

City of Edgewater Community Outreach Report

Submitted By:

Jefferson County Community Development
A Division of the Jefferson County Development & Transportation Department
In Collaboration with the City of Edgewater

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Introduction

The City of Edgewater is one of five communities participating in the Jefferson County Jurisdictional Collaborative. Other participating communities include the cities of Golden and Wheat Ridge and the towns of Lakeside and Mountain View. The participants receive Community Development Block Grant funds from the federal Department of Housing and Urban Development on an annual basis and these dollars may be utilized in a myriad of ways.

Past projects include: Construction of housing for rent or ownership, rehabilitation of existing rental or owner-occupied housing; provision of assistance to new homebuyers; improvement of public facilities and infrastructure, the provision of emergency relocation services and the provision of public services that address transportation, child care, education and a variety of other services. These federal dollars must be utilized to meet the needs of residents who have incomes at or below 125% of the federal poverty level.

The purpose of the City of Edgewater Community Assessment was to conduct a comprehensive study and analysis of the needs of residents and those employed within the City, using a) existing data and information, and b) supplementary community outreach meetings and sessions with City Officials and representative populations within the community. The Jefferson County Community Assessments are designed to provide the County and other service providers and planning entities with information in order to:

1. Establish Community Development Block Grant allocation priorities and implement any necessary changes to the current delivery system;
2. Identify potential gaps in the meeting of community needs;
3. Formulate culturally competent responses to identified needs in the form of new or revised allocation initiatives;
4. Target community strengths to enhance project development and to utilize in further community planning, and;
5. Determine potential barriers to fully utilizing funds and thus preventing the creation of positive change.

Through the examination of existing data sets, target groups were identified and City staff was consulted to determine the best methods of contact and notification.

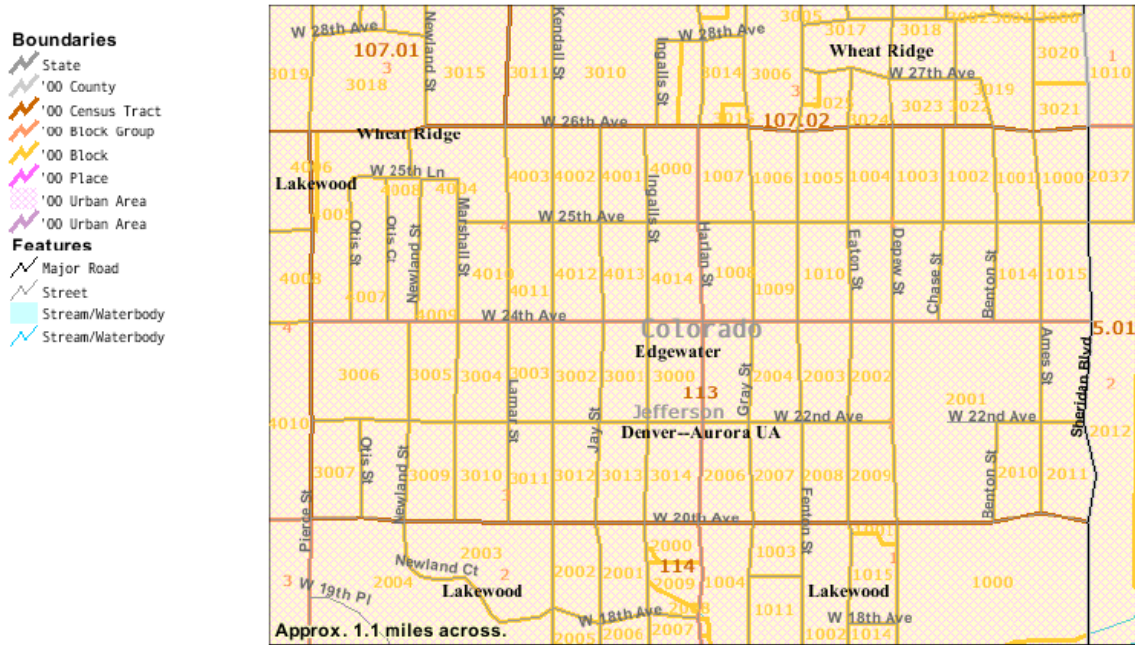
A challenge in developing the overall community assessment was the heavy reliance on community participation. As with any community forum, engaging residents and community members to participate in the scheduled meetings can often prove difficult. Although there were some challenges, particularly with the parent population, the study was extended through September 2008 and sufficient representation was achieved.

The City of Edgewater Community Assessment is composed of two major components:

1. An analysis and report on existing sources of data, providing a brief profile of the City of Edgewater, and;
2. Qualitative studies utilizing information from twelve separate community and City outreach sessions and meetings.

