SALIENT FINDINGS FROM COMMUNITY DISCUSSIONS ABOUT PLANNING FOR THE LAKEWOOD WELLNESS FOUNDATION

PREPARED BY:
THE COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT SUBCOMMITTEE OF THE LAKEWOOD WELLNESS FOUNDATION TASK FORCE

OCTOBER 2017
PURPOSE

• The discussions took the form of one-on-one interviews and small group discussions (referred to as “panels” in this report).
• The intention of the discussions was to promote community engagement in the Lakewood Wellness Foundation planning process at an early enough point to ensure that comments and suggestions were taken into account from the beginning of the planning process.
• What follows is qualitative, not quantitative market research
• These are a series of themes and patterns of thinking that came through quite clearly. To the extent possible, also included is an indication of frequency of mention, which sheds some light on the importance of a particular response to participant
METHODOLOGY

• Ensure that as many segments of the Lakewood community as possible were included.

• A list of 16 population/issue groups was developed; organizations and people representing or affiliated in some way with these Lakewood groups were then added to the list.

• Those who were interviewed (referred to as “participants” in this report) were promised that no names would be attached to specific comments.

• The difference between one-on-one interviews and panels was more a matter of practicality than any other factor. If it was feasible to put together a group of people representing a particular population/issue group that was done, largely to make the number of discussions more manageable.

• The same set of questions was used in both types of discussions.

• Discussions were led by volunteer members of the Community Engagement Subcommittee (Phyllis Osol Dykes (Chairperson), Michael Bentley, Daniel Cohn, Martha Halko and Brittany O’Connor). Also facilitating some interviews/panels was Randall McShepard, consultant to this phase of planning.
POPULATION/ISSUE GROUPS

• Demographic Segments:
  Diverse Races/Ethnicities
  Early Childhood
  LGBTQ Community
  Low Income
  Seniors
  Women
  Youth

• Health-Related Segments:
  Behavioral Health
  Health
  Lakewood Hospital
  Physical Activity/ Recreation

• Civic Influencers:
  Business
  Cultural
  Elected Officials
  Faith Community
  Philanthropy
RESULTS

• 47 interviews and panels. There were 35 one-on-one interviews and 12 panels
• 58 organizations were represented, & 10 individuals who weren’t representing a particular organization
• A total of 87 people participated in either a one-on-one interview or on a panel
MEANINGS OF “WELLNESS” AND “HEALTH”

• “Health” and “wellness” are interconnected and interdependent, but they’re not the same thing
• “Wellness” was frequently defined as “bigger” than “health,” encompassing more, and going beyond the body’s medical condition
• “Wellness” generally agreed as:
  • It’s holistic, encompassing mental, social and physical health.
  • It refers to quality of life, achievement in life.
  • Proactive prevention measures and chronic disease management are the foundation of wellness
• “Health” generally was perceived as being:
  • The body’s physical or medical condition.
  • Most agreed it is doctor-related, and requires health care services at certain points in life.
  • Some said health includes behavioral health, while others did not agree.
  • Some perceived health as being the absence of illness, while others defined it as illness-related.
GREATEST HEALTH AND WELLNESS CHALLENGES

- Substance abuse
- Negative effects of low income and poverty
- Mental health issues.
- Senior age-related issues
- Lack of motivation to be healthy and educated about health
- Lack of coordination between programs and “Disconnectedness” of refugee populations
- Condition of some housing stock
PERCEIVED PURPOSE OF LAKEWOOD WELLNESS FOUNDATION

- No purpose was mentioned in a majority of the interviews/panels.
- The most frequent response regarding purpose was that the new Foundation should improve and promote the health and wellness of all Lakewood residents.
- Throughout many discussions, participants appeared to be favoring a purpose related to wellness, rather than health.
- Education & prevention as a means to promoting wellness.
- Collaborating or partnering with other organizations, not duplicating existing services.
- A coordinating “clearinghouse”
CONCERNS ABOUT THE NEW FOUNDATION

• What will the Foundation’s decision-making process be?
• How will the Lakewood Wellness Foundation be “different” from other organizations?
• Are the Foundation’s finances going to be a problem now and over time?
• Is there a communications plan that addresses the issues of the new Foundation’s development, transparency, unrealistic expectations and accountability?
• How can the new Foundation avoid being dragged down by “politics” or infighting?
• What assurances are there that the new Foundation will be embedded in the Lakewood community and coordinated with other services?
ENGAGING THE COMMUNITY IN THE DISCUSSION

• IMPORTANT POPULATION/ISSUE GROUPS TO TALK WITH
  • Seniors
  • Refugees
  • Families
  • Children and Youth (including the Lakewood Schools)
  • Marginalized people of all types
  • Low income residents
  • Those suffering from (or treating) mental health and/or addiction problems

• BEST WAYS TO ENGAGE RESIDENTS IN THE PLANNING PROCESS
  • Gatherings of people
  • Online
  • Direct personal contact
ENGAGING THE COMMUNITY IN THE DISCUSSION

• MOST IMPORTANT MESSAGES TO BE CONVEYED
  • We’re inclusive
  • We’re listening to you
  • The Wellness Foundation is for everyone in Lakewood
  • We’re committed to transparency, communications and frank and frequent progress reports
  • Purpose and process of new Foundation
  • Health and wellness are crucially important
  • Promote civic engagement
  • Foundation has limited resources
  • This process is more than “window dressing” or token inclusion
  • Know the facts about a target audience before addressing them
BUILDING TRUST

• Communicate
• Be transparent and credible
• Engage all segments of the community
• Don’t allow what happened in the past to negatively impact future plans
• Really listen
• Set and communicate goals and show results that are positive for the Lakewood community
• Follow through and be accountable
• Find a unifying person to be the “face” of the organization
• Be consistent
• Be patient
• Hold some public meetings outside of City Hall
WHAT THE TASK FORCE MUST KEEP IN MIND

• Be transparent
• Be inclusive and promote diversity
• Communicate the goals, the process, the results
• Engage the community throughout the process
• Don’t duplicate existing programs
• Determine the best way to use funds
• Try to provide the social and emotional resources that the hospital provided, but that aren’t there now
• Analyze and review priorities periodically
• Accept that some people will not embrace the new Foundation
• Remember that Lakewood has a unique opportunity to be a “wellness community”