HIT THE TRAIL:
Art, History & Tactical Urbanism
Along Gary’s Fitness Trail

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DISCUSSION OBJECTIVES
• Project Development: Concept to Scope to Implementation
• Grant-writing: Cobbling Together the Funding
• Outside-the-Diamond (you’ll get it in a minute) thinking: Youth Component, Contests, Awareness
• Collaboration-Building
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Model Improvements for the Broadway Corridor
THE DOWNTOWN PLANNING ENVIRONMENT

Base map: 1956 map of Hammond, Gary, Michigan City region
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THE DOWNTOWN PLANNING ENVIRONMENT RESIDENTIAL
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THE DOWNTOWN PLANNING ENVIRONMENT EDUCATIONAL
Connecting the Dots

- Creating a reason for activities in an urban environment
- Centering the positive assets
- Centering transit and transportation
- PAYING FOR IT
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ART AND HISTORY TO IMPROVE HEALTH?

- PSE = Policy, Systems and Environmental Change strategy to improve health

- Survey showed high need for places to be physically active in Gary
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IMPLEMENTATION EFFORTS

PROOF OF CONCEPT
• Urban Hike in downtown Gary, Summer 2021
• Guided tour of most of the route
• Art and historic buildings researched
Project elements

- Crosswalks: installation of pedestrian pathways to demarcate crossing areas for riders/shoppers while alerting drivers

- Improved pedestrian environment in adjacent businesses

- Activity trail to promote transit use, connectivity to/between activity centers, art installations, bike trails and transit nodes
GRANT APPLICATION TO IN. DEPT. OF HEALTH

- Federal Transit Administration (FTA) funds would be combined with ISDH funds
- Existing GPTC marketing vendors would do design work, create website
- ISDH funded for two award cycles
- Additional America Walks grant funded street art within the Art and History Fitness Trail limits
Public Input

- Polling on social media for priorities and scope
- Transit to Trails Program and the “Urban Hike” showcasing art and transit connections
- GPTC Fall Summit in November 2021
Public Input, Community Partners

- Local health centers
- Gary elementary, middle and high schools
- Gary Public Library
- Decay Devils (urban exploration and preservation
- City of Gary Youth Employment Initiative
- Purdue Northwest School of Nursing, senior capstone project
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TRAIL FACTS

• 1.6 miles, but can easily access it from any point

• Includes murals, sculpture and historic sites. This allowed for more potential partners in project
TRAIL FACTS

- Signage at each site has QR code to website with more info and to track usage
- Project is ongoing – new partners and new opportunities for promotion abound, and sites are being improved along trail
IMPACTS AND LEGACY

• Part of investment in active living in downtown Gary:

• Crosswalk and street art across town
• New investment
• Bikeshare
• New phases?
YOUTH SERVICES SITE VISIT
Students, volunteers and staff were given an overview of the sites along the Trail that would be seen. Students were moderately interested, but once on the Trail and being able to take in the sites, using all of their senses, true excitement and enthusiasm! Along with a desire to learn more.
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