



categorized. In order to assess geographic differences, responses were separated into two categories – *City of Syracuse* and *Rest of County*—based upon respondents’ residence. The classification of *City of Syracuse* included residents of the following zip codes: 13202, 13203, 13204, 13205, 13206, 13207, 13208, 13210, and 13224.

## Results

A total of 355 qualitative responses were received from Onondaga County residents. Of these, 130 (36.6%) were Syracuse residents, and 225 (63.4%) lived outside the City of Syracuse. This is fairly consistent with the distribution of residents within Onondaga County where 30.9%<sup>ii</sup> of County residents reside in Syracuse.

### *Characteristics of a Healthy Community*

Responses about characteristics for achieving a healthy community focused around six main themes: meeting basic needs, collaborative mindset, environment that supports health, economic factors, access to services, and other factors (Figure 1).

Figure 1. Key Features of a Healthy Community, Onondaga County, 2016





Responses within the theme of *Meeting Basic Needs* centered around four main components: safety, education, food, and housing. Safety was the most frequently cited factor with comments focusing on crime and violence in community spaces, such as streets and parks. There was a focus on ensuring basic needs are met before addressing other community challenges.



Comments related to *Collaborative Mindset* focused on the belief that a healthy community can be achieved through supportive and engaged people. Diversity, mutual respect, and equal opportunity were cited as important factors. Additionally, pride in the community, and presenting a positive image of both the County and Syracuse were referenced. Finally, community events focusing on arts and culture were considered essential components.



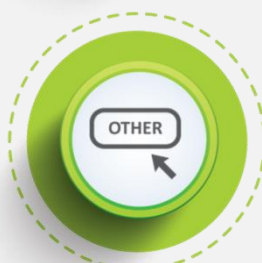
Within the theme of *Environment that Supports Health*, comments highlighted the importance of a clean, safe, and healthy environment. Elements of the physical and built environment were discussed, including green space, water sources, and transportation. There was a focus on the desire for the environment to support healthy lifestyles and behaviors, such as the creation of walking or bike paths to promote physical activity.



Feedback within the theme of *Economic Factors* centered mainly on the topics of economic growth, a strong economy, and employment opportunities. Poverty was a significant concern, as was access to high quality and affordable daycare.



Comments within the theme of *Access to Services* focused on access to supportive services including programs for children, individuals with disabilities, the elderly, and individuals with mental health challenges. Comments also highlighted the need for services for high risk groups and ensuring that services are easy to access.



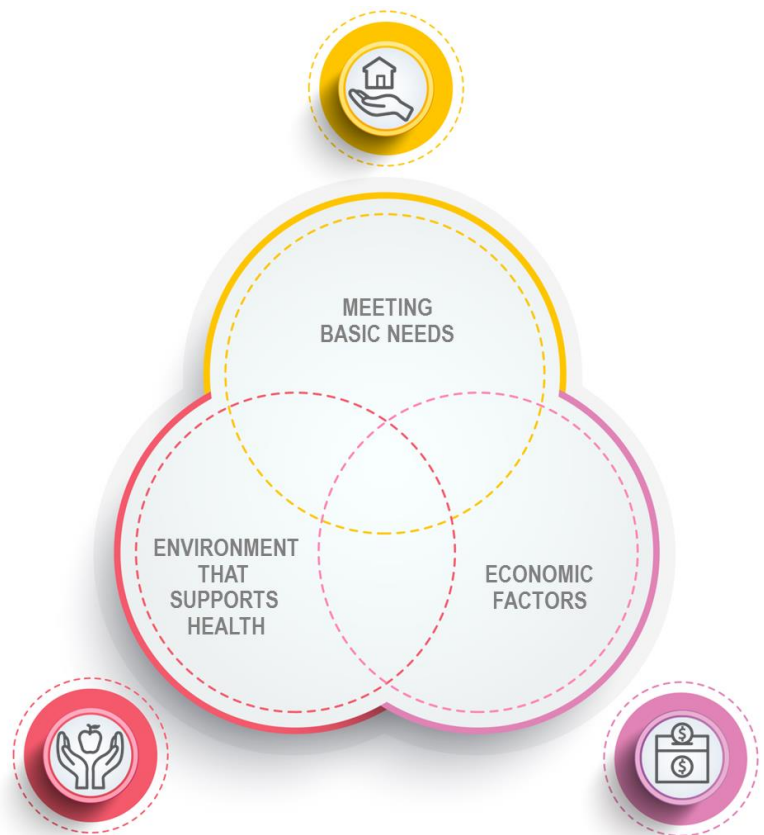
*Other Factors* was a broad category to capture comments that did not fall within the other main themes. Several respondents commented that achieving a healthy community is an individual responsibility. Others cited the importance of communication, including interpersonal communication, messages from government leaders, and media approaches. Religion and religious values were also mentioned by some respondents.

Analysis of the responses revealed that several of the main themes were interrelated. Figure 2 depicts the intersection of the themes of *Meeting Basic Needs*, *Economic Factors*, and *Environment That Supports Health*.

Crime is one example of a topic that fell within all three themes. Reducing crime relates directly to the basic need of safety; however it is also integrated with economic factors such as job opportunities and environmental factors including the presence of streetlights.

Another example is healthy food. Many respondents identified this as a basic need, while others discussed healthy food in the context of food access. The discussion of access related to environmental factors such as transportation and economic factors including cost as a barrier.

Figure 2. Intersection of Key Themes



### Notable Geographic Differences

Consistencies around the main themes were observed between geographies of *Syracuse* and *Rest of County*. However there were a few notable differences noted below:

- Within the theme of *Collaborative Mindset*, Syracuse residents were more likely to discuss mutual respect and diversity in the context of a divide or tension between social groups while those living outside of the city cited respect for others and a general appreciation of diversity.
- Comments from Syracuse residents in the theme of *Environment That Supports Health* focused on public spaces and access to transportation while residents outside of the city focused on clean water and reduced trash and pollution.
- Within the *Other Factors* theme, there was more of an emphasis on religion and related values outside of the city.

## Conclusion

Onondaga County residents identified several characteristics that are important for a healthy community. While there was a variety of feedback, responses centered around six main themes: meeting basic needs, collaborative mindset, environment that supports health, economic factors, access to services, and other factors. Responses for Syracuse residents and for the rest of the County were similar with a few notable differences. Additionally there was significant cross-over between responses within the main themes, demonstrating that a healthy community results from the inter-relationship of many factors.

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<sup>i</sup> University of Wisconsin-Extension. (2003). Analyzing qualitative data. (Program Development and Evaluation G3658-12). Madison, WI: Cooperative Extension Publishing Operations.

<sup>ii</sup> U.S. Census Bureau, American Community Survey, 2011-2015 population estimates.



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