Between March and November 2013, Harder+Company Community Research conducted eight community asset-mapping sessions throughout San Bernardino County with the goal of better understanding the needs, assets, resources, and gaps in services that families with young children in San Bernardino County face. Each session consisted of interactive activities for parents, community residents and local service providers that focused on a broad range of topics, from early education and medical resources to places where children can be active and community sources of pride. This report presents the findings from the Colton Asset Mapping session conducted on November 13, 2013.
For this project, First 5 San Bernardino and Harder+Company Community Research adopted asset mapping as an approach to understanding community needs. Asset mapping has at least two important advantages over other traditional needs assessment approaches that made it well-suited to meet First 5 San Bernardino’s goals: it is strengths-based and inclusive.

Asset mapping focuses first on what is available and working in a community. These resources can then be leveraged to help address the needs of that same community – allowing for a strengths-based approach to problem solving. Simply put, being aware of both the resources and needs of a community allows for the development of more strategic solutions that have a higher likelihood of achieving outcomes. Traditional needs assessment focuses primarily on what’s missing from a community.

Second, asset mapping is inclusive – the technique makes it possible for a diverse group of people to work together to describe and understand the community. First 5 San Bernardino was eager to include a strong parent perspective in this project alongside the professional knowledge that service providers and leaders bring. Anyone who lives in a community is well-positioned to participate in asset mapping regardless of education, literacy level, language spoken or prior experience with this type of activity. Asset mapping truly allows a seat at the table for anyone with firsthand knowledge of the community.

Asset mapping sessions resulted in lively discussions and debates about every community we conducted them in. We hope the information in this brief report conveys the passion that community members brought to the session. We are indebted to them for their time and participation in this process.

About this report:

The fold out map to the right provides an overview of the mappable assets and needs in Muscoy. The report that follows provides more detailed information about the community-identified assets and needs.
This summary map shows community identified assets and needs in the Muscoy community. During the asset mapping workshop a mix of approximately 50 local parents, residents, and service providers worked together to identify current community strengths and challenges. Participants discussed a broad range of assets including schools, child care, food outlets and health care facilities. Although this is not an exhaustive list, First 5 San Bernardino and key community partners can use this map to identify existing resources that can be built upon to strengthen the foundation of services for children 0-5 and their families.

Key Findings:

+ Families in Muscoy lack supports necessary to ensure their children are healthy. Quality food is a major concern as no market in the area provides affordable produce and groceries. Basic healthcare services are also unavailable, and parents must travel outside the area to access them.

+ Parents are concerned about the safety of their children. Many noted that their children typically play at home because they feel public spaces, such as parks, are not safe. Overall, families don’t spend a lot of time outside in their neighborhoods. Until these issues are addressed, parents will not be able to provide kid-friendly activities in Muscoy.

+ Across the board, participants highlighted the need for improved public infrastructure. There are very few sidewalks, street lights, and traffic signals in Muscoy. Residents also expressed the need for safer parks and improved public transportation.

For a full report please go to:
www.first5sanbernardino.org, click on Downloads

NOVEMBER 2013
What does everyday life look like for parents and community members in Muscoy?

Muscoy is a small community located northwest of San Bernardino City, with a population of about ten thousand people; 83 percent of which identify as Hispanic or Latino\(^1\). This community is mostly comprised of families with young children\(^2\). While most of the people who attended the asset mapping session live in Muscoy, daily activities such as grocery shopping, work, and childcare, often take place outside of Muscoy. Many Muscoy residents spend time each day in surrounding areas such as San Bernardino, Highland, and Rialto. The lack of basic resources such as affordable childcare, jobs, and food in the area has led families to seek these resources outside of Muscoy.

**Quality food is a major concern for Muscoy families.** Parents identified quality food as a major concern as no market in the area provides affordable produce and groceries. In fact, only mini marts and gas stations were identified within the Muscoy boundaries (see map). Muscoy families are very conscious of where they buy their family’s food, seeking stores that are nearby and provide affordable and healthy options. Most community members noted that they look for deals and coupons in the newspaper and change the location of where they shop depending on the weekly deals. As can be seen in the map, most participants identified only few stores, such as El Super, Stater Brothers, Superior, and Cardenas for weekly groceries because these stores are the closest ones to Muscoy and tend to offer more reasonably priced groceries. Some families find themselves driving far outside the Muscoy boundaries for big ticket items at stores like Wal-Mart and Costco.

