

Kid Link Terry Redlin

An Initiative of Sioux Falls Thrive



September 2022



Augustana Research Institute

AUGUSTANA RESEARCH INSTITUTE

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September 15, 2022

This report was commissioned by Sioux Falls Thrive.

Executive Summary

This report summarizes research conducted to inform the expansion of Sioux Falls Thrive's Kid Link Initiative to the Terry Redlin neighborhood. Kid Link is a demonstration project of Sioux Falls Thrive, which is a collective impact organization whose mission is to unite business, government, and nonprofit sectors in initiatives that ensure all children in the Sioux Falls area have the resources they need to achieve their optimal educational and career potential. Thrive supports action teams dedicated to aligning community resources and resolving gaps related to housing, food security, and out-of-school time. Kid Link brings their efforts together to focus on a single neighborhood in the city in an effort to move the needle on student outcomes, swiftly and measurably.

Purpose of This Report

This report brings together available demographic data about Terry Redlin Elementary and the surrounding neighborhoods. It also summarizes findings from interviews conducted with neighborhood residents and community stakeholders about their thoughts on neighborhood strengths and needs as well as how best to engage neighbors in Kid Link.

This report's findings are presented in order to help organizers understand community strengths, needs, and preferences as they continue to develop Kid Link.

The Neighborhood

The Terry Redlin Elementary attendance area is located slightly east and north of downtown Sioux Falls; it is bounded by Rice Street on the north and 10th Street to the south, lying between the Big Sioux River to the west and I-229 to the east.

Demographically, the neighborhoods around Terry Redlin are slightly older than the rest of Sioux Falls and more racially diverse. They are also home to a higher proportion of foreign-born residents and limited English-speaking households.

Compared to the rest of Sioux Falls, the neighborhoods around Terry Redlin also have lower average levels of adult educational attainment and fewer workers in management, business, science, and arts occupations. They also have lower median incomes, higher rates of families with children below or near the poverty level, and higher rates of people without health insurance. These areas have higher rates of public insurance coverage than the rest of the city.

Although the neighborhoods around Terry Redlin have labor force participation rates and unemployment rates similar to the rest of Sioux Falls, they have a smaller proportion of children with all of their parents in the labor force. Still, about half of school-age children in these tracts have all parents working or seeking work.

Despite lower income levels and a higher proportion of renters compared to the rest of the city, the neighborhoods around Terry Redlin appear stable, with a large proportion of households who have been in the same home for a decade or longer. In turn, the housing stock is older, with very little new housing built in these neighborhoods after 1980. Consistent with an older housing stock, home values in both areas are lower than the rest of the city. But one positive side of this is that even considering lower income levels, homes are more affordable. Affordability is more evident for homeowners than renters, when comparing monthly housing costs to citywide averages.

Compared to Sioux Falls as a whole, the areas around Terry Redlin have higher rates of households with no computer, no Internet access, or cellular data only. Transportation access in these areas is similar to the rest of the city, with slightly more Terry Redlin area residents walking, relying on public transportation, or carpooling to work, and a slightly higher proportion of households have only one vehicle available.

The School

Compared to other elementary schools in Sioux Falls, Terry Redlin is more racially diverse, with about 34% of students identifying as White, 21% as Hispanic, 20% as Black, 10% as American Indian, 8% as multiracial, and 6% as Asian or Pacific Islander. About one-fourth of students at Terry Redlin are enrolled in the English Learner (EL) program. Terry Redlin also has a higher proportion of students who are eligible for free or reduced-price meals, relative to the elementary school districtwide average.

Community Stakeholder Perspectives

The Augustana Research Institute (ARI) conducted in-depth interviews with community stakeholders in order to understand their perceptions of Terry Redlin area assets, needs, and preferences. Community stakeholder interviews were conducted from June 2 through July 22, 2022. A total of 32 participants were interviewed.

Community stakeholders described unique strengths associated with Terry Redlin Elementary, including the school's special programs and dedicated staff, the attached Falls Community Health clinic, and various school – community partnerships. They also described the neighborhood's location and accessibility as an asset, including its proximity to nearby service organizations and parks. Finally, participants described how neighbors in the Terry Redlin area support one another, how existing or past programs have worked to build community, and the potential for local leadership to emerge.

The most common challenges and opportunities described by participants centered around safety (96% of interviews), out-of-school-time activities (89%), transportation (82%), food insecurity (79%), and childcare (43%). Additionally, participants described challenges related to economic need in general (including housing insecurity and homelessness, access to laundry and hygiene supplies, winter clothes, and healthcare needs), the complexity of families experiencing multiple overlapping needs, and the logic of necessity that families follow when their choices are constrained by limited resources. Finally, participants identified a potential opportunity for Kid Link to explore adult education, especially around digital equity, and a potential challenge for Kid Link in recruiting volunteers.

Each interview included a discussion of communication strategies for engaging Terry Redlin area families with Kid Link activities. Participants shared their experiences with family events and the components that might attract neighbors, as well as effective methods of communication, potential communication barriers, and strategies for building trust. Participants—parents, neighbors, service providers, school staff, and others—all agreed that the best approach to communication will involve (a) building personal connections and (b) using multiple forms of communication, especially word of mouth and texting.

Community stakeholders identified two potential communication barriers: limited internet access and language differences. Beyond thinking about communication tools, community stakeholders noted that effective communication will require building trust with parents and neighbors. To build trust, they suggested working through known and trusted people and organizations, and making a special effort to

bridge cultural and religious differences. There are especially opportunities for Kid Link to build trust with the Muslim community.

Overall, stakeholders described the Terry Redlin area as a neighborhood of tensions: The neighborhood has a high level of complex, layered economic needs, but is near to many organizations that provide various types of assistance and support. These service providers support families and help meet needs, but they also draw traffic into the neighborhood that raises safety concerns. Similarly, the local parks are a community gathering space and one of few options for free family recreation, but stakeholders are concerned for the safety of the many children who spend time unsupervised in the park. Ultimately, parents who live in the Terry Redlin neighborhood face difficult choices, and they must make the best choices for their families from the options available to them. Those choices might not make sense to people in different situations, but families are doing their best to balance the need for affordable housing, safe environments, employment and income, and childcare, among other needs.

Table of Contents

Executive Summary	1
List of Figures	5
Organization of the Report	6
I. The Kid Link Initiative.....	7
II. The Terry Redlin Neighborhood	8
A. Why Terry Redlin?	9
B. Demographics	10
C. Work and Employment.....	12
D. Income	14
E. Housing	17
F. Transportation	21
G. Communication.....	22
H. Healthcare	24
III. Terry Redlin Elementary School	25
IV. Community Input	27
A. Who We Heard From	27
B. Strengths and Assets.....	28
C. Challenges and Opportunities	36
D. Communication.....	57
V. Conclusions	64

List of Figures

Figure 1. Map of the Kid Link Terry Redlin Area	8
Figure 2. Median Age in Years.....	10
Figure 3. Race and Ethnicity (%).....	11
Figure 4. Foreign Born (%)	11
Figure 5. Educational Attainment among People Age 25 or Older	12
Figure 6. Labor Force Participation Rate among People Age 16 or Older	12
Figure 7. Unemployment Rate among People Age 16 or Older	13
Figure 8. All Parents in the Labor Force (% of Children)	13
Figure 9. Occupation (% of Employed Population Age 16 or Over).....	14
Figure 10. Median Family and Household Income (2020 dollars)	15
Figure 11. Families with Children under 18 below the Poverty Level (%).....	15
Figure 12. Poverty Rate by Age (% of Population)	16
Figure 13. Ratio of Income to Poverty for Children under 18 (%).....	17
Figure 14. Households Receiving Food Stamps or SNAP (%).....	17
Figure 15. Housing Tenure (% of Occupied Units)	18
Figure 16. Housing Structure Type (% of Housing Units)	18
Figure 17. Year Householder Moved into Unit (% of Occupied Units)	19
Figure 18. Year Structure Built (% of Housing Units)	19
Figure 19. Median Home Value (Owner-occupied) (\$)	20
Figure 20. Median Monthly Housing Costs (\$)	21
Figure 21. Means of Commuting to Work (% of Workers Age 16 or Over)	21
Figure 22. Vehicles Available (% of Occupied Units).....	22
Figure 23. Limited English-speaking Households (%)	22
Figure 24. Computing Devices at Home (% of Households).....	23
Figure 25. Internet Subscriptions at Home (% of Households).....	23
Figure 26. No Health Insurance (% of Civilian Noninstitutionalized Population).....	24
Figure 27. Health Insurance Coverage (% of Civilian Noninstitutionalized Population).....	24
Figure 28. Student Race and Ethnicity	25
Figure 29. Students Enrolled in EL (English Learners)	26

Organization of the Report

This report begins with a description of the Terry Redlin Elementary attendance area and the neighborhoods that intersect it. The report's first section, "The Terry Redlin Neighborhood," presents descriptive community data for these neighborhoods.

Next, the "Terry Redlin Elementary School" section describes Terry Redlin Elementary, providing demographic data on the student population.

The final section presents findings from interviews conducted with community stakeholders and neighbors with a connection to the Terry Redlin area.

I. The Kid Link Initiative

The Kid Link initiative was first developed in the Riverside neighborhood, located just north of the Terry Redlin area. When Kid Link first went public in summer of 2019, it was described as a “strategic swerve” from Thrive’s typical approach to problem solving. Whereas Thrive had begun with action teams devoted to citywide realignment of resources around a particular service area (e.g., food security or out-of-school-time programming), Kid Link proposed a focus on a single neighborhood. The intent was to create more immediate, measurable improvement for children and their families.

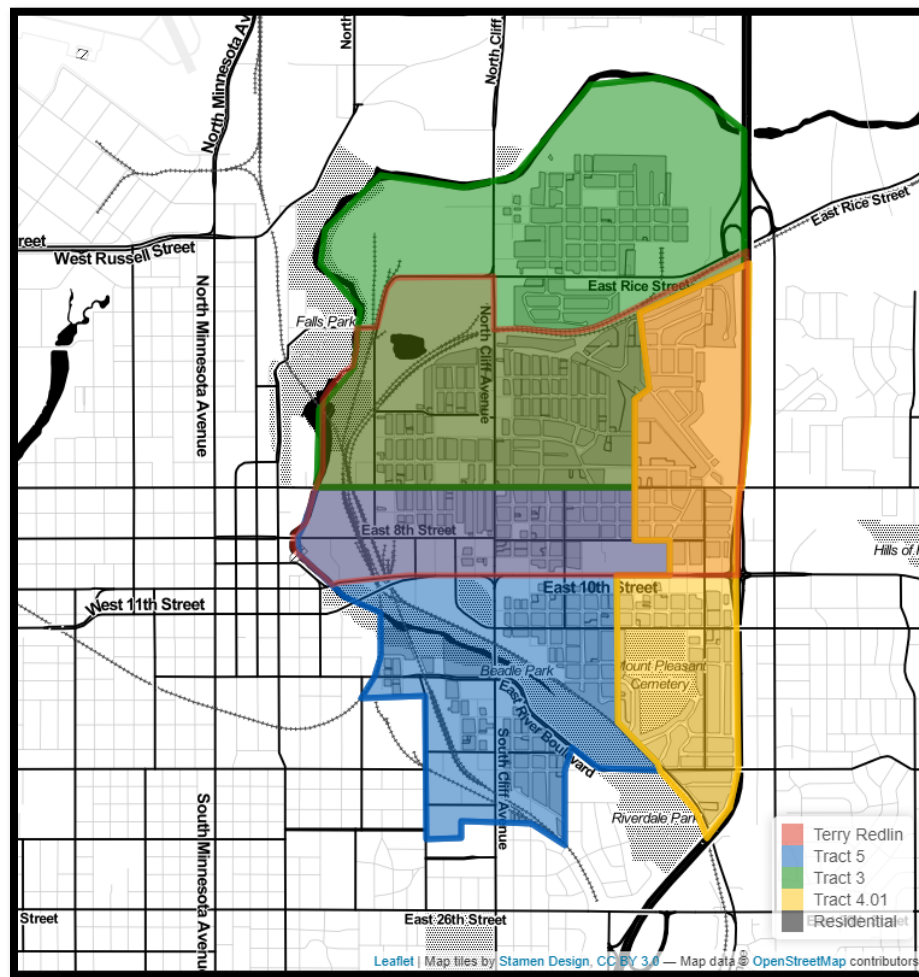
Kid Link Riverside held its first event at Laura B. Anderson Elementary in June 2020, an outdoor event featuring a visit from the Bookmobile, volunteers to greet attendees and talk about Kid Link, and snacks and activity bags for children to take home. Task teams were organized around communications (especially with people who speak limited English), food distribution, and out-of-school-time. Over the next two years, Kid Link experimented with different approaches to programming and community engagement, adapting throughout the COVID-19 pandemic.

Kid Link Terry Redlin is the next development for the Kid Link initiative. Thrive recognizes that the Kid Link model cannot simply be copied in a new location; it will need to be adapted. This report is intended to provide data and community input to inform the adaptation of Kid Link to a new neighborhood.

II. The Terry Redlin Neighborhood

Kid Link takes a holistic, neighborhood-based approach to collective impact. Kid Link Terry Redlin focuses on the area encompassed by the Terry Redlin Elementary attendance area. This area is bounded by Rice Street on the north and 10th Street to the south, lying between the Big Sioux River to the west and I-229 to the east.

The map below shows the Terry Redlin attendance area (red) and the intersecting Census tracts (green, blue, and yellow), geographic areas used by the U.S. Census Bureau to collect and report data. Those tracts are the basis for the descriptive neighborhood data reported in this section. It should be noted that these tracts (and therefore the demographic data reported below) include parts of the Riverside, Riverdale, and Mount Pleasant neighborhoods,¹ which are not part of the Terry Redlin attendance area.



Sources: U.S. Census Bureau, Sioux Falls GIS

Figure 1. Map of the Kid Link Terry Redlin Area

¹ These neighborhood names are colloquial, not official. Compared to neighborhoods recognized by the City of Sioux Falls and with organized neighborhood associations, the Terry Redlin attendance area most closely aligns with the Whittier neighborhood. See <https://www.sioxford.org/planning-dev/planning/neighborhoods>

A. Why Terry Redlin?

The neighborhood-based approach to collaboration grew out of the work of Sioux Falls Thrive's Food Security Action Team. That group's primary goal was—and remains—aligning community resources to ensure families have access to the food they need. For Kid Link's first site, the Food Security Action Team selected the Riverside neighborhood and LBA based on research that identified the area as a food desert with limited access to both retail and charitable food resources.²

Kid Link Riverside volunteers collaborated around improved food access in the neighborhood. In addition to garnering a monthly visit from Feeding South Dakota's mobile food pantry, a weekly food giveaway was developed inside a neighborhood church, and Thrive partnered with the Nightwatch Food Ministry to provide a food truck for volunteers to serve free meals every week.

Originally a secondary area of concern, out-of-school time needs quickly became primary in the work of Kid Link Riverside. The changing vision of the Sioux Falls School District toward a Community Learning Center model for individual schools, coupled with the community-wide childcare crisis, influenced the creation of more educational opportunities for both children and adults.

Kid Link Riverside leadership developed an out-of-school time (OST) task team facilitated by Sioux Falls Thrive. Members of that group strategized potential solutions for lower-cost and no-cost afterschool care, even going so far as to garner business contributions to offset family expenses for the school-based OST program, Kids Inc.

In tandem with the school district's new coordinator of community partnerships and afterschool programs, Kid Link gradually became a prototype for future opportunities to be replicated across the city. In the developing strategy, childcare organizations that have been providing off-site afterschool programming were encouraged to join in Community Learning Center discussions and find new ways to provide their programming inside schools. Ultimately, it is expected that more children will be served and per-student costs will decrease by bringing programming inside school buildings rather than transporting students to other locations.

Terry Redlin Elementary School was chosen as the second Kid Link location based on the readiness of the school district and its nonprofit partner, Volunteers of America, Dakotas, to incorporate the Community Learning Center model into this school and neighborhood.

A Note on Data

The rest of this section describes the Kid Link Terry Redlin community, drawing on data from the 2020 American Community Survey 5-year Estimates. These estimates are compiled by the U.S. Census Bureau based on an ongoing survey. The American Community Survey reaches about two to three percent of the population each year. For small areas like neighborhoods, that results in a very small sample size. The 5-year estimates combine survey responses over five years in order to increase the sample size and the reliability of estimates. Throughout this report, American Community Survey estimates are shown with error bars, which represent the margin of error.³ Larger samples result in smaller margins of error, and conversely, smaller samples result in larger margins of error. As a result,

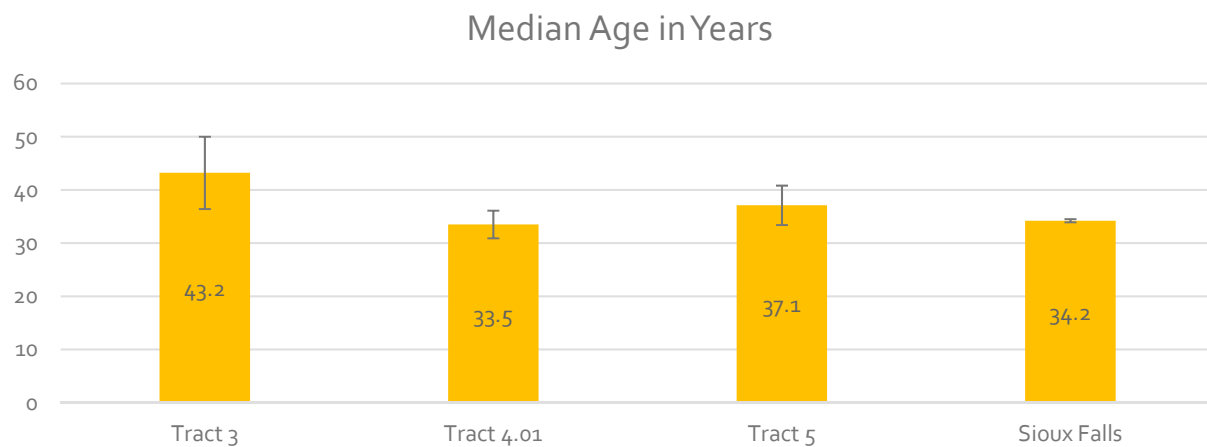
² Augustana Research Institute, "Food Security & Food Systems in Sioux Falls, SD," December 2018.

³ Margins of error are calculated at a 90% confidence level. The interval between the top and bottom of the error bar is expected to contain the true value for the population 90% of the time.

there is a good deal of uncertainty around the true value of estimates for areas as small as Census tracts, and less uncertainty around the true value for larger areas such as the city of Sioux Falls.

B. Demographics

Compared to the city as a whole, the neighborhoods around Terry Redlin may trend slightly older. Tract 3 (north) has a median age of 43.2, and the median age in Tract 5 (southwest) is 37.1. By comparison, the citywide median age in Sioux Falls is 34.2.

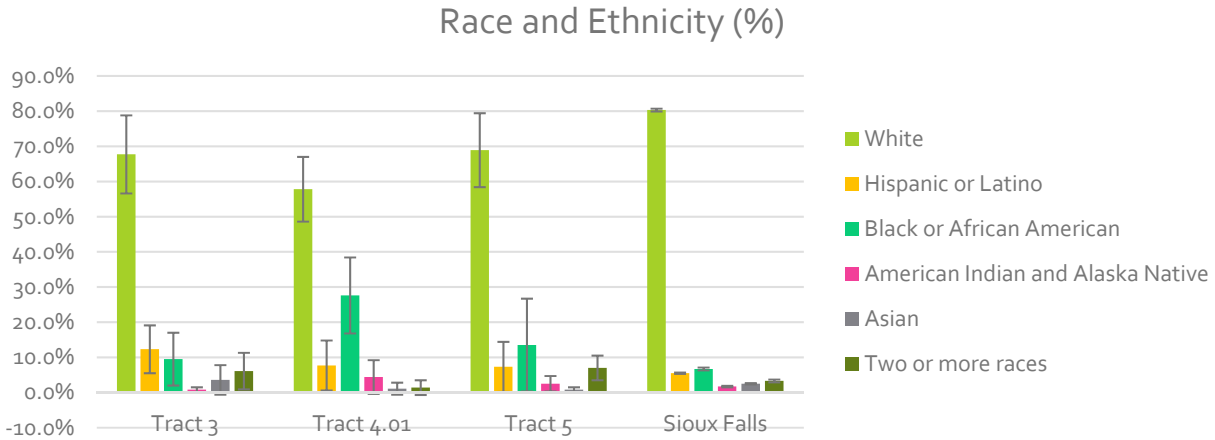


Source: 2020 American Community Survey 5-year Estimates, Table DP05

Figure 2. Median Age in Years

The neighborhoods around Terry Redlin are more racially diverse than the city as a whole. However, the areas differ somewhat in their composition: Tract 4.01 (east) has a higher proportion of Black residents.

In both Tracts 3 and 5, about 70% of residents identify as White, 10% as Hispanic or Latino, and 10% as Black. By comparison, in Tract 4.01, about 60% of residents identify as White, 8% as Hispanic or Latino, and 28% as Black. Citywide, about 80% of residents identify as White, 6% as Hispanic or Latino, and 7% as Black.

