The Proposed Maya Angelou Center for Community & the Response From the Community

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Our Task

- Get a feel for Maya Angelou’s community, including people of Winston-Salem, local universities, as well as cultural and community organizations.
- “The objective of the research will be to canvas the neighborhoods of Winston-Salem to uncover the commonalities across the whole city as well as the differences to get at what the community wants to be.”
- Determine the types of programming that the center should offer.
Tasks Performed

- Utilize and refine survey from Glenn Fulk
- Execute surveys in all wards (phone banking and neighborhood canvassing)
- Analyze data to determine a pattern or trend in results
COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

● Goal: talk to community members and learn their thoughts on a Maya Angelou Center for Community.
● Results: learned of the various problems affecting residents, and whether or not a center for community downtown would be of service to them.
Our survey:

- What are some strengths and weaknesses of the local community?
- What is the most pressing issue you’re facing? That Winston is facing?
- Would a community center in the middle of downtown be of service to you?
- What would you want in a local community center?
- What are some ways local universities could engage in a community center?
Enlightened interview with Dr. Maya Angelou’s Granddaughter (Rosa Johnson):

“I am concerned about children that live here. It’s not safe. As far as a community center downtown, I would ask what is the center’s goal, purpose, and vision, and is it clear how they can address our issues? It needs to not just be a hangout they need to have a place for education. It should have after school programs, art programs, and something built for seniors. There should be educators to help young people up their community skills, and some designated area for sports as well.”
Strengths and Weaknesses of Local Community:

Strengths:
- Youth community
- Strong, well-developed relationships
- Connection to neighbors and the neighborhoods

Weaknesses:
- Lack of grocery stores
- Lack of safety
- Poor transportation
- Lack of opportunities for youth to gather and play
Most Pressing issue Winston is facing:

Common Themes:

- Transportation
- Food desert
- Crime/ Safety concerns in neighborhoods
- Racial segregation & tensions
- Activities for youth
What would you like in a community center:

Common Themes:

- Youth: after-school activities and enrichment, outdoor areas to play (playground), sports, tutoring
- Technology: computer classes, podcast tutorials, and information on other media platforms
- Professional resources: mock interviews, resume writing classes, professional coaching, language classes
- Recreational activities: art classes, sewing, yoga, gardening
How could a downtown community center be of service:

- Concern with location
  - Little access with public transportation
  - Politics of downtown
- Community centers already exist
- Programming: Youth
Analyzing Data:

- Obstacles to community:
  - Community safety
  - Crime
  - Race relations

- Existing community centers:
  - Underresourced
  - Older buildings that have not been serviced in some time

- Who is the center for, really?
  - Would everyone be welcome?
  - Would programs target all age groups?
  - How does the location affect this?

- Concerns of Availability:
  - Programming throughout the week
  - Work schedules
  - Useful for families
Analysis of Responses

- Be intentional about how we plan to welcome and include all community members
- Location and need are a concern.
  - Inaccessible location
  - More important issues to be addressed
- Programming should be accessible for all people, if a center is made the programming should meet community needs
  - Tech resources
  - Various classes
  - After-school activities and support
Recommendations:

- Focus on what is already here, how can these be helped?
  - Underresourced community centers
  - Other problems in the community that prevent access and use of a downtown center (crime, transportation, identity, etc.)
- Consider re-thinking location
- Partnership with Neighbors for Better Neighborhoods
- Development of this Center should NOT happen swiftly.
  - Current barriers may affect efficacy
  - Prioritize further community discussion
- Funding should not come from sources that already work on community empowerment
Recommendations cont.

- Have programming for young children during after-school hours (common response given)
- Develop programming:
  - Personal development
  - Recreational activities (arts, sports, etc.)
  - Technology resources can be provided
  - Targets all age populations
  - Meets community needs
- Assistance towards other community centers, maybe move towards a network of community centers
Evaluation

Once recommendations are implemented, they can be evaluated in the following ways:

● Regular community canvassing to determine needs
● Determine effectiveness of various programs based on regular evaluations from community members and usage
● Use a sign-in sheet where visitors can log personal information including ward and how they got to the center
Conclusion:

Our group set out to discover how residents of Winston-Salem would respond to a Community Center Downtown. We found that there are more pressing issues to focus on, and that this center is not in an ideal location. Some residents liked the location, but many felt they wouldn’t go there or couldn’t get there.

Many community members voiced that this could be useful to them, but is not a priority. The center should work with community partners to gather more feedback from the community, learn who could be helpful, and then execute this project with full community in mind.
What would you like in a community center:

Common Themes:

- **Youth**: after-school activities and enrichment, outdoor areas to play (playground), sports, tutoring
- **Technology**: computer classes, podcast tutorials, and information on other media platforms
- **Professional resources**: mock interviews, resume writing classes, professional coaching, language classes
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