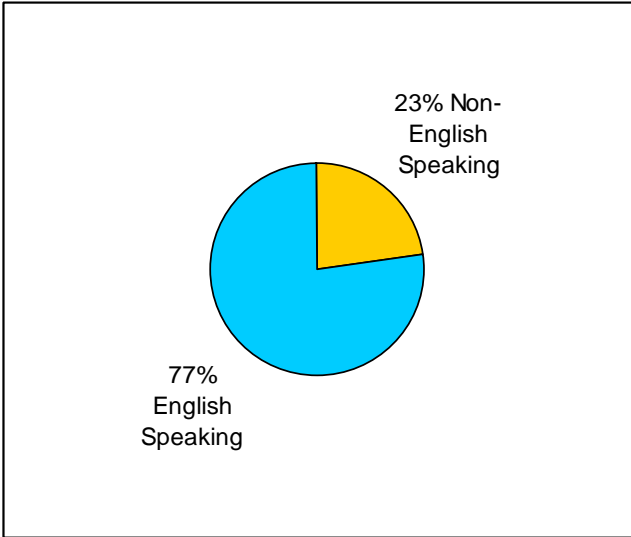
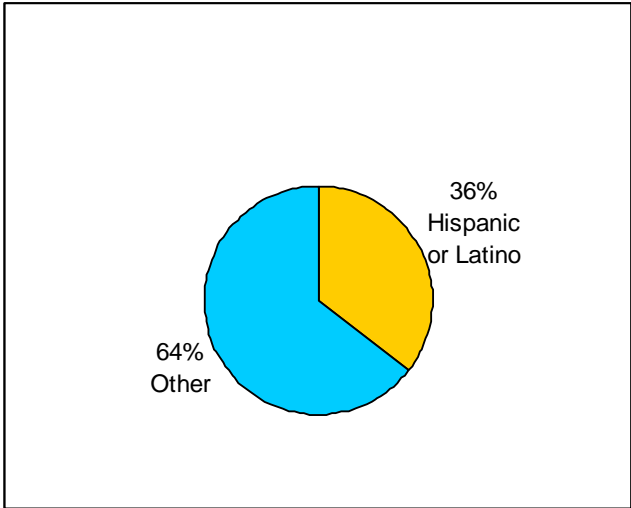
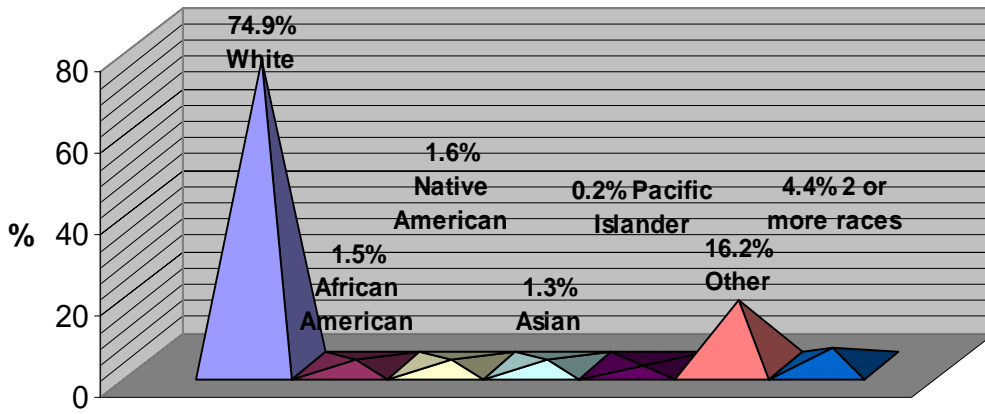
City of Edgewater Profile

The City of Edgewater has a total of 0.7 square miles and borders Wheat Ridge to the north, Lakewood to the south and west, and Denver to the east. The city lies to the north of 17th Avenue, south of 26th Avenue, east of Pierce Street and west of Sheridan Boulevard. Sloan's Lake, a body of water that sits within the western edge of the city limits of Denver, is just to the east of Edgewater.