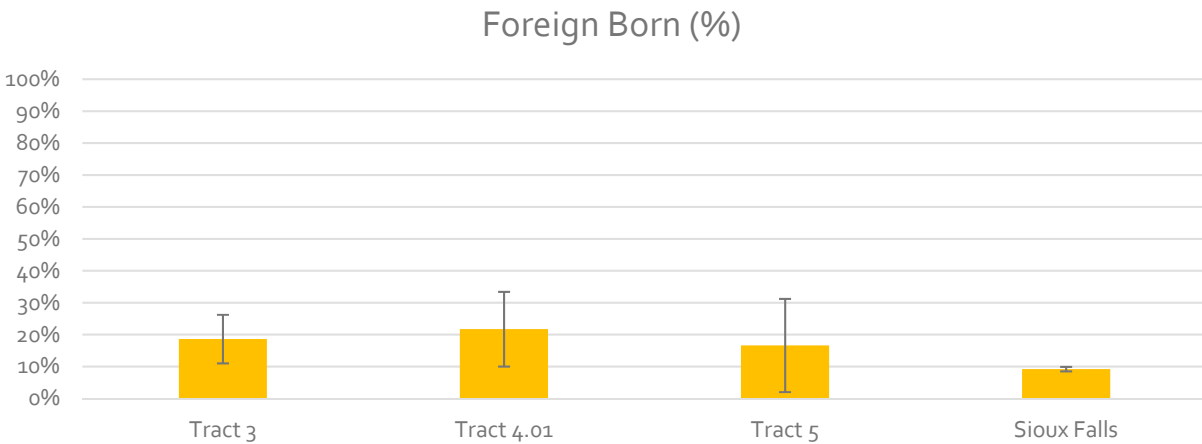


Source: 2020 American Community Survey 5-year Estimates, Table DP05

Note: Race categories refer to one race alone, not Hispanic or Latino. Categories making up < 0.2% of the population in each area are not shown (Native Hawaiian and Other Pacific Islander and Some other race).

Figure 3. Race and Ethnicity (%)

The Terry Redlin neighborhoods also differ when it comes to the nativity of residents. Across all three Tracts, between 17% and 22% of residents were born outside of the United States, compared to a citywide average of about 9%.

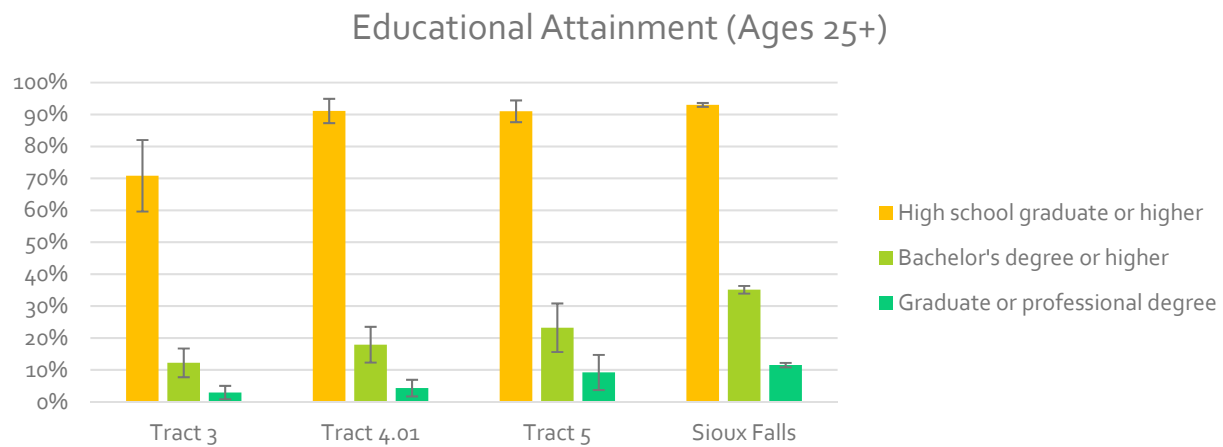


Source: 2020 American Community Survey 5-year Estimates, Table B05012

Figure 4. Foreign Born (%)

When it comes to educational attainment, the neighborhoods around Terry Redlin differ from the city as a whole. In Tracts 4.01 and 5, as in the city of Sioux Falls generally, over 90% of residents have at least a high school education, but in Tract 3, the proportion of residents who have finished high school is closer to 70%. Whereas over one-third of residents citywide have a bachelor's degree or higher, the rate in the Terry Redlin neighborhoods ranges from 12% (Tract 3) to 23% (Tract 5). Although Tract 5 is close to the citywide average in terms of the proportion of residents with a graduate or professional

degree, in Tracts 3 and 4.01, far fewer residents have these advanced degrees—an estimated 3% or 4%, compared to 12% citywide.



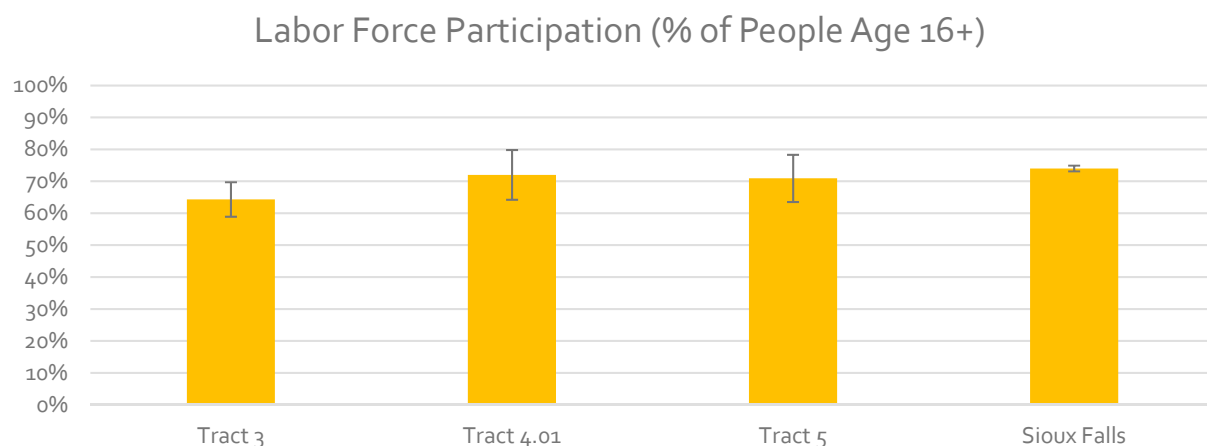
Source: 2020 American Community Survey 5-year Estimates, Table S1501

Figure 5. Educational Attainment among People Age 25 or Older

C. Work and Employment

Throughout the work and employment section, it should be noted that data reflected here were collected from 2016 through 2020, and they do not fully reflect the employment dynamics that have resulted from the COVID-19 pandemic and its economic fallout.

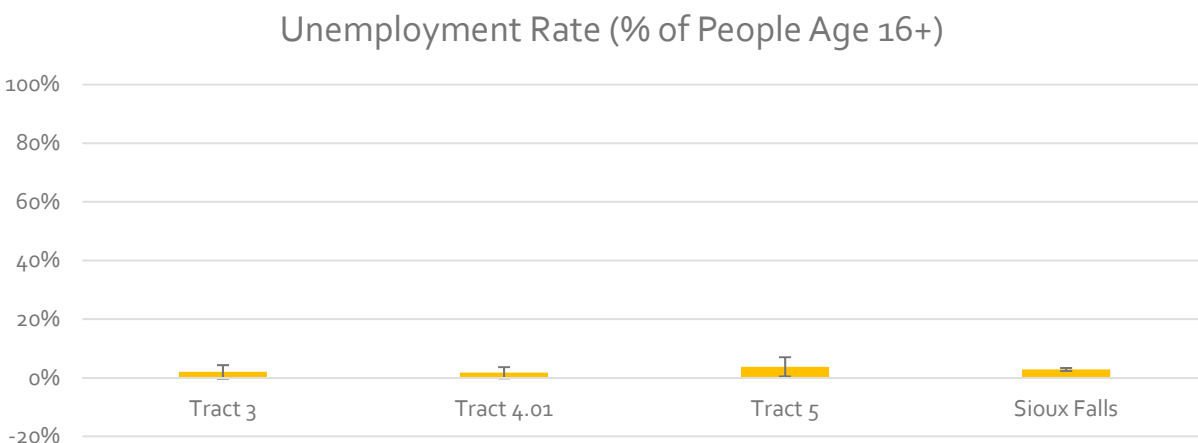
Labor force participation refers to people who are employed or looking for work. When it comes to labor force participation, for the most part, the neighborhoods around Terry Redlin look much like the city as a whole. One exception is Tract 3, which has a lower proportion of residents working or looking for work.



Source: 2020 American Community Survey 5-year Estimates, Table DP03

Figure 6. Labor Force Participation Rate among People Age 16 or Older

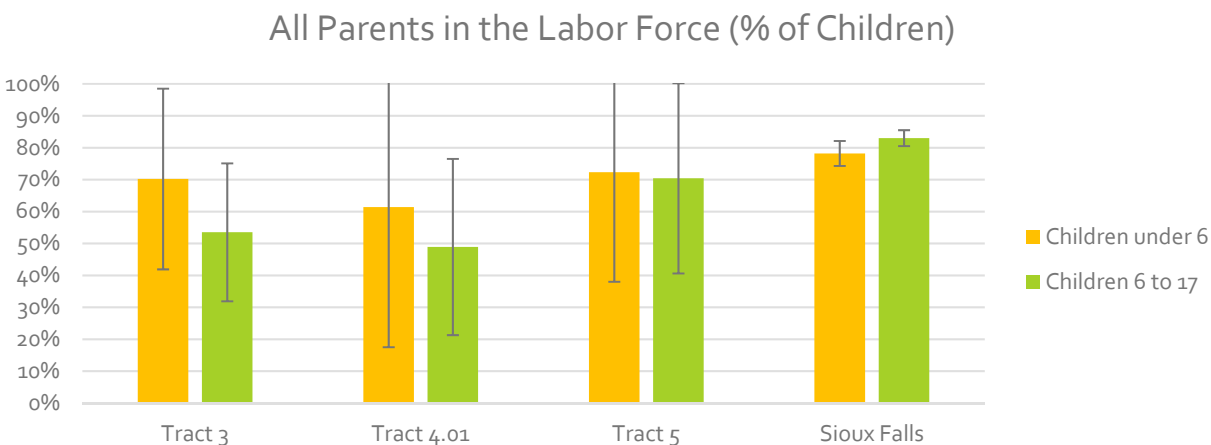
The unemployment rate is similarly low across geographic areas, around 2 to 3%. These figures should be interpreted with caution given the relatively large margin of error.



Source: 2020 American Community Survey 5-year Estimates, Table DP03

Figure 7. Unemployment Rate among People Age 16 or Older

Figure 8, below, shows the percentage of children in each area who have all of their parents in the labor force, either working or looking for work. Similar to families throughout Sioux Falls, in the neighborhoods around Terry Redlin the majority of children have all of their parents in the labor force. However, school-age children in Tracts 3 and 4.01 are somewhat less likely to have all their parents in the labor force: about half of school-age children in these tracts have all parents working or seeking work, compared to about three-quarters of parents in Tract 5 and in Sioux Falls in general.

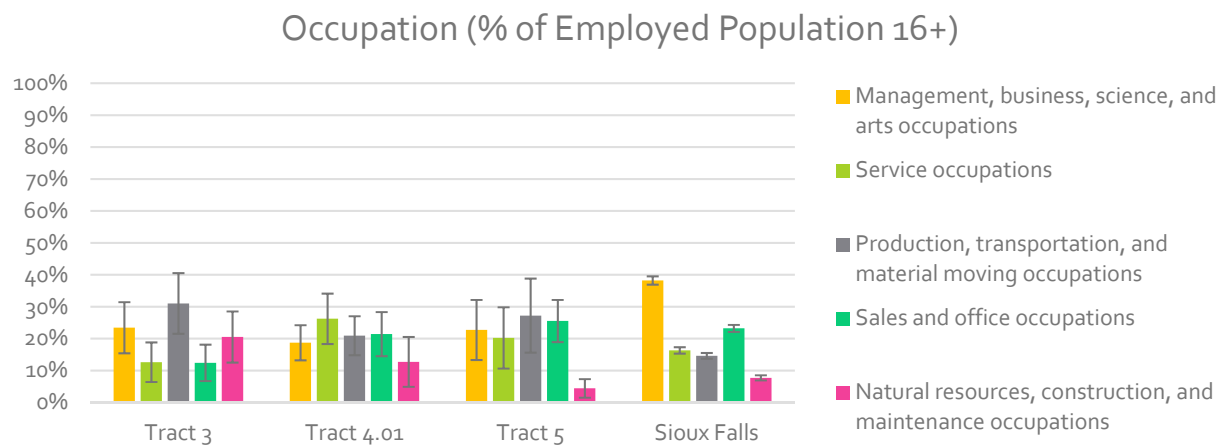


Source: 2020 American Community Survey 5-year Estimates, Table DP03

Figure 8. All Parents in the Labor Force (% of Children)

The occupational profile of the Terry Redlin area also differs from the city as a whole. Citywide, around 38% of employees work in management, business, science, or arts occupations. These occupations are less common in the Terry Redlin area, where workers are more likely to be employed in service or

production, transportation, and material moving occupations. Workers in these neighborhoods—especially Tract 3—are also more likely than others in the city to work in natural resources, construction, or maintenance occupations.



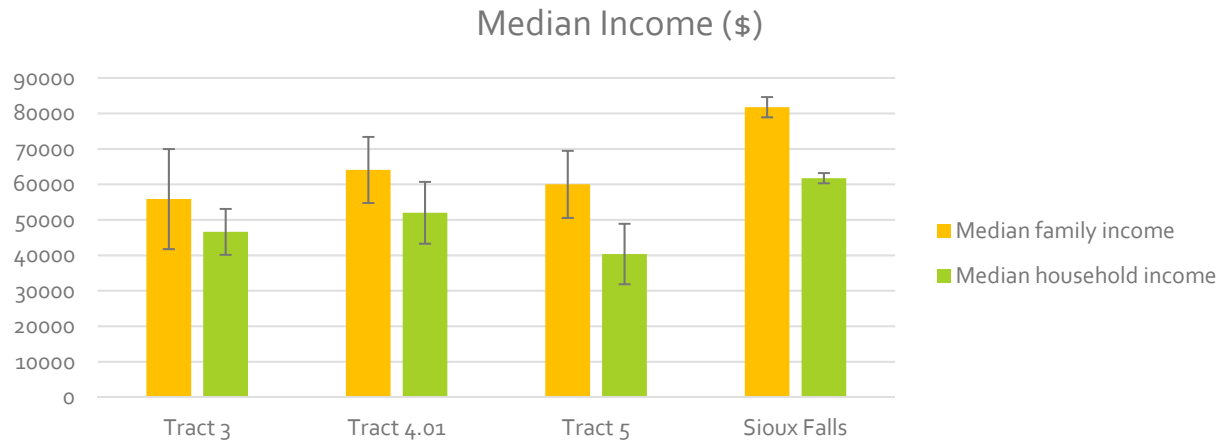
Source: 2020 American Community Survey 5-year Estimates, Table DP03

Figure 9. Occupation (% of Employed Population Age 16 or Over)

D. Income

In the neighborhoods around Terry Redlin, typical incomes are lower than the rest of the city. Whereas the median income for a family in Sioux Falls is \$81,770, the median family income in the neighborhoods around Terry Redlin is about 25% lower, estimated at between \$55,845 (Tract 3) and \$64,067 (Tract 4.01).

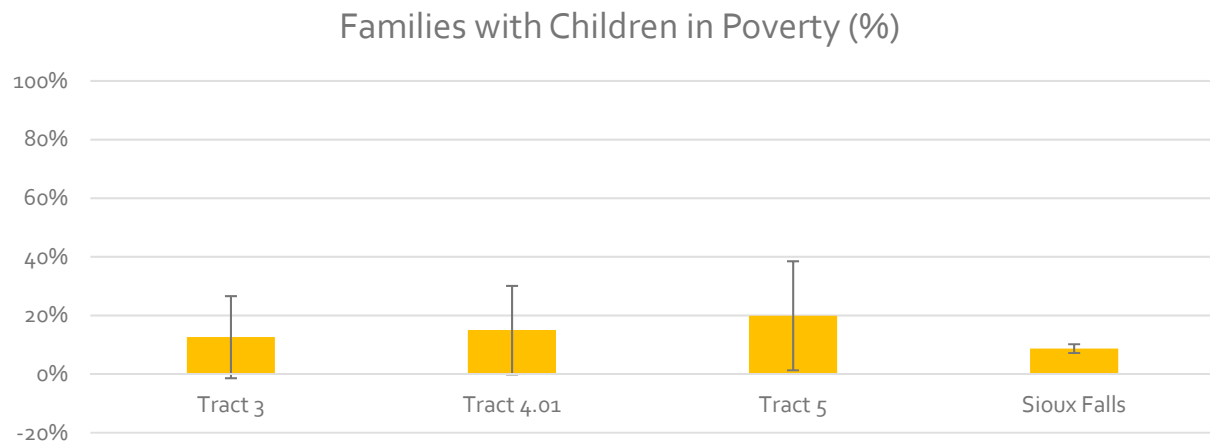
Median household income tends to be lower than median family income because household income takes into account non-family households, including people who live alone. Median family income is measured only among families (two or more related people living together). Income includes earnings as well as Social Security and other retirement income, Supplemental Security Income, and cash public assistance.



Source: 2020 American Community Survey 5-year Estimates, Table S1901

Figure 10. Median Family and Household Income (2020 dollars)

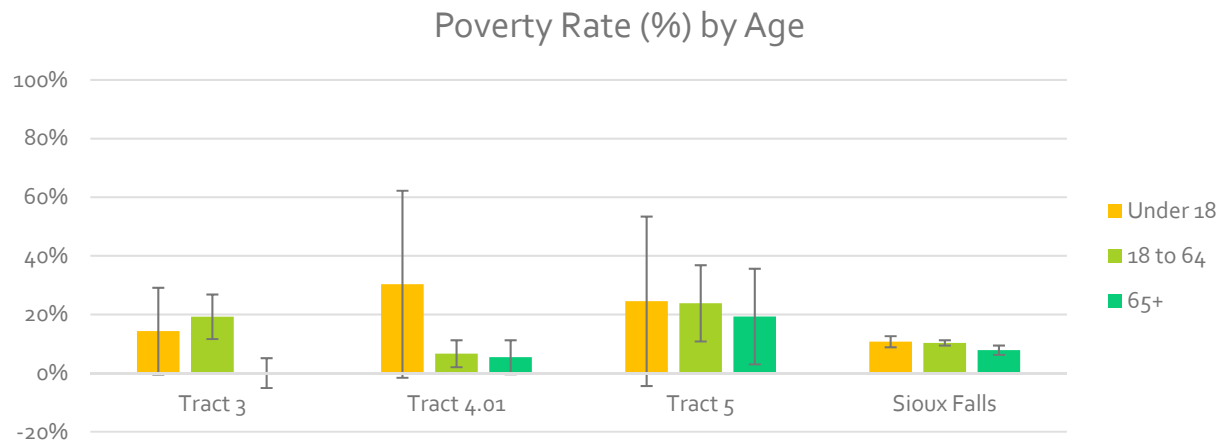
Citywide, an estimated 9% of families with children have incomes below the poverty level. By comparison, in the neighborhoods around Terry Redlin, the poverty rate for families with children ranges from an estimated 13% in Tract 3 to 20% in Tract 5. These tract-level estimate should be interpreted with caution given the small sample size and wide margin of error.



Source: 2020 American Community Survey 5-year Estimates, Table DP03

Figure 11. Families with Children under 18 below the Poverty Level (%)

Poverty rate tends to be higher among children and lower among adults, and this is true across the city. When comparing the neighborhoods around Terry Redlin to the city as a whole, the poverty rate among children is striking: whereas citywide, about 11% of children are in poverty, in the areas around Terry Redlin the rate varies from an estimated 14% (Tract 3) to 30% (Tract 4.01).



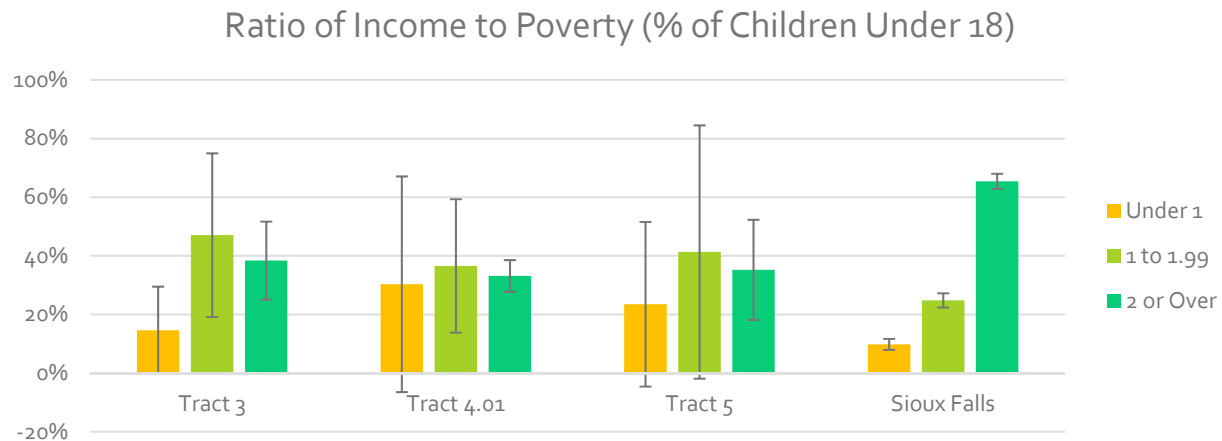
Source: 2020 American Community Survey 5-year Estimates, Table DP03

Figure 12. Poverty Rate by Age (% of Population)

One reason the poverty rate is higher among young people is that poverty status depends on family size, and the poverty threshold for larger families is set at a higher income than for smaller families such as couples or single adults. Additionally, although most families in Sioux Falls have all parents in the labor force, families with children may choose to have one parent stay home, work part-time, or take a job with lower pay but more flexible hours, all of which could reduce the family's income.

