

Neighborhood Place: Unpacking the Role and Reach of a Community-Based Service Collaborative

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Executive Summary

The modern accountability and school reform movement in the United States owes no small debt to the model and framework established through the passage of the Kentucky Education Reform Act (KERA) in 1990. Passed in response to the Kentucky Supreme Court's decision invalidating the state's education finance structure, the KERA established far-reaching goals for school reform and defined many of the early contours of standards-based reform and high-stakes testing for accountability.

Growing out of the school-linked services movement, the KERA focused on both achievement and community supports. The KERA's six goals articulate a vision of educational excellence that reaches beyond test scores to embrace outcomes such as, "students shall develop their abilities to become self-sufficient individuals," and "students shall develop their abilities to become responsible members of a family, work group, and community" (University of Kentucky, 2012).

As the educational and social service communities of Louisville-Jefferson County came together to establish the Family Resource and Youth Support Centers (FRYSCs) required by the law, a small group of community leaders began to believe that simply linking schools and services did not go far enough to reduce the barriers to access that plague families in low-income areas. Their efforts to look beyond traditional service delivery for a more

collaborative and deeply integrated services model (Michalczyk, Lentz, & Martin, 2005, pp. 1-2) produced Neighborhood Place, a model for one-stop social service providers located in or near school facilities and distributed across the city to promote economic self-sufficiency.

For the purpose of this study, we will focus on the following questions: What exactly does Neighborhood Place do, and how do the people of the organization do it? Does the theory of action that underlies the initiative offer explanatory power that can inform leadership efforts toward continuous improvement into the next 20 years? Does a deeper understanding of collaboration carry the potential to establish a more robust performance management approach? Can linking performance planning, performance measurement, and performance management "take Neighborhood Place to the next level," a desire expressed by one member of its Operations Committee?

While Neighborhood Place owes its origins to the school-linked services movement, the effort also bears a strong resemblance to large-scale Community Change Initiatives (CCIs) that began to emerge in cities across the nation in the early 1990s. A careful and thorough mixed method analysis of Neighborhood Place from the perspective of large-scale Community Change Initiatives offers an opportunity

to deepen our understanding of what makes Neighborhood Place unique. Pursuing that objective, two important research questions drove the present study:

- Does Neighborhood Place foster collaboration among service providers?
- Does Neighborhood Place affect outcomes for Louisville families?

In response to these questions, evidence suggests that the underpinning characteristic of Neighborhood Place – collaboration – is on solid footing. The co-location of multiple services and agencies has yielded a collaborative environment in which clients are satisfied and receive services in a timely manner. Previous research confirms that neighborhood and family stability play an important role in academic outcomes for children. In fact, almost two-thirds of the academic achievement experienced by students is determined by out-of-school factors, including neighborhood and family effects (Korbin & Coulton, 1997; Clampet-Lundquist & Massey, 2008; Alexander & Entwisle, 1996; Natriello, McDill & Pallas, 1990; Kornhouser, 1978; Rothstein, 2010; Traub, 2000; Schorr, 1998; Schwartz, 2010; Duncan, et al., 1994). High client satisfaction rates and high comparative distribution in Louisville’s food stamps program suggest that co-location of services near schools and within community contexts provides important benefits that help

address these important out-of-school effects of poverty.

The present era carries new challenges, and the leadership of Neighborhood Place remains cognizant of the importance of demonstrating the impact of the organization’s work. Our research shows that the 20-year history of Neighborhood Place is a story of resilience. Neighborhood Place has improvised in response to external pressures, while maintaining a core identity of collaboration that has entered the DNA of the organization.

Our research also reveals that Neighborhood Place is well-positioned to embrace continuous improvement during times of change. For the current era, that embrace includes a more intentional data and performance management system aligned to the stated goals of the collaborative. The leadership of Neighborhood Place can broaden the narrative so that the use of data for continuous improvement remains the responsibility of all participants in the collaborative, rather than giving way to narrow, reductive evaluations on agency-specific measures alone. By committing fully to the collaborative underpinnings of Neighborhood Place, data can be used to monitor performance over time and performance against similar cities on a wide array of indicators. This practice can continue to guide the evolution of Neighborhood Place in this new era of return-on-investment metrics and data-driven decision-making.

Summary of Key Findings

Research Question #1: Does Neighborhood Place foster collaboration among service providers?

Finding #1: Neighborhood Place demonstrates collaboration at all levels of the organization – from leadership to the individual service providers.

- *Governance and administrative foundations of the collaboration are strong:* Both interviews and survey data confirm that the governance and administrative structures of Neighborhood Place are well-established and supportive of collaboration.
- *Co-location combined with high mutuality has produced strong, organic collaboration among agencies at all levels of Neighborhood Place:* From the Operations Committee to the site-level workers, there is a strong commitment to the clients who access Neighborhood Place services. This commitment, in combination with the co-location of services, has produced an organic, authentic collaboration among agencies.
- *Collaboration, while evident in all levels of Neighborhood Place, moves from formal at the leadership level to informal at the worker level:* The Operations Committee maintains a rigorous schedule of meetings (every week) whereby collaboration occurs through formal problem solving; however, collaboration at the worker level relies primarily on informal networks that have grown over time because of co-location.

- *There is a healthy tension among agencies around autonomy:* There is evidence that individual agency members, particularly at the leadership level, wrestle with the tension between collaboration and agency autonomy. Despite this tension, individual leaders believe the sacrifice in agency autonomy brings about better outcomes for families.

Finding #2: External evidence of collaboration yields mixed results.

- *Analysis of intake data shows limited referrals between agencies; however, qualitative data indicates that site workers refer to other agencies on a regular basis:* There is conflicting data to support referrals between agencies.
- *Initial analysis of Thomson Collaboration Survey results by site does not show a link between collaboration and client satisfaction:* Further study and data collection is needed to draw stronger conclusions.

Research Question #2: Does Neighborhood Place affect outcomes for Louisville families?

Finding #3: Neighborhood Place impacts social service delivery positively through accessibility and coordination.

- *Louisville-Jefferson County families benefit from the Neighborhood Collaborative:* Food stamp delivery is the primary driver for clients to access Neighborhood Place.

Therefore, any evaluation in terms of outcomes must begin with the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP), commonly referred to as food stamps. Louisville-Jefferson County is consistently one of the top three providers of food stamps in the United States. Compared to similar metropolitan areas, Louisville-Jefferson County has a much higher food stamp participation rate, leading to a higher economic impact in the community.

- ***Multiple sites, in or near schools, and located within the community they serve contribute to the high participation rate in SNAP:*** Through analysis of client satisfaction data and interviews, it is evident that the high food stamp participation rate is directly linked to the ease of access to multiple sites that are located directly in the community. In addition, the high rate is also related to a lower level of stigma because many of the sites are located on JCPs school campuses. Clients indicate that they do not know what they would do without Neighborhood Place and agency workers indicate that community culture and transportation barriers prohibit families from going downtown to access food stamps.
- ***Neighborhood Place has consistently earned high client satisfaction rates for the past four years:*** Clients of Neighborhood Place are happy with the services offered, as well as the manner in which the services are delivered. In particular, clients report they do not

know what they would do if Neighborhood Place were not available to them.

Finding #4: The current performance management system is underutilized.

- ***Changing contexts are creating uncertainty and mild concern within the Operations Committee of Neighborhood Place:*** With the “great recession,” competition for scarce resources has added pressure on the collaborative to demonstrate return on investment. Leaders of Neighborhood Place feel a need to prove their worth through compelling data metrics.
- ***Uncertainty over the ability to prove success threatens to fragment efforts and undermine collaboration:*** Current data systems do not align directly to stated goals, and the stated goals are hard to measure, thereby creating pressure within the collaborative to assume defensive posturing to protect individual existence.
- ***Fragmentation risks growing inattention to significant research on the total ecology of schooling:*** The current policy and economic environment may not value the clear and decisive grounding of Neighborhood Place in rigorous research on the total ecology of schools. The fact that two-thirds of a student’s outcomes are determined by out-of-school effects seems to be lost in the conversation.
- ***Current data collection and commitment to performance management provide the foundation***

for a new approach: Neighborhood Place has a strong history of data collection and pursuit of continuous improvement. The continued evolution of this process will be vital to Neighborhood Place's continued vibrancy in a new policy and economic environment.

“Neighborhood Place is about families and children; it’s not about programs.”

Marty Bell, former Deputy Superintendent, JCPS, 2009

Section 1: Introduction

The modern accountability and school reform movement in the United States owes no small debt to the model and framework established through the passage of the Kentucky Education Reform Act (KERA) in 1990. Passed in response to the Kentucky Supreme Court’s decision invalidating the state’s education finance structure, the KERA established far-reaching goals for school reform and defined many of the early contours of standards-based reform and high-stakes testing for accountability. Six broad educational goals shaped the law, and educational policy in the state was permanently affected by the new priorities (Hamilton, Stecher, & Yuan, 2008, p. 26).

While these ambitious goals included similar high standards to those eventually enshrined in No Child Left Behind (NCLB), they also differed from other accountability laws in their attention to the broader support systems in which academic achievement operates. Intentional support systems for families, students, and teachers gave the KERA a broad focus on setting high expectations for educational outcomes and supporting the people whose lives are most directly impacted by and through educational delivery systems. Focusing on both achievement and community supports, the KERA’s six goals articulate a vision of educational

excellence that reaches beyond test scores to embrace outcomes such as, “students shall develop their abilities to become self-sufficient individuals,” and “students shall develop their abilities to become responsible members of a family, work group, and community” (University of Kentucky, 2012).

The KERA recognized the importance of support structures to achieving the lofty expectations the law placed on students, teachers, and families alike. One such recognition was the law’s creation of Family Resource and Youth Service Centers (FRYSCs) in or near schools to help families and students connect with available health and social services. As the educational and social services communities of Louisville-Jefferson County came together to establish the FRYSCs, a small group of leaders began to believe that simply linking schools and services did not go far enough to reduce the barriers to access that plague families in low-income areas. This group, known as the Breakfast Club, began to look beyond traditional service delivery for a more collaborative and deeply integrated services model (Michalczyk, Lentz, & Martin, 2005, pp. 1-2). The result of their efforts was Neighborhood Place, a one-stop social service provider located in school facilities and

distributed across the city in eight main and three satellite locations.

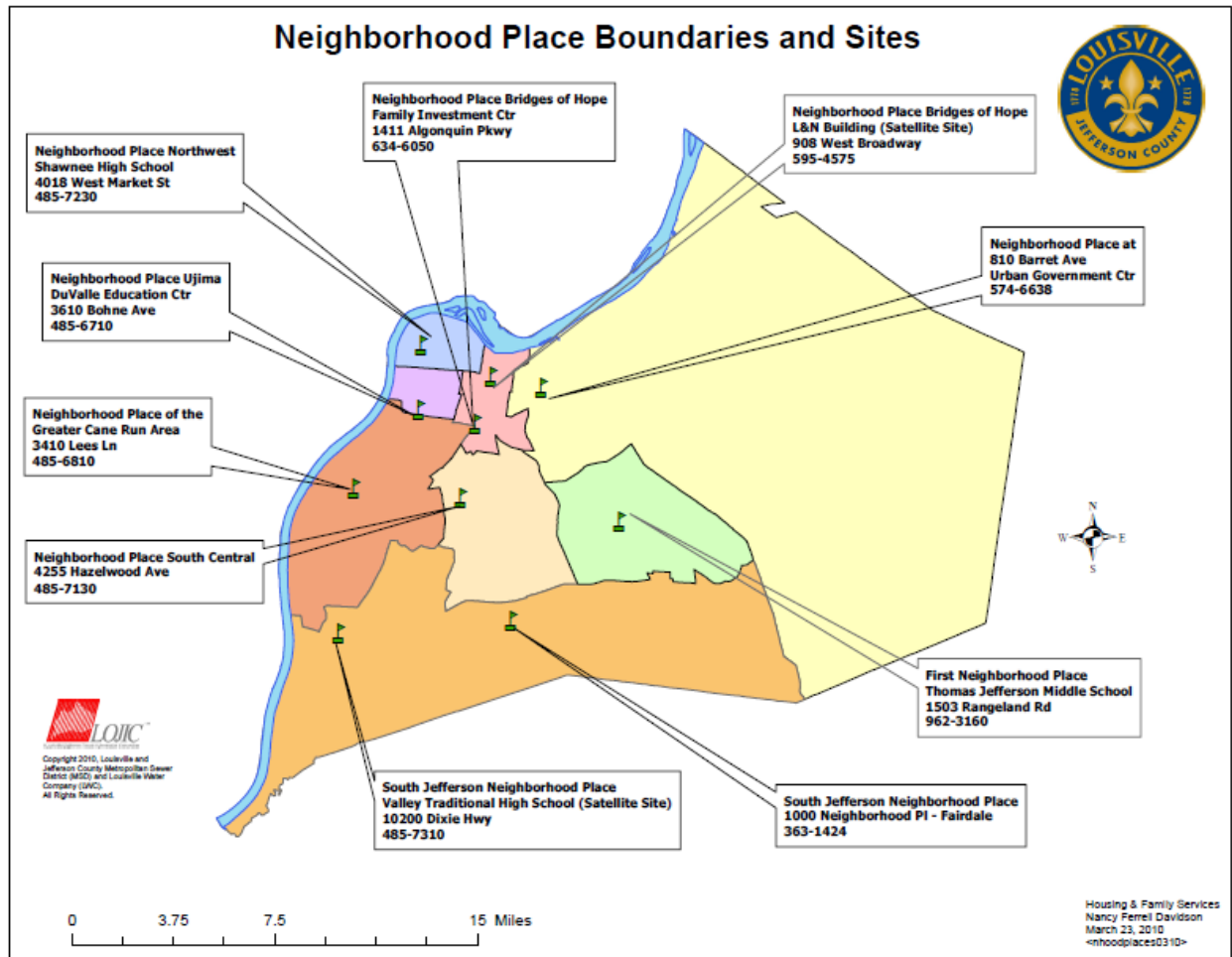


Figure 1. Neighborhood Place boundaries and sites (Source: Neighborhood Place Development and Operations Manual)

EIGHT NEIGHBORHOOD PLACE CENTERS IN LOUISVILLE, KY	
1993	<u>First Neighborhood Place</u> was established in the Newburg area at Rangeland Elementary School.
1995	<u>Ujima NP</u> opens at DuValle Education Center in between two of the city's largest public housing projects.
1996	<u>NP at Urban Government Center</u> opens; NP Managing Board adopts by-laws and submits Community Councils by-laws to councils to be ratified; Community Focus groups held to collect point-in-time data about each NP community; a report is published the next year.
1997	<u>South Jefferson NP</u> , a unique partnership among the Jefferson County Health Department, University of Louisville, Family Health Centers, Inc. and Jefferson County Public Schools (JCPS), opens at the new Lyman G. Armstrong Health Center.
1997	Another unique partnership, between the Housing Authority of Louisville and NP partner agencies, creates <u>Bridges of Hope NP</u> at the new Mabel W. Wiggins Family Investment Center.
1998	JCPS issues a bond for the construction of a building at Farnsley Middle School for <u>NP of the Greater Cane Run Area</u> . Jefferson County Government pays JCPS for bonded debt.
2002	<u>Northwest NP</u> in Shawnee High School moves into space adjacent to the Jump Start program and an intergenerational program.
2003	The final NP, <u>South Central NP</u> , opens. This site is built on Hazelwood Elementary School property, with the new Metro Government paying JCPS for the bonded debt.

Figure 2. Chronology of Neighborhood Place expansion (Source: Neighborhood Place Development and Operations Manual)

Despite great acclaim and a 20-year history, leadership and staff turnover are bringing new perspectives to the initiative, and the new context is creating pressure for a fresh look at the effectiveness of Neighborhood Place. At a national level, the Obama administration has taken the accountability impulse of No Child Left

Behind and infused attention to student achievement gains within nearly all of its grant-making programs, including those supporting community schools, school-linked services, and integrated service providers linked with K-12 educational institutions. At the state level, changes in legislative and gubernatorial priorities have combined

with mounting budgetary pressures to bring increasing attention to the cost-effectiveness of programs such as Neighborhood Place. Finally, the new superintendent for the Jefferson County Public Schools is bringing a new focus to return on investment and data-driven decision priorities for the school system in an era of diminishing public resources.

While NCLB seemed to sharpen debates between advocates for the importance of social capital and basic human services in education and those whose achievement-first focus viewed such concerns as excuses for substandard educational efforts in poor communities, the Race to the Top era has begun to push consideration of the educational challenges created by poverty even further to the margins. As charter schools such as KIPP demonstrate high achievement among students of poverty and alternative teaching programs such as Teach for America claim to show that content mastery and high expectations support student learning, programs such as Neighborhood Place find themselves under increasing pressure to demonstrate dramatic, sustained, and direct impact on student achievement and learning in schools.

Data collection and analysis is not new to Neighborhood Place. In 2005, the Neighborhood Place Outcomes Committee produced a detailed report on the measurement of collaboration (Michalczyk, Lentz, & Martin, 2005). The report centered on four sources of

data and established an annual reporting process to organize and present available data. Efforts to measure collaboration¹ through Client Satisfaction Surveys, Team Collaboration Surveys, and Community Council Surveys were combined with outcome-based perspectives on client satisfaction, client self-assessment, community council perspectives and partner agency data to form the foundation of an annual report demonstrating the effectiveness of Neighborhood Place.

The 2005 report and subsequent annual reports established a strong foundation for reporting on data that seemingly demonstrates consistent, high levels of satisfaction and an organizational culture of commitment that resonates strongly with large numbers of people closely associated with the Neighborhood Place Partner Organizations, Community Councils, and site workers. Yet, despite this foundation, there remains a palpable and growing sense of uncertainty beyond the committed core of the organization. Despite the cost neutral

¹ The authors advanced two claims regarding the importance of collaboration to outcomes in Neighborhood Place. The first identified “clear principles” on which Neighborhood Place was based from its inception: “enhanced quality, responsiveness, effectiveness, and efficiency” (Michalczyk, Lentz, & Martin, 2005, p. 6). The second asserted a direct relationship between “improved service to clients” and “staff satisfaction” (Michalczyk, Lentz, & Martin, 2005, p. 12) through reference to a Harvard Business Review article from 1998 (Rucci, Kirn, & Quinn, 1998).

assumptions of the organization and high levels of satisfaction among employees and clients alike, representatives of the Jefferson County Public Schools requested an assessment of the present state of the organization and asked, in particular, for an evaluation of the “impact of services.” Cognizant of the fact that “the Neighborhood Place program has not been formally evaluated or audited by an independent organization,” JCPS officials sought an objective assessment of outcomes and goals. Similarly, members of the Operations Committee seemed eager to identify a clear and simple set of measures capable of producing an annual assessment of the impact of their work.

Leadership at JCPS and within the Neighborhood Place Operations Committee seem drawn to the concept of performance management, yet frustrated by the challenges of defining clear and balanced measures of “impact” where the goals of the endeavor are as far-reaching as those of the Neighborhood Place (e.g. self-sufficiency). An October 2012 report from the Aspen Institute finds this simultaneous fascination and frustration with performance management prevalent within communities engaged in “complex and place-based work” (Auspos & Kubisch, 2012). The report suggests that not all data collection is performance management and that, too often, efforts to collect data chase program justification at the expense of

continuous improvement. They define performance management as:

[A] process that involves collecting and reviewing data on program performance in order to identify what’s working, pinpoint and resolve problems, and improve effectiveness and efficiency on the ground in real time. (Auspos & Kubisch, 2012, p. 4)

Especially within large-scale, complex, and collaborative Community Change Initiatives (CCIs) such as Neighborhood Place, a performance management perspective may offer a useful approach to answer the questions posed by the stakeholders both within and outside the initiative. Static program evaluation may not serve the complex and collaborative undertakings of multiple, distinct agencies linked through common goals and outcomes that vary tremendously according to the particular strengths, approaches, perspectives, and culture of the individual organizations. Pursuing continuous improvement through a clear and consistent performance management approach on the other hand, “can help place-based efforts make continuous improvements, introduce midcourse corrections, adjust to changing circumstances and conditions, and increase the likelihood of achieving success” (Auspos & Kubisch, 2012, p. 4).

A careful and thorough mixed-method analysis of Neighborhood Place from the perspective of large-scale Community Change Initiatives offers an opportunity to deepen our understanding of what makes Neighborhood Place unique. For the purpose of this study we will focus on the following questions: What exactly does Neighborhood Place do, and how do the people of the organization do it? Does the theory of action that underlies the initiative offer explanatory power that can inform leadership efforts toward continuous improvement into the next 20 years? Does a deeper understanding of collaboration carry the potential to establish a more robust performance management approach? Can linking performance planning, performance measurement, and performance management “take Neighborhood Place to the next level,” a

desire expressed by one member of the Operations Committee?

