



Skinker DeBaliviere Community Council

# Engaging Neighbors

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# Agenda

- Research questions
- Project overview
- Defining community
- The Skinker-DeBaliviere community
- Data collection
- Key findings
- Recommendations
- Measuring success
- Research limitations
- Conclusion

# Research Questions

1. What is the best way to maintain and increase engagement within the Skinker-DeBaliviere Community Council's (SDCC) service area?
2. What metrics are appropriate to measure SDCC community engagement success?

# Project Overview

- Literature review
- Meetings with key stakeholders
- In-depth interviews
- Interview content analysis
- Locate evidence relevant to findings

# Defining Community

Communities are social, spatial, or functional units that:

- Meet members' needs
- Provide patterned interaction
- Create collective identification

*(Hardcastle and Powers , 2004)*

# Skinker-DeBaliviere Community

## Social Activities



*2<sup>nd</sup> Annual  
Home Coming*



## Political Engagement



*Comptroller and resident,  
Darlene Green, hosts a reception  
for residents to learn more about  
Senate Candidate Robin Carnahan*

*Photo Source: The Times of Skinker-DeBaliviere, 2010*

# Washington Heights History

1966

SDCC forms with 2 charter members: Rosedale & Washington Heights (WH)

1980s

WH withdraws from SDCC after a dispute regarding the redevelopment of Nina Place

1980s

Washington Heights' neighborhood association disbands

80s-  
Present

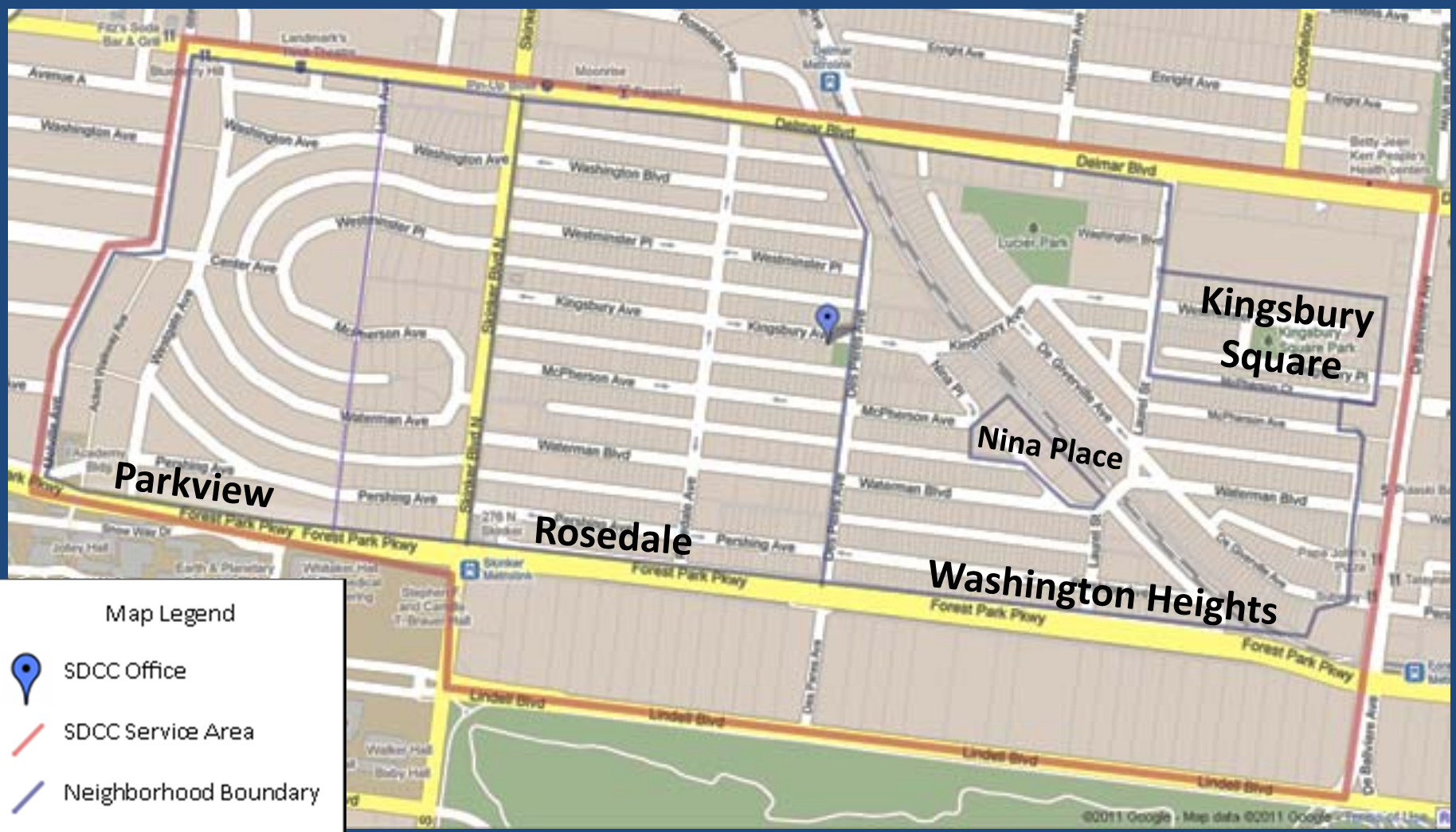
SDCC encourages "at-large" board members so that WH residents are represented on SDCC Board