Compared to the actual expenses of supporting a family, the poverty threshold is set very low; in other words, the poverty rate is a strict measure of economic hardship. In fact, many assistance programs set eligibility levels well above the poverty level. For instance, the National School Lunch Program sets eligibility for free or reduced-price lunch at 185% of the poverty threshold.

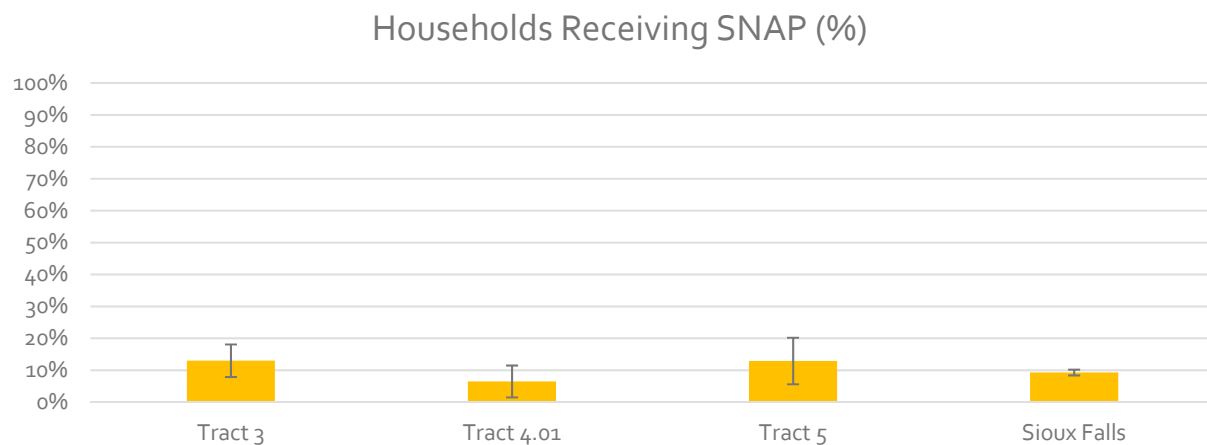
As Figure 13 shows, in the neighborhoods around Terry Redlin, a significant proportion—about two-thirds—of children live in families with incomes below 200% of the poverty threshold. In these neighborhoods, only about one-third of children live in families with incomes at twice the poverty level or higher. These proportions are roughly the reverse of those seen citywide, where about one-third of children are in families with incomes below 200% of poverty, and two-thirds are in families with incomes above that level.



Source: 2020 American Community Survey 5-year Estimates, Table B05010

Figure 13. Ratio of Income to Poverty for Children under 18 (%)

Compared to the rest of the city, the areas around Terry Redlin have similar rates of households receiving SNAP. Citywide, an estimated 9% of households receive SNAP, compared to between 7% (Tract 4.01) and 13% (Tract 5) in Terry Redlin neighborhoods. Again, these estimates should be interpreted with caution given the wide margin of error.

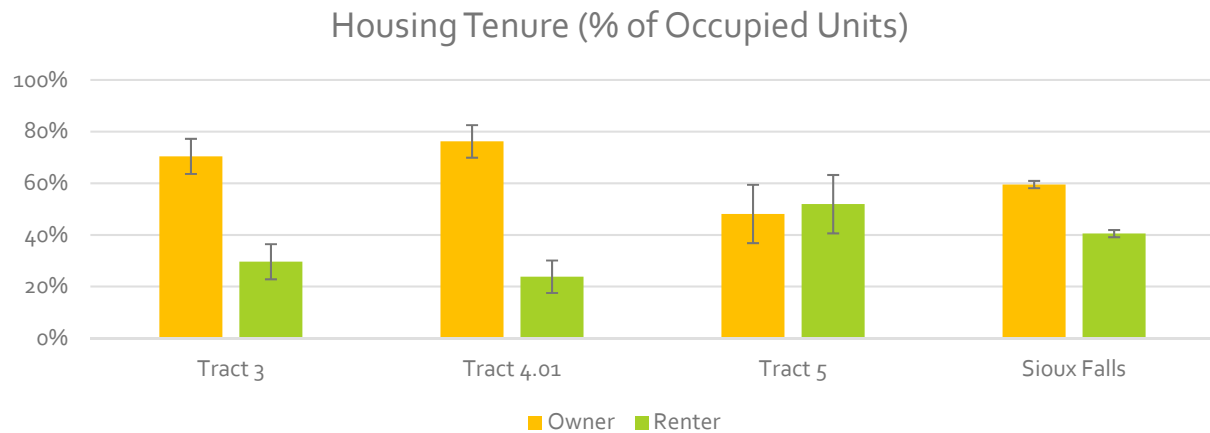


Source: 2020 American Community Survey 5-year Estimates, Table S2201

Figure 14. Households Receiving Food Stamps or SNAP (%)

E. Housing

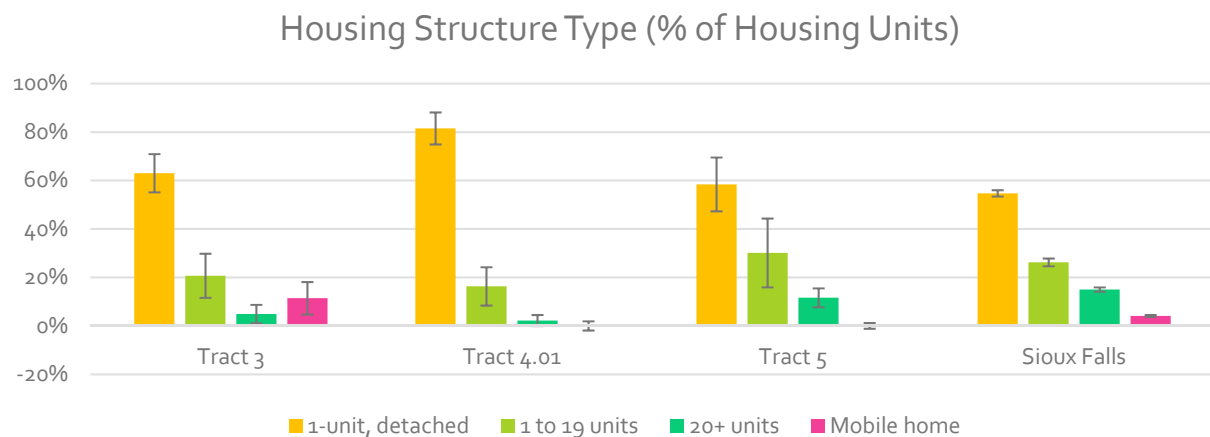
Compared to the city overall, Tracts 3 and 4.01 have a larger proportion of owner-occupied homes and fewer renters, whereas Tract 5 has more renters. Citywide, about 60% of households own their homes. In Tracts 3 and 4.01, the proportion of homeowners is closer to 70 or 75%. In Tract 5, homeowners are estimated at 48%.



Source: 2020 American Community Survey 5-year Estimates, Table DP04

Figure 15. Housing Tenure (% of Occupied Units)

Consistent with homeownership patterns, Tracts 3 and 4.01 have more 1-unit, detached single family homes compared to the city as a whole. Despite the area's higher rate of renting, the proportion of single-family homes in Tract 5 is similar to the citywide average; renters in this neighborhood may be more likely than renters in other parts of the city to live in a house rather than an apartment building. There are few mobile homes in the neighborhoods around Terry Redlin, with the exception of Tract 3.



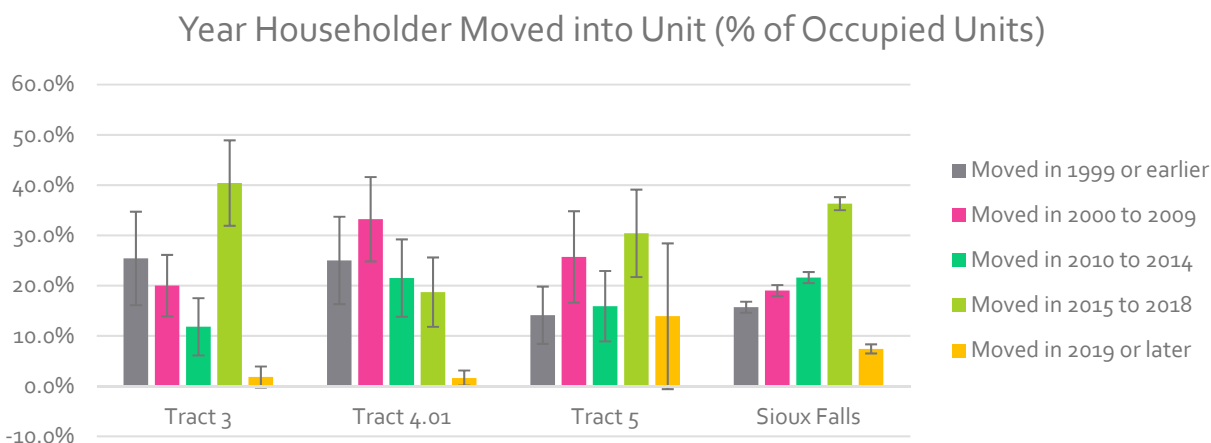
Source: 2020 American Community Survey 5-year Estimates, Table DP04

Figure 16. Housing Structure Type (% of Housing Units)

Although residential mobility may be associated with lower incomes,⁴ compared to the city as a whole, the neighborhoods around Terry Redlin appear to have similar or even higher proportions of long-term

⁴ Phinney, Robin. "Exploring residential mobility among low-income families." *Social Service Review* 87, no. 4 (2013): 780-815.

residents. Of the three Terry Redlin areas, Tract 4.01 has the highest proportion of long-term residents: an estimated 58% of residents have been in their home since at least 2009.

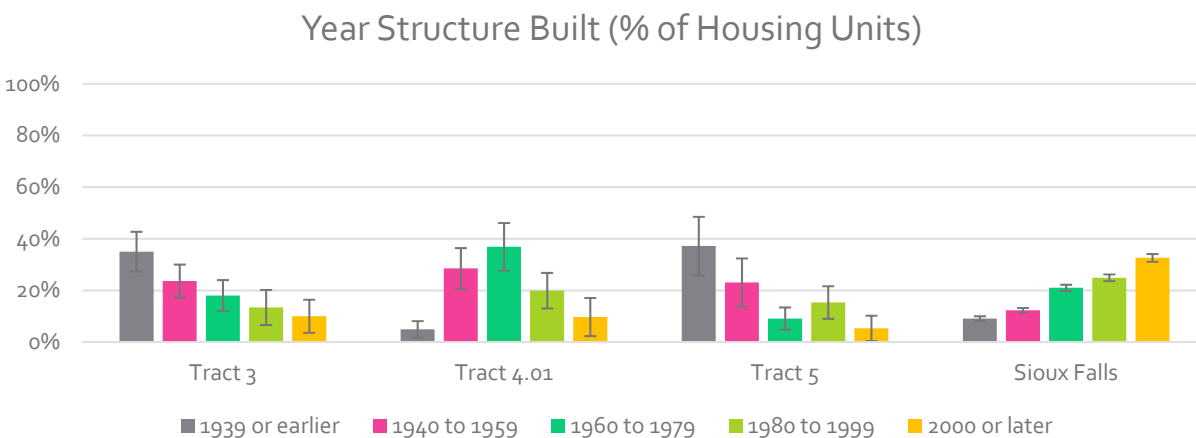


Source: 2020 American Community Survey 5-year Estimates, Table DP04

Figure 17. Year Householder Moved into Unit (% of Occupied Units)

Compared to the rest of the city, the areas around Terry Redlin are made up of older housing stock. In Tracts 3 and 5, the majority of housing units were constructed prior to 1960, and about one-third were built before 1940. The housing stock in Tract 4.01 was primarily constructed after 1940 but before 1980. In all three areas, between 70 and 75% of housing units were built before 1980.

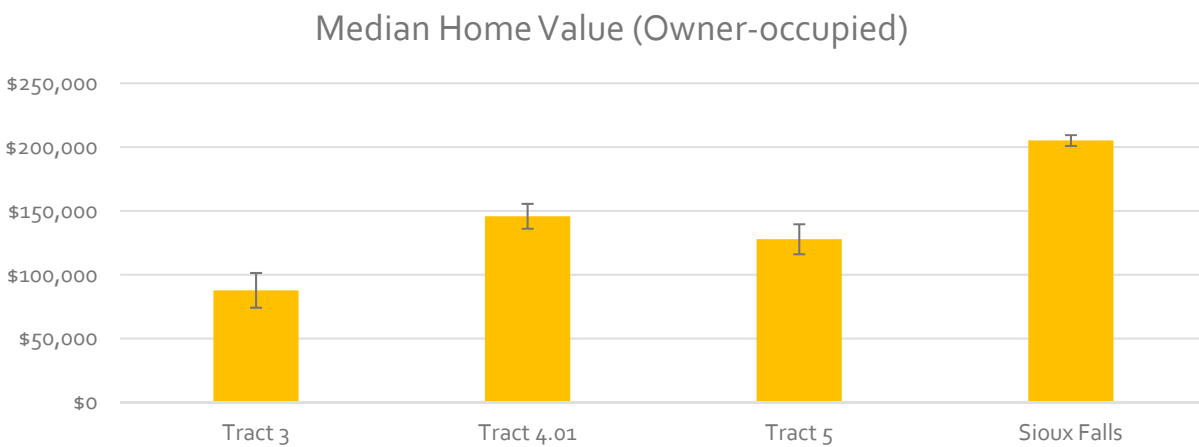
From the perspective of child wellbeing, the age of a neighborhood's housing stock is significant because older homes may pose special health and safety challenges, depending on their condition. For instance, older homes built before 1978 are more likely to contain lead-based paint.



Source: 2020 American Community Survey 5-year Estimates, Table DP04

Figure 18. Year Structure Built (% of Housing Units)

The homes around Terry Redlin have, on average, lower value than those in the rest of the city. On the one hand, this reflects the fact that they are older and smaller than homes in newer neighborhoods. On the other hand, it makes these homes more affordable for homeowners.

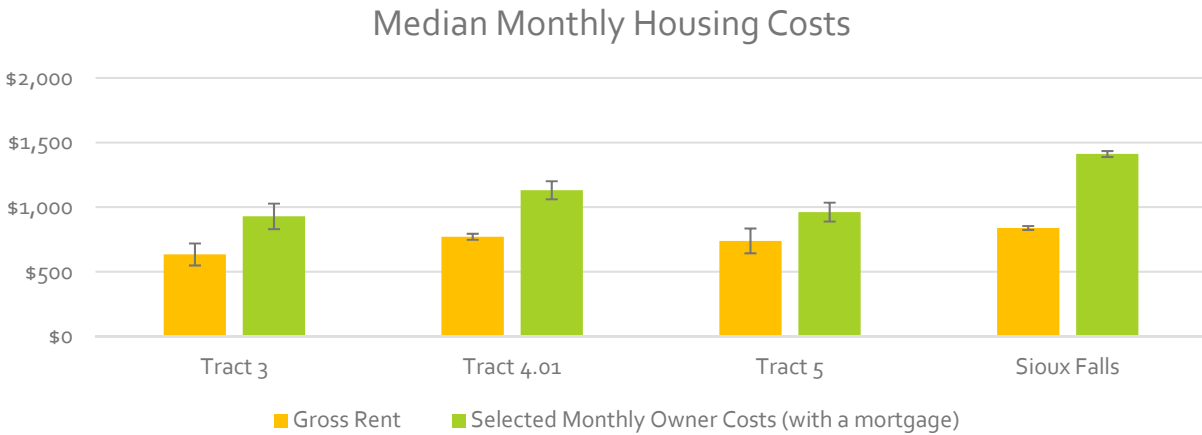


Source: 2020 American Community Survey 5-year Estimates, Table DP04

Figure 19. Median Home Value (Owner-occupied) (\$)

Even considering the lower average incomes among residents in the Kid Link Terry Redlin neighborhoods, the homes there are more affordable—especially in Tract 3, where home values are the lowest and most affordable. One way to compare affordability is to calculate the median multiple, or the median home value as a multiple of median household income. In Tract 3, the median home value is 1.88 times the median household income; in Tracts 4.01 and 5, the median multiple is 2.80 and 3.17, respectively. By comparison, the median multiple for the city of Sioux Falls as a whole is 3.32. Lower values reflect greater affordability, even considering differences in income levels.

With lower home values come lower monthly housing costs. Homeowners in the areas around Terry Redlin generally pay around \$400 or \$500 less per month than homeowners in the rest of the city, with median monthly costs of between \$928 (Tract 3) and \$1,130 (Tract 4.01). By comparison, the citywide median monthly owner costs are \$1,411.



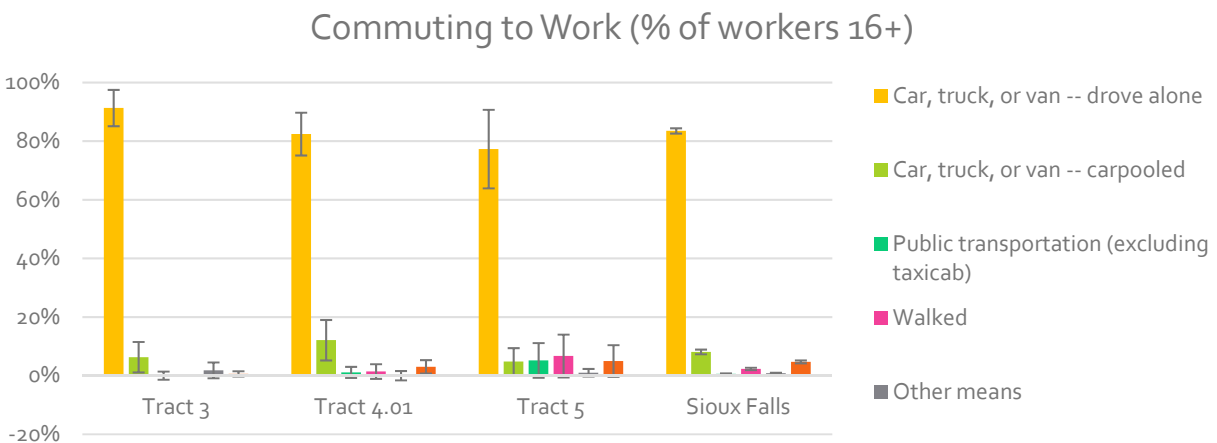
Source: 2020 American Community Survey 5-year Estimates, Table DP04

Figure 20. Median Monthly Housing Costs (\$)

Renters in the Terry Redlin areas likewise pay lower gross rent than renters in the rest of the city, although the difference only amounts to \$200 or less. Median gross rent in the Terry Redlin neighborhoods ranges from \$633 (Tract 3) to \$770 (Tract 4.01), compared to \$838 citywide.

F. Transportation

Workers in areas around Terry Redlin commute to work by similar means as other workers in Sioux Falls. Across all areas, most workers drive a car, truck, or van to work by themselves. Citywide, around 8% of workers carpool, and that proportion may be slightly higher in Tract 4.01 (estimated at 12.1%). Tract 5 may have a slightly higher proportion of workers who use public transportation or walk to work, though they still make up a very small segment of commuters.

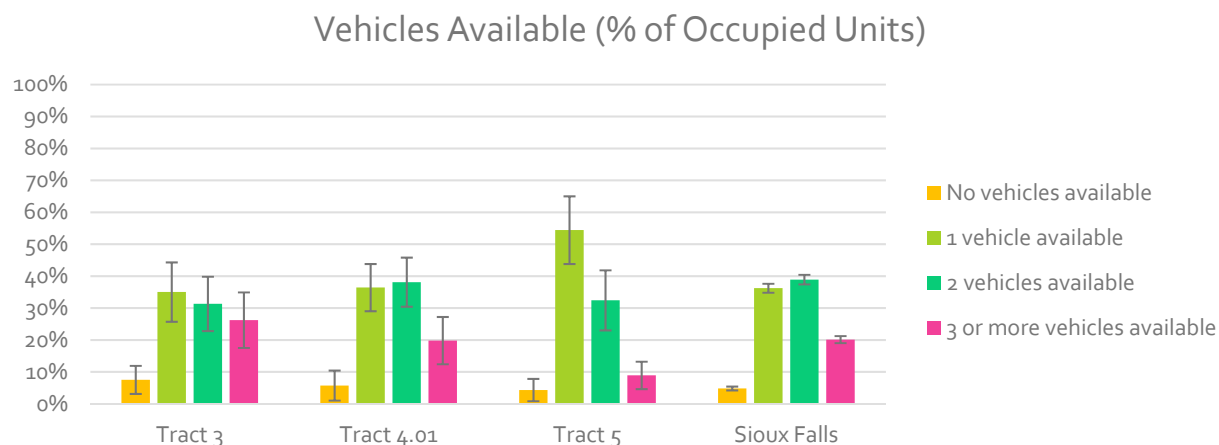


Source: 2020 American Community Survey 5-year Estimates, Table DP03

Figure 21. Means of Commuting to Work (% of Workers Age 16 or Over)

When it comes to vehicle availability, households living around Terry Redlin resemble those citywide: most have at least one vehicle available, and many households have two or three vehicles. One

exception is Tract 5, where the majority of households (54%) have only one vehicle available. Across neighborhoods, around 5% of households have no vehicle.