The first section of this report examines the practical and theoretical bases of Neighborhood Place, its early successes, national attention, and essential theory of action. The second section establishes the basis for testing the theory of action that places collaboration at the center of the organization and delivery of services. Following these essential foundations, sections three through five detail the methodology and important findings related to the two important research questions that prompted our work:

- Does Neighborhood Place foster collaboration among service providers?
- Does Neighborhood Place affect outcomes for Louisville families?

Section 2: Neighborhood Place Story

Family Resource and Youth Service Centers (FRYSC) were first established by the Kentucky Education Reform Act (KERA) of 1990. In 1993, Neighborhood Place was formed to broaden the reach of the FRYSC with the primary purpose of reducing non-cognitive barriers to student learning, reducing truancy in Jefferson County Public Schools, and supporting families on the path to self-sufficiency. Neighborhood Place forged a partnership between Jefferson County Public Schools (JCPS), Louisville Metropolitan Government, state

government, and Seven County Social Services to establish an integrated service delivery model through collaborative governance.

Structures and Functions

The structure of Neighborhood Place is designed to ensure standard decision-making processes, separation of governance and administration, and continuous connection to the local communities in which the individual sites are located. The structures operate

in a nested relationship introducing important links, as well as dynamic tensions important in collaboration (Thomson, Perry, & Miller, 2009, p. 26). To this end, Neighborhood Place coordination relies on distinct structures, each offering interrelated support to collaboration.

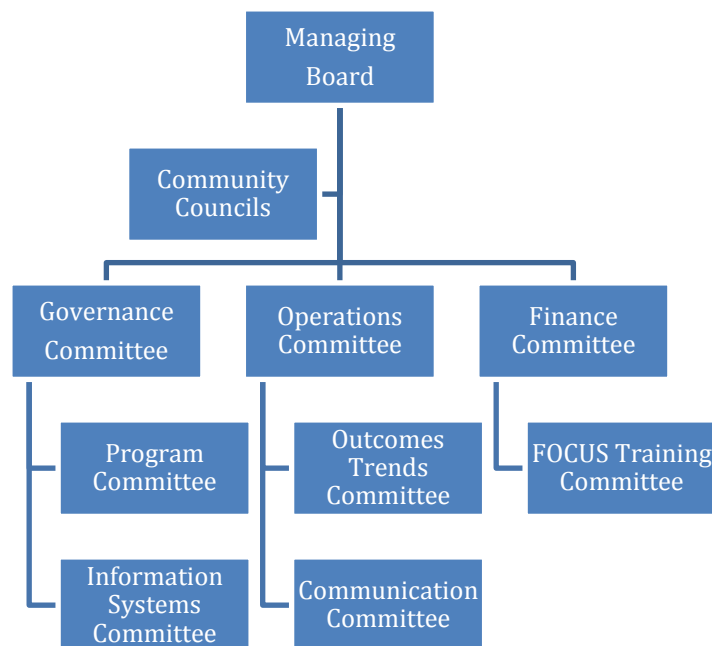


Figure 3. Neighborhood Place organizational structure (Source: Neighborhood Place Development and Operations Manual)

Partner agency participation begins with its upper level management's representation on the Managing Board of Neighborhood Place. And, while, partner agencies retain their organizational purposes within the collaborative, participation in Neighborhood Place is a central feature of the delivery of services for each partner agency. Likewise, support from the partner agencies in the collaborative is crucial to the operation, functioning,

and continuation of Neighborhood Place. Each partner agency brings a unique perspective to the effort with different expectations, commitments, and benefits. Nevertheless, the continued commitment of the partner agencies provides the foundational security that holds the entire enterprise together. Employees located at each Neighborhood Place site remain employees of the partner agencies with the expectation that employees will

collaborate and commit to Neighborhood Place. Below is a table of each agency along with the division

within each agency that works within Neighborhood Place.

Neighborhood Place Agencies and Divisions	
Kentucky Cabinet for Health and Family Services / DCBS	<i>Family Support</i> (provides federal family support programs, including income support programs such as TANF, SNAP, and Medicaid)
	<i>Protection and Permanency</i> (state-funded child protective and family/child stabilization services)
	<i>Community Coordinated Child Care</i> (under a contract with the Cabinet, 4C provides state child care subsidy)
Louisville Metro Government	<i>Department of Public Health and Wellness</i> (provides federally funded Healthy Start and state-funded programs: HANDS, immunization, Maternal and Child Health)
	<i>Department of Housing and Family Services</i> (provides NP site administrators, offers federally funded HUD services for homeless prevention, and local dollars for Emergency Financial Assistance, Information and Referral Services, Case Management Services and emergency food packages from Dare to Care)
	<i>Community Action Partnership</i> , a division of Housing and Family Services (provides federally funded energy assistance, workforce training and other poverty-ending programs)
	<i>KentuckianaWorks</i> , the local Workforce Investment Board (federal funds assist individuals to become work-ready; contracts with state Cabinet for assistance to TANF/Kentucky Work Program participants)
Jefferson County Public Schools	<i>School Social Work</i> (state-funded social workers)
	<i>Pupil Personnel</i> (state-funded truancy services)
	<i>Family Resource/Youth Service Centers</i> (Kentucky Education Reform Act mandated centers, each with a coordinators, to address non-academic barriers to success)
Seven Counties Services, Inc.	<i>Mental Health Services</i> (state- and federally funded truancy services)
	<i>Targeted Assistance</i> (under a contract with the Kentucky Cabinet, mental health and substance abuse professionals work with KTAP clients to assess for and work with clients on dependence issues)
	<i>Mental Health/Mental Retardation</i> (federal, state, and local funding for assessment and linkage to services)

Figure 4. Neighborhood Place agencies and services (Source: Neighborhood Place Development and Operations Manual)

The extent to which the partner agencies continue to commit political and financial resources to the Neighborhood Place correlates strongly with the extent to which the goals of the

collaborative will continue to be realized. In recent years, both state and local funding challenges have raised the prospect of fundamental changes in the funding and structure of key partner

agencies. In each case, the theory of action, revenue-neutral assumptions, and collaborative efforts of the coordinating partner agencies have produced the support required for continuation of the collaborative.

The Operations Committee is the nerve center for the collaborative, and frequent meetings, attention to details, reporting of outcomes, coordination of communication, and organization of annual events play an important role in the symbolic and political preservation of the collaborative. This group is most consistently focused on continuation and improvement of the collaborative, and the legacy of formalization and coordination over the past 20 years runs directly through this body. A 2002 analysis of Neighborhood Place concluded that involvement of senior management from partner agencies played an important role in the successful development and implementation of the Neighborhood Place system (Ragan, 2002, p. 8). Thomson, Perry, and Miller, (2009) highlight the importance of organizational autonomy in collaborative efforts this way:

Partners share a dual identity: They maintain their own distinct identities and organizational authority separate from a collaborative identity. This reality creates an intrinsic tension between *organizational self-interest* – achieving individual organizational

missions and maintaining an identity distinct from the collaborative – and *collective interest* – achieving collaboration goals and maintaining accountability to collective partners and their stakeholders. (Bardach 1998; Tschirhart, Christensen, and Perry 2005; Van de Ven, Emmett, and Koenig 1975; Wood and Gray 1991) (26)

Strains in collaboration may be noticed first within the Operations Committee. As the first generation of senior leaders begin to retire and resource constraints in the public service sector continue to press for greater justification through returns-on-investment analysis, this group has provided the structural continuity and organizational foresight required to meet the challenges and pursue their shared vision of the power and promise of the Neighborhood Place collaborative. Decision-making authority, commitment to collaboration, shared vision and trust, and relentless focus on outcomes position this structure at the heart of the unique collaborative so often recognized and emulated.

The Community Councils consist of 15-21 members whose purpose links directly to the community-centered focus of Neighborhood Place. Community Councils intentionally link residents of the service community and local businesses so that priorities and activities of local Neighborhood Place

sites remain grounded in the particular needs and strengths of the areas they serve. The centers are located according to census data identifying concentrations of children and families in need, and the Community Councils provide structural support to keep the focus firmly fixed on meeting identified community need while also enabling the centers to evolve along with the communities they serve. In addition, the Community Councils are key advocacy partners of Neighborhood Place. In 2008, when budget reduction was threatened across the country, it was the Community Councils that organized and advocated to save the eight site administrator positions from reduction in the Metro annual budget.

The site-level administration of the eight Neighborhood Place locations requires strong collaborative leadership, and the site-level administrators at each site play a role in the effectiveness of the collaborative, responsiveness to family needs, and overall success of the local effort to promote self-sufficiency. Local site administrators are Metro Louisville government employees and must navigate the challenges of collaboration among employees who work *with* the local site but *for* distinct agencies. Administrators navigate essentially

voluntary connections with employees of partner agencies at the same time as they maintain supervisory relationships with Metro Services employees at their sites. The challenges and opportunities of this arrangement depend strongly on the assumptions behind the collaborative undertaking, and evaluation of collaboration is of particular interest to the people who occupy this important leadership role.

Neighborhood Place People

Neighborhood Place employs approximately 500 people through the four agencies. At a minimum, each partner agency agrees to provide at least eight full-time staff members for service in at least four Neighborhood Place Centers and provide at least \$1,500 for staff costs and at least \$4,000 for operating expenses for each person the organization stations at the site. This level of commitment is the minimum required for voting membership on the Managing Board, and the Operations Committee combines representatives from these lead organizations in the work of implementation and programming across the sites (Neighborhood Place, 1996).

STAFFING of 500 EMPLOYEES AT 8 NEIGHBORHOOD PLACE SITES

Louisville Metro Government

- Sixty-one staff from the Department of Public Health and Wellness (fiscal agent for the federal Healthy Start and state-funded programs: HANDS, immunizations, Maternal and Child Health)
- Forty-three staff from the Department of Housing and Family Services (provides NP administrators, offers federally funded HUD services for homeless prevention, and local dollars for Emergency Financial Assistance, Information and Referral Services, and Case Management Services)
- Community Action Partnership, a division of Housing and Family Services (federal funding for energy assistance, emergency food packages from Dare to Care, and other programs)
- Kentucky Cabinet for Health and Family Services: 249 staff
 - Community-Based Services (provides federal Family Support programs, including income support programs such as TANF, SNAP, and Medicaid)
 - Protection and Permanency programs (state-funded child protective services)
 - Community Coordinated Child Care (under a contract with the Cabinet, 4C provides state child care subsidy and Information and Referral)
- Jefferson County Public Schools
 - Thirty-six staff from JCPS housed at NPs and another 96 FRYSC staff are attached to each NP that are housed in schools. (State funding for school social workers, truancy officers and Family Resource/Youth Service center coordinators)
- Seven Counties Services, Inc.
 - One staff member from mental health that connects clients to the many satellite offices around the county. (federal, state and local funding for mental health, MRDD and substance abuse)

Figure 5. Neighborhood Place staffing (Source: Neighborhood Place Development and Operations Manual)

Partner agencies consider their commitments to be revenue neutral, since each would still be responsible for providing the services with which they are charged if the Neighborhood Place did not exist. The dispersed locations of the individual sites should not add markedly to the costs of providing services, and if the theory of the collaborative does indeed improve

coordination, effectiveness of service delivery, and the stability of neighborhoods, then net savings to the administrative bottom line are also expected, although virtually impossible to calculate.

Cost neutrality, however, does not mean that the effort required falls equally on all. Some agencies bear more administrative responsibilities than

others, and for the collaborative to realize its goals, these differential expectations have to be accepted and addressed effectively by the partners involved. For example, most of the Neighborhood Place locations occupy facilities and grounds belonging to Jefferson County Public Schools (JCPS), and deployment of Family Resource personnel and truancy officers in the facilities can assist other service providers to serve families more effectively even though a truancy officer would seldom receive a referral from another provider at the site. Likewise, Metropolitan Government bears an added responsibility for site-level administration, and individual administrators might rely more heavily on other Metro employees at the site to cover duties required for smooth operations. The premise of cost neutrality, then, depends on effective collaboration so that the many and varied responsibilities associated with administration can be executed effectively without overly burdensome expectations on any one person or agency.

Symbols of Neighborhood Place

Neighborhood Place has been heralded as a national model and was named one of the “Top 50” programs in the 2009 Innovations in American Government Awards sponsored by the Harvard Kennedy School’s Ash Institute for Democratic Governance and Innovation. In addition, Neighborhood

Place has been adopted as a design framework for the state of Louisiana (2009) and identified as an exemplary peer by the Annie E. Casey Foundation to support collaborative design work with the city of Indianapolis (Center for the Study of Social Policy, n.d., 2003; Department of Children & Family Services, State of Louisiana, n.d.; Harvard Kennedy School, 2009).

Neighborhood Place draws heavily on its rich symbolic history, including the origin story of the Breakfast Club, the frequent national and international mentions as a visionary and effective collaborative, and its Annual Day celebrations. With nearly 20 years of history behind it and eight fully operational community sites, Neighborhood Place is deeply integrated into the social service sector in Louisville-Jefferson County. As preparations for the 20th anniversary celebrations begin, Neighborhood Place hopes to deepen these connections further, and the time is right for those celebrations to connect the current generation of service providers with the Neighborhood Place legends of the past.

Neighborhood Place: Connections to the School-linked Services Movement

As local leaders from schools and social service providers organized to plan for implementation of the FRYSCs in Louisville, their work was governed by eight Guiding Principles of Collaboration (Michalczyk, Lentz, & Martin, 2005, p. 1) (Appendix B).

Pursuing collaboration among agencies from the start, the group tackled the structural planning and design common to integrated service provision strategies of the mid-1990s. Because the impetus for collaboration flowed from the Kentucky Education Reform Act (KERA), school district leadership played a unique role in the planning and development of the integrated services model.

The KERA was one of the earliest statewide efforts to emerge from the school-linked services movement of the 1980s. Although progressive recognition of the challenges that poverty presents to the academic prospects of children has a long history in the United States, several factors combined in the late 1980s to support the new school-linked services movement animating Kentucky's education reform. Flowing out of the 1960's War on Poverty initiatives and through the publication of *A Nation at Risk* (1983), greater realization of the overlapping pressures on students in poverty accelerated efforts to support the total ecology of schooling as an essential foundation for greater student achievement. As recognition of the importance of out-of-school factors grew, social service provision efforts were becoming more fragmented and limited in scope. In this environment, schools seemed the perfect focal points around which to organize more coordinated service provision narrowly focused on addressing the complex challenges of poverty on academic achievement

(Smrekar & Mawhinney, 1999, p. 443-445).

Early analysis of school-linked services often celebrated the motivational impulse and spirit behind the work while simultaneously indexing a litany of challenges and limitations likely to scuttle significant improvement in the coordinated delivery of services, let alone long-term sustainability or community development (Smrekar, & Mawhinney, 1999; Cibulka, & Kritek, 1996; Crowson & Boyd, 1993; Crowson & Boyd, 1996; Schwartz, 2010; Smrekar, 1998). While the Neighborhood Place system grew out of the efforts to implement Family Resources and Youth Service Centers (FRYSCs) and the FRYSC initiative rested on the school-linked services impulse, Neighborhood Place as a system rather than an organization has developed somewhat distinctly from the traditional school-linked frame. The origin story of the Neighborhood Place carries consistent reference to an "ah ha moment" when the development of Neighborhood Place went beyond the FRYSC school-linked model.

"None of the agencies formally knew what the other was doing to help families. Families were not routinely asked what they needed but rather were fit into a program" (NP Guide 1999). Based on this insight (the "ah ha" moment), the Deputy Superintendent for Jefferson County Public Schools (JCPS) challenged the breakfast group

to come up with a better way to deliver services. He invited those who were interested in serving families in neighborhood locations in a new way to come to some evening work sessions. It was there that the seeds of today's Neighborhood Place system were sown. (Michalczyk, Lentz, & Martin, 2005, p. 2)

Neighborhood Place as a Comprehensive Community Change Initiative (CCI)

At the same time as the school-linked services movement began to reshape the delivery of social services with a focus on schools in the early 1990s, similar efforts to coordinate those working in the broader community emerged with a focus on comprehensive community improvements. Similar to school-linked services in their efforts to broaden meaningful collaboration as an antidote to resource limitations and fragmentation among service providers, comprehensive community change initiatives focused more broadly on community development through multifaceted approaches to community transformation as a whole. Community Change Initiatives (CCIs) “analyzed neighborhood problems and assets holistically, created a plan to respond in a comprehensive way, engaged community actors, and developed a structure for implementing the plan . . . to achieve multiple results with a combination of inputs centered around

some conception of community” (Kubisch, Auspos, Brown, & Dewar, 2010, p. 9).

Early in its development, Neighborhood Place identified goals not clearly linked to schools as the locus for collaboration and moved quickly beyond improved attendance and academic achievement. Intentional location in or near schools and the organizational leadership of the collaborative enterprise that remains part of the JCPS administrative structure has kept the schools involved in the community change efforts at least as directly as the community change efforts have centered on the schools. Yet, the broader focus on goals such as “enhanced quality, responsiveness, effectiveness and efficiency” (Michalczyk, Lentz, & Martin, 2005, p. 6) reveals the extent to which the collaborative embraced a much more ambitious effort at community transformation than typical school-linked services that focus primarily on school improvement. The Neighborhood Place mission itself envisions a community-wide approach. Michalczyk, Lentz, and Martin point out that,

[T]he partners incorporated the above-stated principles in the Neighborhood Place mission: “to work with communities to provide blended and accessible health, education, employment and human services that support families and children in their

movement toward self-sufficiency.” (2005, p. 6)

Moving beyond the traditional assumptions of school-linked services implicit in the KERA’s mandate to create FRYSCs carries both potential and peril. If the collaboration is focused more broadly on community transformation with school improvement as a subset of the effort, schools in general and the JCPS central administration in particular may have trouble seeing the value of the annual investment in facility management that accompanies the effort. The search for outcome measures that justify investments by the school system may increasingly undercut the perceived value of the Neighborhood Place system and threaten reorganization and/or relocation of school-related services in ways that complicate collaboration. In addition, as the school outcome rationale for school-linked service weakens, other agencies in the collaborative system may begin to see their individual agency goals at risk and the justification for collaboration may also begin to weaken.

Indeed, the context for the current investigation and the apparent desire to identify specific and narrowly focused outcome measures for supporters to use in proving the value of Neighborhood Place suggests the emergence of exactly these strains. Interviews for this project revealed concerns about agencies pulling people from the local Neighborhood Place sites, and

reorganization of JCPS truancy support so that JCPS people are becoming linked more directly with schools than with the people in the community where their Neighborhood Place offices are located. This growing recognition among local Neighborhood Place service providers of strains in the community-based focus of the effort highlight the degree to which Neighborhood Place has succeeded and grown according to its character as a comprehensive community change organization rather than a traditional school-linked service. It also explains an underlying sense of unease among the leaders and true believers in the effort and the desire to articulate measures that will ground Neighborhood Place on a more demonstrable and measurable foundation.

Where school-linked service models pursue integration for efficiency, resource-consciousness, and school improvement, a comprehensive community change perspective emphasizes collaboration more self-consciously. Kubisch, et al., describe CCIs as “place-based” with a priority on “community building” that approaches development of social capital from a “comprehensive perspective” (2010, pp. 11-12). Smrekar & Mawhinney (1999) identified community development as a component of the school-linked services model, but consciously located the school as social institution at the center of the development effort (p. 458). In the school-linked service model, schools are community hubs, and communities are

developed and identified through connections with schools. From the comprehensive community change lens, schools are important institutions within communities, and while communities develop most when schools are strong, a comprehensive focus on a wide range of institutions forces CCIs to focus more directly on empowerment and capacity building through intentional, effective, and persistent attention to collaboration in pursuit of strong communities as an evolving end in itself. Therefore, the CCI perspective places greater emphasis on performance management for continuous improvement than on comparative outcomes data for return-on-investment justification of resource use.

Divergent perspectives on the goals of a comprehensive community change initiative virtually guarantee the effort's failure. Comprehensive action exists to enable pursuit of goals too large (comprehensive) to expect a single organization to tackle. Crowson and Boyd's (1993) perspective on the

dilemma of collaboration is that either the organizations engaging in the work will clash over resources and turf, or they will have to alter their organizational identities in fundamental ways that will undermine their ability to remain effective. This perspective presented particular challenges for school-linked service models that relied on schools to play multiple, contradictory roles simultaneously. A comprehensive community change perspective envisions opportunities for effective organizations to continue to do what they do well while coordinating their efforts to support the efforts of other organizations also doing what they do best. This perspective views collective impact as a comprehensive effort to build new capacity as independent organizations pursue community-wide goals together (Kania & Kramer, 2011). This perspective suggests a closer look at collaboration as it functions within Neighborhood Place.