2010





SDCC attempts to reestablish WH association



# Skinker-DeBaliviere Area Today

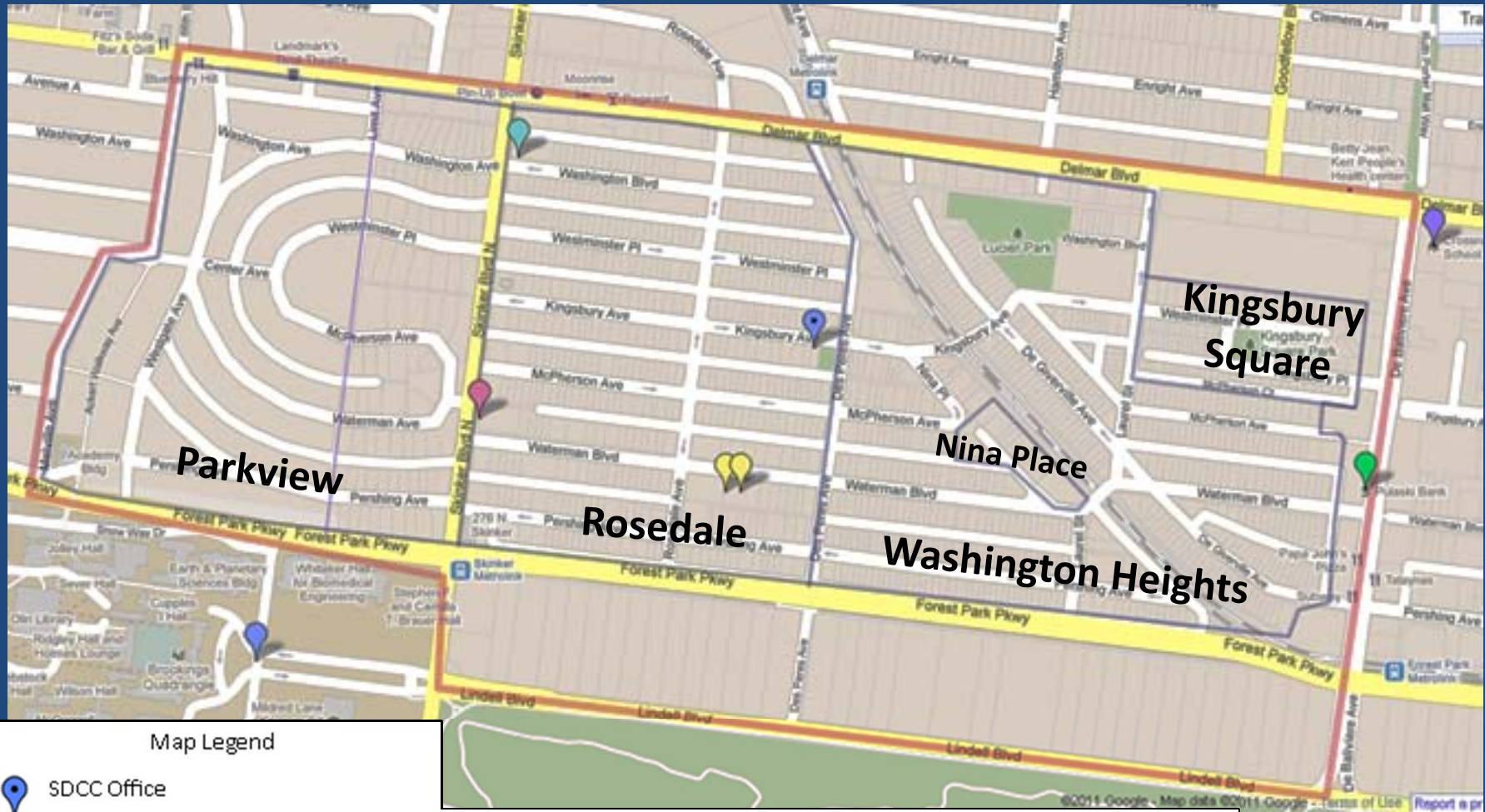












Map Legend

-  SDCC Office
-  SDCC Service Area
-  Neighborhood Boundary
-  City Limit



# Stakeholders



Map Legend			
	SDCC Office		
	SDCC Service Area		
	Neighborhood Boundary		
	City Limit		
	New Cote Brillante Church		Washington University
	Crossroads School		Grace United Methodist Church