\(^1\) 2010 Census
\(^2\) 64.8\% of households have children under 18 living with them (2010 Census).
An additional barrier to ensuring children and families eat healthy food is the prevalence of fast food restaurants in the area. As seen in the map, participants identified a cluster of fast food restaurants just outside the northeast Muscoy boundary and additional fast food restaurants near the 210 freeway. While not all participants eat at fast food restaurants, the majority said they eat there with regularity, ranging from twice per month to three times per week. Most parents said they eat at places such as McDonalds, Jack in the Box, and In and Out because it is affordable for families with multiple children. McDonalds was also identified as the only kid friendly restaurant due to their playground. Few knew of family friendly sit down restaurants in the area.
Poor infrastructure and safety concerns make it difficult for families to exercise and gather in public spaces. Most community members pointed to Muscoy’s poor infrastructure, such as lack of sidewalks, street lights, and accessible parks, as the primary barriers to exercising and gathering with other community members. Moreover, families with children are concerned about the safety of their children due to these barriers and the perceived prevalence of sex offenders in the area. Many noted that their children typically play at home because they feel public spaces, such as parks, are rundown and not safe. Overall, families do not spend a lot of time outside in their neighborhoods, unless they are walking their children to and from school or the library.

Additionally, there are very few parks in or near Muscoy. Participants identified parks such as Lionel E Hudson Park and Secombe Lake Park, both in San Bernardino, as the parks closest to them. Parks are, however, largely considered unsafe. Participants cited shootings, drug paraphernalia, and homeless populations as some of the main concerns about visiting parks near Muscoy.

Local churches provide a safe place for community gathering. Participants indicated that local churches, such as Saint Anthony’s and Our Lady of Guadalupe, provide a much-needed safe environment for kids and families. The majority of participants indicated that they regularly attended a local church and were often embedded in the fabric of that church’s social life.
Muscoy benefits from its proximity to the region’s medical care hub, but poor transportation and lack of health insurance can make it challenging for families to utilize these facilities.

There are several highly valued medical care providers in the area. Most community members identified medical providers such as St. Bernardine Medical Center, Community Hospital of San Bernardino, Arrowhead Regional Medical Center (ARMC), and Loma Linda University Medical Center as great resources for regular medical care and emergency care. The majority of women also identified LaSalle Medical Associates as a great resource for prenatal, pediatric, and women’s health care. However, as can be seen on the map, all of these facilities lie outside of Muscoy. Given that many young families rely on public transportation, accessing care at these facilities poses a challenge for many families. Parents also reported that they typically use regional hospitals such as Loma Linda Medical Center, St. Bernardine’s Medical Center, and Arrowhead Regional Medical Center for emergency care for their families; however, more accessible options closer to home are desired.

Practicing good oral health is important to parents, but the cost and the need for pediatric dentists in the area make it a challenge. All participants indicated that practicing good oral health is a priority for them and their families. This included brushing their teeth, using mouthwash, flossing, and regular visits to the dentist. Parents rely heavily on obtaining information from school health fairs and friends. This is particularly important for those parents who do not take their children to a dentist regularly. For many participants, the biggest challenge to keeping up good oral health habits was the cost of dental care and a lack of dental insurance. Although all parents agreed about the importance of practicing good oral health, many felt the cost of regular dentist visits was too much for them to maintain as a regular habit. One parent wrote, “Dentist are expensive and sometimes dental insurance does not cover all dental work.” For families with limited resources, dental check-ups were more likely to happen when during school health fairs, as opposed to a routine practice. Another barrier parents shared was the lack of appropriate transportation. Many families in Muscoy rely on public transportation, which can make it difficult to regularly attend dentist appointments far from their home. In many families dentist visits are more likely to occur on an emergency basis, suggesting that children may not have regular access to preventative care.
Identifying parent’s practice and knowledge:

Community members utilized “placemats”, like the one pictured below, and worked in teams to identify dental health practices, challenges, and gaps in services.
What learning opportunities are available for young children and their families?