Section 3: Theory of Action

The founders of Neighborhood Place shared a common goal to go beyond the requirements of the KERA and the creation of the FRYSCs. They believed that the problem these centers sought to address was much greater than the impact that this single initiative could have. While the objective was correct – improve families and neighborhoods in

order to improve schools – the approach – Family Resource and Youth Service Centers (FRYSCs) – seemed far too limited in comparison to the challenge. The members of the original “Breakfast Club” sought to make a greater impact on the larger challenge of helping all families and communities move more rapidly toward self-sufficiency. They

based their work on two key assumptions:

1. Disconnected, single-service agencies respond to conditions of poverty and tend to treat the symptoms of economic disadvantage rather than tackling the complex and overlapping causes;

2. Because self-sufficiency is a complex and multifaceted condition, collaboration among the multiple agencies delivering services to families in need could improve service delivery and change perspectives to make the condition (self-sufficiency) a more likely outcome of their efforts.



Figure 6. Implicit identification of need

Measures of success among the many agencies delivering social services typically speak to the quantity and quality of service provided. Less attention is drawn toward measuring outcomes such as self-sufficiency, since any single agency can only expect to do its part and cannot easily conceive of measures related to the broader life conditions and opportunities their clients develop. The animating vision of

Neighborhood Place embedded the pursuit of a bolder but unmeasured outcome – self-sufficiency – within the culture of the newly created organization. The implicit theory of action behind this decision rested on the assumed power of collaboration to improve service delivery and alter perspectives toward a more holistic look at the economic well-being of clients.

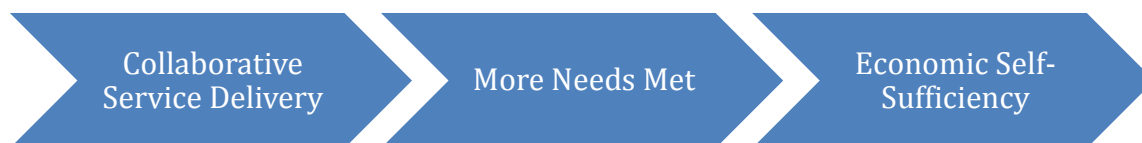


Figure 7. Implicit theory of action embedded in founding work of Neighborhood Place

Because the impetus for the creation of FRYSCs was education reform, this initial theory of action grew more complex as the concept for the creation of Neighborhood Place unfolded. Two clear problems of collective action were

finessed under this emerging theory of action. The educational reform impulse and the involvement of Jefferson County Public Schools meant that the operational definition of economic self-sufficiency remained focused on

educational outcomes. Seeking to reduce truancy, the Breakfast Club rested on assumptions like those embedded in research on the impact of family, neighborhood, and peer effects on student academic performance (Coleman, 1988; Fine, 1988; Furstenberg & Hughes, 1997; Lareau, 1987; Rothstein, 2004; Schultz, 1961; Traub, 2000). In the earliest years of the accountability era, measures of academic achievement were still underdeveloped, and proxy measures such as truancy and school completion rates were more commonly identified as indicators of academic success. Similarly, the animating assumption in the KERA's approach to families and children supported the assumptions embedded in research on the total ecology of schools. Ultimately, the JCPS involvement in creation of Neighborhood Place and the KERA resources behind the FRYSCs led to an implicit equivalence between self-sufficiency and academic success.

The collective action problem inherent in this line of thinking lies in the fact that, while academic engagement matters to the agencies providing services to families, their more direct goals are understood and defined in terms of their particular organizational objectives. Although they work with the same people and serve needs originating from the same cause (poverty), the multiple social service agencies in Jefferson County were not in the position to consider how or whether their work could be measured in terms

of their broader goal – alleviation of poverty itself (improved self-sufficiency). Instead, food stamp providers sought reductions in hunger. Child protective services sought reductions in abuse and neglect. Mental health providers sought improvements in mental health outcomes. Similarly, programs and agencies providing job training, rent assistance, or heating and power assistance strove to deliver on their individual organizational goals. These goals did not conflict with one another, and the agencies were not natural competitors, but neither did they typically offer holistic measurements of the mutually beneficial collaboration embedded in the organizational theory of action.

Neighborhood Place was founded on the assumption that collaboration among these agencies would result in greater and more efficient service delivery. The founders also believed that co-location was essential to collaboration. Once agencies were located together, the collaboration among agencies would offer the opportunity for individual agencies to look beyond their singular focus to develop more holistic perspectives on poverty that would eventually facilitate new and more effective solutions promoting the larger goal of self-sufficiency. The collective action problem was thereby finessed by defining the end goal of self-sufficiency as a goal that all agencies could better pursue collaboratively. Individual agency objectives would all improve as

self-sufficiency grew. In this way, multiple agencies, including the public school system, agreed to work together to alleviate poverty, believing that if

they could achieve that goal together, then all of their individual goals would similarly be met.



Figure 8. Implicit theory of collective action built on co-location

For JCPS, the connection between economic self-sufficiency and improved educational outcomes such as attendance can be justified by the research into family, neighborhood, and peer effects. In each case, economic self-sufficiency and reductions in poverty are shown to correlate strongly with the social capital, family stability, neighborhood stability, and group norms associated with strong attendance and academic success in school (Coleman, 1988; Fine, 1988; Furstenberg & Hughes, 1997; Lareau, 1987; Rothstein, 2004; Schultz, 1961; Traub, 2000). While all the collaborating agencies, including the schools, can implicitly see the power of increased self-sufficiency to promote their organization-specific outcomes, they simultaneously view self-sufficiency as a goal that is promoted by success in pursuing their individual organizational goals.

As long as the efficacy of collaboration was assumed, and the resources within the community expanded, the quest for more specific

measurement remained unnecessary for understanding or explaining the work of the Neighborhood Place. However, leadership transitions, economic recession, political resource pressures, and external questions began to test this implicit theory of action, and new expectations for external validation now require more intentional and rigorous assessment of the collaboration that lies at the heart of the enterprise.

Testing the Theory of Action: Can We Measure Collaboration?

Something in the history, organization, and implementation of Neighborhood Place has resonated well over the previous 19 years. In their finalist presentation before the Innovations in American Government National Selection Committee at Harvard's Kennedy School of Government in May 2009, Neighborhood Place founders were asked repeatedly whether the unique collaboration that led to Neighborhood Place's identification as a finalist could

be replicated with other people. Pointing to data sharing and confidentiality agreements (Appendix C), co-location in neighborhoods, training in family team meeting procedures, and leaders working together, the founders ultimately highlighted the culture of collaboration that permeates all levels of the organization (Bell & Stamps, 2009).

Neighborhood Place has now operated 19 years and grown from a single site to eight sites and three satellite locations during that time. The approaching 20th anniversary produces both incredible pride and noticeable anxiety on the part of those in the organization who believe strongly in the benefits that Neighborhood Place brings to Jefferson County's families. In many ways, the work of Neighborhood Place has been studied and validated many times, yet the request for the present analysis highlights the concern that no independent evaluation of the program has been completed, and members of the Operations Committee clearly yearn for a simple measuring stick that can put to rest lingering questions regarding the effectiveness of the effort.

Prior Analysis of Neighborhood Place

The Rockefeller Institute of Government produced an analysis of the Neighborhood Place System in 2002, and the findings of their report resonate quite closely with the findings from the qualitative investigation, site visits, and document analysis completed for this

project. The Rockefeller Institute report (Ragan, 2002) identified strong client satisfaction and limited but positive data points on health and human service outcomes such as childhood immunizations, referrals from schools to centers, school attendance rates, and numbers of children committed to state care. The report also noted the challenges of isolating clear correlations between these improvements and the operations of Neighborhood Place, since centers now operate across the county and link such a wide range of service providers (Ragan, 2002, pp. 5-6).

Identifying similar strengths and limitations as those uncovered in the present study, Ragan concluded that while there is "room for improvement in the operation of local sites" and "more mundane issues that trouble local office operations (e.g. lack of phone coverage and uneven participation in client assessments)," and while teaming, family involvement, and organizational space could all be improved, "Neighborhood Place is among the best examples of service integration in this study" (Ragan, 2002, p. 11). Ragan concludes:

Local representatives of a large state agency, the county school district, other city and county agencies, and community representatives have reshaped the county's human service system. Instead of traveling to multiple offices in locations distant from those most in need,

families now receive services in a single location conveniently located in their neighborhoods. Neighborhood Place is a vibrant and evolving experiment in redefining the way that human services programs function, and is a testament to the hard work and continuing involvement of the staff and management of the partner agencies and community representatives. (2002, p. 11)

Ragan grounds the success of Neighborhood Place in several critical factors: community involvement through the Community Council structure, neighborhood-centered services and convenient locations allowing local site variation in response to community needs and opportunities, a unified school district and metropolitan city-county government, a robust governance structure attentive to regular meetings, consistent involvement of the senior managers from the partner agencies, data conscious decisions, and the work of the Outcomes and Trends Committee to produce annual reports detailing available performance data (Ragan, 2002).

The work of the Outcomes and Trends Committee was further analyzed in a 2005 report entitled, *Louisville's Neighborhood Place System: A Model Approach to Measure Collaboration*. This report strives to connect the intentional collaboration at the core of the Neighborhood Place system's theory of action with the quantifiable outcome

data that the organization collected over its first 12 years of operation. Drawing on the collaboration focus of the early designers of Neighborhood Place and the history of site development, the authors advance an evolutionary theory of collaboration that places it on a linear progression between co-location and integration (Michalczyk, Lentz, & Martin, 2005, p. 4). While they compare the organizational evolution of collaboration within Neighborhood Place to that of an organism, the framework they embrace is instrumental, and collaboration is reduced to a means to other ends. Retaining a developmental perspective that places service integration at the highest stage of evolutionary development, they inadvertently reduce the potential power of collaboration as an essential and expandable capacity-building outcome essential to comprehensive community change efforts.

Relying on ten collaborative functions identified by The Lewin Group (2001), the authors of the 2005 report lay a strong foundation for valuing collaboration as an important feature of the Neighborhood Place system, and they go to great lengths to connect the 12 years of Neighborhood Place data collection with the outcomes they attribute to effective collaboration. The power of this line of thinking cannot be underestimated, and the work of the Outcomes Committee report goes a long way toward providing a data-driven foundation for annual evaluation

of the work of Neighborhood Place. The report articulates a clear framework for ongoing program evaluation organized around three broad questions: “(1) Are we doing what we said we would do? (2) How do we know? (3) How are we using the findings to continually improve the Neighborhood Place system? (Michalczyk, Lentz, & Martin, 2005, p. 6).

The foundation for data analysis laid by the work of the Outcomes Committee is impressive. Client satisfaction surveys, client self-assessments, team collaboration surveys, community council surveys, and partner agency data offer a vast array of performance measurement perspectives available for use in understanding and managing for continuous improvement. Unfortunately, the persistent challenge of connecting improved community outcomes with unique contributions of Neighborhood Place remains. Connections between satisfied clients and improved self-sufficiency are as difficult to isolate as those between strong and stable communities and student academic achievement growth. In both cases, research and experiences support the connections, but efforts to link specific outcomes with investments in specific service models remain elusive.

In the case of Neighborhood Place, Michalczyk, et al., provide a strong case for identifying collaboration as the key contribution of the system. Certainly, they support the contention that

collaboration lies at the heart of the theory of change implicit in the design and implementation of Neighborhood Place. Unfortunately, their work views collaboration solely as a means to the end of improved service. They begin with the assumption that effective collaboration will improve outcomes and proceed to describe positive outcomes in order to “measure” collaboration. Their approach conflates collaboration with other outcomes and frustrates their original effort to measure collaboration by itself. This circular conclusion is an inevitable outcome of the linear developmental perspective of collaboration on which they base their work. If collaboration is a step on the developmental journey to integration, then it is probably not best measured as a sign of success. While collaboration in this view may produce better outcomes than co-location, the theory suggests that even these outcomes remain inferior to the ultimate goal of integration. This approach devalues collaboration and elevates integration of services to the level of ultimate goal, diverting attention from both the capacity-building potential of collaboration and the transformative goals of comprehensive community change initiatives.

Studies of interorganizational collaboration as a basis for allocating resources more efficiently than fragmented delivery systems, from the perspective of school-linked services, hold little positive promise for collaboration. Incredible obstacles more

often result from approaches to collaboration that assume significant changes in the essential character of collaborating organizations so that they can better share their input resources (Crowson & Boyd, 1993; Smrekar & Mawhinney, 1999; Thomson, 1999, 2001; Thomson & Perry, 1998, 2006). Repeated celebration of collaboration in absence of demonstrable successes reduces the concept to a meaningless buzzword (Thomson, Perry, & Miller, 2009, p. 24).

Assumptions regarding the meaning of collaboration are too often narrow and personalized, lacking the analytical rigor to make measurement possible. Serious analysis of collaboration from a performance management perspective requires a clear and consistent characterization of the concept capable of measurement and manipulation for continuous improvement. Thomson, Perry, & Miller (2009) describe the importance of the work this way:

Furthermore, if one purpose of research on collaboration is to inform practice, then measurement becomes important because policy makers rely on research findings to make substantive changes in policy. If data contain significant measurement error, there is less certainty about the conclusions we can draw from the data. Measurement error frequently occurs in the social sciences because, typically, the variables of most interest to social scientists are abstract concepts

that cannot actually be observed in the real world (Bollen 1989; Carmines and Zeller 1983; Long 1983a, 1983b). Collaboration is one such concept. The consequences of measurement error can be serious, resulting in inconsistent estimators and inaccurate assessments of relationships among variables of interest. (Bollen 1989, 179–180). (p. 24)

Conceptualizing Collaboration

The study of collaboration finds a growing relevance in the field of public administration research as the scale of comprehensive community change initiatives collides with growing strains on public resources. These pressures give rise to calls for more multidimensional and consistent definitions of the collaboration, for in the absence of such definitions, efforts to validate assumptions around the concept remain elusive (Thomson, Miller, & Perry, 2009). Likewise, the proliferation of performance management tools in the field of public administration creates new opportunities and challenges that demand formal efforts to establish multidimensional constructs of collaboration that will support research and development of performance management regimes as they are increasingly applied in contexts of networks and collaboratives.

Moynihan, et al (2011) articulate the need for greater clarity in

understanding and assessment of collaboration by recognizing that both collaboration in public administration and data-driven performance management regimes are on the rise and will likely continue to expand in the years ahead. Underscoring the importance of consistency in definition of collaboration, the authors note that governance complexity grows as networks and collaboratives increase. In this context, Moynihan, et al (2011) appeal to administrators and researchers to examine the changing complexities closely and consider fully how the normative aspects of performance management regimes will often combine to strain this complexity even further.

Calls for performance management tools abound, and one clear impulse behind the commissioning of this evaluation is the clear desire for such a measurement tool that can capture the work of Neighborhood Place and enable its contributors to detail and explain the organization's efforts and successes. Moynihan, however, cautions against pursuing performance management without first examining fully the complexity of governance that collaboration necessarily introduces.

The maximization of these opportunities requires that performance tools are not viewed as simple or neutral but rather as a necessary part of an evolving and inevitably imperfect system of governance.

Thus, our argument here should not be construed as an attack on performance regimes—measuring performance is almost always preferable to not measuring performance—but a recognition of the complex context in which they operate. (Moynihan, et al, 2011, p. 153)

Accepting the challenges identified by Moynihan, we sought first to base our research on a definition of collaboration that is multidimensional and capable of capturing the complex evolution of governance within a collaborative undertaking. Our research is grounded in the work of Thomson, Miller, and Perry, whose approach to the concept of collaboration represents a thorough analysis of the available theoretical research on collaboration, as well as significant case study and investigation of the perspectives of leaders of large public service agencies (2009). While consensus regarding the definition of collaboration is still a work in progress, Thomson, Miller, and Perry have begun to address the two essential characteristics that such a definition must possess: it must acknowledge the multidimensional aspect of collaboration and it must give rise to valid and reliable constructs capable of measurement and research.

The present investigatory work assumes a mixed methods approach, and the virtue of the model of collaboration developed by Thomson, Miller, and Perry lies in its ability to

focus our examination on collaboration as the centerpiece of the theory of action that has given Neighborhood Place its identity, to consider the complexity of the challenges that collaboration carries, and to offer the consistency of survey constructs and interview questions that our investigation requires. The constructs display initial validation in an extensive study of AmeriCorps, and the authors call for expanded investigation in a variety of collaborative contexts. Their work, which includes the development of a validated survey instrument (Appendix D) for testing their five domains of collaboration, rests on this definition:

Collaboration is a process in which autonomous or semi-autonomous actors interact through formal and informal negotiation, jointly creating rules and structures governing their relationships and ways to act or decide on the issues that brought them together; it is a process involving shared norms and mutually beneficial interactions. (Thomson, Miller, & Perry, 2009, p. 25)

Collaboration rests on five concepts that can be grouped into structures (governance and administration), social capital (mutuality and norms), and agency (organizational autonomy) (Thomson, Miller, & Perry, 2009).

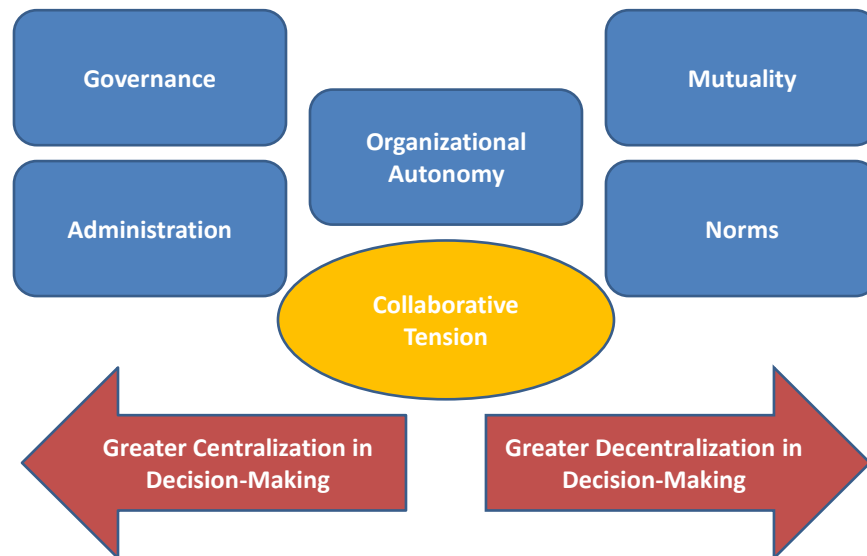


Figure 9. Thomson, Miller, & Perry model of collaboration

Even as the present study extends investigation of this model of collaboration, we remain cognizant of the importance of investigation across domains, and the selection of a mixed methods approach is important in keeping our efforts to manage collaboration in its proper context. Anna Amirkhanyan calls our attention to the informal aspects of collaboration that require investigatory methods, including “in-depth interviews, combined with document analysis, observations, and other qualitative research methods” (Amirkhanyan, 2009, p. 546).

The search for a performance management system through which to evaluate the impact of Neighborhood Place is frustrated by the central importance of collaboration to the entire undertaking and the lack of precision with which collaboration is often or implicitly defined. In fact, the search for measurable outcomes threatens to undermine the collaboration itself in the absence of thorough assessment of the assumptions behind collaboration and articulation of a more dynamic understanding of the multiple aspects at work in genuine collaboration. A growing research effort is emerging to test the assumption that collaboration does indeed serve as a positive means to the end of greater public benefit (Entwistle & Martin, 2005). The present study builds on the realization of these

researchers that collaboration must be more thoroughly understood before it can be either celebrated or set aside.

Before Neighborhood Place can more consistently measure and assess outcomes, a closer look at the collaboration upon which the unique benefits of the organization are assumed to rest is required. In short, before Neighborhood Place can report clear and measurable impacts on self-sufficiency, the central assumption that collaboration improves the nature and impact of the services that would otherwise be delivered individually must be fully assessed along the following dimensions:

- Is collaboration occurring?
- Are some components of collaboration stronger than others?
- Do some Neighborhood Place sites collaborate more effectively than others?
- Do differing levels of collaboration explain differing levels of customer satisfaction?
- Do differing levels of collaboration contribute to customer perceptions that their needs are being met?