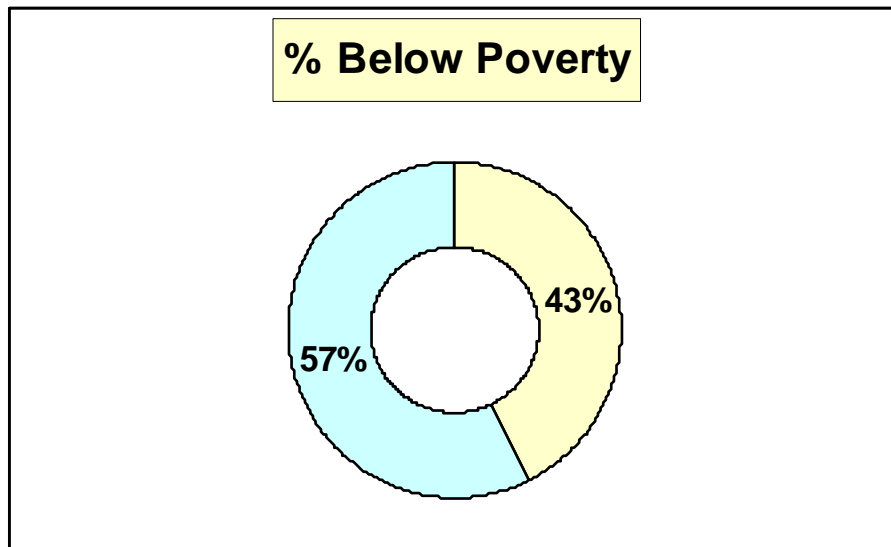
The following information was derived from the 2000 U.S. Census Bureau data, Block 113 of 23135. As of the year 2000 there were 5,445 people, 2,331 households, and 1,314 families residing in the City of Edgewater. The population density was 7,630.4 people per square mile and there were 2,424 housing units at an average density of 3,396.9 per square mile. The racial makeup of the city was 74.9% White, 1.5% African American, 1.6% Native American, 1.3% Asian, 0.2% Pacific Islander, 16.2% from other races and 4.4% from two or more races. Hispanic or Latino persons of any race made up 35.6% of the population and 22.9% of the population spoke a language other than English at home.

Edgewater Racial Makeup

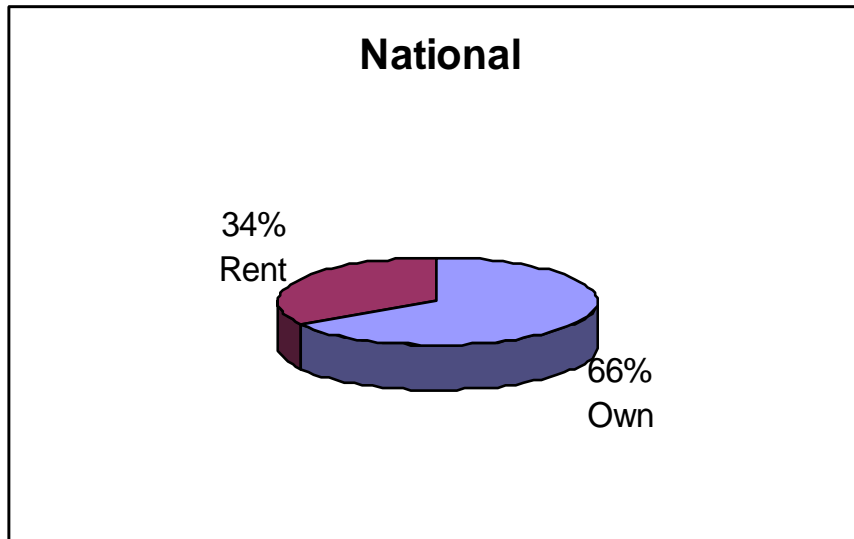
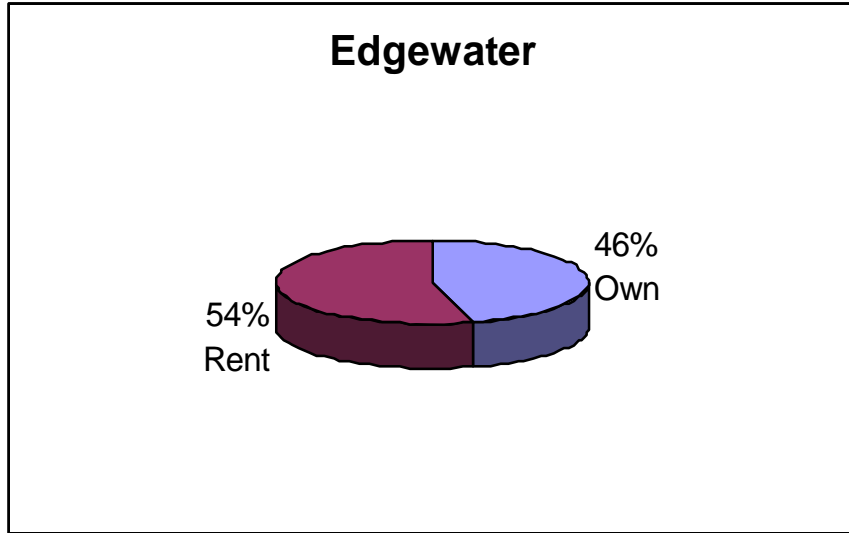