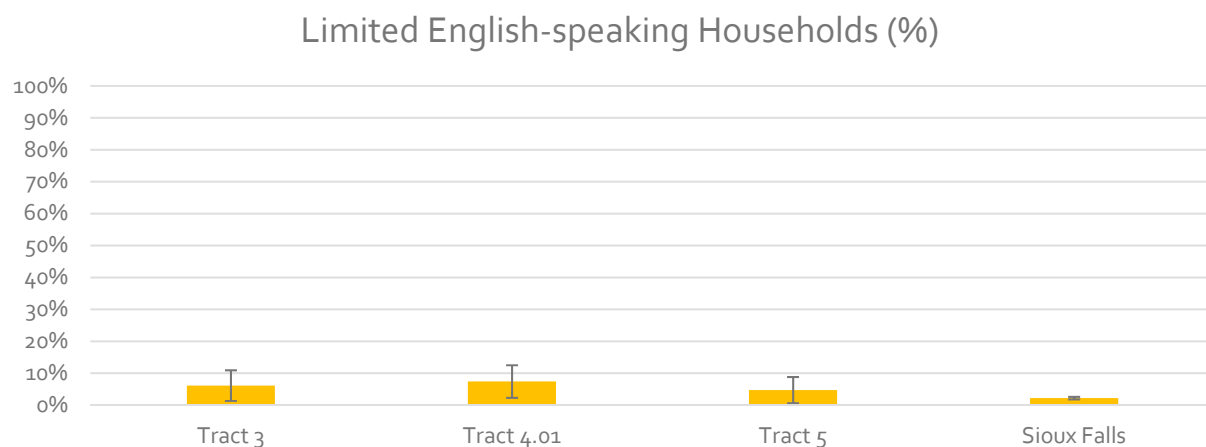


Source: 2020 American Community Survey 5-year Estimates, Table DP04

Figure 22. Vehicles Available (% of Occupied Units)

G. Communication

Compared to the rest of the city, the neighborhoods around Terry Redlin have a higher proportion of households classified as limited English-speaking, which means a household where there is no one who is at least 14 years old and speaks only English or speaks English “very well.” Across the three Terry Redlin areas, the percentage of households that are limited English-speaking ranges from 4.7% (Tract 5) to 7.4% (Tract 4.01). Citywide, an estimated 2.2% of households are limited English-speaking.

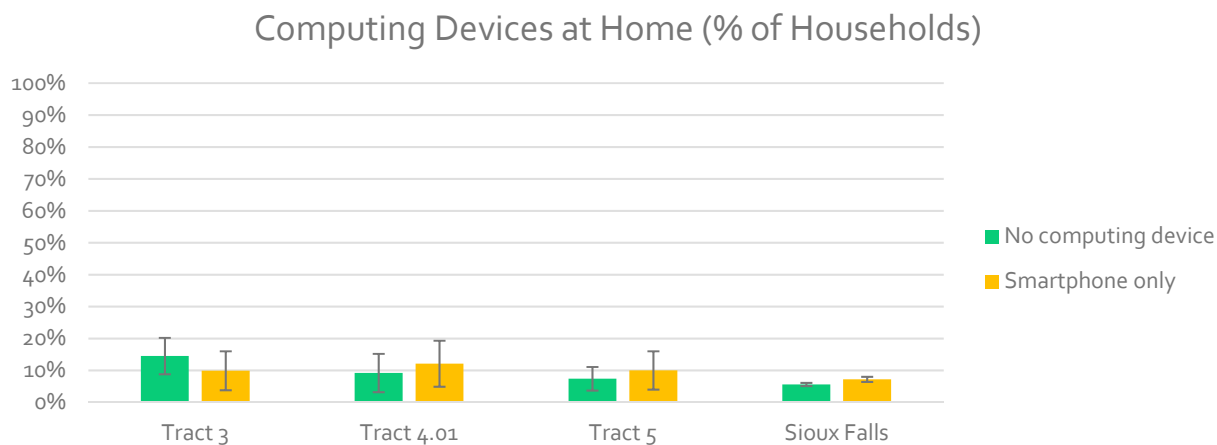


Source: 2020 American Community Survey 5-year Estimates, Table S1602

Figure 23. Limited English-speaking Households (%)

The following two figures show household access to computing devices and the internet. It should be noted that these estimates are based on surveys fielded from 2016 to 2020 and do not fully reflect recent changes in access resulting from outreach programs during the COVID-19 pandemic.

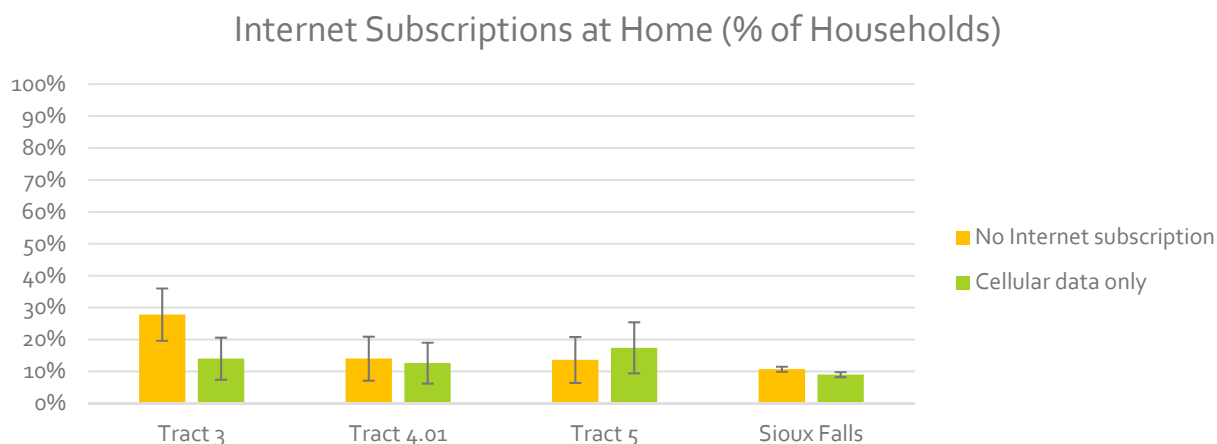
With that caveat in mind, there is an evident digital divide between the neighborhoods around Terry Redlin and the rest of Sioux Falls. In Tract 3, about 15% of households have no computing device at home, and another 10% only have a smartphone—in other words, approximately one in four families have no or limited access to computing devices at home. Somewhat smaller proportions of households in Tracts 4.01 and 5 have no computer or a smartphone only, though both areas still appear to have lower rates of computer access than the city as a whole.



Source: 2020 American Community Survey 5-year Estimates, Table 2801

Figure 24. Computing Devices at Home (% of Households)

Disparities in internet access are more marked. In Tract 3, an estimated 28% of households have no internet subscription, and another 14% have cellular data only. Internet access appears more widespread in Tracts 4.01 and 5, though still an estimated 14% of households in both areas have no internet subscription, and between 13 and 17% have cellular data only.

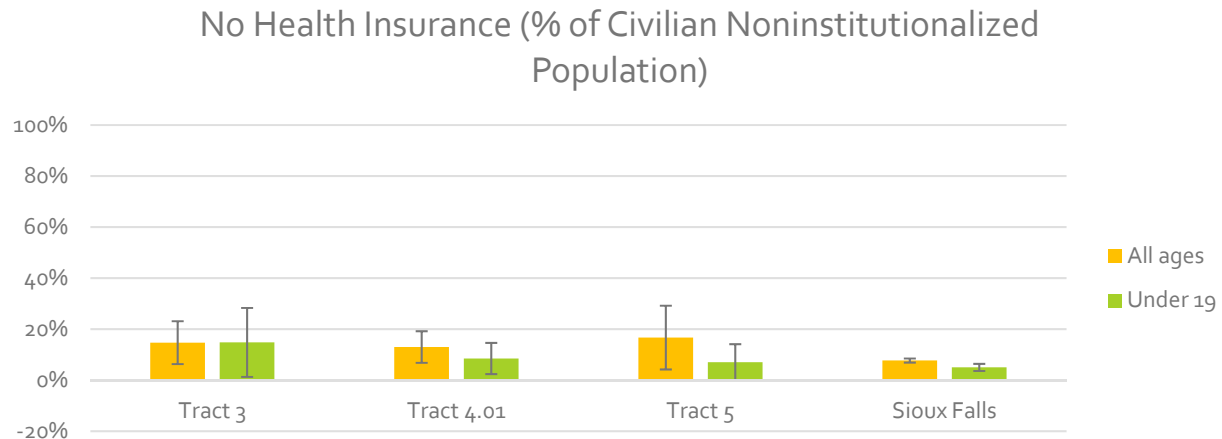


Source: 2020 American Community Survey 5-year Estimates, Table 2801

Figure 25. Internet Subscriptions at Home (% of Households)

H. Healthcare

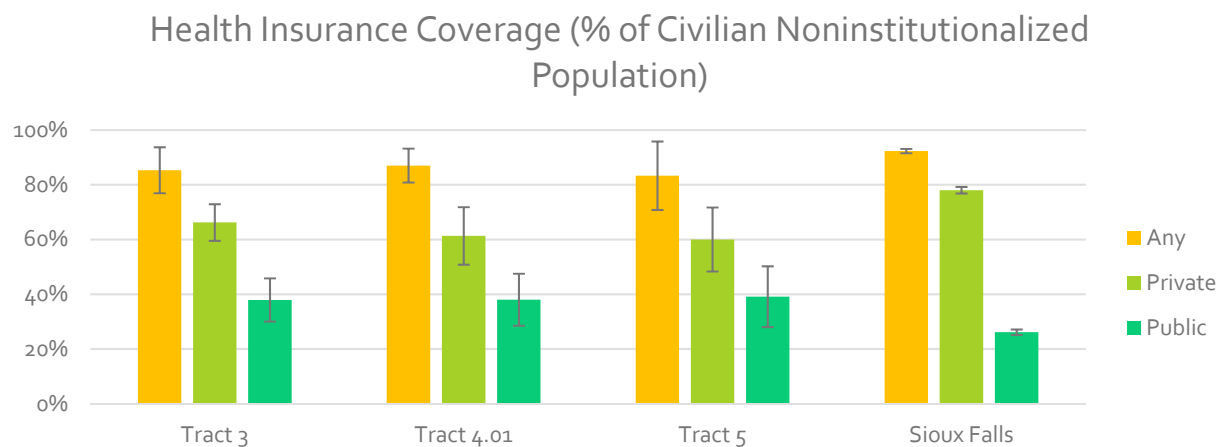
Compared to the city as a whole, people living in the neighborhoods around Terry Redlin are more likely to be uninsured: across all three Terry Redlin areas, about 15% of people lack health insurance, compared to 8% of people citywide. In most areas—with the notable exception of Tract 3—children are less likely to be uninsured. This pattern could be due to the Children’s Health Insurance Program, or CHIP, which provides coverage for eligible children. The income limits for CHIP are higher than the limits for Medicaid for adults. These estimates should be interpreted with caution given the wide margin of error.



Source: 2020 American Community Survey 5-year Estimates, Table DP03

Figure 26. No Health Insurance (% of Civilian Noninstitutionalized Population)

Across all three Terry Redlin neighborhoods, the proportion of people covered by private insurance is lower and the proportion covered by public insurance (e.g., Medicaid, CHIP) is higher than in the city as a whole. Nevertheless, it is still more common for people to be covered by private insurance than public.



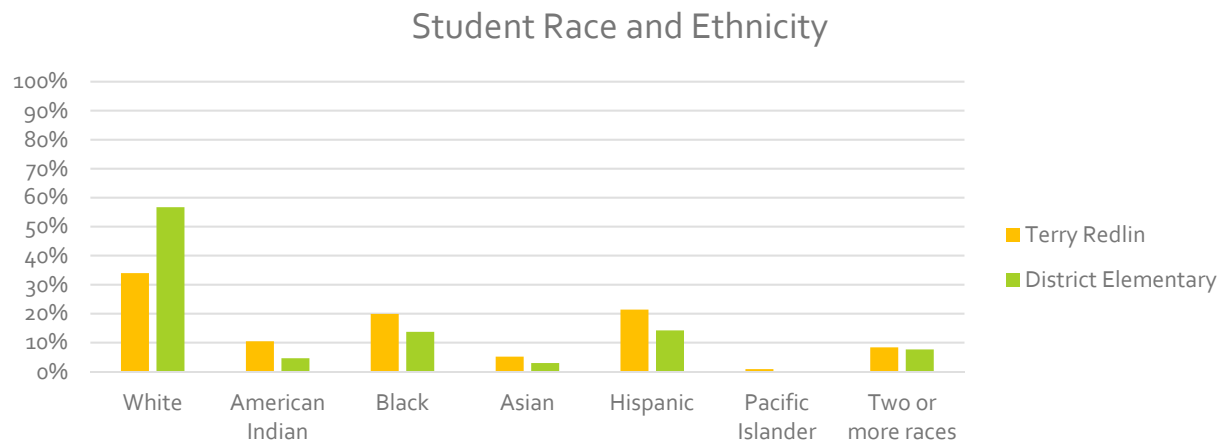
Source: 2020 American Community Survey 5-year Estimates, Table DP03

Figure 27. Health Insurance Coverage (% of Civilian Noninstitutionalized Population)

III. Terry Redlin Elementary School

This section describes the student population at Terry Redlin Elementary. Data are derived from the South Dakota Department of Education's 2021 Fall Enrollment Data.

Compared to other elementary schools in Sioux Falls, Terry Redlin has a smaller proportion of White students and relatively more students of color. The Terry Redlin student body is diverse, with about 34% of students identifying as White, 21% as Hispanic, 20% as Black, 10% as American Indian, 8% as multiracial, and 6% as Asian or Pacific Islander.



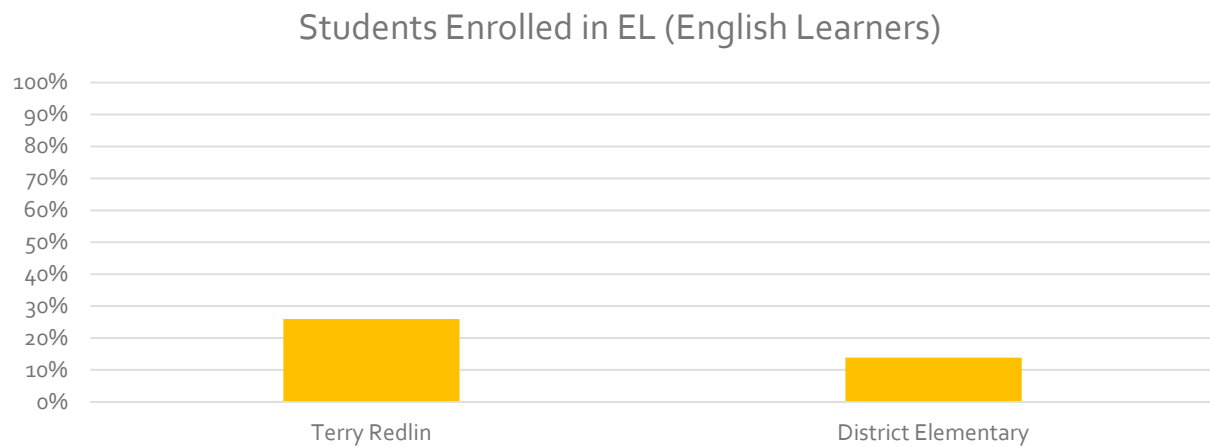
Source: South Dakota Department of Education 2021 Fall Enrollment Data
(<https://doe.sd.gov/ofm/enrollment.aspx>)

Figure 28. Student Race and Ethnicity

Terry Redlin student race and ethnicity differs from that of the general population in the attendance area, which is predominantly White. However, the racial diversity among children in the area is more similar; among children under 18 in Tract 3, about 49% are White; in Tract 4.01, the proportion is 33%, and in Tract 5, it is 58%.⁵

⁵ 2020 American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates, Table B01001

Terry Redlin is a center-based English Learner (EL) program site, and 26% of students there are enrolled in the EL program. Districtwide, 14% of elementary students are enrolled in the EL program.



Source: South Dakota Department of Education 2021 Fall Enrollment Data (<https://doe.sd.gov/ofm/enrollment.aspx>)

Figure 29. Students Enrolled in EL (English Learners)

At Terry Redlin, over 90% of students are eligible for free or reduced-price meals through the National School Lunch Program. By comparison, 44% of elementary students districtwide are eligible.⁶

⁶ South Dakota Department of Education 2021 Fall Enrollment Data (<https://doe.sd.gov/ofm/enrollment.aspx>)

IV. Community Input

A. Who We Heard From

The Augustana Research Institute (ARI) conducted in-depth interviews with community stakeholders in order to understand their perceptions of Terry Redlin area assets, needs, and preferences. Interviews also sought to learn from community stakeholders with experience in the community about what has worked—or not worked—when it comes to engaging and communicating with neighbors.

The initial list of community stakeholders to be interviewed was compiled by Thrive based on existing collaborations and partnerships. During interviews, researchers invited participants to connect them to other potential participants, and in that way, the list was expanded. Additionally, researchers visited community gatherings—including a family event hosted by an organization in the neighborhood and a festive gathering in the park—and distributed flyers through organizations in the neighborhood, inviting parents and neighbors to participate in interviews. In general terms, stakeholders were people in the following roles: parents of children who attend Terry Redlin, residents of the neighborhoods around Terry Redlin, Terry Redlin staff, community-based social workers and service providers, and volunteers with church groups or service providers. In addition to holding professional roles in the neighborhood, several stakeholders were also residents of the area.

The research team is grateful to the participants who shared their insight about the Terry Redlin neighborhood and opportunities for Kid Link. The list below gives the name and affiliation of participants who consented to share this information. In addition, six participants—including parents, neighbors, and community volunteers—elected to keep their identities confidential.

Major Marlys Anderson, Salvation Army

Hugo Barron, Sioux Empire Housing Partnership

Julie Becker, St. Francis House

Stephanie Bents, Siouxland Libraries

Alysia Boysen, Siouxland Libraries

Will Brown, King of Glory Church

Fr. Kristopher Cowles, Our Lady of Guadalupe Parish

Ryan DeGraff, Terry Redlin Elementary

Tammie Denning, Inter-Lakes Community Action Partnership

Ronald P. Dorsman, community member

Jodi Fick, Siouxland Libraries

Stacy Jones, Boys & Girls Club of the Sioux Empire

Sandra Larson, Volunteers of America, Dakotas

Tolcha Mesele, Smithfield Foods

Tricia Naasz, Terry Redlin Elementary
Megan Nagel, PA-C, Falls Community Health
Darla Nelson, Terry Redlin Elementary
Jodie Peterson, Terry Redlin Elementary
Mary Poppenga, community member
Jessica Ries, Terry Redlin Elementary
Elaine A. Roberts, community member
Caitlin Rothschadl, Boys & Girls Club of the Sioux Empire
Kassidi Smith, Boys & Girls Club of the Sioux Empire
Julie Tverberg, Terry Redlin Elementary
Greg Van Luvanee, Celebrate Church
Tutush D. Woldemariam, Southeastern Behavioral Health

Community stakeholder interviews were conducted from June 2 through July 22, 2022. A total of 32 participants were interviewed. Interviews were conducted in person, by phone, or by video conference, depending on the participant's preference. All of the interviews were transcribed and thematically coded. A summary of findings and major themes is presented below.

B. Strengths and Assets

Community stakeholders described unique strengths associated with Terry Redlin Elementary, including the school's special programs and dedicated staff, the attached Falls Community Health clinic, and various school – community partnerships. They also described the neighborhood's location and accessibility as an asset, including its proximity to nearby service organizations and parks. Finally, participants described how neighbors in the Terry Redlin area support one another, how existing or past programs have worked to build community, and the potential for local leadership to emerge.

Terry Redlin Elementary School

Participants described the strengths of Terry Redlin Elementary, including special programs, dedicated staff, and a culture of adaptability. Several noted, however, that teachers and staff are called on to do more than teach, and they would benefit from support in navigating resources for their students and families.

Terry Redlin Elementary has special programs available for students with disabilities and early childhood. School staff detailed programs available at the school to support learners. These programs include Reaching Independence through Structured Education (RISE), a program for students with moderate to significant disabilities. Terry Redlin is one of four elementary schools that are designated as RISE sites and provide intensive programming in a self-contained classroom setting. RISE students at Terry Redlin may come from outside of the school's general attendance area and are eligible for busing.

Terry Redlin is also one of 10 elementary schools in the Sioux Falls School District with an early childhood program, and some busing is offered for early childhood students. Enrollment in early childhood programs is based on financial or learning needs.

Additionally, school staff highlighted Terry Redlin's extra staff for reading intervention and pointed out that the school piloted the Systematic Instruction in Phonological Awareness, Phonics, and Sight Words (SIPPS) program. They also noted the school's Tier 2 program, which entails staff licensed in counseling or trained in Boys Town with approaches for managing school culture to promote social-emotional learning, regulation and behavior, and social skills.