Section 4: Project Methods

Measuring Collaboration

As part of our capstone research with Vanderbilt University, we set out to examine collaboration as an important assumption in the theory of action that drives Neighborhood Place. Approaching collaboration from the five-part perspective of Thomson, Perry, & Miller (2009) holds the potential to clarify the wide range of implicit perspectives on the construct that appear in public administration research and dominate the field of school-linked services for both supporters and opponents. Thomson, Perry, & Miller (2009) maintain that, “Without a more systematic approach, inferences about collaboration will depend on which theoretical perspective one takes. This, in turn, makes theory building difficult and evaluation of collaborative arrangements reliant on inconsistent subjective judgments of evaluators” (p. 55). The Thomson survey instrument provides a multifaceted conceptualization of collaboration with a robust theoretical grounding from which to develop a deeper understanding of how collaboration functions in Neighborhood Place.

Survey

Utilizing the collaboration survey questions developed and validated by Thomson, Perry, & Miller (2009), we administered a 17-question survey to

workers and administrators of the eight Neighborhood Place locations. The survey was administered in the afternoon of the Neighborhood Place’s Annual Day. The survey measured perceptions of the five components of collaboration (governance, administration, autonomy, mutuality, and norms) using validated questions and a five-point Likert scale with 5 being strongly agree and 1 being strongly disagree and 3 being neutral (Appendix D). The survey was conducted with all respondents at the same time using electronic response devices (clickers) with the individual questions projected in the front of the room. Each question was read aloud twice and time was provided for respondents to make their entries on their individual clickers. This administration provided 238 respondents distributed across the eight sites and members of the Operations Committee.

The respondents represented almost 50 percent of the Neighborhood Place workforce, yielding a healthy sample size. However, several threats were evident. First, the survey respondents were voluntary. It was a purposive sample. Everyone present was able to participate, but both the event and the time of day could have had some impact on the results that we cannot fully isolate. The Annual Day is an important event for Neighborhood Place, and most of the people who work in the

organization do, in fact, attend. However, not everyone attends. Skeleton crews are left in the various sites to continue administration despite large numbers of people leaving to attend the Annual Day event. We cannot know how the people left to work the sites might have impacted the survey results.

Despite significant attention to and support of Annual Day, some number of employees were absent from work and not in attendance because of illness or other personal issues. While this number is small, its impact also represented a potential threat to the validity of the survey as administered. Finally, administration of the survey occurred during the last session of the day, and some people present at the beginning of the day left before the last session. The event organizers awarded numerous door prizes following administration of the survey, and the door prizes probably kept more people around until the end, but the hall was not as full in the afternoon when the survey was administered as it had been during the opening session in the morning, and the effect of these departures on the survey results similarly cannot be known.

In consideration of Amirkhanyan's methodological admonitions (2009, p. 546), we constructed our interview protocol (Appendix E) and coding framework (Appendix F) around the five domains of the Thomson model – Governance, Administration, Autonomy, Mutuality and Norms. Our

interviews took place on the day following Annual Day. We spent an entire day circulating between three sites and were able to interview 14 people. We completed group interviews with various workers from each site and each interviewee was given a \$10 Starbucks gift card at the end of the interview.

Interviews

Threats to the data collection of the interviews include the selection of interviewees and the setting of the interviews. We were not able to interview workers from every site. The head of Louisville Metro, who oversees the site coordinators, graciously arranged the interviews and chose each location. A selection bias reflecting the perspective of a single administrator from one of the collaborating agencies cannot be completely eliminated because of this process. In addition, at each site, our interviews were conducted in a group setting with between three and six subjects. In the group interviews, there is a potential for groupthink, whereby the entire group begins to echo a common theme because of the interpersonal dynamics of the group or a particularly influential person within the group. In one of the interviews, the site coordinator sat in on the interviews, which could have been a hindrance to the candidness of the respondents. In each case, the ease of interaction could also reflect the degree of trust and mutuality operating among

site-level workers that is evident from the survey data, and while multiple data points helps reduce uncertainty, we caution against overextension of the observations and evidence in this study.

Finally, we interviewed members of the Operations Committee. These interviews were conducted one-on-one over the phone and followed the same interview protocol. Although these interviews shed important light on our analysis, we were unable to complete formal interviews with each member of the committee, and it is possible that our selection reflected an engagement bias regarding this particular study. Nevertheless, including these perspectives helped us to identify common themes and triangulate perceptions across several levels of the operational infrastructure of the organization. While it is certainly possible that our investigation cut a narrow slice of perspectives, the commonly expressed themes and explanations mitigate against the obvious threats from potential biases of operational leaders whether overly protective or overly critical.

Despite these limitations, the mixed methods approach offered a cross section of perspectives on collaboration as the central component of the theory of action and investigated this construct according to five research-validated components of collaboration, which offered clarity of investigation not found in earlier reports built on implicit or imprecise conceptualizations of this crucial concept. Future rigorous

investigation of our exploratory conclusions carry the potential to improve our theoretical understanding of collaboration within a large-scale community change initiative, as well as a deeper understanding of the power of the construct in the 20-year history of Neighborhood Place.

Internal and External Data Analysis

At root, the motivation for this Capstone project rests on the growing desire to defend public spending through measurable outcome data in order to justify expenditures increasingly under scrutiny in the present political era. If a simple and clear set of measures were readily available for this purpose, efforts such as this one would not be pursued. However, the complex interactions involved in large-scale Community Change Initiatives (CCIs) demand more effective benchmarking efforts in pursuit of collective impact (Kubisch, Brown, & Dewar, 2010, p. ix). Rather than seeking a narrow answer to the question of whether or not Neighborhood Place has a positive impact, the question itself must be reframed to account more fully for the context of the initiative and its transcendent goals.

To tackle this question, we completed an extensive analysis of existing Neighborhood Place survey data that was collected through an annual client satisfaction survey

(Appendix G) and the annual aggregate of daily intake data (Appendix H). In addition, we investigated external data sets that might speak to the overall effectiveness of Neighborhood Place.

The intake data provided insight into the day-to-day operations of Neighborhood Place, including the primary reasons clients identified for accessing Neighborhood Place services. Threats to the intake data emerged from our interviews when it became clear that the intake process was laborious to workers and the integrity of the data collection was in question. While during the course of a year a substantial number of intake surveys were collected, there is evidence to suggest that the data is not complete. In other words, it is possible that not every client that accessed Neighborhood Place services completed an intake form. A second threat to the intake data relates to the specific questions around referrals. While Neighborhood Place was designed to be a “one-stop shop”

for social services, clients do not always access those services on the same day. Therefore, potentially, the referral data is similarly inaccurate.

The client satisfaction survey is an annual survey conducted at the conclusion of client visits during a two-week window of time. This yields a small sample size that has varied from a low of 386 in 2009 to a high of 780 in 2011. For this study, we used the most recent client satisfaction survey data from 2012 with a sample size of 561.

Close examination of the available data enables us to determine what can be known regarding the effectiveness of service delivery through Neighborhood Place. In the process, we consider whether framing the question as a performance evaluation inhibits the use of data for performance management necessary to enable collective impact in a large-scale community change initiative.

Section 5: Research Question #1—Findings

Does Neighborhood Place foster collaboration among service providers?

Our first research question explores the collaboration among agencies. From the beginning, the founders of Neighborhood Place placed heavy emphasis on collaboration among agencies as a means to the end of better outcomes for Louisville’s families and children. The first identified barrier to

collaboration that the Breakfast Club sought to overcome was the co-location of services, believing that if agency workers co-located, the prospects of collaboration would be more likely to occur. The removal of this barrier became the impetus to the formation of Neighborhood Place in its inception and

consequently, services have been co-located since the beginning of Neighborhood Place. Beyond simple co-location, Neighborhood Place emphasizes collaboration, and our project sought to measure the extent to which collaboration was evidenced among agencies.

Thomson, Perry, & Miller's (2009) model of collaboration enables measurement of five differing components of collaboration and offers a multi-faceted picture of the interactions and relationships at work in a collaborative undertaking. Examining each of the components offers a view of where the work is most strongly and genuinely collaborative.

Finding #1 – Neighborhood Place demonstrates collaboration at all levels of the organization – from leadership to the individual worker.

Both the collaboration survey data collected at the Annual Day event and the interviews based on the collaboration protocol confirm that all five components of collaboration are present and play a role in understanding how and why Neighborhood Place functions. All measures of the collaborative constructs were rated positively by respondents with high levels of agreement and means above 3 on a Likert scale. Likewise, all constructs are evident in the language and explanations found in interviews with workers and administrators of Neighborhood Place.

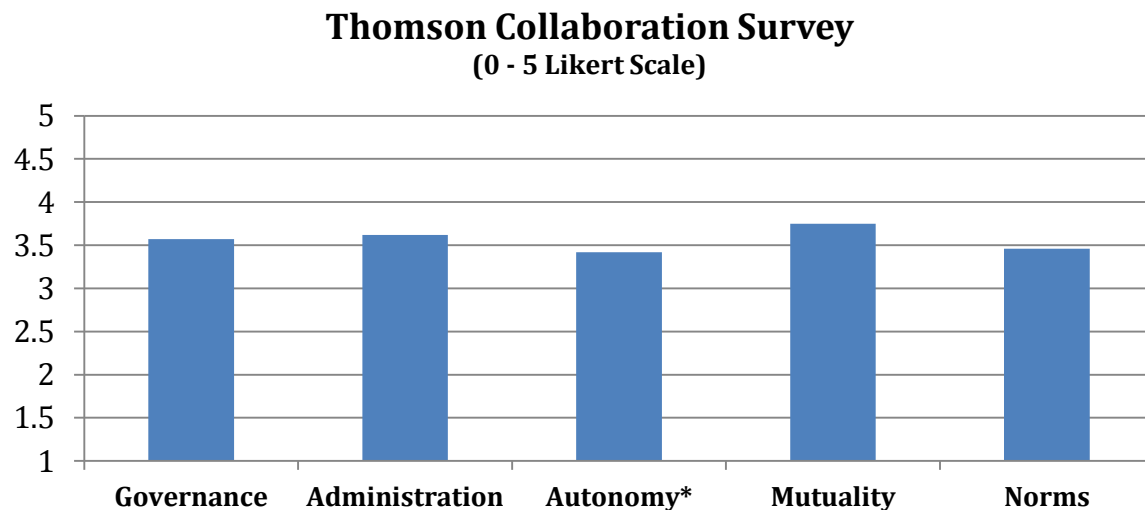


Figure 10. Survey scores (means) on collaboration constructs in Neighborhood Place

* Autonomy mean is inverted from original survey to maintain consistent reporting.

Measurement of Collaboration by Construct

Domain	Cronbach's Alpha	Mean	Percent Agreement (4 and 5 on Likert Scale)
Governance	.716	3.57	69.35%
Administration	.597	3.62	77.01%
Autonomy*	.703	3.42	74.33%
Mutuality	.737	3.75	81.87%
Norms	.643	3.46	66.48%

Figure 11. Quantitative collaboration construct scores in Neighborhood Place
 * Autonomy mean is inverted from original survey to maintain consistent reporting.
 (See Appendix I for Item Analysis and Variable Construction)

Evidence 1-A: Governance and administrative foundations of the collaboration are strong.

Thomson draws from Ostrom, 1990:

Collaboration involves creating structures that allow participants to make choices about how to solve the collective action problems they face by developing sets of working rules about who is eligible to make decisions, which actions are allowed or constrained, what information needs to be provided, and how costs and benefits are to be distributed." (Ostrom 1990, 51)

The Neighborhood Place governance structure is clearly laid out through the organization's by-laws that link membership requirements (human and financial contributions to Neighborhood Place sites) with opportunities for non-member contributors whose support does not alter the formal decision-making processes of the organization as a whole but does contribute to operational success. The clarity of purpose included in the by-laws forms the foundational basis for decisions and permeates the organization at all levels. Survey results showed administration as the second most highly observed construct of collaboration. Certainly the challenges of administration in a collaborative and decentralized

environment are many, and without effective administration, mutuality also breaks down.

Administrative clarity is grounded in the work of the Operations Committee comprised of key operations leaders from each partner organization. The by-laws describe the duties of the Operations Committee simply:

The Operations Committee shall consist of the Full Partners and Contributing Partners. The function of the Operations Committee shall be to open and operate the Neighborhood Place centers and satellites. They will develop plans for implementation of service delivery within the Neighborhood Place, allocate available resources to implement these plans and report to the Managing Board.

(Neighborhood Place By-Laws, Article VI, Section D)

Results from the survey showed strong agreement around the effectiveness of this arrangement (Governance Mean = 3.57; Administration Mean = 3.62). Clear division of responsibility between the Managing Board and the Operations Committee combines with the strong working relationships among members of the Operations Committee to ensure that planning, resource allocation, and implementation are well coordinated.

Staff reported collegial relationships in areas of shared responsibility

(answering phones, covering the front desk), facility use (office space, conference space), and community-centered activities (job fairs, weekend activities, etc.). Thomson, Perry, & Miller's (2009) construct recognizes the importance of structured decision-making rules and clear administrative responsibilities as necessary, if not sufficient bases for collaboration. To the extent that Crowson & Boyd (1993; 1996) reveal challenges related to turf, shared responsibility, and organizations that change their essential character in ways detrimental to collaboration, the evidence here suggests that Neighborhood Place enjoys a strong structural basis for collaboration that allows individual organizations to maintain their essential identity and operating procedures while the Operations Committee shapes the conditions within which the collaboration of individuals occurs.

At the same time, a few mundane operational issues do appear to frustrate workers at individual sites. Interviews revealed irritations surrounding office supplies, copy machines, space allocation, and other day-to-day operational issues for which the lack of a centrally responsible agency appeared to the subjects as a probable cause. Similar concerns were noted in the 2002 evaluation of Neighborhood Place (Ragan, 2002), and it is certainly possible that these office-level concerns would be articulated in any office situation regardless of governance and administration. The unique aspect of

this finding in the present study was that some staff members connected the frustration of operational issues to the perception that collaboration diluted individual attention to the needs of workers. While this was reported only as a minor concern, it does illustrate the importance of governance and effective administration in the working definition of collaboration that permeates the organization. One can imagine that without governance and administrative functions, the frustration of the site workers could potentially fragment the collaborative and produce a dysfunctional, frustrating workplace.

Evidence 1-B: *Co-location combined with high mutuality has produced strong, organic collaboration between agencies at all levels of Neighborhood Place.*

“The reason we’ve been so successful is because of our strong commitment.” – Corey, Operations Committee

Both surveys and interviews confirm that the construct of mutuality is the strongest driver of collaboration as it is understood and practiced at Neighborhood Place. According to Thomson, Perry, & Miller (2009), mutuality is based on “shared interests like those driven by moral urgency or passion that goes beyond organizational mission” (p. 27). The pursuit of self-sufficiency as the *raison d’être* for the Neighborhood Place certainly sounds like such a shared interest, and this finding suggests that the power of the

ambitious vision of the founders persists as an important component of the collaborative work at the Neighborhood Place sites to this day.

Such an overriding and unifying purpose makes mutuality possible because organizations can identify ways in which sharing unique resources might better advance the purpose. In addition, their efforts to negotiate agreement can begin with similarities rather than differences and the shared commitment to similar populations helps everyone feel as if they are collaborating to advance common goals rather than parochial, organizational interests.

This finding also suggests that while organizational goals are important, Neighborhood Place should use caution as pressures to report organization-specific targets and results grows. In the absence of organizational targets and results to report, individual organizations within the Neighborhood Place collaborative are increasingly looking for data to report that will justify their individual existences. If these data are not reported in a balanced way, new goals and targets may have the effect of replacing the collaborative pursuit of self-sufficiency with narrower organizational interests, thereby undermining the important glue of mutuality.

Evidence 1-C: *Collaboration, while evident in all levels of Neighborhood Place, moves from formal at the leadership level to informal at the worker level.*

“When I first came on . . . I said, ‘This group meets all the time! Are they really necessary’ . . . the more I become knowledgeable the more I realized that the meetings are essential to the success of Neighborhood Place.” - Jeff, Operations Committee

“We're just like one family, really. I can go talk to anyone any time, as long as they don't have a client. If I had a client, and I needed to do something with Janet, then I would just email her or just go to her and ask her, and we just talk like that. She's not busy or she's standing there, then we can just talk, and that's with everybody.”
- Site worker, Uijma

The difference in collaboration varies from formal to informal throughout the organization as one moves from the leadership level to the site-worker level. As described previously, the leadership of Neighborhood Place is characterized by multiple groups that have frequent meetings. There is a formality to the meeting structures that address the daily needs of the collaborative. From personnel decisions to the allocation of

fiscal resources to the assigning of roles and responsibilities, the leadership of Neighborhood Place relies on a rigorous meeting schedule in order to ensure clear, consistent communication across agencies. In addition, the Operations Committee indicated a strong sense of caring between members that strengthened their commitment to each other.

“The operations is one committee . . . they meet every single Friday. Keeping the lines of communication open is key. George brings donuts . . . that caring commitment of the partners is prevalent and we care about each other and care about what other people think.”
- Jeff, Operations Committee

“We're just like one family, really.”

-Site worker, Uijma

“We care about each other and care about what other people think.”

-Jeff, Operations Committee

At the site level, workers portrayed an informal, organic collaboration that stems primarily from co-location. Workers painted a picture of working together in an atmosphere of collegiality. While they work for different agencies and have different roles and responsibilities, the common belief system shared by the workers

about their clients and their strong commitment to the clients creates an environment in which people get along

and enjoy working together. The interviewees consistently described how they would “walk over and talk” to their co-worker in the next cubicle. The stories typically described sharing data about clients across agencies and working together to solve problems for clients on an *informal* basis. The data-sharing agreement that all clients sign as part of the intake process means that agency workers can freely discuss clients they have in common.

Responding to questions from the Innovations in Government Award Panel, Marty Bell and Jackie Stamps identified two replicable foundations for the intentional collaboration at the heart of Neighborhood Place. They first maintained that intentional training in collaboration and facilitation of Family Team Meetings laid a foundation for collaboration. They grounded the second basis for collaboration in the confidentiality and data-sharing agreements that make this informal problem solving possible. Interviews showed evidence of each of these foundations, but the staff level of the organization pointed much more often to the informal communications while the organizational leadership was more likely to point to the formal Family Team Meetings as the basis for collaboration. Our research shows that both foundations are important for different reasons to different people in

“There is no one that is a supreme leader.”

–Corey, Operations Committee

the organization and that formal and informal avenues feed collaboration across levels.

Evidence 1-D: There is healthy tension between agencies around autonomy.

“There are assumed roles: for example, JCPS has assumed the role of facilities, Metro has assumed the role of administration, there are some other things that need to happen, but no one has assumed the role. There is no one that is a supreme leader, no one director of Neighborhood Place, there is no one to say, ‘Here is a need of Neighborhood Place and your agency is going to take the lead on this.’ Because it’s a collaborative.” – Corey, Operations Committee

The construct of organizational autonomy explores the tension that collaborating organizations experience when employees have the freedom to act for the benefit of collaboration while simultaneously ensuring that individual organizational goals are advanced. Thomson, Perry, & Miller describe the tension this way:

Partners share a dual identity: They maintain their own distinct identities and organizational authority separate from a collaborative identity. This

reality creates an intrinsic tension between *organizational self-interest* – achieving individual organizational missions and maintaining an identity distinct from the collaborative – and *collective interest* – achieving collaboration goals and maintaining accountability to collective partners and their stakeholders (Bardach 1998; Tschirhart, Christensen, and Perry 2005; Van de Ven, Emmett, and Koenig 1975; Wood and Gray 1991). (2009, p. 26)

Huxham (1996) points to an autonomy-accountability dilemma that can produce “collaborative inertia” if site-level workers are constantly required to get permission to act through the chain of command (p. 5). Innes (1996) identifies a Goldilocks perspective in identifying the “edge of chaos” (p. 644) as the fulcrum for effective collaboration. Using this construct to identify the degree of autonomy operating in the Neighborhood Place collaborative reveals interesting and important perspectives that can guide deeper analysis and efforts toward continuous improvement.

The construct of autonomy is the lowest measured construct of the five outlined by the Thomson, Perry, & Miller conceptualization of collaboration. While still above 3 on a Likert scale, the measurement of autonomy indicates that there is a

comparably lower level of agreement around the role of autonomy within the collaborative. Our interviews with NP staff suggest that budget pressures, reorganization, and maturation of the collaborative may be placing strains on the balance required for effective collaboration. The mean for autonomy was 3.42 and 74.3% of respondents agreed or strongly agreed. Clearly, this data does not demonstrate a significant deviation from the other areas and while lower than the others, we can see that the necessary autonomy is still evident within Neighborhood Place. This survey construct does not suggest an ideal measure at which appropriate balance between autonomy and accountability is reached. However, the relatively lower measure combines with themes from our interviews to suggest an appropriate, but possibly growing, tension at all levels of the organization around autonomy.