There were 2,203 households out of which 59% had children under the age of 18 living with them, 14% were married couples living together and 45% had a female head of household with no husband present. 60% of all households were made up of individuals and 10% had someone living alone who was 65 years of age or older. The average household size was 4.5 and the average family size was 5.5. In the city the population was relatively spread out with 24.1% under the age of 18, 22.5% from 18 to 24, 34.9% from 25 to 44, 15.5% from 45 to 64, and 4.0% who were 65 years of age or older. The median age was 31 years.

The median income for a household in the City of Edgewater was \$25,023, and the median income for a family was \$30,426. The per capita income for the city was \$19,166. Approximately 39.1% of families and 47.2% of the population were below the poverty line, including 13.8% of those under age 18 and 3.9% of those aged 65 or over.



Total housing units in the City of Edgewater was 2,424 of which 2,331 were occupied. Of those occupied units 45.9% were owners and 54.1% were renting, compared to the national average of 66.2% and 33.8%, respectively.



The following information was derived from psk12.com, an internet source for school performance and ranking as well as the National Center for Education and Statistics. Supplemental information was derived from an interview with the principal of Lumberg Elementary school.

There are three public schools located within the City of Edgewater, two elementary schools and one high school. All three schools have high Hispanic populations compared to the City population as a whole, and all three schools have poor performance ratings within Jefferson County and the state of Colorado. Lumberg Elementary School Principal, Mr. Shatta Garcia Mejia, stated that an informal internal survey showed at least 60 children enrolled at Lumberg had one or more parent who was currently incarcerated.

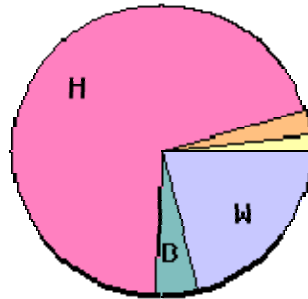
JEFFERSON HIGH SCHOOL

School Information:

Jefferson High School
 2305 Pierce Street
 Edgewater, CO
 80214-1031
 (303) 982-6062

Grade Range: **9-12**
 Enrollment: **692**
 Full-Time Teachers: **48**
 Students per Teacher:
14

Student Ethnicity:



W	White/Non-Hispanic	21.0%
B	Black/Non-Hispanic	4.6%
H	Hispanic	70.1%
A	Asian/Pacific Islander	2.5%
N	American Indian/Alaska Native	1.9%

Jefferson High School
Scores and Rankings
Year: 2003

Test	Score	State-Wide Ranking	County-Wide Ranking
Standard Ranking	1.0	282 / 312	23 / 24
Grade 9 Read Adv	0.0	222 / 294	21 / 24
Grade 9 Read Prof	27.0	272 / 294	24 / 24
Grade 10 Read Adv	0.0	251 / 287	23 / 24
Grade 10 Read Prof	32.8	264 / 287	23 / 24
Grade 9 Writ Adv	0.5	239 / 294	21 / 24
Grade 9 Writ Prof	14.4	275 / 294	24 / 24
Grade 10 Writ Adv	0.0	234 / 288	22 / 24
Grade 10 Writ Prof	17.2	263 / 288	22 / 24
Grade 9 Math Adv	0.5	236 / 293	21 / 24
Grade 9 Math Prof	6.0	256 / 293	22 / 24
Grade 10 Math Adv	0.0	186 / 286	19 / 24
Grade 10 Math Prof	2.1	260 / 286	21 / 24

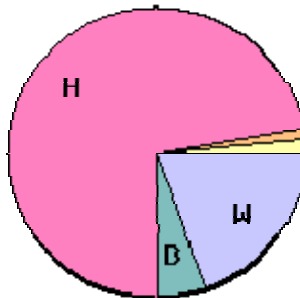
LUMBERG ELEMENTARY

School Information:

Lumberg Elementary
School
6705 West 22nd Avenue
Edgewater, CO
80214-1010
(303) 982-1844

Grade Range: **KG-6**
Enrollment: **546**
Full-Time Teachers: **36**
Students per Teacher: **15**

Student Ethnicity:



W	White/Non-Hispanic	19.4%
B	Black/Non-Hispanic	5.3%
H	Hispanic	72.5%
A	Asian/Pacific Islander	1.1%
N	American Indian/Alaska Native	1.6%

