implemented. Enhancing security within the district, working with local police to identify areas and times more in need of police attention, and working with local block watches, many of which are already very active within RSD, will help to reduce these costs.

One police representative suggested targeting the schools that are more visible from main roads as locations for enhanced community use, and further suggested following Crime Prevention through Environmental Design (CPTED) guidelines to eliminate hiding places and dark corners on school properties, where kids and others who may be up to no good can congregate without being seen. Police contacts felt much more confident in their ability to help reduce the potential negative impacts associated with expanded shared use if school properties were well-lit with easily recognizable signage showing hours and terms of use, including the A.R.S. codes police could use to enforce the laws. Additionally, police would appreciate having contact information for the responsible party or on-call night personnel they should outreach to in the case of any incidences after hours.

Cleaning up vandalism within the parks can cost several thousand dollars per year, according to a local park supervisor, but the schools have the added benefit of being completely fenced in, which may help to limit criminal access.

Are there currently any vandalism prevention/clean-up programs in place within the study area? Would there be a need for more such programs?

How we answered the question:

Key informant interviews

What we found:

The City of Phoenix currently offers the Graffiti Busters program to help clean-up instances of graffiti using City funding. However, school maintenance crews tend to take care of any such issues on school property using school funds. A police representative explained that schools usually do not call Graffiti Busters, in part, because Graffiti Busters does not match their paint to school colors.

If increased vandalism or graffiti on school properties were to be a problem with expanded shared use, perhaps local block watches and volunteer groups could be of assistance to help the district and schools mitigate those costs.

Again, WESD, which in general experiences more incidences of vandalism and graffiti than many districts in Phoenix, felt that shared use did not make this problem worse but, on the contrary, may even have made it better by increasing the number of people around the school after hours to deter criminal activity.

Summary & Recommendations

Summary of Findings

Residents Care and Value with the RSD Community and for Shared Use

- **Care and Value within the RSD Community**

RSD residents highlighted the potential for a strong sense of community, which can serve as a proxy for how much they value their community. Residents felt that they resided in an older, more established area of Phoenix. Youth, especially, noted their sense of community in the RSD area, and they communicated their desires for a better, safer community for future generations of youth and adults. Community members do feel empowered, despite lack of access to resources, to better their community; however, there appears to be a low level of trust shared among community members. Both increases access to resources and trust-building appear needed and could be facilitated through shared use and other community programs.

- **Care and Value for RSD Shared Use**

Just below 70 percent of residents surveyed indicated that they use school properties after hours at least rarely. Just over 87 percent of residents surveyed indicated that they attend or participate in meetings at their local schools after school hours at least rarely. Of those interviewed, 90 percent support shared use, and 100 percent felt it was important to expand school access in the community. Of residents surveyed, 84 percent support shared use and 73 percent believe that shared use is *important* or *very important*.

- **Care and Value for the Impact of RSD Shared Use in the Community**

Overall, there appears to be an openness to and demand for shared use in the district. Shared use was seen to have potential to increase how much community members value their community by allowing for more community spaces to be utilized. Many residents used local parks and community centers as points of reference for their judgments regarding the potential of shared use. Residents, leaders, and district personnel emphatically emphasized that before shared use was implemented that a number of barriers, concerns, and needs *must* be addressed.

Barriers, Concerns, and Needs Regarding Shared Use

Shared use activities can range from informal, unstructured, unsponsored, and unsupervised to formal, structured, community-sponsored, and supervised. Such high variability can bring about a number of concerns and barriers. The primary barriers to shared use and concerns regarding shared use expressed by the RSD community, included the following:

- **Safety, Security, and Crime**

Safety and **security** were top concerns by RSD stakeholders. These perceptions did vary among schools, locations, and residents. In general, residents are concerned that lack of supervision of schools spaces after hours and/or poor maintenance, grounds-keeping, and lighting conditions could propagate **crime** such as **vandalism or graffiti**. The schools overall were *not* suggested to have poor physical conditions. While crime was noted as a key concern, vandalism and graffiti were of low concern regarding shared use. As mentioned earlier, the local schools appeared to be perceived as relatively safe, but some parents would be hesitant to let their own children play at the schools before or after school hours. From what was seen in the local parks and around their neighborhoods, residents, RSD students reported seeing fairly little activity in their neighborhoods due to safety issues (e.g., street fighting, gangs, drugs, etc.) and constraints placed on children by their parents due to this perceived lack of safety.

- **Lack of Proper Supervision, Staffing, and Volunteers**

RSD stakeholders were especially concerned about failing to have sufficient **supervision, staffing, and volunteers** on school properties after normal school hours. Residents were open to having the schools opened after hours, so long as adequate supervision was provided. Supervision was noted as key to helping parents feel that their schools were safe for their children to play and key to preventing crime on school property, such as vandalism and graffiti. Residents, leaders, and district personnel noted the importance of having at least one responsible adult on campus at all times. Another desire was expressed for a central coordinator and/or point of contact for reservations, questions, concerns, and programming on school properties after hours. They also felt a mix of increased staff and volunteers could help address these issues. A clear strategy for communicating and enforcing rules appeared essential to supporting supervision of school spaces.

- **School District Infrastructure and School Design**

RSD stakeholders highlight key physical **infrastructure** needs regarding school spaces, so that they could feel these spaces were safe and ready for shared use. Local police suggested that only *some* of RSD's school **designs** aligned with their emphasized CPTED (Crime Prevention through Environmental Design) standards. A strong emphasis was placed on the need for good and proper lighting of school spaces. They felt that there should be no hidden spaces on school grounds, because nefarious activities might be conducted in such areas. They also felt it was important that their children and their activities should be easily visible from the street. Additionally, they noted the need for safe, clean, and updated fields, playgrounds, and restrooms. They also highlighted a need for a sufficient number and proper placement of trash cans around school spaces. Aside from these particulars, residents did not emphasize a need to use other school equipment, but equipment needs were of

concern to some key informants. Finally, there were little, if not no, concerns over parking needs or excess noise.