At the leadership level, members of the Operations Committee acknowledged that there were times when timeliness and ownership caused tension or affected the efficiency of the collaborative. However, they were quick to say that these realities of collaboration were “worth it” and that they would not exit the collaborative for these reasons. In respect to timeliness and efficiency, interviewees referred to key decisions on personnel and resources that were discussed at the Operations Committee and required full agreement before moving forward. While this process and need for

consensus could potentially delay decisions for up to a week and be somewhat inefficient, the support and buy-in from all agencies was seen by all interviewees as essential to the success of Neighborhood Place.

In addition to some issues associated with timely, efficient decision-making, there is evident tension around the ownership of problems that arise for Neighborhood Place. Routine problem solving that is inherent in any organization can lead to frustration between agencies as some agencies might feel that they pick up more of the work than others. In particular, when scarce resources are required to address particular issues that arise, the tension can become detrimental to the collaborative.

However, for Neighborhood Place, high mutuality and a shared belief system, combined with commitment to the collaborative, seem to bring balance to the inherent tension of the autonomy-accountability dilemma. Interviewees consistently acknowledged the tension without depicting the tension in a negative light. Their acknowledgement stems from a comfort with the reality of collaboration and an acceptance of this tension as the way in which collaboration takes place – for the good of the clients (suggesting the common passion that animates mutuality).

One way in which the collaborative has worked through the tension has been persistence over time, which has yielded traditional roles and responsibilities for each agency. These

historical roles have served to distribute the range of fiscal and human resource responsibilities to each agency with some level of fairness. For example, JCPS has traditionally accepted the role of facilities, and Metro has traditionally accepted the role of administration. These assumed roles are vital to the continued success of Neighborhood Place. However, current needs do not always fall into pre-determined roles and responsibilities. In these situations, the Operations Committee must work through particular issues, and one agency typically must take the lead in resolving the issue. The commitment to the clients and the strong belief that collaboration is the key to better services guides these decisions at the Operations Committee level.

“We just kind of work it out.” –
Jeff, Operations Committee

In reference to these emerging issues that develop through the daily administration of Neighborhood Place, the Operations Committee seems to “work it out.” Many times this process is facilitated through the extensive networks that each agency maintains within the community. In one interview, a staff member related a situation when Neighborhood Place encountered a specific need and the solution was found through the connections that a collaborating agency had with a separate non-profit agency. In relating this story, the staff member said, “that happens all the time.”

Throughout the interviews, it was evident that there was a strong belief that problems would be solved together and solutions would emerge from the collaboration. This on-going collaborative process involves meeting frequently, discussing the emerging issues, and maintaining a resolute commitment to shared responsibility.

While the leadership of Neighborhood Place Operations Committee was more willing to accept the inherent tension and inefficiencies of acting collaboratively, the site workers were less willing to accept any negative connotation about collaboration. When asked whether collaboration was ever a hindrance to their work, site workers responded quickly and with conviction:

“Never. It’s always a help.” – Site Worker, Cane Run

As mentioned previously, the norms of collaboration are deeply engrained in NP’s organizational culture. While some site-level workers acknowledged time constraints of their monthly inter-agency meetings, everyone consistently praised the collaborative environment and the benefits of co-location as a key to their own agency’s success.

Finding #2: Other evidence of collaboration yields mixed results.

Evidence 2-A: Analysis of intake data shows limited referrals between agencies;

however, qualitative data indicates site workers refer to other agencies regularly.

One of the primary assumptions behind the theory of action set forth by the founders of Neighborhood Place was that the co-location of services and collaboration would produce a “one-stop shop” for governmental services for families and children. The theory was predicated on an idea that if clients came for one service, they would find others that they needed because the initial contact worker would be able to refer them to other agencies. This line of thinking is identified as a basis for collaboration itself in the 2005 report (Michalczyk, Lentz, & Martin et al, 2005, p. 12) and features prominently in interview responses collected for this study.

Two data points from the intake form speak to this theory and raise questions regarding the assumption that co-location improves coordination of services across agencies. On the surface, it appears that clients are not accessing multiple services and that there are relatively few times when Neighborhood Place workers actually record referrals of clients to other services. In fact, 81 percent of the time, clients do not receive more than one service and 75 percent of the time there is no recorded referral to another agency.

Did the Client Receive More than One Service?

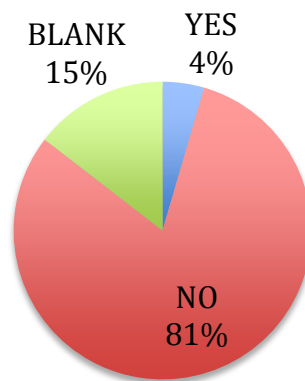


Figure 14. Percentage of clients receiving multiple services, 2011 Intake Data

Available data indicates that at the time of intake, clients rarely receive multiple services. What is not known is what this number would be in the absence of co-location of service and the intentional work to cultivate collaboration. Furthermore, this result could also relate to the nature of the services provided. For example, food stamp registration is a service that can be accessed within a visit, whereas other services may require follow ups that are time intensive. So, while it is certainly possible that individual clients receive multiple services over time through co-location, our research revealed no clear evidence to confirm that the “one-stop shop” intention of Neighborhood Place is indeed improving coordination of

multiple services to support individual families or children.

In addition, available data does not show the levels of active referral that interviews and official descriptions suggest. Intake data suggests that 75 percent of the time there is no referral. This could indicate that the 20-year existence of Neighborhood Place has permeated the community to the point that “everyone knows” about the services present at Neighborhood Place and referrals are not necessary. However, the interviewees indicate consistently that they refer clients to other agencies at frequencies that exceed those demonstrable using currently available intake data.

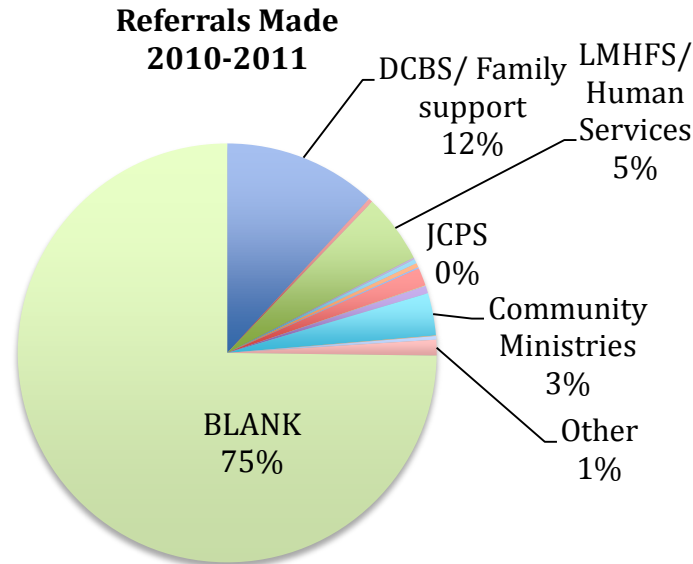


Figure 15. Percentage of clients referred to other agencies, 2011 Intake Data

Another question we could not answer is whether clients themselves are able to ascertain that there are other services present and available to them and therefore, take advantage of those services at another time. In addition, we do not know what type of informal referring happens among Neighborhood Place workers and between Neighborhood Place workers and clients.

For example, Neighborhood Place workers might discuss other services with various clients without making an official referral to that agency. Likewise, site workers may discuss clients amongst themselves and that conversation might initiate a contact by another agency.

A theme that emerged through our interviews was the organic collaboration among agency workers within

Neighborhood Place. As we will discuss later, SNAP (or food stamps) is a portal for Neighborhood Place, and other agency workers believe that their client referrals increase because of the co-location alongside food stamps.

“I wouldn't have as many clients. Probably ‘cause they might not know that the service is available, or their ability to get to me. Whereas now, if they tell their food stamp worker, ‘I need help with my rent; I just got laid off,’ they say, ‘Well, go talk to Angelissa, she's right here,’ and they'll even walk her over to me. So, it's a little more convenient.”

– Site worker, Uijma 2

Our investigation suggests that the intake form may not be capturing the full range of referrals between agencies, and there was consistent evidence from

the interviews that workers believed they were “referring all the time.” The question then becomes, to what extent is this actually happening? And, how might Neighborhood Place capture these referrals quantitatively so as to demonstrate and give evidence to the original coordinated theory of action.

Well, um, I refer them to food stamps and to Y Heap . . . it’s the gas and electric assistance during the winter months. Well, it starts next week, so I’m telling everybody about that. People that are not eligible for SR, or even if they are eligible but we are not able to pay the full amount that they owe are referred to our community ministries, churches, things like that. Let them know who’s hiring, who can help them with employment. Some folks come in needing commodities. We got canned goods, and stuff like that. And, everybody that I give a food basket to, I tell them about the Dare to Care, because they can call the Dare to Care phone number to find out who else gives out free food in their area. So, constantly telling them about other resources out in the community. Or, even in the building, too. – Site Worker, Uijma 2

The theme was clear throughout the interviews that the workers at Neighborhood Place, regardless of agency, worked together in the best interest of the families. Our research

uncovered no evidence of turf wars between agencies. Also, a genuine desire to ensure that each client received needed services from each agency permeated each conversation with workers, who were able to cite numerous examples of interactions from their own work that produced positive, integrated outcomes for individual clients.

It is possible that the history of Neighborhood Place and the specific commitment of the partnering organizations combine with the administrative coordination of the Operations Committee to offer effective collaboration, and that exploration of the five-part conceptualization carries potential for an improved process of continuous improvement.

Yet, currently available evidence offers little direct connection to measurable outcomes associated with improved collaboration. We take the investigation of outcomes further in the next section. The lack of available data does not mean that benefits of the collaborative are non-existent and this study lays a foundation for investigation of collaboration that can be carried forward in future work. Nevertheless, efforts to establish clear links to measurable service improvements associated with collaboration require work beyond the scope of this study.

Evidence 2-B: The link between agency collaboration and client satisfaction outcomes is limited and needs further study.

While the theory of action placed a strong emphasis on collaboration as a means to the end of better outcomes for Louisville families (Michalczyk, Lentz, & Martin, 2005, p. 9), our research uncovered little conclusive evidence to show that this connection plays out in practice. An inherent challenge in establishing this linkage turns on the definition of collaboration, and our work in the previous section only begins to unpack this important foundation. An additional research challenge lies in how to control for co-location or the fact that Neighborhood Place now reaches all parts of Jefferson County through its eight sites and three satellite locations. Our project does not eliminate the possibility that the success of outcome data and client satisfaction could be linked to the co-location of services or the proximity and number of the Neighborhood Place sites within the communities where people live with little or no connection to genuine *collaboration*.

For the purposes of this study, Thomson, Perry, & Miller's conceptualization of collaboration enables us to pursue some initial exploration of the connection between collaboration and improved client outcomes. In particular, we tried to compare variations in reported levels of collaboration by site with the site-specific client satisfaction data to determine whether positive correlations

of variance existed to support the hypothesis that constructs of collaboration and measures of client satisfaction are linked.

To explore this idea, we analyzed the survey data according to percent agreement by site. This analysis shows only the respondents who answered in the affirmative toward the questions and gives a more rigorous interpretation of the data by excluding not only those who disagree, but those who are neutral.

From this analysis, Neighborhood Place leadership can see the variations in reported collaboration by construct at each site. Through a comparative analysis that uses distance from the mean to expose outliers within the data set we can determine which Neighborhood Place sites reported relatively stronger constructs of collaboration as compared to the mean of the entire Neighborhood Place collaborative. In Figure 12, the green coding shows a +5 percent variance from the mean, and the red coding shows a -5 percent variance from the mean for individual sites and categories.

The analysis shows that measures of collaboration at Cane Run are above the Neighborhood Place average in four out of five constructs and that 810 Barret and First NP are below in three out of five constructs.

Percent Agreement by Site									
Domain	810 Barret	BoH	Cane Run	First NP	NW	SC	SJ	Uijma	All % Agree
Governance	64 N=25	77 N=39	78 N=18	54 N=26	80 N=15	68 N=25	73 N=22	62 N=16	69 N=186
Administration	79 N=28	69 N=36	79 N=19	71 N=24	86 N=14	86 N=28	77 N=22	75 N=16	77 N=187
Autonomy	69 N=26	74 N=38	83 N=18	77 N=26	64 N=14	75 N=28	76 N=21	75 N=16	74 N=187
Mutuality	69 N=26	89 N=37	94 N=18	73 N=22	93 N=14	86 N=28	70 N=20	82 N=17	81 N=182
Norms	62 N=26	60 N=38	72 N=18	80 N=25	36 N=14	54 N=26	82 N=17	89 N=18	66 N=182
Average Agreement	68.70	71.10	81.32	70.73	71.83	74.07	75.49	77.12	73.81

Figure 12. Collaboration constructs variance by site

The 2005 report drew an explicit connection between client satisfaction and collaboration arguing that, “The partners believed that team collaboration directly impacts client satisfaction and is expressed through consultations, teamwork, and improvements in functioning and overall service integration” (Michalczyk, Lentz, & Martin 2005, p. 8). In order to

determine whether stronger constructs of reported collaboration do indeed link with stronger client satisfaction results, we then connected the collaboration data with customer satisfaction data – one outcome for which we have site-linked data. In comparing the two sets of data, we see that there is no conclusive link between sites with high reported collaboration scores and high

client satisfaction scores. 810 Barret was five percent below the Neighborhood Place average in three out of five domains as well as the overall collaboration average, and yet was at or above average in each of the three satisfaction questions. Similarly, First NP was five percent below the Neighborhood Place average in three out of five domains, and yet their client

satisfaction data for 2012 was above average in all three questions regarding satisfaction. Finally, we can see that there are relatively lower levels of client satisfaction at South Jefferson, but the reported collaboration scores show average scores, except a below-average score in mutuality and an above-average score in norms.

2012 Percent Satisfaction by Site									
Client Satisfaction Question	810 Barret N=116	BoH N=65	Cane Run N=86	First NP N=11	NW N=66	SC N=46	SJ N=48	Uijma N=78	Overall N=516
I feel that NP met my needs – A Great Deal & Somewhat	94	94	91	91	86	87	71	94	90
How would you rate your overall experience at NP today? – Excellent	94	92	74	91	83	93	67	87	86
Rank your satisfaction with staff – Highly Satisfied & Satisfied	73	72	72	100	80	76	56	78	74

Figure 13 Client satisfaction measure variance by site

A note of caution in the interpretation of this data flows from the relatively high levels of all collaboration constructs in Neighborhood Place. Comparison between Neighborhood Place sites offers less insight since the means are high for both the collaboration data and the client satisfaction data. An attempt to prove the negative becomes challenging in the absence of longitudinal data that might show evidence of consistently low client satisfaction combined with consistently low collaboration scores.

Such analysis was beyond the scope of this study. Regardless, continued study of the linkage between collaboration and client satisfaction would be required before concluding that collaboration, as defined by the Thomson model, holds the key to client satisfaction more than simple co-location. In addition, continued study would be essential to determine whether a tipping point exists beyond which low collaboration impacts client satisfaction.

Section 6: Research Question #2—Findings

Does Neighborhood Place affect outcomes for Louisville families?

While the outcome-oriented goal of “progress toward self-sufficiency” provides direction and support for all levels of the NP organization, efforts to quantify outcomes clearly linked to the organizational efforts of Neighborhood Place remain elusive. The pursuit of self-sufficiency is a lifelong endeavor for anyone, and the contribution of a coordinated social service collaborative could never singlehandedly offer more than incremental support toward this ultimate goal. Establishing constructs and measures for ambitious community change goals such as this one proved difficult.

An effort to develop a measurable construct of self-sufficiency undertaken by the

Commonwealth Corporation found that,

If programs intend to support individuals and families along the continuum [of self-sufficiency], then organizations may need to revisit their service mix, partnerships, and perhaps organizational structure. Strategic partnerships with other providers of key services are the foundation for weaving disparate supports into a comprehensive package that can favorably impact an individual’s ability to increase their skills, credentials, work experience, and wages. Funding streams will need to better support a continuum of integrated services that will support workers from

poverty to self-sufficiency. A multiplicity of funding sources can be melded to support these initiatives. (Commonwealth Corporation, 2003)

To this end, Neighborhood Place put forth a theory of action grounded in a strong belief that coordinated social services would lead to better outcomes for Louisville families. Neighborhood Place holds the following goals as stated objectives of the Neighborhood Place collaborative:

Neighborhood Place Goals

- To improve the safety, permanency and well-being of children, families and individuals
- To improve the health status of families and individuals
- To improve the economic self-sufficiency among families
- To improve the level of student attendance and academic success

Along with these goals, Neighborhood Place seeks to produce the following end outcomes:

Neighborhood Place End Outcomes

- Coordinated, streamlined, efficient services
- Partnership and participatory planning

- Responsiveness to client and community needs

Clearly, the goals provide the inspiration for collaboration because of their loftiness.

However, regardless of their ability to motivate and inspire, the goals of Neighborhood Place are hard to measure, and despite substantial data collection and continuing efforts to clarify outcome measures, the Neighborhood Place Operations Committee has not settled on consistent and clear metrics as indicators for their stated goals.

The leadership of Neighborhood Place has focused their data collection on the stated end outcomes. To be sure, the end outcomes quantify indicators that are more within the grasp of the daily work of Neighborhood Place and reflect things that Neighborhood Place can control more directly. However, in recent years there has been an increased desire to prove the effectiveness of the Neighborhood Place collaborative in terms of the stated goals. This work has become the challenge of a new generation of Neighborhood Place leaders. And, while, the stated goals of Neighborhood Place exemplify the ultimate desire of most social services, many times the metrics used to evaluate the success of these agencies come in terms of the quantity of their service delivery

instead of measurements of the goals of economic self-sufficiency, health status, and student achievement.

This study originated at the request of Jefferson County Public Schools and highlights the individual agency desire to see progress on individual agency metrics vis-à-vis the collaborative.

However, while the research around the total ecology of schooling clearly speaks to the link between stable families and stable neighborhoods to school and student outcomes (Coleman, 1988; Lareau, 1987; Rothstein, 2004; Furstenberg & Hughes, 1997; Traub, 2000; Fine, 1988; Schultz, 1961), there is not a current data collection and reporting process that tightly links individual families of Neighborhood Place to JCPS student outcomes. In order to establish that, JCPS would need a robust data system linking its families who use Neighborhood Place services, not only while their children are in school, but also prior to their children's reaching school age, with the academic records their children earn once enrolled. Formal linkage of families served through Neighborhood Place with student records such as student participation over time, student achievement, attendance and conduct data might require technical adjustments as well as expanded confidentiality agreements, but without that linkage, efforts to demonstrate causal connections between

Neighborhood Place and the student achievement data currently in great demand will remain limited.

**“We need to take
Neighborhood
Place to the next
level.”**

**–Rachel, Operations
Committee**

If such linkage were established, researchers could compare students whose families accessed Neighborhood Place with similar students whose families did not access Neighborhood Place to determine if the unique delivery method of Neighborhood Place services was indeed a causal factor to increased student outcomes. Even then, the outcome would only show at best that accessing services improves school outcomes. It would be hard to compare with other service delivery methods, since NP is where services are provided. Those who do not access NP, by and large, do not access services at all.

JCPS might have the biggest challenge in linking the services of Neighborhood Place to their specific organizational outcomes of student achievement. For policymakers in the educational arena, those metrics

include graduation, closing the achievement gap, college acceptance, attendance, etc. The goal of building stable communities of involved people who may or may not have children carries inherent challenge in trying to connect inputs tightly to school outcomes. And while the connection between stable families and communities and student outcomes is well-established in educational research, the connection no longer carries the presumptive weight among policy makers that it did when the KERA was passed and Neighborhood Place began at the height of the school-linked services movement. Even with robust data linkage that does not presently exist, the existence of Neighborhood Place sites in a particular community would need to correlate with improvements in the conditions for children within the community to be successful in school. From families with children to the elderly and those without children, the stability of the entire community must prove to have an effect on student outcomes via the Neighborhood Place sites. In other words, does the existence of a Neighborhood Place site produce statistically significant effects on the school outcomes in

“We need to develop our elevator speech, something more than just individual stories.”

–Jeff, Operations Committee

that community, or do similar communities without a Neighborhood Place site have similar student outcome data?