Lumberg Elementary School
Scores and Rankings
Year: 2003

Test	Score	State-Wide Ranking	County-Wide Ranking
Standard Ranking	10.8	654 / 834	88 / 101
Grade 4 Read Adv	1.3	656 / 844	92 / 102
Grade 4 Read Prof	33.8	755 / 844	102 / 102
Grade 5 Read Adv	0.0	703 / 834	95 / 101
Grade 5 Read Prof	38.8	738 / 834	101 / 101
Grade 3 Writ Adv	1.9	775 / 839	97 / 100
Grade 3 Writ Prof	44.4	599 / 839	89 / 100
Grade 4 Writ Adv	2.5	629 / 844	82 / 102
Grade 4 Writ Prof	20.0	775 / 844	99 / 102
Grade 5 Writ Adv	0.0	715 / 834	91 / 101
Grade 5 Writ Prof	20.9	778 / 834	100 / 101
Grade 5 Math Adv	10.8	552 / 832	82 / 101
Grade 5 Math Prof	44.6	583 / 832	87 / 101

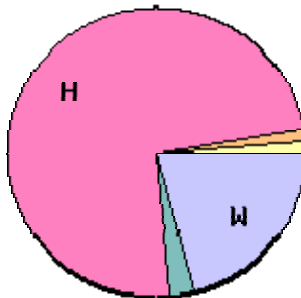
EDGEWATER ELEMENTARY

School Information:

Edgewater Elementary
School
2280 Depew Street
Edgewater, CO
80214-1265
(303) 982-0885

Grade Range: **PK-6**
Enrollment: **423**
Full-Time Teachers: **34**
Students per Teacher: **12**

Student Ethnicity:



W	White/Non-Hispanic	20.8%
B	Black/Non-Hispanic	2.4%
H	Hispanic	73.8%
A	Asian/Pacific Islander	1.4%
N	American Indian/Alaska Native	1.7%

Edgewater Elementary School
 Scores and Rankings
 Year: 2003

Test	Score	State-Wide Ranking	County-Wide Ranking
Standard Ranking	1.6	805 / 834	100 / 101
Grade 4 Read Adv	0.0	696 / 844	94 / 102
Grade 4 Read Prof	54.8	577 / 844	88 / 102
Grade 5 Read Adv	0.0	703 / 834	95 / 101
Grade 5 Read Prof	45.3	689 / 834	98 / 101
Grade 3 Writ Adv	3.8	712 / 839	93 / 100
Grade 3 Writ Prof	19.2	805 / 839	100 / 100
Grade 4 Writ Adv	2.4	632 / 844	83 / 102
Grade 4 Writ Prof	33.3	658 / 844	89 / 102
Grade 5 Writ Adv	1.6	656 / 834	87 / 101
Grade 5 Writ Prof	26.6	736 / 834	99 / 101
Grade 5 Math Adv	0.0	790 / 832	99 / 101
Grade 5 Math Prof	9.4	824 / 832	101 / 101

Edgewater Community Outreach Sessions

Methods

When considering the methods for construction of this study, Jefferson County Community Development determined the basic principles of data gathering should center on information heard directly from the residents of the community. It was decided that the best way to accomplish this goal was to first work closely with City representatives to gather historical knowledge of the community and then to host open community outreach meetings based on this knowledge. The principles guiding the community outreach sessions were as follows:

- Open Discussion Forum: This included open-ended questioning and participant-directed conversations. General topics of discussion included but were not limited to: healthcare, safety, recreation, childcare, education and community perception. No sign-in sheets were required in order to allow participants to remain anonymous and to encourage attendees to speak freely;
- Community Outreach Meetings: These meetings were held mainly in conjunction with current standing community meetings and events, which allowed Jefferson County Community Development to reach a larger number of residents and community members. A small portion of the meetings were called specifically for the community outreach sessions and these meetings were in general less attended;
- Based on the historical knowledge gathered by City representatives, the demographic summary and the targeting population for Community Development Block Grant funding, several key groups were identified and a portion of the outreach sessions were conducted expressly to address these populations.

Jefferson County Community Development conducted this study over the course of four months. The initial intent was to conduct all City meetings and community outreach sessions throughout a week-long period in order to produce an analysis and report for publication within one month. It was found, however, that due to the summer school break it was difficult to acquire participation from the public school population. It was therefore necessary to extend the study through September and the start of the school year.