Terry Redlin Elementary teachers and staff go above and beyond. In interviews, parents reported positive experiences with teachers and school staff, commending them for the support they provide students. Community partners, such as afterschool program providers, likewise reported positive interactions with the school administration; they said they found the school to be a good partner for identifying students for programs and sharing information in support of students. One provider even reported that some teachers volunteer with afterschool programs. The school's ELL liaison was lifted up by several participants as an asset for the school and neighborhood because of his ability to connect with families and his facility with multiple languages.

One person from a community partner organization described teachers as an asset and pointed out, "When you make a decision to teach at Terry Redlin, you're making a different kind of commitment than when you teach at John Harris. And so what I always found about the staff is their commitment to the kids and to their families, and [they] really try to be really good role models, model kindness and respect, and all of that."

A teacher echoed this sentiment:

"It's a great place to serve. The students need a lot of things beyond just their educational experience there, and so it's an opportunity to offer a little more of the extra kinds of things they need to support their family development and social development along with their academic development. It's a place that feels rewarding to give a little more than just what my profession requires of me."

Terry Redlin Elementary has a culture of adaptability and service. School staff described efforts of the school to adapt to and accommodate families' needs. They explained that one-size-fits-all policies do not work well at the school because "there is no typical at Terry Redlin," where parents are working different schedules and dealing with various issues. Staff believe the school has developed a strength of adapting to these challenges. As one teacher elaborated:

"We are just really used to filling gaps where there are gaps, and we are used to recognizing when situations arise that potentially would get in the way of something, whether it's open house or conference nights, or whatever it is we schedule, a family night at night. We're always aware that there are multiple schedules and multiple needs and...so we fill in a little bit more at the school. And, you know, we do that because we want our parents to have access... When we recognize there potentially might be a gap, we just fill it in advance so that parents don't have to feel like they missed out because they couldn't gain access to whatever it was."

School staff gave several examples of how this culture of adaptability plays out. For example, it might look like busing families to a family night at a nearby library branch, planning activities to occupy younger siblings during conferences assuming that families will arrive with their children, or serving meals at family events to reduce the stress on families of timing work and meals around the event.

Teachers and school staff need support. Several school staff members suggested that, because teachers and staff at Terry Redlin are called on to do more, they need extra support. For example, one teacher explained that staff at Terry Redlin can be called on to fill roles beyond their official roles—for instance, helping a family identify resources for financial help. While they often rise to the occasion, she said, it does put additional burden on staff. She wondered how teachers could be better supported in this type of work (matching students and their families to available resources). For one thing, she explained, teachers and staff are not always aware of available resources: “There’s so many things in Sioux Falls, so many supports...but how do we connect them all?” As she shared her feeling that she is not aware of many of the resources that are available, she told the story of a family facing medical bills and a language barrier; when the financial stress showed up in the classroom with her kids, teachers noticed, and they were eventually able to find help for the family’s bills. But, as she reflected, “that was not that teacher’s job...I wish we knew who could we call?... And it just can’t be us, because teachers are burning out and we see tons of needs. We can’t fix them all.”

Healthcare Access

In the Terry Redlin area, the Falls Community Health clinic at the school makes healthcare more accessible, and Project AWARE at Whittier Middle School helps families connect to mental health services.

Falls Community Health at Terry Redlin. One particular asset of the school and neighborhood, brought up by school staff, is the Falls Community Health clinic attached to the school. One school staff member explained the advantage of having accessible healthcare for students and their families: “We have a Falls Community Health Clinic attached to our school. So, when we think about providing access and equity and access to affordable health care, quality health care, that is nice.” For students, the clinic can make it possible for them to stay in school by providing services on-site. For community members, the clinic may be easier to access both financially and in terms of transportation; for neighborhood residents, it offers an alternative to traveling to the downtown Falls Community Health location.

However, school staff members acknowledged that there are opportunities to increase use of the clinic. One staff member speculated that communication challenges may be one barrier to use: “Of course, we’d love to have more families be able to take advantage of that. So that is still a barrier, whether it be communication, or just follow-through with the paperwork and all those different things.”

Among the parents and neighbors interviewed for this study, the clinic did not rise to the fore as a community asset. One parent explained that, although he was aware the clinic existed, he didn’t feel comfortable visiting it for his own healthcare needs: “It’s just, it’s weird, like, you’re supposed to use a school for school, health clinic for health clinic, you know what I mean? I don’t really cross them.”

Project AWARE at Whittier. Funded by a federal grant and operated by Southeastern Behavioral Health, Project AWARE provides basic social work for families and connects students with mental health services. The program is based at Whittier Middle School, whose attendance area overlaps Terry Redlin’s. Through Project AWARE, Southeastern staff are on-site in the school and also go into the

community to connect with and support families, including meeting in families' homes to facilitate enrollment and registration for services, providing transportation, and other services as needed to make sure students are connected to the mental health resources they need.

School – Community Partnerships

Several participants saw existing school – community partnerships as a strength that Kid Link could draw on. One participant, familiar with Kid Link Riverside, suggested, “I think this Terry Redlin group will take a little more time and organizing. Because it's a bigger group. There is the potential for a lot more partners. But there's also then a potential for a big pool of volunteers and support.”

The school has existing partnerships that provide funds, gifts, and volunteers. School staff pointed to community partnerships as a major asset. The partnerships discussed in interviews were with faith partners, including Celebrate Church and King of Glory Church. As a school staff member explained, these faith partners provide critical support for the school: partnerships have “really helped to strengthen our school because we have a PTA in name only, I mean, we really don't have one. And so when we think about ways to enrich our school with time, talent, and treasure, it really comes down to community partners, faith partners that are willing to volunteer or willing to give of money so that we can have experiences for our students.” School staff and participants affiliated with faith partners described the supports they provide. Volunteers mentor students (through the LSS mentoring program); volunteer at family events at the school; serve meals for teachers during conferences; and provide donations of winter clothing, for example.

One long-standing partnership deserves special note. For around two decades, Terry Redlin has had a relationship with nearby Wesley United Methodist Church, which has run the Kids Count afterschool program—recently, in collaboration with Volunteers of America, Dakotas (VOA). Participants explained how the church's role has changed over time: according to long-time neighborhood residents familiar with the program, the church used to be more actively involved in the neighborhood, including holding a weekly Wednesday program for families with a meal and children's programming. A former volunteer reported that the Wednesday night program would sometimes see as many as 80 children in a night. The church also kept a small food pantry. However, trouble staffing programs, recruiting volunteers, and change in church leadership led to the end of these programs. An agreement with VOA made it possible for Kids Count to continue, with VOA managing staffing and the church continuing to provide space. Participants said Kids Count maintains a strong relationship with the school, which will evolve as the program relocates from the church to the school site as part of the district's Access for All initiative.

Other faith groups are active in the neighborhood, although not necessarily in partnership with the school: participants identified Our Lady of Guadalupe, Eastside Lutheran, the Salvation Army, and the Islamic Center as faith-based organizations located in or near the Terry Redlin neighborhood and offering programs for youth and families. These organizations and their programs are described in more detail below.

Partners support soccer leagues. In interviews, participants described two recently organized soccer leagues in the Terry Redlin neighborhood:

(1) Celebrate Church and King of Glory Church have partnered to run a youth soccer league for Terry Redlin students, which meets at Meldrum Park on Saturdays. This free soccer league is open to students in grades 2 through 5 and offers spring and fall seasons. Information about the league was

sent home on flyers from the school, and last spring, according to interview participants, about 80 students registered. In support of the league, Scheels donated equipment, Dakota Alliance brought coaches, and members of the Sioux Falls Police Department showed up to play. Church partners helped prepare and serve meals for families. According to community stakeholders who have volunteered with this soccer league, the intent of the program is to build community.

(2) A second soccer club, the Rising Stars, was started by Moses Idris about four years ago. The team, made up predominantly of Kunama youth from Eritrea, attracts older students from the Terry Redlin neighborhood, according to one parent who was interviewed. The team usually practices at fields near Washington High School, and Idris transports players who do not have their own transportation.

According to one service provider, soccer can be a special asset for outreach, because the teams often network communities and can facilitate the distribution of information. He explained:

“There may be a soccer team leader that’s in the community, whether it’s from [a] Hispanic background or other ethnic groups, those are leaders that have gained the trust of those parents, so reaching out to them and see[ing] how during their events we could provide informational booths or pamphlets or things like that.”

Location and Accessibility

Community stakeholders saw the neighborhood’s location and accessibility as an asset. The Terry Redlin area is near downtown, a short distance from employment centers on the north side of the city, and has within it a number of businesses and food retailers.

Small businesses could be an asset for sharing information and supporting programs. One stakeholder who is familiar with both Kid Link Riverside and the Terry Redlin area compared the two neighborhoods. She pointed out that the Terry Redlin neighborhood has many more community assets within walking distance, and noted that she sees more people walking with groceries, or able to get where they need to go. Another service provider highlighted the economic opportunities available because of the neighborhood’s location: “There’s the grocery store, there’s businesses, there’s places of employment. So, it’s not kind of out in the outskirts where none of that—the bus system is there. I think that’s a huge strength as well.”

For Kid Link, small, locally owned businesses in the neighborhood could be a significant asset in terms of information sharing and resources. One service provider explained that some small businesses have been in the neighborhood for a long time and might have perspective on neighborhood challenges and opportunities as well as a stake in collaboration on neighborhood initiatives:

“I think even just some of the smaller businesses over there too that have been there forever and ever. You know, I think of, like, Vantek Communications. I think a lot of times you don’t think of some of those places, but those people, or those businesses, that have been there for years—Dick’s Vacuums, you know, they’ve been there forever. I think they can provide some valuable input about what goes on in that area, because they’re always there. They’re always seeing people.”

Another service provider agreed:

"If you go down 10th Street, you see a lot of different family-owned businesses or whatever. And I think they would be involved if they were asked or, you know, to donate something. I think the businesses in this area would be heavily involved as well."

However, one stakeholder cautioned that when he volunteers in the neighborhood, he sees more volunteers coming into the neighborhood from larger businesses located outside of the neighborhood—so while there is opportunity to engage local businesses, participants interviewed for this report were not aware that these businesses were already engaged.

Compared to Riverside, the Terry Redlin neighborhood has better geographic access to food.

Because of Kid Link's roots in addressing inequitable food access, the interview protocol asked about food access. Participants shared that the Terry Redlin area has good access to grocery stores and programs such as the Banquet and food giveaways, but they also shared their belief that many families in the neighborhood are struggling to get the food they need—especially with recent price increases.

One school staff member summed it up like this:

"I would say the difference between us and LBA is that we probably have more food options, because they're probably more of like a food desert up there. So, we would have obviously Hy-Vee, but you'd have to cross the interstate, which isn't the end of the world, but it's still [challenging]. Lewis [Drug], I'm sure, is used quite often. I mean, the unfortunate thing is, I think convenience stores are used more often."

In addition to having the Banquet nearby, the Salvation Army has weekend meals and a food pantry, and several neighborhood churches maintain small pantries. Participants also mentioned food access through the school—including summer meals, breakfast in the classroom, and the backpack program. Food security challenges that remain in spite of these resources are described later in this report.

Nearby Service Organizations

In addition to being near large employers, small businesses, and grocery stores, the Terry Redlin neighborhood is also home to—or near—a vast array of service organizations. A stakeholder familiar with both Riverside and the Terry Redlin area made this comparison:

"I just can't help but compare it to Riverside. Riverside has just the one church and then the school and then the housing. This one has so much. It has, you know, Our Lady of Guadalupe, it has that Wesleyan Methodist I think. And then, of course, all the social service agencies nearby. I think that we could count on maybe more neighborhood support because of that too."

Of nearby service organizations, the Empower Campus was most frequently named: located on 8th Street, the Empower Campus is home to several tenant organizations, all Christian outreach ministries that provide services such as childcare, healthcare, transportation assistance, bike repair, financial counseling and assistance, and mentoring. As one service provider explained, "the Empower Campus, where we have several nonprofits connected together, has really made our community flourish."

Other frequently mentioned service organizations were St. Francis House as well as downtown shelters (Bishop Dudley Hospitality House and the Union Gospel Mission).

Several stakeholders pointed out that the Banquet is nearby—a short drive or manageable walk for many families. The Banquet serves a free breakfast and supper every weekday and lunch on Saturdays.

The Salvation Army was not widely mentioned by community stakeholders, but a couple did identify it as a neighborhood asset. The Salvation Army provides a monthly family fun night with activities and a meal, a six-week summer day camp program that is free or very low cost, feeding programs on weekends (Saturday night, Sunday morning, Sunday night), food pantry and care box delivery, and assistance with rent and utilities. They have done outreach in the Terry Redlin neighborhood, including delivering care boxes to the Whittier Apartments.

Other nearby service organizations and potential partners for Kid Link that were named in interviews include the following:

- Islamic Center
- Caminando Juntos
- The Presentation Sisters
- Call to Freedom
- Boys & Girls Club
- Multi-Cultural Center
- Lutheran Social Services (LSS)
- St. Vincent de Paul thrift store

Parks

Terry Redlin Elementary is located very near Meldrum Park. In interviews, most people who live in the neighborhood described the park as an asset—they saw it as a nice gathering place that is generally safe. However, some service providers, school staff, and long-time residents expressed concerns about safety, which are described in more detail later in this report.

For neighborhood residents, the park is a center of activity: the youth soccer league described above meets there weekly, and the Islamic Center hosts afternoon gatherings at Meldrum Park the first Saturday of every month. One faith leader, who also lived in the neighborhood for a time, described Meldrum Park as a welcoming gathering space: “I know with Meldrum park, and I know other areas, a lot of people feel very welcome going down to those locations and spending time.” One participant, who grew up in the neighborhood, recalled, “I used to come here and play basketball. It's pretty nice. You know, there's a lot of friends come over here and we just play basketball or hang out... I love it here.”

One school staff member described the park as a significant asset for families because it offers an opportunity for no-cost recreation:

“I think having a park nearby that I think the kids go to, they talk about hanging out there. As far as when I drive by, or when I've walked by before, it seems like a cleaned up nice park, safe park with lots of activities to do. I think that just provides, you know, for families that are struggling, and maybe aren't doing the things that cost money to entertain, but still having family time together, building memories together, a close by park is great.”

Another service provider agreed that the park is a significant neighborhood asset that is well used and appreciated by families and children:

"I see a lot of kids playing at Meldrum Park. And I know it used to have a reputation of not being the safest place in the neighborhood. But they've got a nice playground over there. They have the shelter. I actually saw yesterday Parks and Rec had a sign up that they were doing something in the afternoon so there's that [program] maybe once or twice a week."

School staff and service providers who live outside the Terry Redlin area acknowledged that they spend less time in the neighborhood and have less experience beyond where they work. Many still highlighted the park as an asset, but some expressed concerns about safety. One long-time resident of the neighborhood recalled efforts by neighborhood leaders and the Sioux Falls Police Department to trim trees and improve lighting at Meldrum Park, which he said made the park safer.

In addition to Meldrum Park, participants pointed to Nelson Park, which is home to both Drake Springs (the swimming pool and aquatic center) and a skate park. The Drake Springs pool, many reported, is a particular draw, and discounted pool passes can make it more accessible for lower income families. It is within walking distance of the Terry Redlin neighborhood, although for many residents, walking there does require crossing 10th Street and/or Cliff Avenue.

Mutual Aid and Community Building

Many participants talked about neighbors' support for one another, or mutual aid, as a strength of the Terry Redlin area. For example, one parent who lives in the neighborhood described how he sees cooperation among families as the biggest asset for the area: "The best thing is, you know, they cooperate, they help each other whenever they need. Like, they wanted to move a house to a different area. They asked, and then we helped them. We like to help each other."

A school staff member likewise identified mutual aid among extended families and neighbors as a strength: "They do look out for each other...they really reach out and connect. You know, what we see of grandparents or cousins close by that they can kind of help raise those children together, you know, and just understanding kind of the unique challenges. So I think that is something that's really good."

A staff member from the school shared that she hears from families in the neighborhood who are watching out for students' safety, and a third staff member said she often witnesses connections and community among families who come together at the school: "Our families walk their kids to school in the morning, and a lot of them will stay on the playground and, you know, visit with other parents before school starts, so you see sort of that community engagement between families... We have a lot of families who, you know, they know who lives next door to them, who's coming and going, they have that, like, I know my next-door neighbors kind of a feel, and kids know that." She went on to explain how these connections help families meet their needs—for example, a neighbor might help with transportation before or after school. But she also cautioned that, while mutual aid is powerful, it may not be sufficient to meet neighborhood needs:

"I think that our families watch out for each other as much as you can trust that, but that's not a consistent option, you know. But we see our kids wait at the playground alone at the end of the day. And so a community network of people watching each other's children is not a reliable source of safety. It's not consistent."

Other community stakeholders corroborated these parent and school staff assessments. For example, a childcare provider said she sees connections among families in the neighborhood, reinforced through connections at work or through family relations: “A lot of people know each other. Just the parents that I’ve seen, like when we have family events, they work at the same places, or they know each other because of family.”

Existing programs and partnerships in the neighborhood are also dedicated to building a sense of community. Several faith leaders active in the community explained that they see their role as helping to foster community and build connections among families and neighbors. As one put it, “Their kids probably know each other, but the parents don’t necessarily, which is kind of the common case for a lot of people, I think, but that’s a big push at Terry Redlin Elementary anyways, to develop a little more community within the school, among families and stuff. So, we try to support that.”

Local Leadership

A few community stakeholders, both school staff and neighborhood volunteers, suggested there is strong potential to develop local leadership for Kid Link in the Terry Redlin neighborhood. A stakeholder familiar with both Kid Link Riverside and the Terry Redlin area reflected on the importance of local leadership, which she saw as critical to Kid Link Riverside’s success; she also affirmed that she believes local leadership will emerge for Kid Link Terry Redlin. A school staff member pointed to a legacy of local leadership in the neighborhood through the Whittier neighborhood association, though it has waned in recent years: “For quite some time, I believe the Whittier neighborhood association was a really strong group. I don’t know if that’s around much anymore. But there’s definitely a history of coming together, helping to solve problems. I just don’t know if there’s any formal structure at this point.”

C. Challenges and Opportunities

The most common challenges and opportunities described by participants centered around safety (96% of interviews), out-of-school-time activities (89%), transportation (82%), food insecurity (79%), and childcare (43%). Additionally, participants described challenges related to economic need in general (including housing insecurity and homelessness, access to laundry and hygiene supplies, winter clothes, and healthcare needs), the complexity of families experiencing multiple overlapping needs, and the logic of necessity that families follow when their choices are constrained by limited resources. Finally, participants identified a potential opportunity for Kid Link to explore adult education, especially around digital equity, and a potential challenge for Kid Link in recruiting volunteers.

Overall, the challenges and opportunities described for the Terry Redlin neighborhood were rooted in tensions between the neighborhood’s access to resources and level of need. School staff, for example, described the school’s location as a sort of blessing and a curse: families in the attendance area have access to myriad services through nearby service providers. But those same services draw people into the neighborhood, resulting in more foot traffic, including adults who may sometimes be under the influence—and this dynamic raises safety concerns.

Safety

By and large, participants agreed that the Terry Redlin area is perceived as unsafe. One service provider was very blunt:

"I would say the biggest needs and wants are probably safety concerns. Whether that's just safety in their own home, windows, doors, locks, or safety with the people their parents associate with, or just safety of the general community right here. It's not the safest neighborhood... There's shootings. I mean, this is like a neighborhood where there are shootings and there's a school right here. So that is probably the biggest need."

However, not all participants agreed the neighborhood is dangerous; their interpretations and validations of that perception varied, falling into a few themes, profiled here.

Traffic to service organizations or shelters raises safety concerns, though there is disagreement over the level of danger for children. Many community stakeholders, particularly school staff and service providers, saw safety as the top concern for the Terry Redlin neighborhood. They attributed a significant portion of safety concerns to a high level of traffic through the neighborhood of people seeking services from nearby providers. For example, one school staff member pointed out:

"This corridor is a very busy corridor, when it comes to all those services, and especially now that this big place [the Empower Campus] has opened up in terms of, absolutely, people are going to walk by because they're going to get resources. Not all the time, but we do see individuals that are under the influence of something. So that just creates that higher level of concern as you have kids playing on the playground and you just wonder how much our students experience that on a daily basis."

A service provider shared a similar perception, and added that nearby government assistance offices and shelters add to the traffic:

"With the Bishop Dudley being kind of down in that area, you see a lot more of the population. DSS [the South Dakota Department of Social Services] is down there. A lot more of the homeless population kind of congregates around that area... A lot of the people are intoxicated or are using substances, which I know creates a safety concern as well, for kiddos in that area especially."

Another service provider elaborated that unaddressed substance abuse and mental health issues among the unhoused people in the neighborhood have been increasing over time, which could pose safety problems:

"I've been doing this [social service work] for a long time. And I would have no problem walking up to someone that was maybe sitting on a neighbor's steps and say, okay, come on, let's move on. They don't want you there. Let's get going. [But] I don't know if I would approach this group that we have now. They're rougher. They are—a lot of mental health, a lot of public intoxication. And I worry about kids walking home from school."