While JCPS initiated this particular study and remains a strong partner in the Neighborhood Place collaborative, each organization in Neighborhood Place is experiencing external pressure to connect its work to broader, societal outcomes such as those identified in Comprehensive Community Change Initiatives (CCIs). The question of measuring ultimate success as defined by the stated goals of Neighborhood Place is not new. Despite the 2005 Measuring Collaboration report and nearly two decades of data collection, little useful information has yet emerged to address this persistent, evaluative question. Indeed, in 2009 the members of the finalists review panel at the Ash Center for Democratic Governance and Innovation at Harvard asked a similar question when evaluating Neighborhood Place for its Innovations in American Government Award: “Is it possible to measure self-sufficiency improvement over time?” Additionally, Neighborhood Place

Operations Committee members realize the context of their work and the importance of useful data tools to continuing their collaborative efforts.

“We need to take Neighborhood Place to the next level.” – Rachel, Operations Committee

“We need to develop our elevator speech, something more than just individual stories.” – Jeff, Operations Committee

In short, the leadership of Neighborhood Place is eager to demonstrate measurable progress toward their stated goals. Having begun the work of tracking data that speaks to their intended outcomes, they now desire to explore the effect of Neighborhood Place on the stated goals.

Finding #3: Neighborhood Place impacts social service delivery positively through accessibility and coordination.

Evidence 3-A: Louisville-Jefferson County families benefit from the Neighborhood Collaborative

Through multiple conversations with the leadership of Neighborhood Place it was evident that they did not have an “elevator speech” that included legitimate data to demonstrate the effectiveness of Neighborhood Place. While each member of the leadership team articulated the strong belief that Neighborhood Place was good for families in poverty and essential to the work of the four agencies involved in the collaborative, they could not affirmatively answer the question, “Are we getting a good return on investment?” Without comparative data, they struggled to engage policymakers in meaningful dialogue about continued funding and political support. To further explore this concern, we examined intake data to identify the services of Neighborhood Place that drive its attraction for clients. Through this analysis, it is clear that accessing food stamps is the primary motivator for clients to access Neighborhood Place.

2011 Intake Data: Primary Reason for Visit

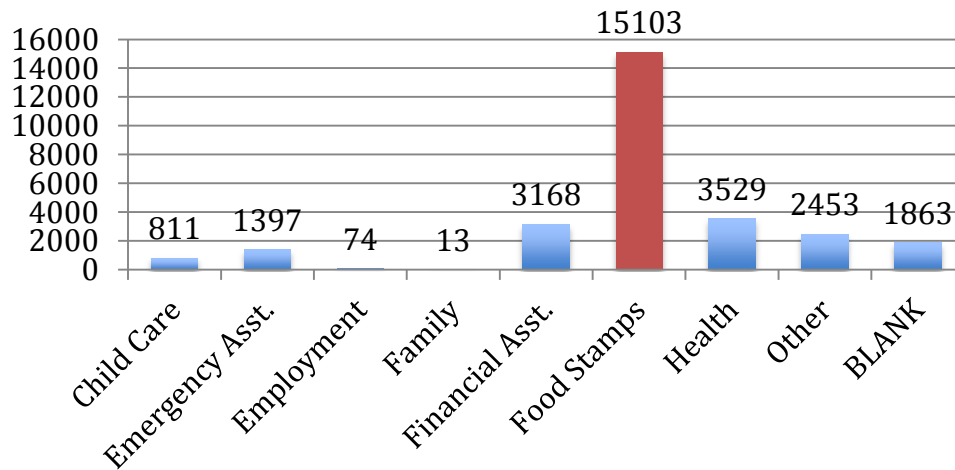


Figure 14. Primary Reason for Visiting Neighborhood Place, 2011 Intake Data

Figure 14 shows that 15,103 intake forms (53 percent) cite food stamps as the primary reason for their visit to Neighborhood Place. Further, in Figure 15, we see that 19,685 intake forms (60 percent) cite Department of Community Based Services (DCBS) as the agency of initial contact. Both of these data points support the understanding that clients access Neighborhood Place primarily for food stamps, making it a portal by which families access Neighborhood Place.

2011 Intake Data: Agency of Initial Contact

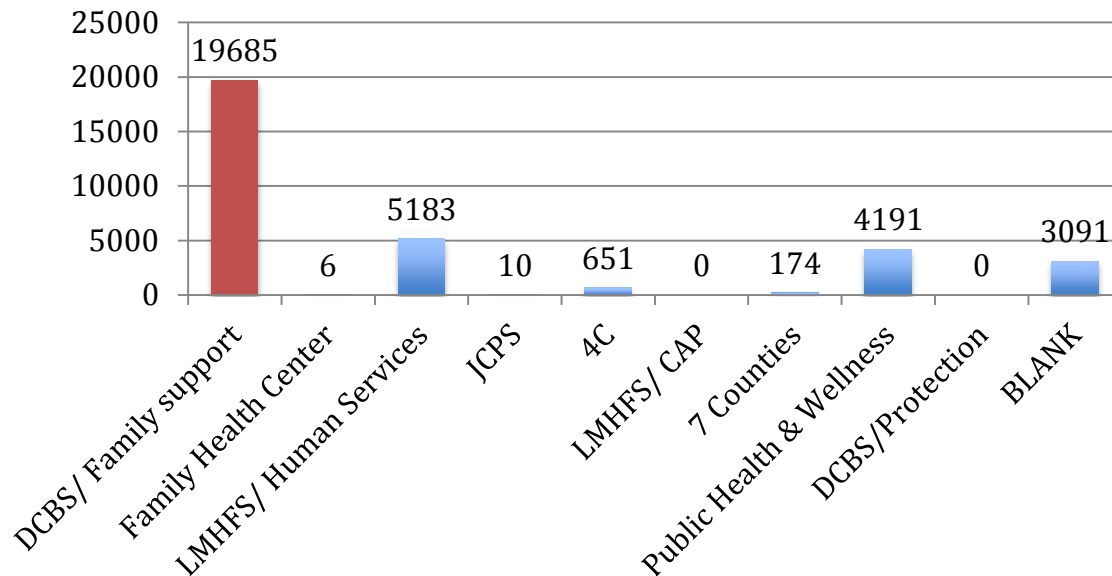


Figure 15. Agency of Initial Contact, 2011 Intake Data

Using food stamp distribution as a starting point for evaluation, the obvious question becomes, “Does Louisville-Jefferson County deliver food stamps effectively as compared to other cities in the United States?” and then subsequently, “Does Neighborhood Place contribute to the effectiveness of food stamp delivery?” Ultimately, in the quest to establish relevancy from a

return-on-investment standpoint, Neighborhood Place must be able to demonstrate a connection to this data point because food stamps are such an obvious driver of client need.

According to the Food and Action Research Center, Louisville ranked #3 in the country in both 2007 and 2008 in food stamp participation as seen in the table below.

City-by-City SNAP Participation Rate Comparison		
City	2007 SNAP Participation Rate	2008 SNAP Participation Rate
Philadelphia, PA	93%	Not Available
Detroit, MI	92%	97%
Louisville, KY	88%	96%
Washington D.C.	82%	98%
Columbus, OH	75%	84%
Indianapolis, IN	85%	94%
Jacksonville, FL	68%	86%
San Diego, CA	35%	40%
US National Average	67%	76%

Figure 16. SNAP Access in Urban America: A City-by-City Snapshot, 2009, 2011

The study by the Food and Action Research Center (FARC) seeks to demonstrate the economic impact that the food stamps program

has on individual cities by showing the estimated unclaimed value of food stamps in each of the cities. Comparatively, Louisville-Jefferson

County has a lot to be proud of in respect to its participation rate in the food stamps program. Because of the high participation rate, the amount of unclaimed benefits is substantially lower than many other cities of similar size. According to the FARC, under-participation in food stamps affects not only the individual family adversely, but also the entire community. Food stamps are completely funded by the federal

government, meaning that food stamp dollars increase the economy in low-income areas. According to the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA), every dollar of food stamp benefits generates \$1.79 in economic activity. Therefore, increasing food stamps has a positive effect on local business and increases the tax base for local governments.

City-by-City Estimated SNAP Unclaimed Benefits Comparison			
City	2007 Population	Est. Unclaimed Benefits 2007	Est. Unclaimed Benefits 2008
Philadelphia, PA	3,887,694	\$13,386,210	Not Available
Detroit, MI	1,985,101	\$17,025,271	\$7,299,577
Louisville, KY	1,233,735	\$7,105,881	\$2,034,479
Washington D.C.	4,151,047	\$10,267,301	\$822,577
Columbus, OH	1,754,337	\$25,824,413	\$16,654,934
Indianapolis, IN	1,695,037	\$11,488,769	\$4,563,472
Jacksonville, FL	1,300,823	\$19,205,516	\$8,303,719
San Diego, CA	2,974,859	\$107,673,097	\$105,826,629
US National Total	301,621,157	\$1,669,112,023	\$1,113,573,352

Figure 17. SNAP Access in Urban America: A City-by-City Snapshot, 2009, 2011

Clearly, from the chart above, Louisville-Jefferson County, along with Detroit and Washington, D.C., is doing something right in terms of getting the service of food stamps to

those who need it. And, clearly, this work has an economic impact on the city. The question for Neighborhood Place is, "Does the unique service

delivery method of Neighborhood Place contribute to this data?"

Evidence 3- B: Multiple sites, in or near schools, and located within the community they serve, contribute to the high participation rate in SNAP.

Our analysis of the client satisfaction survey data and interview data indicate strong linkages between the high food stamp participation rate and the proximity afforded by multiple sites, along with the decreased stigma attached to school locations. In 2012, only 17 percent of respondents said they would go to the agency's home office if Neighborhood Place did not exist. In addition, just over 60 percent of the respondents indicated

they did not know what they would do if Neighborhood Place were not available. This effectively indicates that if Neighborhood Place were not in existence 83 percent of the current clients would not access food stamps in the infamous L&N building, the central headquarter of SNAP, and commonly referred to as the welfare building, in downtown Louisville. Inevitably, some would find a way to the home office building, but regardless, this data offers a clear connection between Neighborhood Place and the food stamp participation rate in Louisville. Clients value services in their neighborhood at sites without a negative stigma.

2012 Client Satisfaction Survey	
If Neighborhood Place were not here, what would you do?	
I do not know	61.14%
I would not receive services	14.97%
I would go to the agency's home office	17.47%
I would pay for private services	0.53%
BLANK	5.88%

Figure 18. 2012 Neighborhood Place Client Satisfaction Survey

This conclusion was reinforced repeatedly in interviews with both the Operations Committee members and individual agency workers within Neighborhood Place.

Throughout the interviews, there was a consistent message that clients from around Jefferson County would not go downtown to the L&N building in order to receive food

stamps. Interviewees spoke of logistical challenges of transportation, the stigma of waiting in line at the L&N Building, and the informal boundaries within Jefferson County between neighborhoods.

“[S]o one main thing is also the stigma of the building. That was the welfare building, and people were seen going in and out, whereas NP is connected to schools. They offer other services, like some of them have GED programs . . . classes here, used to have those. They used to have the relationship classes here. So, people are coming here for all kinds of services, and you don't have that stigma of having to travel all the way to that one spot and then go someplace else for something else.” – Site Worker, Cane Run

“If you were to look at data from different parts of the county before Neighborhood Place the food stamps participation was very low . . . people will not go there to get the services, and before Neighborhood Place they simply went without. There are these informal boundaries within the county . . . they will not come downtown for anything. That is simply because of Neighborhood Place. It's

created easier access.” – Corey, Operations Committee

“ . . . And so with my clients that I had, they were talking about the stuff they needed and they don't have transportation, and so just going from that building and coming over here is not a long way instead of them having to go all the way downtown.” - Site Worker, First & TJ

From the historical perspective of agency workers, transportation problems, stigma, and neighborhood norms created barriers for clients before Neighborhood Place existed.

We found that multiple sites within the communities in which the people live help to reduce barriers to access and reduce the stigma of going to the “welfare building.” The 2012 client survey showed that 87 percent of the clients reported it was “easy” to get to the Neighborhood Place site. This adds to the evidence that the location, reputation, and organizational structures associated with Neighborhood Place play a pivotal part in the food stamp program distribution patterns and high participation rates at Neighborhood Place.

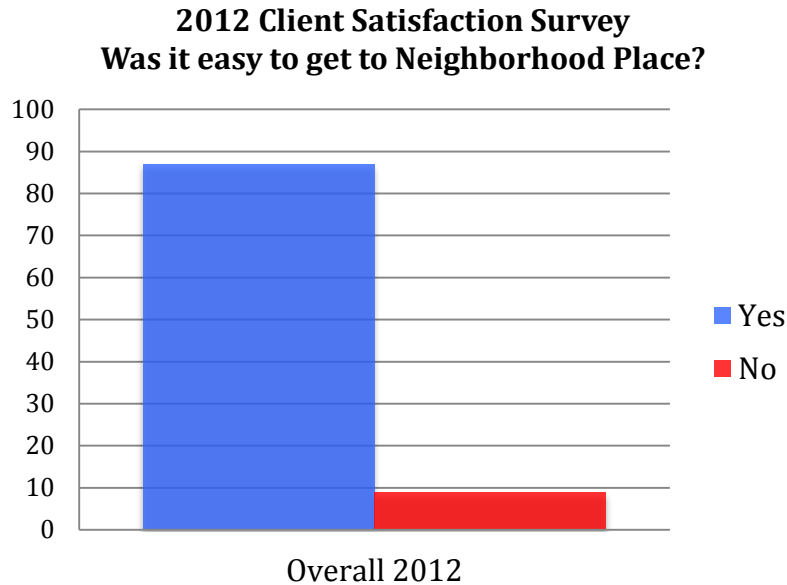


Figure 19. Ease of access to Neighborhood Place, 2012 Client Satisfaction

Therefore, our project data support the theory of action. The service delivery method of Neighborhood Place addresses the two primary barriers to food stamp access – proximity and stigma – and yields impressive results on this one indicator. Focusing on the most frequently accessed service of Neighborhood Place, we isolated one agency – DCBS – and one data point – food stamps – in order to investigate the value of Neighborhood Place. Our evidence supports the conclusion that Neighborhood Place contributes to the high food stamp participation rates. However, this is only one, narrow indicator of strong service delivery. To address the issue of return on investment, it will be important for Neighborhood Place to develop indicators for each agency

that indicate how co-location and collaboration enhance its ability to serve clients on a variety of indicators that speak to all agencies involved in the collaborative. Ideally, these indicators would have national comparatives that demonstrate how the unique delivery mechanism of Neighborhood Place places Louisville above other comparative cities.

Evidence 3-C: Neighborhood Place has consistently earned high client satisfaction rates for the past four years.

A third indicator that Neighborhood Place has a positive impact on service delivery is customer satisfaction. Measurement of customer satisfaction is a legacy of the Neighborhood Place focus on families and children and the effort

to make services accessible and helpful to those families. Implicit assumptions that relate satisfied customers to services well delivered and needs well met are associated with every aspect of the collaborative. Indeed, while client satisfaction cannot be assessed before and after Neighborhood Place, it is also true that satisfied clients do provide some indication that the goals of Neighborhood Place are being advanced. Researchers tend to disregard satisfaction as self-reported and of limited use in establishing a comparative evaluative measure of the effect of Neighborhood Place on its identified goals. However, the data in this area are continue to support the finding

that Neighborhood Place has a positive affect on families.

One of the key data collection tools utilized by Neighborhood Place is through the client satisfaction survey (Appendix G). For the past four years, Neighborhood Place has been collecting client satisfaction data and the results have been consistently high.

These probes and responses can be used by Neighborhood Place leadership to drive continuous improvement, and the questions dealing with clients having their needs met and satisfaction with staff seem particularly important in respect to the effectiveness of Neighborhood Place.

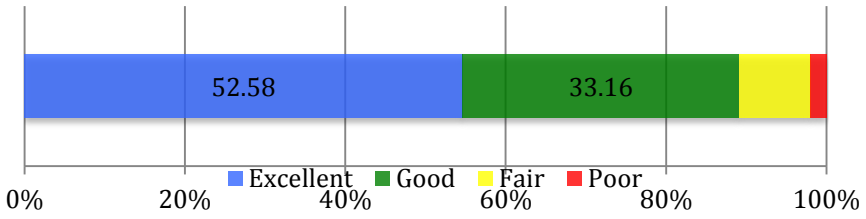
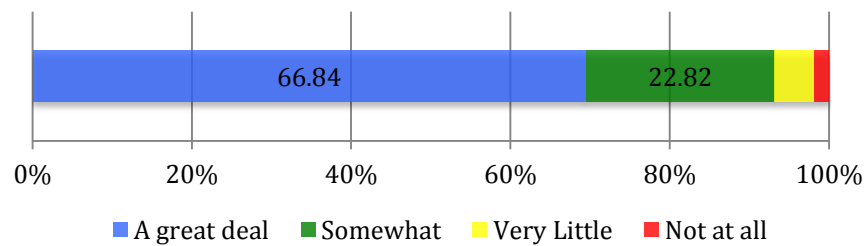
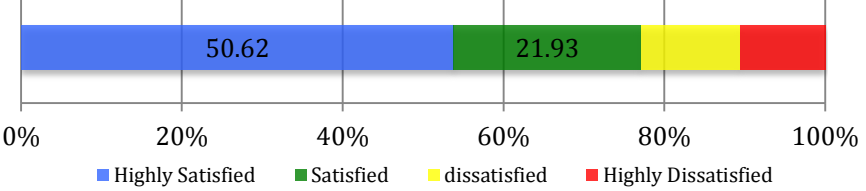
Question	2012 Survey Results	2012 Agreement
How would you rate your overall experience at NP today?	 <p>52.58</p> <p>33.16</p> <p>0% 20% 40% 60% 80% 100%</p> <p>■ Excellent ■ Good ■ Fair ■ Poor</p>	85.74% Excellent & Good
I feel that NP met my needs	 <p>66.84</p> <p>22.82</p> <p>0% 20% 40% 60% 80% 100%</p> <p>■ A great deal ■ Somewhat ■ Very Little ■ Not at all</p>	89.66% Great deal & Somewhat
Satisfaction with Staff	 <p>50.62</p> <p>21.93</p> <p>0% 20% 40% 60% 80% 100%</p> <p>■ Highly Satisfied ■ Satisfied ■ dissatisfied ■ Highly Dissatisfied</p>	72.55% Highly Satisfied & Satisfied

Figure 20. Sample questions from 2012 Client Satisfaction Survey

Historically, these three questions vary by a maximum of five percent in any given year dating back to 2009, demonstrating the consistency of this finding over several years. With this data, Neighborhood Place continues to demonstrate its value. The clients indicate that their needs are being met and that they are satisfied with the function and effectiveness of Neighborhood Place.

Finding 4: The current performance management system is under-utilized.

Evidence 4-A – *Changing contexts are creating uncertainty and mild concern within the Operations Committee of Neighborhood Place.*

Despite nearly 20 years of operation and several instances of national recognition, we uncovered a

growing sense of uncertainty among the Operations Committee Leadership that, on first blush, appears disconnected from the enthusiasm and clarity of purpose found at the site level. Despite clear evidence from our research that collaboration, the key component in the theory of action, is operating across five distinct dimensions, and that customer satisfaction and food stamp program participation are consistently high, the simple question, “Is Neighborhood Place working?” persists. It is, after all, the central question presented to us as we embarked on this research journey, and our initial work with the Operations Committee confirmed that their intuitive sense of success could not displace the growing desire for a definitive answer to the question.

Indeed, more has changed in the past five years than may meet the eye. Significant challenges to the continued funding for Neighborhood Place have emerged separately at the state and local levels; new leaders have assumed the reins of the major partners including JCPS, Metro Government, and Seven Counties Services; seminal figures such as Marty Bell no longer serve in the upper echelons of school system administration; and a post-NCLB reductive evaluation mindset increasingly pervades the discourse

of school reform and community change.

Assuming an evaluation posture, built on the reductionist assumption that investments can only be justified if evaluators can isolate a clear and positive impact that would not occur without the intervention in question, presses each organization further toward identifying narrow objectives to justify continued participation in the collaborative. Each agency seeks clear evidence that its own priorities are met, even if that effort increasingly fragments the common and far-reaching objectives that drove collaboration and the development of positive mutuality (Thomson, et al, 2009) in the first place. School system participation is increasingly predicated on the ability to show clear positive impacts on student achievement data or proxies for achievement gains such as attendance and discipline. Each partner agency feels similar pressure to show positive impacts on the specific goals their individual organizations would pursue in the absence of the collaboration. This pressure is evident in the request for this evaluation, and the tension generated by the shift in expectations is challenging the sense-making function of the organization. The evaluation mindset challenges and fragments the comprehensive community change goals that animated Neighborhood Place and

have sustained its sense of purpose until now.