Muscoy parents place a high value on early education but more resources are needed. All parents reported they promote educational activities with their children such as reading, singing, counting, and visiting the local library. However, many noted that additional resources such as parenting classes and parent-and-child activities are difficult to find regularly. Currently, most parents rely on friends and family for advice on parenting and early education issues. Others seek help from the internet.

Parents also identified Muscoy Baker Family Learning Center Library, Muscoy Elementary, and Vermont Elementary as great resources for parents and children. Many noted that they have attended Muscoy Elementary for parenting classes and information sessions whenever those are available. Others added they utilize the local library for their computers, as a source of information, and for child-centered activities. There is speculation that the library will also soon offer much needed preschool services for Muscoy children, but parents are not clear as to when that will happen. Lastly, some parents have attended Vermont Elementary for ELS classes.

Community members used “place mats”, maps of Muscoy, and stickers to identify early education practices and resources.
Parents desire more early education learning opportunities and resources. Muscoy parents are very engaged in their children’s education and desire additional resources to ensure their children are receiving early and ongoing education. A number of parents identified the local Head Start as a great service, but many parents are also concerned about the qualification requirements. For many families, finding low-cost accessible preschool and childcare presents a major challenge. Most families turn to grandparents, other family, friends, and neighbors to provide affordable childcare. Parents in Muscoy desire more parent education, childcare, and preschool services. By having access to such opportunities, parents felt they would gain confidence and become stronger parents for their children.

Community Desires for the Muscoy and the Central Valley Region

This word cloud illustrates resources participants most desire for Muscoy. Participants were asked to name some things they would like to see in their community. Words appearing in larger type appeared more frequently in their responses. Overall, community members desire more parks, safety, and family activities in their community.
Summary of community-identified needs in Muscoy and the Central Valley Region

- There are limited healthy and affordable food options for families in Muscoy and the Central Valley Region. Due to the convenience and affordability of fast food chains, most parents view this as their only choice for eating out with their families.

- Safety is a major concern for the families in Muscoy. Many residents identified issues related to poor infrastructure, such as the lack of sidewalks or street lights, and lack of safety at parks and public spaces. These concerns in combination with poor public transportation in the area contribute to families traveling outside of the area for recreation.

- Children’s oral health needs are likely to be unmet. While most parents understand the need for regular preventative care, family budgets cannot cover the cost.

- Affordable childcare and preschools are a priority for most Muscoy families with young children. Currently, there is a scarcity of accessible childcare and preschool facilities in the area. As a result, many children are cared for by family members, friends, and neighbors while their parents work.

*Community members* were asked to name some things that families with young children need that currently are not available in the region. The “word cloud” below illustrates their responses. Words appearing in larger type appeared more frequently in their responses. Overall childcare and healthcare appear to be the largest needs for families in the Central Valley Region.
Thank you!

Many thanks to the community residents who attended this asset mapping event and worked diligently to identify their community’s needs and assets. We also want to thank local organizations that helped recruit community members. We extend a special thanks to the Latino Health Collaborative, who provided their knowledge and support every step of the way, helped recruit families, and obtained donations to make this event a celebration for community members.

The community of Muscoy cares deeply about the well-being of young children and their families. Parents understand the importance of healthy foods, preventative dental care, and early learning opportunities for their children’s future. However, family budgets, poor infrastructure, and the lack of local resources make it difficult for families to provide their children with the necessary tools for them to thrive.
First 5 San Bernardino was created in December, 1998 in order to realize the benefits of Proposition 10 (California Children and Families Act) for the County's youngest residents and their families. The act created a program for the purpose of promoting, supporting, and improving the early development of children from the prenatal stage to five years of age.

Vision – All children in San Bernardino County are healthy, safe, nurtured, eager to learn and ready to succeed.

Mission – Promote, support and enhance the health and early development of children prenatal through age five and their families and communities.

www.first5sanbernardino.org
735 E. Carnegie Drive, Suite 150
San Bernardino CA 92408
(909) 386-7706

Harder+Company Community Research is a comprehensive social research and planning firm with offices in San Francisco, Davis, San Diego, and Los Angeles, California. Harder+Company’s mission is to help our clients achieve social impact through quality research, strategy, and organizational development services. Since 1986, we have assisted foundations, government agencies, and nonprofits throughout California and the country in using good information to make good decisions for their future. Our success rests on providing services that contribute to positive social impact in the lives of vulnerable people and communities.

harderco.com