- **Maintenance of Current Infrastructure**

RSD stakeholders noted that the **maintenance** needs of school spaces must be addressed before and during the implementation of shared use. This concern became especially more salient if schools are to serve as community gardening spaces. Maintenance and upkeep of school spaces were thought to best occur through inspiring ownership and responsibility within community organizations and individual community members, while still leaning on school custodial staff. Increased funding, likely through fees, grants, and community partnerships, were deemed essential for keeping up with each school's maintenance needs.

- **Increased Costs**

RSD stakeholders felt shared use of school spaces would incur increased **costs** to schools and the school district, which could spill-over to community members and organizations. Costs were thought to result from increased liability and insurance costs, maintenance needs, repairs due to greater wear, possible reconfigurations of school spaces, staffing needs, utility usage, and removing vandalism and graffiti. Funding for increased costs was deemed necessary to be ascertained right away in order to sustain a shared use strategy. Concerns were expressed regarding the amount of additional resources the school district would be willing to commit to ensure these costs were covered and to ensure that their school spaces would be fun, useful, and safe. RSD personnel expressed little optimism that such funding would become a reality, particularly since student education is their number one priority when it comes to both funding and facility use. There appeared to be no current budgeted funds available for shared use but perhaps lessons in this area can be learned from the Washington Elementary School District (WESD) in Phoenix, Arizona. For example, the burden of insurance costs can be pushed onto community groups that utilize school facilities. Additionally, RSD schools could decide not to rent out equipment to groups, groups could bring their own equipment, or the schools could charge extra if equipment was needed. Facility use fees could help increase revenue but, if too high, may serve as a barrier to community use.

- **Leadership and Transparent Processes and Procedures**

RSD stakeholders, especially residents, felt that if shared use were to succeed that better **leadership** and **transparency** in rental and use **processes** and **procedures** were especially needed. Residents and community leaders expressed frustration with finding how to reserve and rent school spaces for community activities. In many cases, they were unable to locate a particular leader or staff person who could help them, or when they did find such a person, they often expressed disappointment in how the reservation and rental process went. A single district website or webpage could alleviate a great deal of confusion and frustration. Both district and school district leaders and champions of

shared use were suggested to be important. Also, RSD stakeholders felt programming was also deemed essential to be developed before shared use implementation. Along these same lines, a need was shared regarding proper signage, so that clear rules of use and enforcement were made apparent.

- **Communication between the District, School, and Community**

RSD stakeholders highlighted lack of clear messages, channels, norms, and strategies for communication between the school district, the individual schools, and the greater community (i.e., organizations and individuals). All three parties expressed a desire to improve communication, so that inconsistencies in communication and tensions in district-school-community relationships could be avoided. Community organizations highlighted that sufficiency and care in communication with the schools and district could help further develop trust and respect between all parties. Primarily regarding shared use, any gatekeepers have been noted to be key players in improving communication. Finally, communication with players in all three parties must be ensured to be clear and consistent as well.

Perceived Benefits of Shared Use in RSD

RSD stakeholders identified a number of benefits that shared use could provide to students, staff, and families in the RSD district. Notably, they emphasized that these benefits could only occur if all of the above concerns, barriers, and needs were addressed. Still, they expressed hope and demand for the success of shared use.

- **Community Enrichment through Collaboration and Partnership**

Shared use likely can **enrich** the good work of both school and community leaders and partners in the RSD community. A direct outcome of shared use that was discovered is that shared use will increase access to community meeting and gathering spaces. Another outcome, if the above concerns are addressed, are more open communication channels between community organizations, the local schools and the school district. Overall, there was a strong interest expressed by community leaders to enter into greater **collaboration** and **partnership** with local schools through hosting programs, classes, and events outside of normal school hours. Such collaboration and partnership may help indirectly inspire a sense of ownership over the school spaces, which could lead to cleaner and safer schools during off hours.

- **Physical Activity Improvement**

Shared use likely can **improve physical activity** in the RSD area by directly providing increased access to recreational spaces. This notion is especially more salient for youth, rather than adults. Youth were seen to be more likely to take advantage of open schools, especially if they lived in neighborhoods where local parks were not close. A strong emphasis was placed on the need for structured and planned physical activities for

local youth, so that improvement in physical activity could actually occur.

Recommendations:

- 1) Address safety, security, and vandalism/graffiti issues within RSD in order to encourage residents to become more active and involved within their community and schools
- 2) Identify or hire a centralized staff person whose primary responsibilities include facility-use scheduling, outreach, and volunteer recruitment and coordination
- 3) Work with schools, the district, and community organizations to identify and schedule structured activities in support of community health and wellbeing prior to implementation of expanded shared use policies
- 4) Improve communication among schools, the district, community organizations and residents
- 5) Enhance efficiency and understanding of the facility rental process by providing easy, online access for community members and organizations
- 6) Identify additional funding sources and partners to alleviate the burden of potential increases in expenses associated with expanded shared use
- 7) Collaborate with City of Phoenix police to identify and target schools for expanded shared use that most closely align with CPTED guidelines and are in areas not already served by high quality parks
- 8) Join the Arizona Community Education Association (AzCEA) to network and receive support from other facility use coordinators statewide

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