Our research uncovered a disconnect between the significant work regarding data collection and evaluation undertaken by the Outcomes Committee in recent years and the persistent sense expressed in our leadership interviews that better data is needed in order to take Neighborhood Place “to the next level.” Following the recognition by the Ash Innovations in American Government Committee in 2009, annual data collection and reporting have continued to expand.

An updated logic model (Appendix J) lists numerous evaluative tools, including Weekly Meetings of NP Operating Committee; Bimonthly Managing Board meetings, Annual Outcomes and Trends report; Annual Client Satisfaction, Team Collaboration and Community Council surveys; Regular Reports to JCPS Board of Education; Annual Performance Data Reports; NP Annual Report (NP Logic Model). “Collaboration & Integration Processes” have been formalized into a single index, and a “Development and Operations Manual” now stands as a detailed “How-To” guide for other cities that would like to replicate Neighborhood Place. This manual provides a blueprint regarding formal and informal structures for establishing, maintaining, and advancing collaboration, offering a

descriptive roadmap for new organizations while simultaneously suggesting perspectives for self-reflection and continuous improvement for application in the original Neighborhood Place.

The “Development and Operations Manual” also includes a significant section detailing plans for “Measuring the Results of a Community Partnership.” The Manual suggests six steps in this process:

1. Prepare for an evaluation
2. Develop a logic model
3. Develop an evaluation plan
4. Collect data
5. Analyze data
6. Share and use results

These steps are fairly straightforward and offer insight into the kinds of measures available for this process, but the purpose of the evaluation fluctuates between a reductive evaluation framework and the more holistic performance management perspective. The section concludes with this perspective:

It is important to remember that the primary reason for the partnership’s evaluation is to improve services to children and families. Sharing the results in a report or a presentation allows the partnership to reflect on how services should be strengthened or altered to meet the needs of

families better (Development & Operations Manual, p. 63).

With all of this work and all of the data collection undertaken by Neighborhood Place, why did our research reveal growing uncertainty and concern over the ability to continue to justify the work to new leadership in the years ahead? Perhaps the problem lies more in the expectations placed on the data than on the data itself.

Even in the best possible situations regarding data linkage, design of an external evaluation that could render such a simple conclusion remains problematic. The universal reach of Neighborhood Place and the inability to link families receiving service before their children enter a Jefferson County School mean that even the most rigorous data analysis will be fraught with disclaimers and uncertainties that leave the search for a simple answer unsatisfied. Our research suggests, however, that this search for external validation is more properly understood as a growing recognition that the definitions of success and assumptions that undergirded Neighborhood Place from the beginning are starting to change.

Growing out of the assumed orthodoxy of the school-linked services era, Neighborhood Place could be assumed successful if it could produce collaboration and

satisfied clients. Smrekar & Mawhinney (1991) have detailed the degree to which collaboration's intuitive appeal dominated the early enthusiasm for school-linked services enshrined in the Kentucky Education Reform Act, and despite Crowson & Boyd's (1993) early identification of the unexamined nature of the collaborative assumption, the narrative that runs through the first 19 years of Neighborhood Place was solidly built on this assumption. In 2005, Michalczyck, et al., explicitly identified client satisfaction as evidence of strong collaboration (2005, p. 8). While these assumptions served well for understanding the purpose and value of Neighborhood Place over the past 19 years, our finding is that these assumptions are no longer built into the psyche of the various stakeholders and are, therefore, beginning to erode.

Weick (1993) examined the experience of fire jumpers in the 1952 Mann Gulch disaster as a story of how organizations unravel when circumstances that previously provided clear understanding of their purpose change unexpectedly.

But the more general point is that organizations can be good at decision-making and still falter. They falter because of deficient sense-making. The world of decision-making is about strategic rationality. It

is built from clear questions and clear answers that attempt to remove ignorance (Daft and MacIntosh, 1981). The world of sense-making is different. Sense-making is about contextual rationality. It is built out of vague questions, muddy answers, and negotiated agreements that attempt to reduce confusion. People in Mann Gulch did not face questions like where should we go, when do we take a stand, or what should our strategy be? Instead, they faced the more basic, the more frightening feeling that their old labels were no longer working. They were outstripping their past experience and were not sure either what was up or who they were. Until they develop some sense of issues like this, there is nothing to decide. (p. 636)

Despite the long tenure of Neighborhood Place, the assumptions and definitions of success are changing with predictable effects on everyone involved in the organization. The intuitive appeal of collaboration among new leaders, some education reformers, and local funders has receded, and in the wake of NCLB, school-level interventions to move test scores are driving pressures to

justify all expenditures in terms of academic achievement and discount or discard investments unable to draw a tight link. As the people responsible for the work that brought the Jefferson County Public Schools into the collaborative at the beginning move on or retire, the deep and powerful trust among the original visionaries has to be reestablished with new leaders lacking the long-term relationships and the implicit trust those produced. The emergence of these changes does not mean that Neighborhood Place is failing; rather, they suggest that the sense-making that sustained the organization through its first 19 years may not be sufficient to sustain the work into the future.

What holds organization in place may be more tenuous than we realize. The recipe for disorganization in Mann Gulch is not all that rare in everyday life. The recipe reads, Thrust people into unfamiliar roles, leave some key roles unfilled, make the task more ambiguous, discredit the role system, and make all of these changes in a context in which small events can combine into something monstrous. Faced with similar conditions, organizations that seem much sturdier may also come crashing down (Miller, 1990; Miles and Snow, 1992), much like Icarus who

overreached his competence as he flew toward the sun and also perished because of fire. (Weick, 1993, p. 638)

Watching the presentation of the Neighborhood Place representatives before the Ash Innovations in Government award panel in 2009 already shows the potentially disorienting power of this emerging evaluation mindset.

Q: We have some outcome data about self-sufficiency that has to do with how many people are getting employment or are being put into work training opportunities, job training, etc., but we only have it for the current year. . . We don't have it over time, so we can't see improvement. Is it possible for you to give us this data over time?

A: On the employment issue?

Q: Yeah, the economic self-sufficiency data.

A: We probably cannot get that to you over time, because we haven't had access to it until recently. We do have data that tracks other areas. We do know that we've improved student attendance. We track student attendance and some of the other outcomes we do measure.

Q: On the economic self-sufficiency, do you compare to other cities?

A: I don't have that information.

A: (later) Back to the question...we can go back and track the data about families that moved out of the welfare system. We do have the ability to track that.

Self-sufficiency is the stated goal of Neighborhood Place, and the ability to track comparative data on families moving out of the welfare system can help to inform a performance management system supportive of continuous improvement and capable of supporting comprehensive community change. Disorientation occurs, however, as these data are increasingly expected to provide justification for the effort compared against all possible alternatives.

The Aspen Institute recently examined the role of performance management in the field of comprehensive community change initiatives and found that current efforts to support large-scale collaborative efforts for "collective impact" are driving new approaches to collective goal-setting, planning, and measurement for continuous improvement (Auspos & Kubisch, 2012, p. 3). Nevertheless, challenges to establishing a collective, data-driven approach to community change abound in the field. Efforts to promote continuous improvement and data-driven decision-making in the field of comprehensive community change will determine

whether Neighborhood Place will forge a clear sense of purpose over the next few years. If the effort is to succeed, the collaborative's performance management system will have to account for the specific challenges that comprehensive change efforts confront. The Aspen Institute Report identified four particular challenges. First, multiple agencies, services, outcomes, and management levels introduce significant challenge in reaching agreement on outcomes to measure and accountability benchmarks to set. Second, community-level goals are particularly hard to measure. Third, comprehensive efforts seek interaction effects that are often hard to identify or even predict. Finally, the system should balance focus and direction with room for flexibility and innovative adaptation (Auspos & Kubisch, 2012, p. 6-8).

Our research reveals that the challenges of developing such a performance management system have yet to be undertaken by Neighborhood Place in a systematic way. Multiple agencies increasingly want to know how the collaborative benefits their particular service, markers for community-wide goals such as self-sufficiency are not collectively owned, interaction effects are seldom isolated or identified, and data collection and reporting maximizes flexibility at the expense of benchmarking. As the demands of this work continue to

grow, the fragmented response to performance management is increasingly straining the sense-making that carried the organization so well through its first 20 years.

Evidence 4-B: Uncertainty over the ability to prove success threatens to fragment efforts and undermine collaboration.

Three significant challenges stem from these narrow efforts to provide a clear, externally valid conclusion that Neighborhood Place "works" in an evaluative sense. The first challenge lies in the inability to isolate a specific intervention for its impact on narrow data such as student achievement. Data simply does not exist to draw such a conclusion, and while such data is important from the perspective of Jefferson County Public Schools, efforts to isolate it subvert the theory of action on which Neighborhood Place is based. The only way to isolate a positive impact on the school system's ability to deal more effectively with truancy, for example, as part of the collaborative rather than outside of it is to withdraw and test the assumption. That consideration by itself, threatens to weaken the collaborative, and our research uncovered efforts to reorganize the services of school truancy and attendance personnel in ways that challenge the prior links between

Neighborhood Place sites and schools.

Furthermore, the data showing how few of the people accessing Neighborhood Place actually have children enrolled in JCPS schools raises significant questions uncovered in our research regarding the idea that JCPS is getting the academic impact it needs from the effort. As funding challenges and achievement pressures mount, these questions will likely continue to raise pressure on the sense-making functions of the organization.

An example of the growing desire to demonstrate clear return on investment comes from the origination of this study. Despite the cost neutral premise of Neighborhood Place, leaders of JCPS may view the cost in a different manner. The primary financial obligation of JCPS in the collaborative is facilities and human resources. In respect to facilities, many of the Neighborhood Place sites are located on school campuses, and indeed within school buildings. JCPS maintains the buildings, pays

for the cleaning and maintenance, as well as the utilities of each site. With respect to the human resources allocation, each of the JCPS staff members is paid through state and federal dollars which are allocated based on job responsibility. For example, JCPS has an allocation for social workers, and some of the social workers work at a Neighborhood Place site.

With both of these resources – facilities and human – leaders of JCPS have begun to ask the question, “What do we get from the allocation of these resources in terms of our own organizational

objectives?” In other words, while the collaborative may approach cost neutrality, and there is truth to the fact that JCPS would be spending this money regardless, there seems to be a persistent question at the leadership level of repurposing those resources in order to target JCPS outcomes more narrowly. This questioning becomes more pronounced as the founders of Neighborhood Place who maintained leadership positions in

“We have a fiscal cliff in JCPS . . . the superintendent and cabinet are supportive, yes, but the superintendent has a laser-like focus on student achievement [which] in the data connection to Neighborhood Place is very important.”

–Jeff, Operations Committee

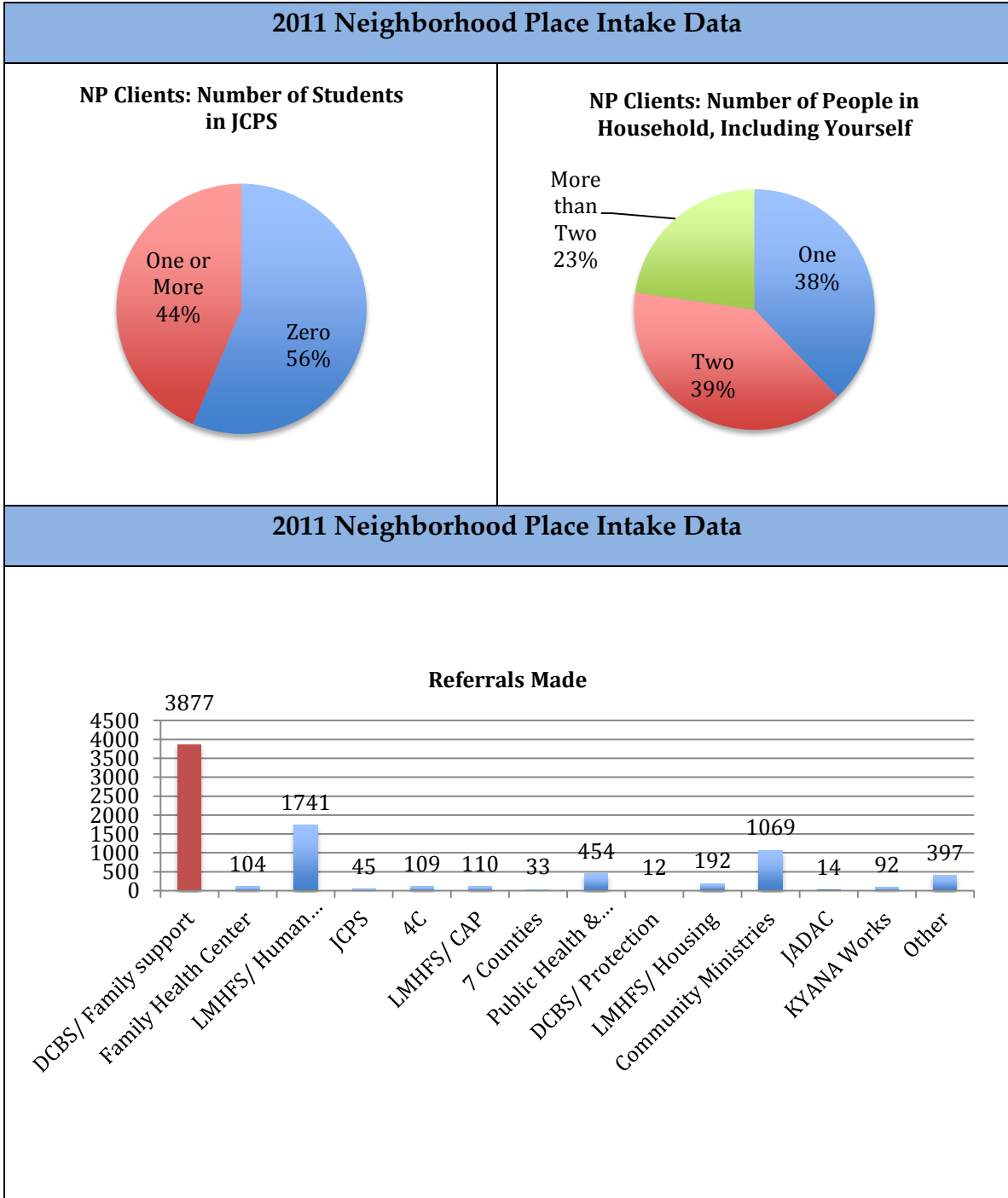
JCPS and other organizations retire or are replaced by leaders new to the Neighborhood Place. In addition, the perception that some agencies bear disproportionate shares of the cost of Neighborhood Place, while seldom expressed until recently, now emerges in conversation.

“However, we have a fiscal cliff in JCPS . . . the superintendent and cabinet are supportive, yes, but the superintendent has a laser-like focus on student achievement . . . therefore, student achievement in the data connection to Neighborhood Place is very important . . .” – Jeff, Operations Committee

Unfortunately, the current data that is collected by Neighborhood Place is not capable of making that connection. Neighborhood Place displays a commitment to data and a history of analyzing client satisfaction, worker satisfaction and intake data. However, despite the fact that the original impetus for Neighborhood Place was school reform, there has been no significant effort to demonstrate the effects of Neighborhood Place in terms of student achievement. Instead, the

theory of action rests on research showing that stable families will produce stable neighborhoods, and stable neighborhoods will affect school outcomes.

In fact, some interpret the available data to imply that JCPS receives very little direct benefit from its participation. There are few data points that can justify and give evidence to the benefit within the narrow, evaluative context of direct effects on student growth. Intake form data reveals characteristics of the clients of Neighborhood Place as well as indicators of JCPS involvement in the core functions of Neighborhood Place. From a cursory look at the data, one might conclude that JCPS, while a key contributor to the function of Neighborhood Place and its continued operation, does not receive a proportionate share of positive data findings particular to its organizational interests. For example, data suggest that many of the families that access Neighborhood Place do not have children in JCPS and that JCPS workers are not actively involved in the referral process to other agencies within Neighborhood Place.



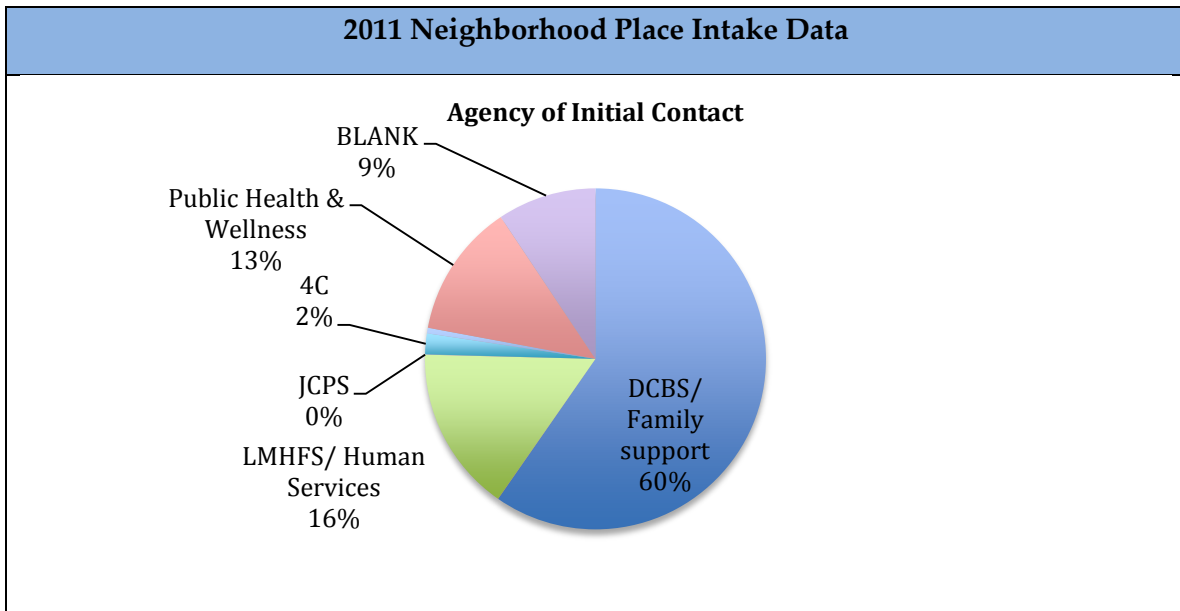


Figure 21. Summary of 2011 Intake Data

When asking the return-on-investment question, data such as these cause JCPs leaders to question whether to maintain an organizational and financial commitment to Neighborhood Place. Narrow measures, however, can obscure the broader goals of the collaborative as a comprehensive community change initiative, and while the research exploring the total ecology of schooling offers justification for JCPs involvement in the effort, the lack of clearly isolated data linkage will continue to pressure policymakers to justify the allocation of resources for the work. With academic data for students of low socioeconomic-status (SES) students continually under scrutiny, pressure to reallocate and redesign current strategies toward “innovative” school-level solutions for students will persist.

Other agencies are in similar situations with their leadership and stakeholders. Each agency has its own set of metrics that is used to measure individual agency success, yet the metrics Neighborhood Place owns collectively are limited to collaboration and client satisfaction. Agency-specific outcomes are important, but a collaborative theory of action requires collaborative goals owned by all participants. Instead of understanding participation in the collaborative as a means to improve individual agency outcomes, a performance management system views the comprehensive community change goals embedded in the mission and vision of Neighborhood Place as the collective responsibility of all partners. Each agency must have a vested interest in the goals of the other agencies. Ultimately, each agency should also

be able to demonstrate higher success on its individual metrics because of the collaboration with other agencies if the theory of action functions as intended.

Evidence 4-C: Fragmentation risks growing inattention to significant research on the total ecology of schooling.

The urgent need to address low-income student performance is supported by policymakers. Condoleezza Rice and Joel Klein recently argued in the task force on U.S. Education and National Security sponsored by the Council on Foreign Relations that low achievement among students of lower socioeconomic status is a matter of national security. Global competition is so intense, that the very fabric of our society is at risk if we cannot raise the educational level of our most at-risk youth. As described by Joel Klein, the task force chairman, "Educational failure puts the United States' future economic prosperity, global position and physical safety at risk."

Research suggests that as much as two-thirds of the factors influencing student achievement derive from out-of-school effects that emanate from families, neighborhoods, and communities. The traditional indicators of out-of-school effects include health,

parenting, family mobility, neighborhood violence, family economic stability, hunger, and social capital (Rothstein, 2010). The services of Neighborhood Place include physical health, mental health, economic support, food stamps, etc.; however, the primary objective of Neighborhood Place is to create economic self-sufficiency in families in order to produce stable neighborhoods.