Other service providers who work in the neighborhood reported witnessing drug exchanges or coming across discarded drug paraphernalia on their property (though, according to one service provider, the

development of the Empower Campus and Children's Inn seems to have reduced or displaced activity in the vicinity of the campus).

Several community stakeholders—service providers and former residents of the neighborhood—said they were aware of families who avoid the parks in the neighborhood because of safety concerns. For example, one service provider talked about the Drake Springs pool:

"We have the wonderful pool down here...[but] I know that it is very troublesome for a lot of the parents that are bringing their kids to the pool that the number of people who are laying in the parks, so it's not necessarily a safe place for kids... I think that we need to take another step so those kids feel that they have a pool to go to. Otherwise what's happening is they're going to the other locations."

However, some participants, including current and former neighborhood residents, said they see the neighborhood as safe, especially for children. One former resident explained that, in his view, the perception of danger is exaggerated:

"It's a relatively safe neighborhood. I didn't notice any major difficulties, at least for the safety of the kids. There are a large, decent amount, as we already know, of homeless who are in that area, or who make their way up to that area... So, there is some aspects that people would look at and say, it's not as safe as other neighborhoods just because the people who are wandering through the neighborhood on a regular basis. And I think there's a kind of fear that they're going to do something to the kids or something's going to happen with them. I haven't had that particular fear... I never saw them, typically, just approach youth or kids. If there was adults, they'd approach them, especially seeking money, but not typically children... But I would say part of it depends on how acclimated you are to that kind of community of people."

A youth leader who lives outside the neighborhood but spends significant time there shared a similar sentiment. He explained his view this way:

"One thing about this area, it's pretty safe even though it's close to the—and I'm not trying to be prejudiced, but it's close to the homeless thing. Once you go down Sixth Street, you'll see the homeless... But as far as the neighborhood, it's pretty safe. The kids feel safe... We really like this park. It's really nice."

Parks are safe when adult supervision is available, but unsupervised play is common and unsafe.

Although parks were lauded as one of the neighborhood's greatest strengths, many participants also identified parks as potential dangers—especially when children were there alone, without adult supervision. Ultimately, one school staff member summed it up like this: "It depends on if there's adults and responsible adults there. There's positive experiences anywhere as long as there's safety and supervision."

Leaders Park, Heritage Park, Whittier Park, and even Meldrum Park were perceived as at times unsafe due to unhoused people frequenting the area. One former resident who maintains ties to the neighborhood reported that families sometimes choose to avoid the parks (if they have the means and transportation):

"The parks, sometimes families are scared to take their kids to those parks. Yeah, because especially in the morning, you'll see 6, 7, 8 people asleep, maybe a couple of bottles there. So, it's not as welcoming as some of these other parks, more family-friendly... A lot of people will avoid them. Even if they live here, they'll drive out of the way because they feel safer in those parks."

Safety depends on who people associate with. Asked to elaborate on their safety concerns at the parks, community stakeholders typically explained that their primary concern is that young, unsupervised children may fall in with older children or young adults who introduce them to drugs or other risky behaviors. As one neighborhood resident put it, "A lot of times a lot of the older kids are there. And I think that—not that they're bad kids. But they want to do things that probably elementary kids shouldn't be introduced to yet." Another long-time resident expressed a similar concern, adding that unsupervised children at the park may not have a safe alternative place to be:

"We'd seen so many kids out in the park, little kids who were maybe in second grade playing with people that were out of high school. And we were concerned about drugs and other things going on. And we'd seen those kids out there because they couldn't go home, they had an older sibling or somebody else living in the residence that was not safe for them."

From the parent perspective, some parents said that the neighborhood was as safe as people make it. One parent suggested that safety concerns are exaggerated, saying, "Some days you run into a lot of hostile situations, but for the most part, I think people are getting a misconception of the east side being like, a not so good place to raise your children. It's just, you have those days." Another added that safety depends on who people choose to associate with, regardless of where someone lives: "It's a nice place to live. It's just who you associate yourself with. I mean, anywhere in Sioux Falls, it's who you associate yourself with."

Violence at home causes trauma for some students. While most interviews focused on safety concerns in public spaces such as parks and streets, some community stakeholders raised worries about violence in students' homes. Several school staff and service providers pointed out that violence that occurs at home may not be visible in the streets or around the school, but the trauma affects children and the classroom.

School staff members said they hear reports from children of unsafe conditions at home, including drug use in apartment complexes and shootings. One school staff member said that the intensity of violence in the neighborhood elevates trauma and concerns:

"But it's gun violence. Those types of things that you go, Okay, now that really raises the stakes when you have kids that go, Yeah, my apartment got shot up, and now they're coming to school with all that trauma, but just all that to understand for your staff and your students."

For school staff, dangers outside of school are especially concerning because they feel powerless to protect students. One school staff member reflected on this struggle:

"Sometimes kids are walking home that shouldn't be walking home, crossing streets they shouldn't be crossing, and by themselves, and so I guess that's one of the big things that I feel like we can't really do anything about. We can feed them breakfast, we can give them free lunch, we can send them home with a bag of food, and you know, all that. But we can't do a whole lot with how they're getting home."

It's part of life and so "You just have to keep going." A few service providers said they were resigned to the reality of violence and determined to just keep going and doing their work. They reported hearing similar things from parents, who may be aware of violence but cannot afford to be concerned about a problem they feel powerless to address or escape.

As an example, one service provider acknowledged that she does worry about safety, and she believes neighborhood residents do, too, but they find ways to manage the risk and just keep going because they feel they have to:

"You hear about shootings, you hear about knife whatever... During the day I'm not so concerned. We are here till six o'clock at night. In the winter, it's dark at six o'clock at night. And so I will make sure that someone's not here by themselves until six, or that they're parked somewhere safer so that when they leave, there's the parking lot with the light... It's not the safest neighborhood in Sioux Falls. But also, like, the families that are here, they're here because they can't afford to be anywhere else. And they're worried about safety as well... You just have to keep going."

The neighborhood has become less safe over time. Several participants said they believe that the neighborhood has become less safe in recent years. One long-time resident shared her perspective after decades in the neighborhood:

"You know, I never did [worry about safety]... I walked anytime I felt like it. But recently, there have been several incidents. In fact, my oldest son said, Oh mom, I'm so glad you're not there anymore. Did you hear that about those women shooting out that gas station? And I know you used to go to that gas station! ... You know, I had to say to my son, I don't go to that gas station anymore, because I didn't feel comfortable in there. You know, but up until probably two years ago, I did. However, I think there are some changes."

A few attributed this change to increased residential mobility and household turnover. One school staff member wondered whether the neighborhood has a growing proportion of renters and higher rates of mobility than in the past; he observed that some long-time residents are older and no longer connected to the school, and had the impression there was more residential turnover than in the past. Along these same lines, a long-time neighbor shared his observation of how the neighborhood has changed over the past 40 years. In his view, the neighborhood has lost its stable, working-class base and seen an increasing number of families with lower incomes. He surmised that the neighborhood's relatively affordable housing has drawn in lower income households in less stable circumstances:

"When we moved there...many of them were workers at Morrel's, Smithfield now... It was a working-class church, neighborhood, school, and so on. And, you know, I don't know when it

began to change, probably because some of those folks moved out of the neighborhood. And then it became more a place where there was affordable housing.”

Another participant shared a similar sentiment, though his observations were made over a shorter timeframe of about a decade:

“I’ve been here since 2009. It’s been up and down, you know, but just a lot of people move in from different places. They bring different behaviors, like I was saying. Before when I was here, it would stay quiet and no more violations and stuff like that. But now it’s getting really—because of different people coming in and different behaviors and they brought their behavior here—and then it’s becoming really dangerous. Sometimes it’s kind of scary too, you know, to go out, especially with the kids.”

A couple of other stakeholders, however, saw neighborhood change as a positive: they reported that properties in the neighborhood are being kept up and they have seen new landlords move in who seem to care more for their properties. One service provider, who has worked in the neighborhood for decades, said, “It’s an older neighborhood, but new people have moved in, new landlords have bought houses to help clean them up to provide housing. So, I think that that’s made a big difference.”

Out-of-School Time

After general safety concerns, the need for out-of-school-time (OST) activities was the most frequently cited challenge in interviews. In most interviews, participants connected OST activities and safety concerns: they believed that structured, supervised activities are needed to keep children out of trouble, especially given the significant number of unsupervised children they see in the neighborhood. Some participants also framed the need for OST in terms of mentorship and the need for positive role models and caring, stable adult figures in children’s lives.

Participants were aware of several available options for afterschool care, but they reported that these options were not serving all children. The barriers they described include cost, lack of space or facilities, lack of awareness of available programs, families’ desire for cultural preservation, and scheduling.

Several participants also highlighted the need for before school supervision and childcare and preschool options for younger children.

Many children spend out-of-school time unsupervised. Participants expressed nearly unanimous agreement that many children in the Terry Redlin neighborhood are unsupervised during OST. Asked how their children spend their time, parents answered that they play soccer and basketball at the park or stay at home. Other community stakeholders observed children in the park, often without accompanying adults.

One participant, who is often at the park with a youth program, said he worries about what is available for children who don’t participate in programs such as his:

“Most of them just come to play. They have nothing... They come here, sometimes there’s no ball. Sometimes there’s nobody. They’ll sit and then they’ll go. I see them. I see two kids sitting, then they’ll go. So now I wonder, well what do they do actually? I don’t even know, to be honest.”

A school staff member who lives in the neighborhood shared a similar observation:

"A sad thing is you see kids all by themselves sometimes and not supervised with parents, and then I always wonder what's happening or where they're going or, you know, is someone gonna check on them and stuff."

One factor that participants believed contributes to children without supervision is parents who work opposite shifts. This strategy helps families ensure that a child is never home alone, but it means that when parents are home, they are resting before their next shift. As several participants pointed out, being home with a sleeping parent is not the same as having the opportunity for structured OST activities. One service provider put it this way:

"Sometimes you see families who do shift work so that, you know, one parent works in the morning and one parent's at night. So, they can be home, they are physically home. But kids don't get any attention, or they're not able to provide that extra time taking kids different places, to activities, getting them involved in extracurricular activities outside of school. Most families don't have that. And I see that as a major necessity as far as I'm concerned."

A faith leader who works with youth echoed this, and said he sees this pattern especially among refugee families:

"It's not easy for these new refugees to adjust to American life, and especially when some of them don't have education. So, they have no option but to do the hard work that nobody wants to do. They have no time with the kids... Like you see a lot of refugee kids, but you don't see their parents here [at the park], because they're working."

He emphasized that much of the work these parents do is physically demanding, so when they are home, they need rest. He also explained that some parents might commute to Worthington, MN, car pooling in a van, which means more time away from home and even less time with children.

Supervised activities are needed to keep children safe. Recognizing that many children in the neighborhood do not have adult supervision available at home, many participants lifted up the need for structured, supervised OST activities. They saw these activities as a way to keep children safe. As one long-time resident summed it up, "They need supervision, and they need to be challenged during the summer, have activities that they can participate in."

Another long-time resident who has worked with programs for youth shared this feeling:

"Well, my heart has always been in the fact that the kids need to have something to do in their spare time. And that was the whole reason why we started all these programs is to try and give them something to do other than get into trouble. And I still think that's a problem in that neighborhood. We didn't touch everybody in that neighborhood by any means."

A community stakeholder who works with youth in the neighborhood explained that this belief underlies his work. As he said, "What we try to do is, with all the crime and crazy things that are going on, we're trying to keep them connected to the community and through sports and you know, get them involved."

One stakeholder, who grew up in the area and still has ties to the neighborhood, said he sees families wishing for structured afterschool programs to keep kids out of trouble. He shared what he has heard from families:

"Because honestly, the last couple of years, the amount of times I see things on the news, and it's somebody that like my family knows, and obviously you know, those parents they don't want that to happen. They don't know what they need to do. They do know that they believe in after-school programming, because a lot of them are working two jobs. So, they do want to see something that's like a structured, afterschool [program that] will help with the transportation issue, you know, isn't overly academic, because you know, I think sometimes that's too much right? You've gotta have a little fun, some social time, some creativity. I think that's what they're wanting, like, because there is no structure. They're just roaming and just getting into trouble."

A variety of OST program options are already available. The Terry Redlin neighborhood has some existing options for childcare and OST, including the Kids Count program, the school's Summer Academy (a six-week program for students in grades K through 2 who have been identified as needing math and reading support), Kids Inc. at the school (afterschool only, no summers), the Boys & Girls Club, and private daycare providers. School staff reported that the Promising Futures Fund has also gifted camp registrations that school staff can give to parents to use like vouchers for summer OST programs. Additionally, the Salvation Army has been trying out a 6- to 8-week summer day camp program.

However, enrollment in these programs is limited, especially for free or subsidized fee spots. One service provider explicitly noted that even with available options, more OST options are needed:

"There's still a pretty heavy need for afterschool care, even with the opportunities that are available. The Boys and Girls Club is across the street. There's [Kids Count], there's Kids Inc. But I think there's still quite a few kids at Terry Redlin that don't have any afterschool care. That's a big need."

Cost is a barrier. School staff identified cost as a barrier. Parents also pointed to cost. For example, one parent explained that, for her, a barrier to afterschool programs is cost: "You know, single mother of three children, it's kind of a little bit costly for somebody like me."

Lack of a community center or indoor facility is a barrier. A couple community stakeholders said they see a lack of an indoor community space as a barrier. One long-time resident said she would like to see more opportunities for safe, structured OST activities for children—but at the very least, she wishes the neighborhood had a community center where children could be safe and indoors:

"Parents, I think, like I said, want their kids to be safe. Maybe, you know, a little bit of structure, some place where they could go for structure. There's no library around here... I don't think Terry Redlin has a center at all... Anne Sullivan, they've got a center where they can go and spend some time playing basketball or doing different things... I don't think Terry Redlin's got something like that."

Another stakeholder said he would like to see a community center with youth activities replace the gas station at 6th Street and Cleveland Avenue, which, he believes, is an epicenter of negative activity and youth crime.

Lack of awareness of available programs is a barrier. Some service providers and school staff said they see lack of awareness and communication gaps as a barrier to enrolling families in existing programs. For example, one service provider said she worries that parents are not aware of available opportunities or the benefits of OST enrichment:

“There are kids who stay home, basically, on their social media, or TV or whatnot. Because they don't have outlets to go do other things, because parents are too busy, or they don't know what's out there. And they're probably not aware how much difference it makes [for a child]. So I don't know how we reach out.”

The desire for cultural preservation is a barrier. For some families, the dominant culture in schools and available afterschool programs is not their own culture, and they prefer to reserve out-of-school time for cultural preservation—a time for passing on their language, religion, and customs to children. For example, one faith leader explained that, in the Muslim community, parents see out-of-school time as a time for religious education:

“I'm a Muslim, we have our own faith-based schools for our kids... That's why you don't see a lot of Muslims getting involved with the afterschool program, because we try to balance, you know, normal life and religious life. So, they go to school, normal [public] school, and then we have our Islamic schools. So like Saturdays, Sundays, that's why it's very hard to see a Muslim kid going to afterschool program because their parents are trying to teach them both.”

He further explained that Muslim and immigrant parents may be reluctant to let children participate in afterschool programs, not only because it trades off with opportunities for religious or cultural education, but also because they fear children will learn and adopt Christian culture and forego their own:

“One thing about refugees, they're scared, to be honest with you. Because most of the kids when they come here, they lose their culture, their identity. They try to fit in with your culture. Most of us, we have our own culture from Africa, we are Muslims, you see, like we have hijab, we wear [clothes] a different way. So the parents, their biggest fear is to lose their kids—and not that you guys have bad culture, but we have our own ways, you know? So they're scared. The kid spends, like, seven hours at school, and then after that, you guys want them to go to afterschool program. The parents are like oh my god, I'm gonna lose my child, because the child is gonna, you know, take your culture.”

He suggested looking for opportunities to partner with the Muslim community (for instance, through the Islamic Center) to build trust and encourage participation from Muslim families.

Corroborating this account, a parent who lives in the neighborhood, when asked whether he had considered childcare instead of having his child stay with a grandparent, explained that both cost and cultural preservation were incentives to keep his child with family: “No, because just the money-wise, I'd rather [they] just stay home and learn the first language, you know.”

A few stakeholders said that, for immigrant families, the perception of danger can make parents reluctant to allow children out to participate in activities. One service provider said she sees reluctance among the immigrant families she works with to send children into the community when parents cannot accompany them: "I always go to families, like in the spring, during summer days, they're packed up in a small apartment, sitting around and doing what kids shouldn't be doing. Most immigrant families are, I would say, are very careful about sending kids out, just to be out and about. So, they would rather keep them in the house. So, you know, there is that issue where kids need to be able to go out."

Scheduling is a barrier. As described above, many parents in the Terry Redlin neighborhood have work schedules that differ from the conventional 8 a.m. to 5 p.m. workday. This creates a barrier for enrolling children in activities. School staff explained that, in addition to cost, available hours of care can be a barrier. As one staff member put it, "There's a daycare need for kids, for people that aren't able to afford [it]—and I think sometimes it's that being able to find care that fits with times that they would have their job. Not everybody has their job to six o'clock or whatever, so that daycare situation is a need."

Young children need access to preschool. Beyond the need for OST activities for school-age children, school staff identified a need for preschool. They explained that preschool access for younger children is essential for kindergarten preparation—otherwise, students start school behind from the beginning. One school staff member elaborated on what she sees in the Terry Redlin area:

"I think preschool... access to an early childhood setting is a huge limitation for our families. If they don't qualify for the preschool programs that we offer through the district, then of course they rely on whatever they can afford, as far as childcare, and paying for preschool would never be an option in most of those situations. So, you know, kids stay with grandparents or somebody who's working or a parent who's sleeping. There's lots of different things that come about that create situations where children are not in enriching, stimulating environments that a child who's going to a structured daycare or preschool would experience, and so when our kids come to school, they are already a little bit behind their average peers...because of language development or school awareness development... There's lots of things that become a barrier first thing in kindergarten because of the lack of access in those preschool years before they get to us."

Before-school supervision is a need. In interviews, most comments were about OST in general or afterschool and summer care. However, a couple parents and school staff said they were specifically concerned about early mornings. One school staff member shared, "another thing I've seen kind of over the years are like kids getting dropped off earlier and earlier"; as a result, she said, "it'd be kind of nice to have a before-school program of some type for kids." A couple parents, likewise, said they typically drop their children off for school around 7 a.m. One participant, who had worked with a summer program in the past, said they saw the need for early morning care:

"We thought when we started that program, and we said we're going to open up at seven o'clock, we'd maybe have three kids between seven and nine. [But] they were waiting in line to have us open the door for them to get in at seven o'clock in the morning."

Transportation

Transportation was a widely cited need for the Terry Redlin neighborhood. In general, concerns about transportation focused on a few themes: parents' work schedules are a barrier to transporting children to school and activities; expenses and requirements related to car ownership are a barrier to reliable transportation; most Terry Redlin students walk to school because busing is not available and this raises safety concerns; and although the Terry Redlin neighborhood is connected to bus routes, the system as a whole does not meet families' needs.

Work schedules are a transportation barrier. As described above, many parents in Terry Redlin work shifts outside of 8 a.m. to 5 p.m. Work schedules can create a barrier to transporting children to and from school or to and from activities. As one school staff member explained, families may have access to transportation but still encounter challenges in transporting children to and from events at specific times:

"It's not that they can't provide it [transportation], I would say that it's hard for them to provide it consistently and on our terms, which is we want them dropped off just before eight, and we want them picked up, you know, in the 2:45 portion of the day, and it doesn't always just work like that."

Another service provider corroborated this account, describing the transportation barriers he sees among clients:

"Through our conversation and in trying to identify how we could help them better, we would pinpoint areas where they were having to share one vehicle amongst three drivers or amongst two drivers and they were struggling with timing, getting to and from work."

This affects activities outside of school, too. For instance, one youth program leader said that often students in the program he leads rely on one another for a ride, or sometimes he will help transport them. As he explained, parents are often working, so they are not available to help with transportation, even if the family has a vehicle.

Car maintenance, gas prices, and licenses and insurance are barriers. The expenses and requirements related to car ownership can also pose a barrier to providing reliable transportation. As one school staff member explained, families may generally have transportation available, but not consistently or reliably:

"Transportation in general, it's just hard. They have to be really creative, and sometimes seeing, well, their cars are not reliable. So, then that becomes—I mean, there's just tons of reasons that make [transportation challenging]. Winter driving, that complicates [it]."

Several parents said that, especially in recent months, the high price of gas has been challenging. Maintenance and upkeep also increase the expense of owning a car. Several service providers said they see families who need help with car repair. A school staff member elaborated:

"A lot of people who have a car but maybe it doesn't work today and they can't afford to get it fixed, or buy tires and whatever. So, a lot of times those car fixes are not within their means at the time. So, then they rely on neighbors or someone else that they know, if they get there [to school]. Otherwise they stay home."

A service provider pointed out that, for some parents, obtaining a driver's license in the first place can be challenging: new drivers must provide proof of insurance, documentation of identity, and a vehicle to take the driving exam.

A couple service providers were aware of programs that are available to help with transportation, such as Project Car and Wheels to Work, but acknowledged their capacity is limited, and not all families are aware of them unless they are connected with a social worker or similar service.

Busing is not available for most Terry Redlin students, and walking raises safety concerns. Most students at Terry Redlin are not bused to school because they live within one mile of the neighborhood school. There are some exceptions, as school staff explained, including students in the RISE and early childhood programs. School staff also mentioned that the school has run a pilot program to bus students from a specific apartment complex that is home to many students in an effort to improve attendance. The pilot was interrupted by COVID but started up again this year.