Following is the schedule of City and community outreach meetings conducted between June 13, 2008 and September 24, 2008, which will be represented in this report. Included are the meeting dates, groups, approximate number of attendees and number of facilitators:

- 06.13.08 Dinner meeting with City of Edgewater Staff & Officials
20 Attendees / 2 Facilitators

- 06.16.08 Tour of the City of Edgewater, including assets and areas in need of improvement
4 Attendees / 4 Facilitators

- Meeting with City Department Heads & Officials
7 Attendees / 4 Facilitators

- 06.17.08 Community Outreach at Edgewater Plaza Senior Building
13 Attendees / 5 Facilitators

- Meeting with Principal at Lumberg Elementary School
3 Attendees / 3 Facilitators

- 06.18.08 Community Outreach with Small Business Owners
3 Attendees / 3 Facilitators

- Meeting with Principal at Jefferson High School
3 Attendees / 4 Facilitators

- Community Outreach at Terra Village Apartments
10 Attendees / 3 Facilitators

- 06.19.08 Meeting with Edgewater Police Chief & Police Force Staff
2 Attendees / 3 Facilitators

- 06.20.08 Community Outreach at the Senior Coffee Gathering
8 Attendees / 3 Facilitators

- 06.17.08 Community Outreach with Lumberg Elementary Parents
24 Attendees / 2 Facilitators

- 06.24.08 Community Outreach with Lumberg Elementary Teachers
33 Attendees / 1 Facilitator

Data from the above meetings and outreach sessions was collected in typed and written format by the facilitators present at the meetings. Facilitators included: Jacqueline Pickett of Jefferson County Community Development, Emily J.B. Sander of Jefferson County Community Development, Paul Johnson of Compass Consulting, LLC, Anne Rogers of Restorative Solutions, LLC and Helen Pietranczyk of Seniors' Resource Center. Data was collected from each facilitator and then compiled and analyzed for common themes.

Acknowledging there is always a degree of reduction when conducting qualitative research, great effort was made on the parts of all facilitators to record data in a concise and objective manner. Data from each of the meetings and outreach sessions was compared and cross-referenced to determine over-riding themes to which the remainder of this report will be directed.

Findings

The subsequent findings are based solely on community input and are compiled from the common themes derived from the facilitator recordings during meetings and outreach sessions. The common themes are Community, Family, Youth, Seniors, Business and Safety. The findings are separated into two categories which include strengths and desires. Following each category are results, listed in no particular order, recording the basic premises of those frequent points expressed during the sessions.

Strengths

Community

- Edgewater Days
- 4th of July celebration
- Friendly feel, walk-ability
- Commitment to community among residents
- Close to Denver, highways & Sloan's Lake
- Small city with many amenities
- Opportunities for citizens to get involved in local government
- Established community
- Easy access to public transportation
- Three major parks
- City Parks & Recreation Department
- City staff longevity and pride in the community

Family

- Affordability for young families

Youth

- No comments

Seniors

- No comments

Business

- Accessible business corridor

Safety

- Dedicated all-volunteer Fire Department
- Quick response from Police/Fire forces
- Friendly and helpful Police staff

Desires

Community

- Better communication between City and residents
- More opportunities for local involvement in the community
- Diversity in City government
- Improved City infrastructure
- Pedestrian bridge to Sloan's Lake
- Recycling
- Community farmer's market or flea market to bring people together
- Equal outreach to all backgrounds, cultures and income levels
- Bigger library

Family

- Recreation Center
- Parent mentors in the schools
- Parent education classes (i.e. managing finances, etc)
- Community supported food and clothing bank
- Basic health care lessons (teeth brushing, hand washing etc) at schools
- Free or very reduced rates at new Ice Ranch for low-income families
- Outreach to families who are Spanish-speaking
- Increased childcare opportunities for working parents
- Assistance with basic food, housing and medical needs
- Liaison for Spanish-speaking families to navigate available resources

Youth

- More youth services and activities
- Before and after school care and activities
- Youth center
- Scholarships for youth to participate in sports
- Mentors to advocate for kids and help them get to activities
- More access to English & Spanish books in the schools

Seniors

- More senior services and activities
- Consideration of an aging population with no services
- Accessibility: particularly on City sidewalks and in the parks
- Updates on City government activities

Business

- Enhancement of the business district
- Encouragement/incentive for residents to utilize City businesses, schools and other services
- More support of small businesses

Safety

- Support for police presence in the schools (Resource Officers)
- Determine steps to address the high sexual assault rate
- Crosswalks/speed traps in specific areas where children are at risk (i.e. Kendall, Pierce & Sheridan, school zones)
- Determine steps to address gang activity coming from outside of City; older elementary school age children are particularly vulnerable

Based on respondent comments and knowledge of the City's current programs, resources and plans, there were several opportunities that presented themselves during the course of this study. The following points are merely observations derived from the information gathered and should not necessarily be construed as recommendations.

