

# Ebeid Neighborhood Promise UpTown Community Coalition

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Planning Together for a Healthy Neighborhood

## County Health Rankings & Roadmaps

Building a Culture of Health, County by County



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## UpTown Toledo in Lucas County, Ohio

Founded in 1837 along the banks of the Maumee River, Toledo, Ohio, is a major port city in northwest Ohio. It is the fourth-most populous city in the state and the county seat for Lucas County. This historic home of the Wyandot and Odawa peoples eventually became known for its manufacturing industries, most famously for the Willys Jeep used throughout World War II. Toledo is also known as the “Glass City” due to its glass industries, including bottles, windows, windshields, and art. The UpTown neighborhood in Toledo is a diverse, predominately Black community nestled between the Downtown, Old West End, and Junction neighborhoods. While the neighborhood is home to a renaissance in organic arts and small businesses, many UpTown residents continue to navigate low incomes, food insecurity, and limited access to jobs with a living wage. With a median household income of around \$15,000 per year, nearly half of all residents receive SNAP benefits, and about one out of three residents lives in subsidized housing. By comparison, about 5 out of 100 residents in Lucas County reside in subsidized housing. UpTown is also primarily a community of renters, with around 4 out of 100 residents being homeowners<sup>1</sup>.

Considering these issues and UpTown’s proximity to Downtown and public transit, many social services agencies also call UpTown home. While these organizations do important work, much structural work remains to be done, specifically in the areas of education, housing, jobs, and health. These disparities manifest as clinical health challenges, including frequent emergency department visits, high readmission rates, babies born prematurely or at low birth weights, and numerous preventable chronic health conditions.

## Investing in the Health of the UpTown Neighborhood

ProMedica, a not-for-profit integrated health and well-being organization serving communities in 28 states, has pursued improvements to the quality of life in the UpTown neighborhood for the past five years. This work began with the Market on the Green grocery store in what was once considered a food desert. As the current facilitator of the coalition, Malcolm Cunningham, described, “The ProMedica health system started to notice why people were coming in. Hunger was beginning to be understood as a health issue—initially, we [ProMedica] were focusing on hunger. And then we noticed it wasn’t just hunger. It was also transportation. It was also housing, etc. So we began stepping away from the traditional model of looking at health.”

Since 2017, this pursuit has taken the form of the ProMedica Ebeid Neighborhood Promise (ENP). ENP is a 10-year, \$50 million community development initiative that aims to improve the health and well-being of UpTown residents by focusing on critical social determinants of health (SDOH): education, jobs and finances, stable housing, and health. ENP centers community engagement in its planning efforts as well, acknowledging that residents, organizations, businesses, and other stakeholders provide critical perspective and lived expertise.

 <p><b>ENP Uptown Community Coalition</b></p> <p>Established in 2021 Vibrant Neighborhoods, Vital Communities</p>	<p><b>TOLEDO, OH</b></p> <p><b>Geography:</b> Urban</p> <p><b>Population:</b> 270,871</p> <p><b>People of color:</b> 41.3%</p> <p><b>Median Household Income:</b> \$37,752</p>
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## The ENP UpTown Community Coalition

In March 2021, ProMedica launched the ENP UpTown Community Coalition to reintegrate community voice and choice into ENP. Addressing the root causes of health inequities requires community partnership with *all* stakeholders. The coalition members codesigned a shared language, mission, and guiding principles during the first six months of coming together—essential elements for any successful long-term partnership. As a leading healthcare system in the region, ProMedica has an SDOH framework that acknowledges that while clinical care plays a role in fostering health, it is not the most significant factor. As the backbone organization for the coalition, ProMedica recognizes that environmental, behavioral, social, and economic factors play a more substantial role in shaping the health and well-being of the community.

From previous experiences with place-based work, ProMedica knew that the seats at the table must expand beyond those for traditional “key stakeholders.” This includes residents navigating social services, small business owners, and other community-based organizations with authentic local perspectives. In addition, it was vital to center communities as collaborative partners, not just as providers of services, resources, or dollars. ENP is testing new ways to lift community voices and expertise to address issues that drive health. The coalition’s earliest win has been its ability to nurture trust, buy-in, and collaboration among community members, business owners, and social service providers who demonstrate a shared vision of making UpTown a healthier neighborhood.