Still, for most families at Terry Redlin, there is no busing available, and that is a struggle. Transportation affects attendance and safety. One school staff member explained:

"That's [transportation's] hard. Attendance has been pretty bad, pretty bad this year. And quite honestly, even the students that get the pilot bus, it's been poor too. I mean, overall, when you look at it. I think that's a big shock to people who move from out of state and probably find a place in town that's the most affordable. And so they come and they call, they say we're registering our kid, when's the bus picking them up? And we say, there is no busing."

One school staff member explained the Terry Redlin attendance area as "far enough that they really shouldn't be walking but not far enough for an actual bus route"; she lamented that "we have so many kids that are there that are not getting to school because they don't have the means to get there."

In the absence of school busing and reliable car transportation options, some service providers said they worry about the safety of children walking to and from school. Their safety concerns centered around the heavy vehicle traffic on nearby streets that students may have to cross to get to school (e.g., Cliff Avenue).

Although the neighborhood is served by bus routes, the public transportation system is inadequate to meet families' needs. Service providers were nearly unanimous in their observations about the inadequacy of public transportation in Sioux Falls. Nevertheless, several stakeholders acknowledged that, however inadequate public transportation may be as a system, the Terry Redlin neighborhood itself has accessible bus stops. Problems arise, they explained, in getting from the Terry Redlin neighborhood to other parts of the city.

As with transportation generally, schedules are a significant barrier when it comes to public transportation. Many work schedules do not align with the bus system's hours of operation; limited weekend hours and service make it difficult to get around on Saturdays and impossible on Sundays; and bus routes may be inconvenient or end far from ultimate destinations.

Illustrating the scheduling problem, one service provider shared the struggles she has heard from people who have to walk home because their shift ends after the buses stop running for the night:

"The Sioux Falls bus system is available. But it's not as available as it could be... I know there's a lot of people walking late at night from jobs or because they have no other option. If you are living at one of the shelters in this neighborhood, obviously, you probably don't have a car either, and you've got to work. And many of those places help people get jobs, but then how do they get there?"

Other participants shared that, posted schedules aside, public transportation is unreliable. A long-time resident said:

"For my mind, a city the size of Sioux Falls has a really poor public transportation system. I've done almost a lifetime of work with people with disabilities. And you know they say we have paratransit. Well, I know just exactly how that works. Sometimes they're a half hour late. Sometimes the person will be sitting there waiting for them."

Another participant pointed out that people who rely on public transportation may be at risk of losing their jobs due to their inability to reliably get to work on time.

A parent who uses public transportation regularly acknowledged that "It can be time-consuming, but for the most part, I can get to where I need to go." When he was asked how the system could be improved, he immediately responded:

"Saturdays ride on demand? I hate that. Like, I literally hate that idea. Because it's better to be on a schedule on an hourly basis than just sit there [waiting for] the on-demand crap."

He explained that he finds on-demand service is more time consuming than fixed routes, and that it is confusing for riders because "you're having a bus driver tell you, Hey, I'm here for this person. Not for you. You can't get on the bus. Okay, well, you're here. You're going my way anyway! Why can't I get on the bus?" Additionally, he said the bus system does not get him where he needs to go for work on North Cliff or 60th Street North, and he sometimes finds himself having to walk a mile or more from the nearest bus stop to his ultimate destination.

Finally, service providers and parents both said that the public transportation system is confusing and difficult to navigate. One parent explained how this created a barrier for her when she first came to Sioux Falls: "My biggest problem was, back then, was the lack of transportation and not trusting like with the bus routes and things at that time. Like I said, being new to Sioux Falls you don't trust that kind of stuff yet." A service provider said that many of the transportation needs among the families he works with are rooted in confusion with public transportation:

"They were not comfortable with our local transportation services because they would either miss it very early or they were not available at a certain time, after certain hours of the day. And they didn't know how to go about it. Now, this was individuals *without* a language barrier. And they did not know how to go and ask those questions or talk to the individuals downtown."

Food Insecurity

Although the Terry Redlin neighborhood has abundant access to food—including grocery stores, giveaways and pantries, and free meals—community stakeholders saw food security as a significant need in the neighborhood. One participant ranked food access second only to safety as a concern in the neighborhood, explaining that food insecurity may not only mean lack of food overall, but “they don’t have enough or it’s not healthy foods, and it’s more junk food.” Parents agreed that food is a struggle. Asked about getting enough food, one parent replied simply, “It’s hard. It’s getting harder.”

Terry Redlin has access to food. As a neighborhood, the Terry Redlin area is in close proximity to both grocery stores and charitable food resources, such as the Banquet. Comparing the Terry Redlin area to Riverside, one participant pointed out, “They don’t have the same food desert issues [as Riverside]. You know, there are some grocery stores that folks can get to.”

Staff from the school and service providers said they hear from children and families who visit the Banquet, which for many neighbors is within walking distance. Likewise, the Salvation Army is within walking distance and provides meals on the weekend. The school’s backpack program also helps ensure students have food over the weekends, although school staff worry that the program carries stigma and may be underused.

The neighborhood’s use of food resources demonstrates need. Community stakeholders acknowledged the neighborhood has many food resources available, and they also pointed out that these resources are heavily used. Most drew the conclusion that the neighborhood has a high level of need when it comes to food. One childcare provider noted that the abundance of resources does not eliminate need, and the heavy use of resources actually indicates the degree to which families may struggle to afford all of the food they need. She compared the Terry Redlin area to Riverside and said that, despite the wider availability of food, she sees the same sort of food insecurity coming out of Terry Redlin: children picking up food from the backpack program, children who stay later with childcare or afterschool programs so they can eat a meal before going home where they may not have an evening meal waiting.

Participants who had volunteered or worked with food pantries and giveaways in the neighborhood agreed those resources were well used, which they believe demonstrates a need for food. Most service providers, including childcare and afterschool providers and church members, said they had a practice of keeping extra food on hand to help families from time to time. One participant recalled his work with a church youth program: “They came to us, you know, because we were there. If they needed food, we always seemed to have something in the freezer or on the shelves that we could share with them. We handed out a lot of food in the neighborhood.”

Access to nutritious food is a special concern. Several participants said they believed one of the biggest challenges around food access was nutrition and affordability, that is, being able to afford fresh fruits and vegetables and other nutritious foods. As one participant—a long-time resident in the neighborhood—put it:

“As far as food is, there’s something [available]. It might not be the most nutritional thing, you know, or wisest thing for them to have to eat. But, well, you guys know, the price of groceries. We don’t have kids, and we can hardly afford fresh fruit every day.”

Service providers tended to share the same view. As one service provider explained:

"I would say it's more healthy food choices. And then price. I mean, just because there's a grocery store close doesn't necessarily mean they can buy food there. Because they may not have the money... But yeah, I think it's more just money to pay for food, and then knowing what foods are healthy. And do you spend the \$5 on a couple of apples? Or do you spend it on five bags of chips?"

A school staff member described how school meal and snack programs help meet some nutritional needs by providing breakfast and lunch at school, lunch in the summer, and snacks. She observed that, while families may have food, they do not always have access to healthy foods because they are more expensive:

"They need healthy food options. And I feel like at school, we give that to them. At the grocery store, those healthy food options are expensive and perhaps out of reach. So, they rely on us for a lot of their—and they look forward to it. Whether it's vegetables or snacks, our fruits and vegetable program, you know, they try new vegetables, they eat new vegetables, but just because they eat them and like them at school, it would be my guess that they do not have those kinds of things in their homes."

The primary barrier is cost, not distance. For parents in the Terry Redlin neighborhood, the primary barrier to getting the nutritious food they need for their families is cost. Asked whether the availability of grocery stores is a barrier, one parent replied, "Not really, it's the availability of grocery stores that are not as costly."

Several parents put the cost of food in context with their other expenses. With a limited budget, they struggle to pay for healthy foods. For example, one parent explained that food costs and gas costs together are creating financial pressure:

"Yeah, the cost is rising, gas prices are rising, I mean, you have—where was it? Like \$3 for a gallon of milk the other day, now it's like six bucks almost for a gallon of frickin' milk! It's almost double in less than a year. And then on top of that, I mean yeah, I got a small car, but it still takes only premium, and we're still at \$5.50 a gallon. I mean, that's 70 bucks to fill up your tank of gas, it used to [cost], you know 20 bucks."

Another parent described his struggle to pay for rent and food as rising costs for diesel fuel have limited his take-home pay from his trucking job:

"Right now, to be honest, I'm struggling with the rent. They already gave me notice, eviction notice, because I was working and I was trying to do truck driving... But you know, the diesel price was so high and every money that I make, it goes to the gas price and insurance, so I didn't have much money to cover [rent]... I went to my old job, but right now they're trying to give me more hours, but I'm sure struggling to pay my rent... Yeah, and I'm struggling with the food to be honest."

Inflation and rising prices make it harder for everyone, as one service provider pointed out: "Maybe they have more access to food, but it's so expensive, and I would think the neighborhood demographics, it's really, really tough at eight and a half percent inflation to get the food you need."

SNAP does not fully meet families' needs. A few community stakeholders described how SNAP can help families with the price of groceries, but the program does not fully meet all families' needs. For example, a youth leader said that he sees hungry children in his program and worries about whether their families have the food they need. He explained that families who receive SNAP may not get enough, and some families may not be eligible because their incomes are above the eligibility threshold even though they still struggle to afford food:

"I wonder if there's a lack of food at home, but I don't go to their homes. But when we have food, kids come and they're really hungry and stuff... I know the majority of them are refugees. Some of them are on food stamps. And I don't know if you know, but the food stamps, some of them, they don't get enough. Some they do. Some of them work, [so] they don't get food stamps. So, I don't know how they deal with their financials, you know, but they make it happen, they survive."

A parent shared her experience, which echoes these observations. She explained that she receives SNAP and it helps, but she has to be very careful about her grocery budget and often ends up short toward the end of the monthly cycle.

Healthcare

Terry Redlin Elementary is somewhat unique in that it is one of three elementary schools in Sioux Falls with a Falls Community Health clinic on site (the other two are Hawthorne and Hayward Elementary). Yet despite the availability of this clinic, several of the parents interviewed for this report described challenges accessing healthcare.

For the most part, parents said they rely on hospitals or acute care when their children are sick. Asked about the school-based clinics, they explained that they were concerned the clinic would not have specialized care available for conditions such as diabetes or that it seemed too strange to go to a school building for healthcare. One parent did say he regularly visits the downtown Falls Community Health location, but not the school-based clinics.

Most of the parents interviewed for this report also described a lack of insurance coverage. For example, one parent explained that he does not qualify for Medicaid in South Dakota and has no other coverage, so he tries to limit his doctor visits, even though he is diabetic:

"I don't have actual health care, and I don't classify underneath Medicaid. I have to see a specialist because I'm diabetic. So, if I have insurance or if Obamacare or anything like that, [if I] would be able to afford it, it'd be different. But South Dakota actually has no like, the health care act here? Nothing. Like if I was down in Georgia, I'd have zero premium copay. But here in South Dakota, there's nothing like that."

Another parent said he avoids seeing a doctor unless he is very ill because he does not have insurance. In an emergency, if he has to seek healthcare, he relies on hospital systems' financial assistance programs:

"Right now, to be honest, my job doesn't offer insurance. So, you have to get your own, you have to buy it and get on a thing... I just, I actually don't go [to see a doctor], but when I'm really sick, you know, I go there and I ask them, I don't have Medicaid, but they give you an application for the low-income thing, and they hook you up."

Layered Needs and the Logic of Necessity

In interviews, participants framed community and family needs around two themes: (1) layered, multiplex needs and (2) the logic of necessity. That is, many families in the Terry Redlin neighborhood who face challenges face multiple, interconnected challenges: needs with layers. As one school staff member explained, “sometimes you just, that layer of an onion, right? You start unraveling and understanding that, gosh, there's needs here, and there's needs—maybe mentally or there's needs financially.” Additionally, many families in the neighborhood use a logic of necessity to work through challenges: that is, they make choices under the very real constraints of limited resources. Those choices may seem puzzling to outsiders who have more resources and the privilege of less constrained choice, but they are logical to the families forced to make the decisions.

Although this report has attempted to distill discrete areas of need (e.g., safety, out-of-school time, transportation, and food security), often, economic challenges are intertwined and inseparable. A need in one area can cascade to create other needs or erect barriers to addressing other challenges. In this sense, economic needs have layers. The decisions families make within that mesh of needs follows a logic of necessity that may not always be apparent to outsiders. This section delves into these two themes.

Needs have layers. In general, parents who were interviewed for this study described a high level of economic need, facing challenges of paying for housing, transportation, food, and other necessities with limited (if any) disposable income left for family activities, childcare, or afterschool programs. Tight budgets can create stress and instability. Several stakeholders shared stories of families that lost housing or transportation, for example, because they did not have the financial flexibility to deal with any upset in the delicate financial balance. One participant, a service provider, adopted the same onion metaphor used by school staff:

“Lots of different things happen all the time, every family, and you know, every family in society is dealing with something, every person. But when you have more than one thing you're struggling with or more than one barrier, it's like, okay, what do I overcome first? Do I find childcare first? Or do I get a job first? And then is the job going to pay enough for the childcare? And then if my car is older, and it doesn't want to run all the time, how do I get it fixed? There's so many different layers, and I think sometimes just helping people wade through all those layers and kind of get through each obstacle one at a time, it's like an onion. It's like Shrek says.”

Sometimes economic need can prevent families from taking advantage of free or subsidized programs. For example, one service provider said she worked with families who had free swim passes but were unable to use the pools because they had no swimsuits and were not allowed to swim in t-shirts. Instability may also deter families from taking advantage of programs—one service provider said she had witnessed families who were reluctant to use the bookmobile, for example, because they were not sure they would be in the neighborhood in the future to return books.

Other stakeholders described the stress they see among families who do not have financial resources or disposable income for entertainment, vacations, or a night out. This stress can compound relationship problems and mental health and resiliency.

Limited resources force constrained choices, or a logic of necessity, that may appear puzzling to outsiders. The logic of necessity refers to the idea, expressed by many participants, that families choose what is best for them within a set of constraints, even though those choices may not make sense from the perspective of someone with the resources and privilege to access other options. In interviews, many participants framed this logic in terms of parents wanting the best for their children. For example, one long-time resident of the neighborhood described the community this way: “They love their kids. They may not know just exactly how to manage certain things, but they love their kids. And they want the best for their kids.”

A school staff member shared a similar sentiment, observing that parents are driven by love for the children but may struggle to do all of the things they wish they could to meet their children’s needs:

“Our parents want what's best for their kids. And that's always clear. And for some of them, it's hard to provide it. But they want it, you know, our parents love their children. And I think when we provide extra things, they come. When we offer summer school, they come. They know the kinds of things that help their kids. They know and love their children, and they want what's best for them, they all want [that]. But sometimes life happens.”

Participants explained that parents may make choices that, to outsiders, seem puzzling or even dangerous for children. Several talked about neighborhood safety in this frame: parents choose to live in a neighborhood that outsiders see as unsafe, but for those parents, it is the best choice they can make for their families given the resources they have available. For example, one school staff member highlighted the privilege of worrying about safety that might not be available to all families at Terry Redlin:

“We have a lot of kids who are walkers, and they walk a long ways, and they walk across streets that I wouldn't have my—you know, I live in a situation where I can have different standards for my own children. And I would say I would never have my child walk across that particular street unsupervised. But I have the luxury of being able to set higher standards for my children. So they set the standards that they can accommodate. And sometimes that means that they will allow their children to cross the street that perhaps shouldn't be crossed, which in our neighborhood is Cliff or Sixth Street.”

A service provider shared a similar observation. In her view, many of the parents she interacts with appear unconcerned about safety because they do not have the luxury of that concern:

“They don't really—aren't too concerned with the safety, but they're also the one that probably chose to live here, or they don't have another choice. This is the only place they could afford or they could find or they're doubling up with a family member. So, this is what works for them. And they'll put up with it, because it's better than being on the streets.”

One school staff member gave an extended explanation of how she thinks about this pattern, that value systems can be different but that does not make them wrong. She gave the example of families who come to parent-teacher conferences together, with the student as well as siblings, and why it is important for the school to welcome the whole family:

“I think it's a welcoming thing too... They don't have caregivers, it's not like they can say, hey, we're going to conferences tonight, grandpa come over and hang out with the [kids]. They

don't have access to all of those quick and trustworthy resources. So, part of it is they couldn't leave them home. But yeah, when we welcome in their whole family, and when we have set it up, then it tells them that we expected you to bring your children, we wanted you to bring your children, you're all welcome here. And we value you as a family. It is a combination of growing trust and then valuing who they are and where they are. I think I'm learning a lot about our perceptions of what is right, and my idea of what is right, which might be, let's just say, I'm gonna get a babysitter so that when I take my child, I give them my undivided attention. Okay, that is based on my value system where I feel like this one-on-one connection supports my child best, but like recognizing my value system might not be the same as theirs, and it doesn't make mine better than theirs. They believe, you know, they might have this idea that everything is a family, and we go and we support each other there. And when the conference is over, we all celebrate each other. I think recognizing that their ways of doing things, it accommodates them, so it is right for them. And mine is not right for them."

Work schedule conflicts exemplify layered needs and the logic of necessity. Work schedules are an example of both layered needs and the logic of necessity. Participants described families in the Terry Redlin neighborhood as working opposite shifts or shifts scheduled outside of the conventional 8 a.m. to 5 p.m. workday. Parents may choose to work long hours or unconventional shifts because it helps pay the bills. But these work schedules can make it difficult for families to access resources such as childcare, because many institutions are set up to operate around an 8 a.m. to 5 p.m. shift.

One school staff member explained that many parents work at Smithfield, and regardless of which shift they work, their work schedules typically do not align well with either pick-up or drop-off times at the school. Another service provider pointed out that, in terms of planning for Kid Link, an evening or weekend event will not be accessible for all families. Combined with transportation challenges or parents' apprehension about allowing children out on their own, these scheduling difficulties could prevent children's participation, too:

"Right so not everyone can come to that [event after school], though, you know what I mean? There are a lot of families who work afternoons, those families won't be able to come. And those kids won't be able to come... It's hard. It is what it is for some families. They have to do that to provide for their families. But what could we do for the kids? It's kind of like, there's no magic answer for them."

A school staff member described how the school has approached this challenge:

"We have lots of different schedules to accommodate, parents working nights and weekends and odd shifts and multiple jobs, and we have, you know, different dynamics to deal with... So, accommodating, adjusting, adapting is sort of what we do to meet their needs. But, to that, I always say, it's not because they don't want to be there...it's not that they're putting their work or their schedules in front of their kids... They want what's best for their kids, they offer what they can offer. And they often trust us to sort of fill in some of the other gaps... It's not that they're not trying...it's just that they have to work around what they have access to, and what they can offer."

One service provider described how institutions can think about accommodating families by adapting their delivery methods. He gave the example of mobile food pantries, which have increased access to

food by making it easier for families to juggle transportation demands, work schedules, and food pantry schedules:

“The ability to have mobile food pantries go through the neighborhoods of some of our lower income is very beneficial, because dad might be working and has the vehicle and then mom isn't able to go and get [food] or vice versa. They're not able to go and get the food that is widely available for the family. So, I think that that is a great effort that has been done.”

Economic needs can also manifest as homelessness, laundry needs, and winter clothes needs.

Community stakeholders mentioned a few other needs that may arise for some families in the Terry Redlin neighborhood.

Homelessness. As a school, Terry Redlin Elementary likely serves a disproportionate number of students experiencing homelessness. Several participants pointed out that the Terry Redlin neighborhood is home to most of the city's homeless shelters, including both the Bishop Dudley Hospitality House and the Union Gospel Mission. Additionally, St. Francis House provides shelter and transitional housing, and Children's Inn, a domestic violence shelter, is finishing construction next to the Empower Campus. Children in these shelters may continue to attend their home school if they have one, but students who are new to the school district and staying in a shelter would go to Terry Redlin. Additionally, as students move out of shelter into permanent housing, they may continue to attend Terry Redlin for stability.

Laundry and hygiene. Nearly all of the families interviewed for this report said that they do not have laundry available at home and have to travel to a laundromat. While they said this was mostly workable, parents mentioned the inconvenience of long waits and the expense: As one parent said, “It's alright, but, you know, spendy sometimes. Expensive. Like you spend like \$10 one load, but if it's two loads, then it's gonna be 20 bucks. Because you're gonna be putting in the washer and then the dryer.”

Winter clothes. A few participants said they see an annual need for winter clothes for children, but they also noted that existing community organizations and the school are effective at providing winter clothes as needed. As one school staff member put it, “I feel like our school's really good as far as like, providing kids like winter clothing, and almost to an abundance.”

Additional Opportunity: Adult Education

Two participants, both current or former residents of the neighborhood who had also worked or volunteered with organizations there, said they saw an opportunity for adult education.