Opportunities

Ice Ranch: The City of Edgewater recently entered into a development agreement with a private partner to build an ice arena and community facility called “The Ice Ranch at Edgewater”. The adopted proposal includes an ice arena, an office for the Parks & Recreation Director, a Community Room, an Aerobics Room and a Cardio/Weight Room. The plans also include a Spray Park outside the facility which can be utilized free of charge. Ten (10) hours per week and six (6) hours per weekend will be rented by the City to use at its sole discretion. The Ice Ranch is an ideal opening to address the need for youth programs, particularly sports scholarships for those children whose families cannot afford equipment. Discount recreation rates based on income level or vouchers for school children in targeted areas would support a level of involvement from all residents. A high school or other local hockey team could bring the community together. With the recreation space available to the City this is an opportunity for the enhancement of youth as well as senior programs and activities. Again, free or deeply discounted rates for a target population would encourage involvement from the entire community.

Parks & Recreation Programs: The Parks & Recreation Programs offered through the City of Edgewater have the potential to reach a wide audience of residents. The fact that the City has dedicated new office and community space for this department shows support for the continuance of these programs. During community outreach sessions, particularly those involving the parent and senior populations, a desire for connection and increased opportunity for participation were expressed. Specific barriers for these two populations made it difficult for them to identify the offered resources and to take part in existing programs. Many of the parents attending the outreach sessions, as well as school staff, expressed that the language-barrier was an obstacle. Increasing outreach to Spanish-speaking families, including Spanish literature regarding upcoming programming, would create opportunities for involvement by this particular population. The senior residents expressed a desire for in-place activity opportunities, as a significant barrier cited by this population was mobility. Edgewater Plaza, a senior building in Edgewater, houses 87 residents and would be an ideal setting to offer in-place recreational opportunities.

City Newsletter: The City of Edgewater publishes a seasonal newsletter for its residents, full of information concerning City legislature activities as well as public informational pieces and material on upcoming recreational events. It was found during the outreach sessions that many members of the community were not receiving the newsletter. This mainly included residents who lived in non-owner-occupied units. The City immediately took the initiative and started delivery of the newsletters to these residents. The City also pledged to continue to search out those residents who are not receiving the newsletter and to rectify this situation. There was also mention during the outreach sessions that a large portion of residents who are Spanish-speaking only are not able to read the newsletter. Consideration of a Spanish version or a Spanish portion of the newsletter would enable all residents to receive City information and to participate in City government and other published activities and events.

Heritage Center: A theme during many of the outreach sessions was a desire to be more connected as a community. The creation and rehabilitation of the Heritage Center, which includes a park and an indoor facility, is an opportunity to provide a community center for Edgewater residents. As a city focal point, the Heritage Center could potentially become a gathering place and point of pride for the community, as well as a statement of the importance of Edgewater's heritage and history. There was discussion of relocating the current library to the new center in order to have a more open and user-friendly space. A new library space was also mentioned in the outreach sessions and creating this space at the Heritage Center would be in line with resident desires.

25th Avenue Corridor: The 25th Avenue Corridor is seen by many people, residents as well as visitors, as a defining area within the City of Edgewater. Adjacent to Sloan's Lake and the busy Sheridan Avenue, this corridor has the potential to become a bustling retail area with the support and dedication of small business owners as well as the City. During the course of the outreach sessions, these business owners expressed a desire for increased communication and collaboration with one another. There was also a desire for additional support and acknowledgment from City representatives and residents as a whole. Shortly after meeting with business owners, Jefferson County Community Development assisted in facilitating a second forum to encourage additional discussions. This continued conversation led to the formation of a business group called the Edgewater Enterprise, a business association motivated to enhance enterprise throughout the City. This newly formed group of Edgewater business owners began meeting on a weekly basis and they are currently working on exploring potential funding resources to assist with a variety of newly created initiatives.

Dedicated Partners: Throughout the outreach sessions, a wealth of resources were discovered in the form of dedicated community partners. Several groups and individuals were forthcoming in their desire to work with the community to enhance the quality of life for Edgewater residents. These people could potentially have wide-reaching impacts, especially to those populations who may be most likely to need assistance. The principals of Jefferson High School and Lumberg Elementary School are committed to improving conditions at their schools and are prepared to advocate for the children and parents through partnerships with the City and other entities. Close to 2,000 of Edgewater's residents live at the Terra Village Apartments, including well over 100 children under the age of fourteen. With such a large number of the population residing in this small geographical area, an ideal situation is created for future outreach opportunities and community participation. The current manager at Terra Village has made a concerted effort to clean up the area, is an advocate for residents and is ready to work with the City and other entities to continue these efforts. The City of Edgewater Police Department also showed a great desire to move beyond the typical scope of duties to work with community partners for the benefit of residents. Utilizing these and other dedicated individuals would increase collaboration throughout the community and may be an optimal way to leverage resources and human capital.