*“We cannot exist in a vacuum, and it only makes sense to partner. Otherwise, how do we create the connectedness that a community needs to have? How do we create the cultural humility that is needed for us to coexist in communities and neighborhoods?”*

*—Kathleen Greely, Coalition Member*

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## Uplift UpTown: Grants to Beautify the Built Environment and Enhance Safety

The Uplift UpTown: Safety & Beautification fund is the first initiative launched by the coalition, with funding provided by ProMedica ENP and facilitation led by the Toledo Arts Commission. Uplift UpTown provides micro-grant funding for community-led projects that improve safety, reduce blight, beautify the neighborhood, and respond to resident, businessowner, and other stakeholder concerns. The community has applied for funding to support an array of projects. The funded projects include the development and distribution of emergency preparedness kits for adults with disabilities and supporting a community-led bike group with helmets for children, bike lights, and marketing materials. These projects are certainly about changing the built environment, enhancing neighborhood safety, and facilitating community connectivity.

*“I am most appreciative of the grant that I was awarded for my Bike Rides Matter community bike group! Our Saturday night Glow Roll events help shine a positive light of diversity and inclusivity on our UpTown Green meeting location as well as the neighboring UpTown area that we ride [in].”*

*— Keith Cook, Recipient of an Uplift UpTown Grant*

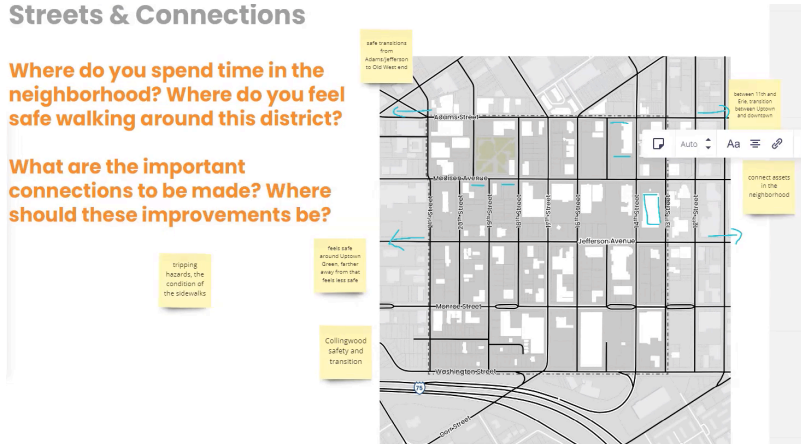
Community members are involved in the process for selecting the funded projects. The coalition also voted to enshrine community voice and choice in the subcommittees; any subcommittee or working group must include a community member and community-based staff from the Ebeid Neighborhood Promise.

## Community Voice and Choice in Neighborhood Planning

### Streets & Connections

**Where do you spend time in the neighborhood? Where do you feel safe walking around this district?**

**What are the important connections to be made? Where should these improvements be?**



*Feedback session on community connectivity in UpTown*

The ENP UpTown Community Coalition believes that residents, business owners, and other community stakeholders hold the expertise and knowledge needed to create a thriving and vibrant neighborhood. For the coalition, this means facilitating an intentional culture of collaboration and feedback among various sectors and community members in the neighborhood's planning, beautification, and health improvement efforts.

Most recently, the coalition hosted community conversations to create a shared vision for the future of UpTown. Beyond the monthly coalition meetings, individual meetings were held with resident groups, social service organizations, and businesses. These meetings will inform an updated community plan for the built environment in UpTown, with a focus on a few key city blocks and pathways. The coalition members prioritized improved street connectivity, greening, and pedestrian and transportation improvements. The coalition members also highlighted the need to support the unhoused, improve pedestrian walkways, and ensure that safe, high quality, and affordable housing remains available.



**THE ARTS COMMISSION**  
INSPIRING A VIBRANT TOLEDO

The Arts Commission is a 501(c)(3) nonprofit organization founded in 1959 to foster Toledo's heritage in the arts. Since 2015, the Arts Commission has facilitated creative place-making projects prioritizing authentic resident and community partnerships. As a result, community members have mapped cultural assets in the neighborhood, gathered community feedback on public art projects, and connected community members to health resources.

The Uplift UpTown: Safety & Beautification fund supports stakeholders in owning their vision for the community. Ryan Bunch, former Director of Community Initiatives with the Arts Commission, describes the work of the Arts Commission as being in tune with community readiness and “see[ing] where people are at and then going from there.” While there are many challenges to building authentic engagement in the neighborhood, he notes that residents are beginning to take ownership through the beautification efforts in UpTown.