	Pulaski Bank		Saint Roch's Catholic Church & School

# Data Collection

Feb. 2 Community Engagement Committee Meeting

Feb. 17 SDCC Board Meeting

Mar. 24 Block Captain Meeting

March  
1-31 In-Depth Interviews

# In-Depth Interviews Goals

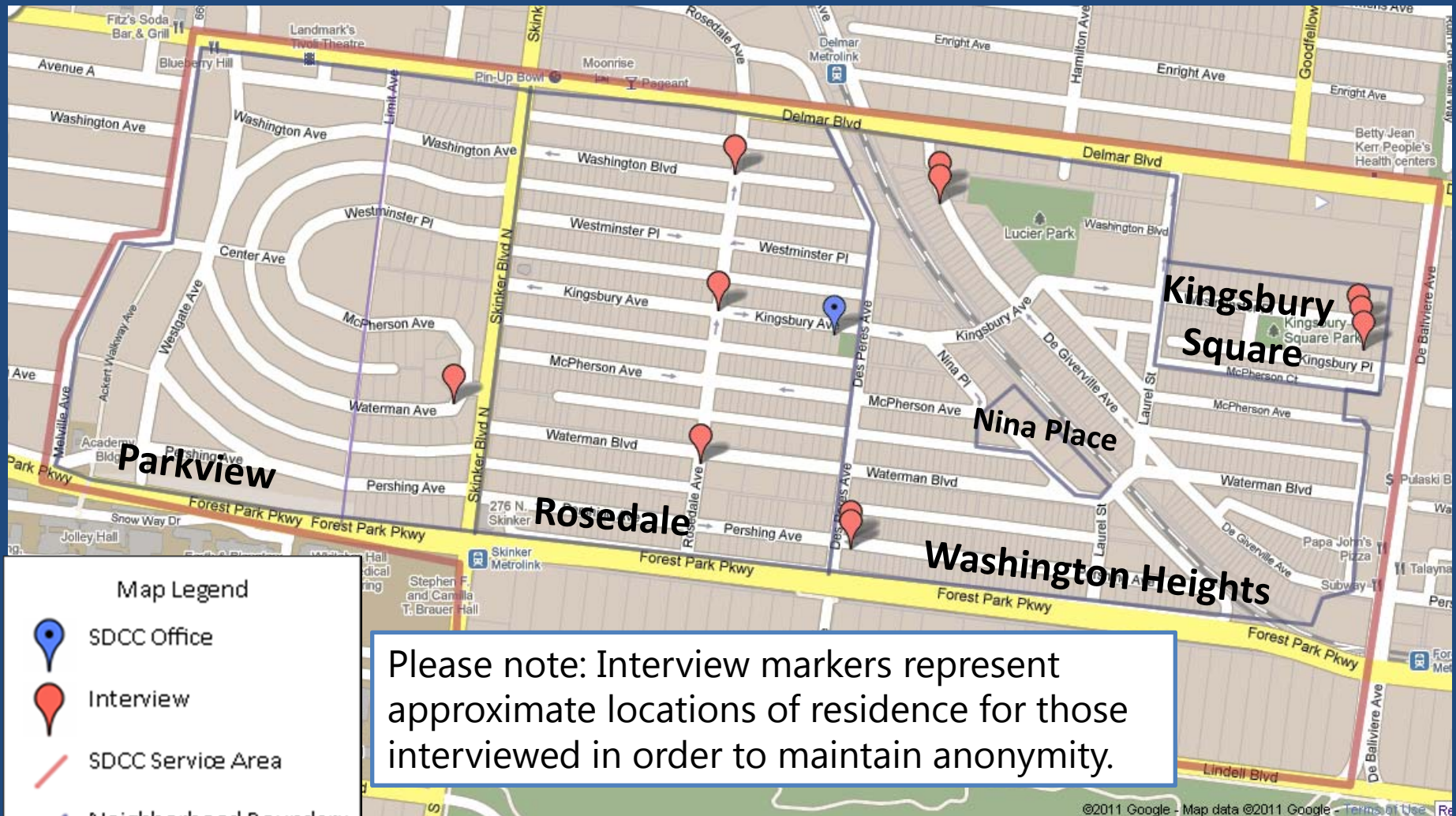
- Learn from residents their
  - History with & perceptions of neighborhood
  - Community engagement needs
  - Barriers to involvement
- Identify next participant
- Analyze content for themes