Other Resources: The Seniors' Resource Center (SRC) has already responded to feedback from the senior population gathered during several of the community outreach sessions. SRC provides information and services to this particular age group and returned to Edgewater for a follow-up meeting. During the course of this meeting, SRC was able to work with 18 senior residents to provide transportation, home care and other services and is prepared to continue this relationship with any residents who may need assistance in the future. During the course of the outreach sessions, Restorative Solutions, LLC connected with the Edgewater Police Department and Jefferson High School to explore the possibility of creating a diversion program within the school to resolve issues and unburden local resources. Jeffco Community Connection is interested in partnering with the City to support the connection of outside agencies and services to those groups and individuals looking for assistance. Finally, Jefferson County Community Development worked with local business owners to help develop Edgewater Enterprise, is partnering with the Principal of Jefferson High and the Chief of Police on a grant to provide a Resource Officer for Jefferson High School and is ready to work with the City in any capacity necessary to address resident needs. By reaching out to other partners and agencies the City of Edgewater will strengthen core programs, increase innovation and gain support in addressing the desires of the community.

Conclusions

Overall, the residents of Edgewater reflected great pride in their City and an appreciation of the “small town feel” and friendliness of the community. This was shown by the unanimous support of events such as Edgewater Days and the 4th of July celebration. There was a clear commitment to the community which was present among the citizens and also revealed in the longevity of much of the City staff. The proximity to Sloan’s Lake and Denver and the accessibility to major highways places Edgewater in an ideal position to attract new residents, especially those who cannot afford to live in neighboring Denver. The City’s interesting history and unique charm create the distinctive local feel that many people desire; this coupled with relatively affordable homes make Edgewater a sought-after alternative for first-time buyers.

A great desire of the residents of Edgewater seemed to be enhanced communication and community involvement. Whether it was with City representatives or their neighbors, residents were looking for better ways to connect. One suggestion from residents to help increase communication was to employ a City Liaison to act as a connector within the community. Throughout the outreach sessions, there were several more specific recurring thoughts heard from the participants. These included: The need for after school programs for youth, a desire for more senior programs and activities, support from the community to address basic needs for a portion of the population, addressing the language barrier and increasing accessibility to parks, shopping, etc.

A resounding call for youth programs was heard by all populations attending the outreach sessions. Providing safe places for youth in between school time and when parents return home from work was at the top of the list for many residents. If successful after-school programs are accomplished, this could additionally serve to address other safety issues such as the threat of gang involvement for school-aged children and the large number of incidences of sexual assault taking place on Edgewater children. Overcoming language barriers will be an important piece in working with parents and creating youth programs. The Seniors of Edgewater are another population who would like to see more opportunity for activity. Many outreach participants found that an enormous barrier to community involvement was mobility, due in part to health conditions and in part to accessibility issues. In-house activities were requested at the Edgewater Plaza and populations of all ages said they would like to see accessible sidewalks to stores, parks and restaurants. Creating this type of usable “path” throughout the City could serve as a connector for all populations as well as show support for mobility-challenged residents and also local businesses.

Additional participant suggestions included a variety of partnership ideas. Some residents saw an ideal connection in the Senior and youth populations, perhaps in the form of a “grandparent” program. Other ideas for links included the youth population and the Police force, the high school students working with local business owners, and a parent-mentoring program in the schools. Suggestions were also made to hold a monthly flea market or farmer’s market where all residents could have the opportunity to participate free of charge. Caring for the entire community to make certain that all residents have their basic needs met was yet another resounding theme. Outreach participants thought a good way to accomplish this goal might be to involve the community in a local food and clothing bank.

The City of Edgewater is fortunate to have many dedicated residents who are extremely committed to the enrichment and betterment of their community. There are also numerous internal and external partners who are prepared to work closely with the City government and the community as a whole. Edgewater has many exciting and potentially far-reaching opportunities that are ready to be explored, and the City is already poised to move forward with several new projects. In conducting some additional outreach to the residents, in particular the senior, youth and Spanish-speaking populations, a number of the desires expressed by the public participants may well be fulfilled. Leveraging resources with some of the willing partners and creating programs and policies that include all populations could also enhance the fulfillment of the community.