One stakeholder focused on adult education to close the digital divide between generations, especially for immigrant parents. From his perspective, digital equity is less about access—most families have access to the internet, at least through a mobile phone and data plan, and students have Chromebooks from school. But as students learn more digital skills at school and from peers, parents may be left behind, and as institutions move processes online, this becomes a growing barrier for parents and a potential divide between children and parents. This participant said he sees a need to holistically approach digital equity and education for the family:

“The refugee/immigrant population, they rely on their kids from a young age to do a lot of this, and more and more of it is occurring at the digital level. Like before, the parents could go physically talk with somebody to get some help, [but now] everything is getting moved [to digital or online]. And the more you do that, it's like anything else, right? Like you call your

buddy, because he's really good on cars. So, you never have to learn how to fix a car. It's the same thing. So that concerns me, for sure... That's the missing piece. All these great programs for kids, and there's that piece with the family, that's missing in a lot of programs."

He also said he foresees technology becoming increasingly important in the workplace, which will require parents to learn and adapt. Adults who are less familiar with digital technology, and especially those in immigrant communities, may fall farther behind. As he put it, "I'm just worried about that population, the lack of strong English skills, because it's gonna require learning very quickly, learning on the job, [as a working adult] you're not gonna be able to go to four years, five years, six years [of college or training] and then come back. It's gonna have to be pretty quick. So digital equity is something that I'm really concerned about."

Another stakeholder said she sees an opportunity to meet a growing need to support seniors while addressing a volunteer shortage by incorporating seniors into programming with students. For example, she shared a vision for repurposing space at Wesley United Methodist Church after Kids Count relocates to the Terry Redlin building:

"There's going to be a huge, beautiful area available that could house senior day break [services], drop-in [services], you know, a lot like they have over at the other senior center. And why couldn't we incorporate children in those activities? I mean, they do it with animals, you know, that would be just a wonderful thing, if they had their [cognitive] facilities about them, if they could read to the kids. That's huge. Maybe teach them how to knit! You know, some of these dying arts that are going away because parents don't have time to teach their kids to do that stuff."

Additional Challenge: Volunteer Time

One of the potential challenges facing Kid Link will be coordinating the efforts of many organizations and recruiting volunteers. Stakeholders familiar with Kid Link Riverside expressed concern about meeting a growing need for volunteers and partner organizations as Kid Link expands. As Kid Link scales, one participant asked, how will it be possible to stretch across the entire community with existing resources? She noted that, for example, there is only one bookmobile, and it cannot possibly be at all schools simultaneously.

Recruiting volunteers may also be a challenge. Several long-time residents of the neighborhood described how the COVID-19 pandemic reduced volunteerism, especially among older adults who stopped volunteering during the pandemic and have not returned. A few participants noted that recruiting volunteers from within the neighborhood may be difficult because of work schedules; one pointed out that the school itself relies on outside volunteers in the absence of a PTA. At least one service provider gave an example of an attempt to start a tutoring program at the school that was eventually disbanded because they could not recruit enough volunteers.

However, participants also noted one possible advantage in the Terry Redlin area, which is that, compared to Riverside, there are more community resources nearby, including social services, churches, the Islamic Center, and businesses. As a result, there may be more capacity within the neighborhood to support Kid Link.

D. Communication

Each interview included a discussion of communication strategies for engaging Terry Redlin area families with Kid Link activities. Participants shared their experiences with family events and the components that might attract neighbors, as well as effective methods of communication, potential communication barriers, and strategies for building trust.

Family Events

School staff members reported that Terry Redlin Elementary has hosted several family events in the past, including a multicultural night, kindergarten registration, family-friendly parent-teacher conferences, and back to school open houses. The school also hosted a family literacy night at Oak View Library.

In general, school staff and service providers said that the types of things that entice families to attend events include a fun and festive atmosphere, serving food, and making personal connections and invitations. One service provider said she believed a key piece of success for Kid Link Riverside was making the event fun by bringing in partners, such as the Zoomobile: "It was like a night out or entertainment for the families too." Similarly, a school staff member described the school's approach to welcoming families by providing meals and expecting children to come to meetings and events at the school:

"I think about when we invite them to come to school, when we like to feed them dinner when they come to school... Food insecurity is a reality in our neighborhood, but it's also like a scheduling thing. So, if we don't offer to feed them when they come, then they have to decide am I going to eat before? Am I going to eat after? Are we going to be up all night? You know, it's like, we schedule in those evening hours. And a huge part of our evenings is trying to feed their families... When we plan any event, we usually offer dinner, and we expect them to bring their entire family, and they do... Littles, olders, they all come together, it's actually kind of a beautiful dynamic when you see on our family nights, you know, just the networking within their own families... I would, I would say that expecting to connect with the entire family. And, you know, relieving that dinner necessity is always two things that we do."

Communication Media

Participants—parents, neighbors, service providers, school staff, and others—all agreed that the best approach to communication will involve (a) building personal connections and (b) using multiple forms of communication. One faith leader noted: "I think in the very beginning, 'both and' is important, where you have paper notices as well, and those kinds of flyers as well as Facebook messages and so forth." Means of communication to consider include—in order of promise—word of mouth, texting, social media and video, employers' channels, school newsletters and flyers, and email. Each is discussed below.

Word of mouth. Many of the families interviewed for this report said they rely heavily on word of mouth to learn about events in the community. For example, parents who were interviewed at events (a gathering in the park and a family fun night at a service organization in the neighborhood) universally said they heard about the event through word of mouth or simply driving by. To facilitate the spread of information about Kid Link by word of mouth, one long-time resident suggested going to where people

are gathered (e.g., at a park or an event) and making personal invitations to the children and families there to check out Kid Link.

Another said it is important for events to be highly visible so that people passing by will see them and check them out. In this same vein, some participants suggested ways to increase the visibility of Kid Link, such as billboards or flyers posted at local business, gas stations, organizations and service providers, thrift stores, or apartment buildings in the neighborhood.

Texting. Parents, service providers, and school staff agreed that texting tends to be the most reliable means for communication. Parents said they most often use texting for daily communication; school staff also said they have the most success with texting; and afterschool providers agreed. Texting is accessible to anyone with a phone, whether they have a mobile data plan or not, provided they can access wi-fi at home, work, or another location. But, participants cautioned, texting is not always immediate. For example, one service provider explained how she approaches texting:

“Texting works best with my families. Not a lot of people have the internet at home. So, I don't have an email address for many of our families. I know some of them have email. Phones sometimes work, sometimes don't, if you call. But like, if they're on a certain kind of plan, texting, they get the texting or, their phone is shut off for whatever reason but they still get text messages. So, texting works the best.”

A couple stakeholders suggested that WhatsApp is a frequently used messaging platform in some immigrant communities because it is widely used in their countries of origin and also because it can be used on wi-fi without a phone plan.

Social media. Parents mentioned using a variety of social media platforms, including Facebook, Twitter, Snapchat, Instagram, and TikTok. However, no one interviewed for this report was aware of a local, neighborhood-based page or group other than the school's Facebook page and closed groups maintained by various youth programs or organizations.

Social media may offer a way to connect directly with children in the neighborhood. One youth leader says that many children he works with do not have phone numbers, but they do have social media accounts, so he relies on Snapchat and Instagram to coordinate activities.

Another service provider strongly urged Kid Link to create a video. He suggested that a 20 or 30 second video could more effectively show families what Kid Link is all about than any written communication. He explained that seeing Kid Link in action at Riverside gave him a positive impression, one that would not come through in written materials:

“Yeah, it convinced me when I was there and I saw with my own eyes that oh, wow, kids are happy. They come back. Parents, I saw them walk away and coming back, so I got a sense of that they feel comfortable and safe enough for their children to be there.”

Employers' channels. A few community stakeholders suggested that employers could help spread the word about Kid Link. Employers might post information about Kid Link on message boards or via other announcement mechanisms. Stakeholders suggested this could be an especially effective strategy if Kid Link partnered with large employers located near the Terry Redlin area, such as Smithfield and Grand Prairie Foods.

School newsletters and flyers. School newsletters and flyers were mentioned as a communication tool to add on to other strategies, but were widely regarded as insufficient in and of themselves. In interviews, parents, service providers, and school staff alike said papers sent home from school may get lost in the shuffle and go unread. As a result, several school staff members and childcare and afterschool providers said they were unsure whether papers in backpacks are really an effective means of communication. As one provider explained, "If we put it in kids' backpacks, I don't know if parents see it or not. And I know that happens with school stuff, too." A school staff member echoed this comment:

"We used to always send like a half sheet of paper home with information on, but then sometimes we'd have kiddos that no one looks in their backpack and there sits notes from three weeks ago. So, it's just how to reach the parent and say, This is important too. It's good information, it'll help your family. But I don't know how to get parents to look in those bags."

Another school staff member shared that she tries not to rely on written communication because it is too easy for the message to get lost:

"Written communication is just not a great tool, you know, I think it gets mixed in with lots of written communication that comes in our mailboxes, gets thrown on the pile, their lives are busy, they may or may not get to it. I feel like whatever written communication, I'm always cautious about using it. I think, you know, people need that phone call, or they need that text, our families need things interpreted for them."

Email. Participants agreed email is *not* an effective communication method. They generally said it should be avoided. Several observed that it seems as though no one keeps up with their email, and people who do use email are still reluctant to open email messages from people or organizations with which they are not familiar.

Communication Barriers

Community stakeholders identified two potential communication barriers: limited internet access and language differences. Further, as a school staff member pointed out, limited technology access and language barriers can intersect:

"Language, and just technology in and of itself. Many families may have cell phones, but that doesn't mean they have an email address. Or maybe they can't receive text messages, those types of things. And if you're getting a text message in English, and you speak Somali, we're not getting anywhere."

Internet access. Participants reported that most families have some degree of access to the internet, but they may have unreliable access or limited devices. For example, one participant pointed out that, with mobile phones, internet access may be close to universal, but not everything can easily be done on a phone. As he put it, "Yeah, I mean, it's pretty universal. Like, basically, everybody's got it [internet access]. There are some instances in which it's mobile only. Which is, that's kind of a problem. Because I mean, you don't do research, your complex research and all that learning on your cell phone!"

Another school staff member elaborated: "And they also, some families, their phone number changes, or it's out of minutes, or it has to be connected to wi-fi. And so trying to reach them at a time when we're here and they're connected to wi-fi, it can be difficult too."

Mobile-only internet access can also mean that, even if students bring Chromebooks home from school to have a device available, they are not able to connect to the internet because they do not have wi-fi available at home.

Language. Participants saw language as perhaps the most significant communication challenge in the Terry Redlin neighborhood. The challenge with language, they explained, is that there are many different languages in the neighborhood, not just two or three. As one school staff member put it, “This is just a little hodgepodge of everything. We have a lot of different languages. That probably might be one of your bigger barriers... It's not, Oh, yeah, it's a lot of white and Hispanic, white and Native. I mean, yes, you have Native and Hispanic too. But there's a lot of other cultures here too.”

Another school staff member explained the difficulty of translating materials and providing interpreters for a wide variety of languages, compared to just two or three. She explained that, especially when a language is spoken by only a small group of people, it can be difficult to provide translated materials:

“When you get into some of those other languages, where there's only a few, then I think translation becomes a problem, because it's hard to justify translating everything for these few people who speak these less populous languages in our school.”

A few service providers acknowledged they sometimes rely on children to translate or interpret, but cautioned against that approach. Some school staff and service providers pointed out that children may be unable or unwilling to translate. For example, when papers are sent home in English only, it assumes that either adults at home read English or children are willing and able to translate. That may not be the case, including situations where children in earlier grades have not yet learned to read at the level needed, do not know the vocabulary to translate in one language or another, or choose to tell their parents something other than what the paper was intended to communicate.

Multiple service providers shared examples in which a family they worked with had been presented documents in English only, had signed those documents, but had not fully understood the agreement, and later ended up in a dispute—in one case, over the status of a lease and security deposit, and in another case over a home purchase contract.

In order to reduce language barriers, community stakeholders urged Kid Link to provide translation of any materials sent home and to make interpreters available at events.

Building Trust

Beyond thinking about communication tools, community stakeholders noted that effective communication will require building trust with parents and neighbors. To build trust, they suggested working through known and trusted people and organizations, and making a special effort to bridge cultural and religious differences.

Several participants suggested it will be important for Kid Link to reach out through a known and trusted person or organization. For example, one school staff member explained that she is herself reluctant to open email or read information from someone she has never encountered before. She told the interviewer that she almost missed his email inviting her to participate in this study:

“I didn't recognize his name. And I didn't see anything in his email that I recognize. And I ignored it. So, you had that caution to you also where Kids Link is going to come in, and they're

new. If you don't have something on there that represents a name they recognize, Terry Redlin elementary or, you know, something that causes you to recognize it as not a generic scam type of thing. I think we're starting to train ourselves to ignore anything that is new to us. You're going to be new to them. So, I think that getting some name recognition and awareness and connecting it to something they already trust is going to be important. Because I think we're pretty quick to ignore new things now because we don't trust them."

A service provider who was familiar with Kid Link Riverside observed how important it was in that neighborhood to get the school involved. She had noticed that having teachers present during Kid Link events helped draw out students, families, and the community, and having communication come directly from the school through usual channels (e.g., folders, text messaging, newsletters) also built trust and buy-in. Other participants suggested LSS and the Multi-Cultural Center as potential partners who are trusted in the community.

Participants also suggested it is important to build relationships and personal connections in order to build trust, especially before trying to approach difficult conversations about families' needs. One school staff member said he believes it is crucial to have in-person conversations and connections in order to build trust and create a sense of community, something that was driven home when COVID made it difficult to be with families in person. Now, he said, the school is focusing on getting families back into the building, "because that's how we build that trust... You're not just experiencing school from what your child is saying about school, you get to meet the teachers, you get to interact with staff, you get to interact with other families. It just creates that true sense of community."

A foundation of trust, rooted in relationship, is necessary before trying to delve into deeper needs. One long-time resident said:

"I think it's important with anyone that you connect with that person, before you start asking, What do you need? For them to trust you. If you can find ways to connect with them before you start talking about, you know, what's wrong? Or what do you need? Or what don't you have? They're going to trust you better if they know that you're real, that you're legit."

Consistency can also help build trust—for example, always holding an event in the same place on the same night. One service provider observed how Kid Link Riverside's consistency, even during the pandemic, built trust in the neighborhood and encouraged participation:

"I remember when they were trying to move it into the church during COVID, and I thought, oh no, I mean we're all going to get COVID, but really they were onto something. They knew to do it year-round and make it real consistent, so that they were always there even during really troubled times and the families could count on them to come."

Communication requires bridging cultural differences. Many participants described diversity as a strength of the neighborhood, but they also acknowledged that diversity creates communication challenges, both in terms of language and cultural understanding. Cultural differences pose communication challenges because people have difference backgrounds, traditions, and knowledge. Those differences can present a barrier to connecting, building trust, or even to making use of available resources. For instance, one participant gave the example of a turkey giveaway, which was intended to

help families meet their food needs. However, a communication breakdown across cultural differences led to some families not being able to benefit from the giveaway:

“We bought a whole bunch of turkeys and we gave them to all the kids, to all the families that were involved in the afterschool program. We found out that probably half of them didn't know how to cook a turkey. They'd come from a country where that just wasn't done. So, a lot of that went to waste. The next year, we gave out turkeys, and we gave instructions on how to cook them, how to do it. So, you learn as you go. There's a communication problem.”

There are especially opportunities for Kid Link to build trust with the Muslim community. The Islamic Center of Sioux Falls is located very near Terry Redlin Elementary and just across from Meldrum Park, and the neighborhood is home to many Muslim immigrants. Yet, participants were not aware of existing partnerships with the Muslim community or Islamic Center, though several mentioned it as an organization to include in planning efforts.

One participant, who is himself active in the Muslim community, said there is work to be done building trust between the community and the dominant institutions in Sioux Falls:

“[Muslim parents] want to try to keep that culture intact... At least the parents would feel safe [if] we can tell them actually hey, the program is going to be right outside the masjid, because they feel safer here. But if you tell them to bring their kids somewhere else, the bus is picking them up, you know, maybe some of them, they're scared that you guys are gonna change their religion, you're gonna change them from Islam to Christianity... Parents are very scared of that, and some of them don't even speak English, so whenever they see a letter a kid brings in [and says], mom, this is for afterschool program, can you sign? They're like No, no, no. We're not gonna sign. They're scared of signing anything. If there's a way for you guys to have like interpreters or try to change that paperwork into Swahili or Somali, that way at least they can read and understand like, Okay, this is not what it is. If you just give them something in English, they'll be like okay, this is a trick... If they can bring something more close to the community, where the parents can come and see them, or at least the Muslim community can see the program and can come, and can assure the parents hey, it's okay, we are here with them, too, there's no agenda or anything. We can watch your kids and they will have fun. That would be nice.”

Partnership, Not Charity

Finally, community stakeholders emphasized the importance of establishing a partnership with parents and neighbors and avoiding the perception of charity. This approach preserves dignity, honors people's pursuit of self-sufficiency, and builds trust.

For instance, one school staff member said that when approaching outreach and communication, it is essential to think about partnering and avoid judgment or a savior mentality:

“I think being cautious not to see their lives through our lenses and our value system... They don't want, they don't necessarily need to be saved, they need to be helped. We're not going to save them from their lives or their stuff, they don't want to be, they love their lives. They would like their lives to be easier... They want support, they want help. But I think we just have to be cautious... Letting them know that we want to work together.”

Similarly, a service provider emphasized the importance of dignity and self-sufficiency:

"What I see is whenever I meet with families, people are always wanting to do better, like, even if they're struggling with something, they want to do better. They have this belief that they can do things. Hardly ever [do] you meet someone who feels defeated, and [like] I can't do this. It's just that there are people who say we don't need the service, even if they do, because they really believe that they can do this on their own. So, I see a lot of wanting to be self-sufficient and self-sufficiency is important to people."

Another long-time community volunteer shared an experience he had in the past that demonstrated for him the importance of avoiding charity, which can feel insulting to recipients:

"There's an awful lot of single parents living in that area. There's also a lot of kids that are living with their grandparents. And sometimes the grandparents particularly get pretty proud. And they hate to accept help. They need it, but they hate to accept it. And we might have gotten a little overzealous trying to help some of those, you know, the grandma said, I can take care of my own kids and my grandkids. And so we learned to back off a little bit fairly quick."

An afterschool provider echoed this sentiment:

"I think the only thing that I can think of that they should not do is come in—and I'm pretty sure they wouldn't do this anyway—but come in and say we're gonna fix this. Because I think a lot of people in this neighborhood don't think that they need fixing, but more like, what can we do to walk alongside you and help if you need help? And what kinds of things can you help us with and make it a partnership?"

A church leader who is involved with the soccer league described their approach to building a partnership by asking families to contribute what they can, so that everyone is invested in the program:

"I think the biggest thing when we were doing like the soccer league—because we were providing all the gear, the food, everything pretty much—is to just keep emphasizing that we're really glad you're here. And you're a big part of this. If you weren't here, we wouldn't have a program or wouldn't have a need to be here if you weren't showing up to this. Trying to turn more into a partnership thing, like you're here with us... We're hoping to eventually pull some parents in like, Hey, like, would you want to help do a little coaching here and there? You can bring a little treat that you like to make or a little, whatever gesture, whatever thing you want to do, bring some beverages for the parents as they're sitting alongside, some coffee or whatever they can do or are willing to do... [That can] help create a sense of ownership among the community itself, rather than just getting another handout. That way, it feels a lot more like a community effort and a team effort rather than some strange folks coming in and just giving us stuff."

On that note, several participants who were familiar with Kid Link Riverside said that establishing local leadership for the program was a key component of its success. They encouraged Kid Link in Terry Redlin to likewise look for local leadership.

V. Conclusions

The Terry Redlin attendance area is home to hardworking families and parents who, like many parents in Sioux Falls, struggle to manage the conflicting demands of supporting their family by putting in hours at work and spending time at home. There is a significant need for out-of-school time programming that engages children in enriching activities and connects them with caring adults.

The area is rich in resources to support families, from food assistance to transitional housing. Yet it is also an area of need. The juxtaposition of resources and needs yields a neighborhood of contradictions:

The neighborhood has a high level of complex, layered economic needs, but is near to many organizations that provide various types of assistance and support. These service providers support families and help meet needs, but they also draw traffic into the neighborhood that raises safety concerns. Similarly, the local parks are a community gathering space and one of few options for free family recreation, but stakeholders are concerned for the safety of the many children who spend time unsupervised in the park. Ultimately, parents who live in the Terry Redlin neighborhood face difficult choices, and they must make the best choices for their families from the options available to them. Those choices might not make sense to people in different situations, but families are doing their best to balance the need for affordable housing, safe environments, employment and income, and childcare, among other needs.

Families in the neighborhood and other stakeholders alike are uncomfortable with the idea of charity and programs that purport to rescue people who cannot help themselves; they agree that programs should focus on enhancing neighborhood resilience. In communications, those working with Kid Link Terry Redlin should be cognizant of the way they frame the program and messages about the need for and intent of Kid Link.

Additionally, Kid Link's organizers should proactively seek to bridge cultural and religious differences, and to overcome language barriers. Terry Redlin is a diverse neighborhood with families from many different backgrounds, who speak many different languages. A key challenge for Kid Link will be communicating across differences.

The Terry Redlin neighborhood has abundant opportunities for partnership and collaboration with existing organizations, both service providers and businesses. Kid Link should also seek ways to engage families in the neighborhood as partners and local leaders in Kid Link's development in order to foster a sense of ownership and inclusion. However, these efforts will need to accommodate the limited time many parents have for volunteering, given work and family obligations. To help meet volunteer needs, Kid Link might consider ways to engage older adults in the neighborhood or multigenerational families with grandparents at home.