# 11 Interview Participants

- Age range: undergrad to retiree
- Race: 2 African American, 1 Asian American, 8 Caucasian
- Gender: 6 men, 5 women
- Length of residence: 2-25 years, 11.9 average



# Interviews



# Finding #1: Residents do not Identify with "Washington Heights"

What neighborhood do you identify with?	Number of responses
Skinker-DeBaliviere	6
Kingsbury Square	2
Central West End	2
Parkview	1
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>11</b>



## Finding #2: Residents Confirm Importance of Diversity

“If you hear that St. Louis is a racist city, it is. .. But the thing about this neighborhood ...is that most of us don’t give a damn what color our neighbors are”  
(interview).



*Photo Source: The Times of Skinker-DeBaliviere, 2010*

## Finding #3: Residents Require Multifaceted Communication

- 10 of 11 interview participants said email is the best way to contact them

However...

- Engagement requires personal communication such as a phone call



## Recommendation #1: Build “Skinker-DeBaliviere” Brand

- Redirect efforts from recreating a “Washington Heights” neighborhood association
- Educate residents about SDCC’s function
- Develop and implement marketing/communication strategy
- Build on existing strengths
- Highlight diversity and inclusion

## Recommendation #2: Ensure Inclusion

- Expand Block Captain initiative to every block
- Forge strong partnerships with community organizations that are reaching less engaged populations
- Provide tools, incentives, and strategic supports for civic participation

## Recommendation #2: Ensure Inclusion

Engagement for all ages:

- Community games
- Celebrations
- Festivals
- Contests



*Photo Source: The Times of Skinker-DeBaliviere, 2010*

## Recommendation #3: Implement Communication Strategy

- Build and maintain contact list
- Collect and respond to feedback from the community
- Analyze communication effectiveness
- Be consistent
- Use multifaceted approach



# Measuring Success

- Collect and analyze participation data
- Conduct "Sense of Community Index -2" survey which measures four elements:
  - Membership
  - Influence
  - Meeting needs
  - Shared connection

# Limitations

- Understanding project scope
- Time frame
- Sampling
- Interview location

# Conclusion

The Skinker-DeBaliviere community has a long history, a strong core of volunteers, and commitment to continued community improvement.

Given these strengths, research findings, and recommendations, we believe Skinker-DeBaliviere Community Council will be successful in increasing engagement within its service area.



# Thank You

## Questions

# Resources

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