Disadvantaged neighborhoods suffer from concentration effects whereby the combination of poverty and social isolation produces social norms within the neighborhood that prohibit members from participating in the broader economic system. Families residing in these neighborhoods have limited access to quality schools and well-paying jobs (Massey, 1996; Wilson, 1987). In addition, the concentration of poverty leads to a higher potential of unsafe housing, attending a low-performing school (Alexander & Entwisle, 1996; Natriello, McDill & Pallas, 1990), dropping out of school and potential of teen pregnancy (Schorr, 1998).

There is no direct link between IQ and poor neighborhoods; however, we do know that having higher-income neighbors is associated with higher IQs, while having lower-income neighbors is associated with problem behaviors (Duncan, Brooks-Dunn, Klebanov, 1994). This adds to understanding

that children who grow up in persistent poverty, not temporary poverty, develop behavioral norms that are incongruent with schooling. In fact, the effect of persistent poverty on behavior problems is 60 percent to 80 percent higher than transient poverty (Duncan, Brooks-Dunn, Klebanov, 1994). This comes from several factors, including the higher likelihood that children will associate with deviant youth (Peeples and Loeber, 1994) and that these neighborhood conditions lead mothers to encourage aggressive behavior in their children as a means of protection from a dangerous neighborhood (Jarrett, 1999).

The neighborhood environment does affect the academic attainment of students, at least proportionally to the time that students spend outside of school. Peer effects increase with age, and after-school activities can either support cultural and human development consistent with school ecology or those that are at odds (Traub, 2000, p. 81). Replacing expectations of discrimination and underachievement with the language of personal responsibility and opportunity for success requires new interactions between the residents and the web of social institutions long since fragmented in our impoverished urban neighborhoods (Rothstein, 2004). The contagion effects of the neighborhood exert a bidirectional influence on the academic

achievement of the students in our schools (Korbin & Coulton, 1997).

Together, multiple risk factors converge in a poor neighborhood to create a tangled web that is almost impossible for children to escape. This is compounded by the duration a family spends in this concentrated area of poverty – both by time and generations (Clampet-Lundquist and Massey, 2008). The concentration of these factors in a small geographical area where families spend a large portion of their time continually reinforces negative social behavior. Children in these environments are rarely exposed to the skills necessary to navigate school and ultimately work.

Clearly, the challenges facing our poorest families and children are immense and all encompassing, which is why the belief that a comprehensive strategy can achieve gains that are greater than the sum of its parts is so attractive.

Raising the achievement of lower-class children, and narrowing the gap in cognitive achievement and non-cognitive skills between these children and those from the middle class, are more ambitious undertakings than policy makers today acknowledge . . . it requires abandoning the illusion that school reform alone can save us from having to make the difficult economic and political decisions that the goal of equality

inevitably entails. School improvement does have an important role to play, but it cannot shoulder the entire burden, or even most of it, on its own. (Rothstein, 2004, p.149)

The research is overwhelming and clearly demonstrates that work within the neighborhood, to stabilize the neighborhood through economic self-sufficiency, is a key ingredient to school success for youngsters in poverty. And, while no one would deny the need for school reform that requires substantial shifts in resources and policies, the research in the total ecology of schooling certainly argues for continued efforts to support comprehensive community change initiatives as part of the effort to improve schools.

The increasingly fragmented search for data-driven justifications to address narrow concerns represents a significant change in the external expectations for making sense of the work of Neighborhood Place. Neighborhood Place is a comprehensive effort to make a

community-wide difference, but the challenge of demonstrating institution-specific impacts while engaged in comprehensive and complex, interactive work is straining the ways in which members of the collaborative understand, value, and explain their efforts.

The frustration of finding a simple measure of success resembles the Mann Gulch fire jumpers continuing to try to meet the challenge of a fire not behaving according to understandable patterns.

Perhaps the greatest casualty of this shifting paradigm lies in the degree to which a well-established

research base on the vital importance of neighborhood, family, and peer effects is so easily discounted and cast aside for want of a clear and isolated impact on narrow measures. The goal of Neighborhood Place is self-sufficiency through collaborative, comprehensive community change, and that effort is grounded in strong research showing that success in this community-wide endeavor carries

“Raising the achievement of lower-class children . . . requires abandoning the illusion that school reform can alone save us . . . School improvement does have an important role to play, but it cannot shoulder the entire burden.”

–Rothstein, 2004, p. 149

positive benefits for students and schools. The current JCPs Operations Committee members believe this strongly, but also exhibit frustration in their ability to convince key leaders who hold the financial and political influence to continue their support.

"It takes a whole village to raise a child . . . and it takes a whole child to make a village.' I see NP as a way to reach the whole child . . . sure, we are focused on student achievement. But, we know from research that unless the child's whole needs are met, their brain does not come to school." – Jeff, Operations Committee

Evidence 4-D: *Current data collection and commitment to performance management provide the foundation for a new approach.*

The dedication and hard work of the members of the Operations Committee have given Neighborhood Place a powerful resiliency that has survived significant challenges in the past five years (leadership transitions, budget pressures, etc.) Weick identifies four organizational characteristics that foster resiliency in the midst of changing contexts: improvisation and bricolage, virtual role systems, the attitude of wisdom, and respectful interaction (Weick, 1993,

p. 638). Our research reveals evidence of all four of these characteristics within Neighborhood Place. From the outset, disciplined creativity toward a vision similar to but more ambitious than the one identified in the KERA has driven the organization and celebration of this can-do spirit that pervades the conversations and rituals of the organization.

Interviews revealed that everyone understands each other's roles formally and informally as a result of co-location, confidentiality agreements, and shared problem-solving. Likewise, the collective wisdom is predicated on the belief that problems will be resolved with patience and joint deliberation. Finally, strong mutuality and norms of interaction dominate site-level relationships with limited evidence of isolation or significant battles over turf.

The challenge of establishing an effective performance management system in this comprehensive community change initiative is substantial, but the foundations of resiliency present within Neighborhood Place offer hope. Willingness to invite external evaluation to support the work is itself evidence of the organization's resilience. The work of the Outcomes Committee has produced a volume of data at both the individual outcome and collaborative interaction levels, and this

foundation will serve the effort well. However, a comprehensive performance management system takes several years to establish and must become the shared objective of all levels of the organization as well as the partners as individual organizations (Auspos & Kubisch, 2012, p. 9-10).

Performance management requires the ability to discern whether identified problems result from bad theory or ineffective implementation. Auspos & Kubisch suggest consideration of the following questions to guide this determination:

- ***Review the theory of change:*** Are the underlying assumptions in the theory of change correct? Are the dose and scale of the intervention sufficient to produce the desired results? Is there a mismatch between the goals and the resources and capacities that are available?
- ***Review the implementation process:*** Are the planned activities, programs, and other components implemented as intended? Are they reaching the targeted population? If not, why?
- ***Assess the role of individual partners:*** Are some not performing as intended?
- ***Consider contextual factors:*** What larger demographic,

economic, or political events or trends may be affecting the collaborative effort? (2012, p. 5-6)

The present study offers a baseline understanding for these questions and suggests that available data can be assembled more intentionally in order to support development of a strong performance management culture that will enable Neighborhood Place to identify, pursue, and reach “the next level.”

Although little or no empirical assessment of balanced scorecards as tools for organizational improvement exists, several advocacy organizations suggest that the development of such a tool can help a wide range of people and organizations reach agreement on what success looks like and lay the foundation for collective action on social challenges that are adaptive in nature and larger in scope than even the largest and most successful individual organizations or government agencies can possibly accomplish acting alone (Kania & Kramer, 2011).

Adopting a rigorous assessment and continuous improvement mindset requires clear goals, good data, careful planning and benchmarking, and honest assessment and revision for midcourse corrections so that work advances the ultimate goals without

compromising the expertise of the agencies involved (Auspos & Kubisch, 2012, p. 4).

Presently, data collection and reporting is not fully integrated into such a process, and to the extent that it is used for assessment and planning, it is owned by a narrow subset of the organization. Staking out clear goals and balanced measures that everyone in the organization, including managing board partners, civic leaders, and site-level employees understands and accepts joint responsibility to advance will fundamentally change the way that data is currently used.

Without this effort, data will never show enough progress for the critic and will never demonstrate a need for improvement to the apologist. In that environment, neither corrections for improvement nor support for greater collective progress can be expected. The challenge for Neighborhood Place and for Louisville-Jefferson County is to forge agreement on the broader goals of the effort and move beyond the more narrow idea that individual agencies are sharing space in the hope that co-location will solve more problems than it causes.

We worked in an initial and investigatory way with the Operations Committee and tested our approaches against concepts revealed in our interviews to develop a very preliminary

framework for organizing data within a balanced scorecard.

This example captures some of the essential interests in data management that we detected through our investigations and should not substitute for broader conversation among partners, management layers, community organizations, site-level employees, and others in development of a comprehensive, consistent, and public annual report. Performance management depends on forging a common vision of the outcomes that the multiple organizations will pursue and measure. Bardach and Lesser (1996) suggest that the utility of accountability systems ought to be understood more broadly than their simple use in oversight and discipline.

It is misleading to think of accountability subsystems merely as oversight and reporting arrangements. Such arrangements will in fact have an important role in our conceptual design. These will work in tandem with a broad range of relationships and practices – including dialogue – with which we intend to support wise policy choice and effective and efficient program performance and which we also think of as part of an accountability system (p. 199-200).

Collective, outcome-based accountability systems are particularly important for public sector collaborative efforts. Agency-specific accountability systems tend to focus on processes and caseloads rather than the broader social values at which these processes are supposed to be aimed. Since collaborative efforts presuppose an increased effectiveness, accountability measures must address the valued outcomes that the effort aims to achieve more effectively. Broad outcome goals shared in common also play an instrumental role in fostering interagency collaboration, since they reveal the degree to which meaningful progress demands efforts beyond those that any one agency can attain alone. The sacrifices required to achieve the common goals are likewise easier to justify when those goals are clearly reported and progress is evident than when sacrifices or adjustments to narrow agency accountability are made on faith that the effort is worth it (Bardach & Lesser, 1996). When individual accountability is clear and collective accountability fuzzy or invisible, the natural risk aversion of public sector agents may even prevent sacrifices that could result in dramatic improvements in socially desirable outcomes through collaborative innovation and discovery.

Accountability systems must align the work of front-line personnel with the broader goals of the collaborative if they are to have any effect at all.

Under any conceivable accountability system, provider agencies are inevitably the first line of accountability for system modification and redesign. Most of them work hard, keep up with trends in professional best practice, and do what they can to loosen the constraints imposed by the existing system so as to get their jobs done. (Bernstein 1991) (Bardach & Lesser, 1996, p. 217)

Not only is it impossible to answer questions regarding the effectiveness of collaborative efforts and the benefits of collaboration in promoting greater effectiveness using traditional accountability systems, such traditional, agency-specific systems of accountability actually undermine the potential for genuine collaboration in many important ways (Bardach & Lesser, 1996).

The traditional accountability system cannot be assumed to be performing its accountability functions very well. Yes, it can target resources to particular constituencies, provider interests, and the like. But most observers would probably agree

that it does not perform very well the other three accountability functions we have discussed in this article: motivating performance, encouraging wise priorities, and facilitating continuous improvement of its own design and functioning. If the overall purpose of a modern state is (or should be) to promote the well-being of the citizenry as a whole, the traditional accountability system does not always measure up. (Bardach & Lesser, 1996, p. 223)

Nontransparent, traditional, and agency-bound accountability systems derive much from the organizational identity that Crowson so eloquently shows to be at odds with genuine collaboration, but they also contribute greatly to shaping and maintaining that identity. Designing transparent and agreed-upon goals and public accountability systems for collaboratives is a necessary prerequisite to

overcoming the individual agency cultures that so powerfully limit collaboration, especially where public sectors agencies are involved (Bardach & Lesser, 1996).

Discovering ways to help successful organizations collaborate for common purpose requires intentionality (Auspos & Kupisch, 2012). Our research merely lays a foundation for this important work. Nevertheless, the potential for success in the effort is evident in Neighborhood Place. Strong history, effective collaboration, large-scale data collection, evidence of satisfied clients, strong service delivery in at least the food stamp program, and organizational resilience mean position Neighborhood Place to tackle the community consensus building that goal-setting, benchmarking, and effective collective performance management require of comprehensive community change initiatives.

Section 7: Recommendations

In light of the previous findings, we offer two primary recommendations to Neighborhood Place as it continues its journey of continuous improvement within a new context. First, we recommend that Neighborhood Place adopt a

collective performance management framework for continuous improvement. Secondly, we recommend that Neighborhood Place adopt the Thomson model of collaboration, administer the survey annually, and provide targeted

professional development in collaboration practices.

Recommendation #1: *Neighborhood Place should adopt a performance management framework for continuous improvement.*

Our findings speak clearly to a unique collaborative that has evolved over 20 years to become the Neighborhood Place of today. With such a rich repository of stories that speak to its effectiveness and value, it is now important to develop the metric systems that will give evidence to the effectiveness of Neighborhood Place, and more importantly, become the foundation for continuous improvement dialogue within the organization. The quantitative metrics for evaluative purposes are necessary in this new policy era; however, as cautioned earlier, the primary purpose would be to foster a continuous improvement climate within the organization that matures Neighborhood Place into its next 20 years.

Component 1-A: *Develop a performance management tool that includes multiple indicators aligned to the goals and desired outcomes of Neighborhood Place.*

Developing a performance management perspective to analyze Neighborhood Place begins with a four-part analysis to clarify the

theory of change, the implementation process, the role of individual partners, and the larger contextual factors (Auspos & Kubisch, 2012, pp. 5-6).

As part of this research endeavor, we worked to develop an initial performance management tool (Appendix K). This tool was developed with the input of the Operations Committee who populated the tool with data indicators that align to the stated goals and outcomes of Neighborhood Place. In addition, there was a commitment to measure at least one national indicator per goal so as to have comparative data between similar cities. This approach aligns to the work being done through the mayor's office using the Competitive City framework (Appendix L).

According to the Aspen Institute report, the development of a performance management tool, or evaluation framework, must be "real and inclusive." With the tool populated with a variety of data in which each agency has an inverse attachment, it is important that each agency feel proportionally represented.

In addition, the members of each agency must demonstrate a high degree of trust to the collaborative in order to share individual data points for the sake of continuous improvement.

Component 1-B: *Provide professional development to the managing board, operations committee, and site coordinators in the use of a performance management approach for the purpose of continuous improvement.*

Key to this recommendation is the ownership of the performance management tool and the performance management approach by the managing board, Operations Committee, and site coordinators. Throughout the findings, we discuss the pressure experienced by the Operations Committee from both individual agency leaders who are pressing their agency-specific goals and external policy makers from the city or state in respect to the success or value of Neighborhood Place. In an era of high-stakes accountability metrics, it is essential that the Operations Committee assumes ownership of the goals measured in the tool, monitor the results, and receive training in the effective use of data for the purpose of continuous improvement.

The site coordinators need training in the use of the tool as well. The population of data into a user-friendly format will not improve or substitute for effective management of the organization without dedicated, intentional action steps that have collective ownership by each agency. But, the prioritization

of opportunities for improvement (OFIs) and the actions steps to address the OFIs can lead to real improvement and ultimately affect the trend of the data in the tool.

Professional development is important in order to “establish vehicles for translating learning into action,” as described by the Aspen Report. Without this training, Neighborhood Place runs the risk of creating a data collection tool and simply “admiring the data.” Without the empowerment that comes from professional development around the tool, the organization may feel helpless to change the trajectory of indicators that may be declining over time or show weak performance as compared to similar cities. This result would paralyze the organization rather than setting the conditions for improvement and continuous, incremental change. In keeping with *Overarching Lesson #7*, from the Aspen Institute report, Neighborhood Place must find ways to expand the definition and purpose of evaluation to assist in planning, managing and learning (Kubisch, et. al., 2010).

Finally, the Aspen Institute recommends that the implementation of professional development take on the following process:

- **Performance planning:**
setting goals, data requirements, and performance standards

- **Performance measurement:** collecting information on each stakeholder's performance and group progress toward the collective goals
- **Performance management:** reviewing the data to diagnose problems and develop strategies to improve stakeholder performance

Following this process and centering the professional development on the use of a performance management tool will help to embed a culture of continuous improvement around an agreed-upon set of indicators that have shared meaning.

Recommendation #2: *Neighborhood Place should adopt the Thomson model for conceptualization of collaboration, administer the survey annually, and monitor results in the performance management tool.*

Collaboration is a foundational component to the theory of action, and Neighborhood Place should continue to monitor the health of collaboration within the organization. Through annual measurement, the leadership of Neighborhood Place can respond to variance between sites or between organizations, continue to test the theory of action, develop methods to deepen and improve collaboration,

and advance research in the area of Community Change Initiatives.

Component 2-A: *Merge and align the Thomson conceptualization model of collaboration with the Family Team Meeting training for all Neighborhood Place workers and provide continuing professional development in collaboration.*

While the evidence of collaboration as measured by the Thomson constructs is currently strong, Neighborhood Place should not assume that this high level of collaboration will continue without consistent measures that foster its development and growth. The narrative of collaboration at the worker level is deeply engrained in the organization, and regular monitoring could help to expose changing circumstances while time remains to respond. As expectations of the organization change, measurement of change in annual perceptions of collaboration could provide the instrumentation needed for resiliency.

Therefore, we recommend that the Neighborhood Place Operations Committee evaluate the current training through the Family Meeting framework and work to align or supplement with the Thomson framework in order to have a consistent measurement that will signal any erosion or changes in

perceived collaboration within the organization.

Thomson, Perry, and Miller argue that collaboration can be coached and fostered in an organization through intentional training. They provide examples of how an organization might use the Collaboration Survey constructs to develop, nurture and mature collaboration over time. These examples include using the tool for comparative purposes by comparing self-reflection scores to whole-group scores and using the entire 56-question tool for deeper understanding of the constructs. According to Thomson:

Practitioners at the operational level of policy implementation tend to view collaboration with some skepticism as case research demonstrates (Huxham 1996; Huxham and Vangen 2000; Thomson 1999, 2001; Thomson and Perry 1998). The conceptual model of collaboration, with its five key dimensions operationalized on a questionnaire, holds the potential to make that rhetoric more relevant for participants in collaborative arrangements. (2009, p. 52)

Inclusion of regular measures of collaboration within the performance management tool also carries the potential to construct professional development that targets the

structures, norms, and practices that give rise to strong collaboration. Professional development focused on the multifaceted definition of collaboration that Thomson, Perry, and Miller offer can help the organization develop induction, training, and growth opportunities that may actually deepen collaboration and improve associated practices. Efforts are already underway to explain and teach collaboration, and the consistency of annual measurement of perceptions could enrich these efforts significantly. Similarly, if collaboration can be defined and improved, protocols and intervention strategies can be developed to address dysfunctions before they cripple collaborative relationships.

Targeted uses of the techniques that can be developed to improve collaboration's utility could also include efforts to drive more desired outcomes that may be identified through the performance management framework and approach to continuous improvement outlined in the previous recommendation.

For example, the large disparity between food stamps participation and access to other agencies suggests that Neighborhood Place may want to be more intentional about teaching food stamps workers to collaborate intentionally with other agencies, increasing referrals. This

way, the food stamps portal could be developed to foster more collaborative entry into the services other agencies can provide, including those promoting job training, education, and paths to self-sufficiency.

Collaboration lies at the heart of Neighborhood Place. Defining and measuring it consistently offers an opportunity to understand, assess, and develop the power of this central ingredient over time, pursue continuous improvement and develop a deeper understanding of the relationship between collaboration and the work of Neighborhood Place.

Component 2-B: *Explore and monitor links between collaboration indices and client satisfaction and goal indices by site and agency.*

Finally, consistent data collection on a variety of shared outcomes as described in the previous recommendation will combine with consistent, annual measurement of collaboration to offer the potential for further investigation of possible relationships between collaboration and the collective impact that Neighborhood Place hopes to achieve. Through an annual survey of staff using the Thomson model, Neighborhood Place can begin to collect longitudinal data and disaggregate by site and agency.

Another must, if we are to examine system-level relationships, is to develop measurement models that provide us with ever more valid and reliable indicators and scales for empirical research. The multidimensional scale of collaboration used in this study represents a first attempt to wrestle with the meaning of collaboration and how to measure the process in order to explore empirically relationships such as those between collaboration and its outcomes (Thomson 2001; Thomson, Perry, and Miller 2006). This scale is the first of its kind and is meant to be tested in other contexts and refined. This is especially important when examining the relationship between collaboration and its outcomes. We need to subject our conceptualization of outcomes to evaluation of measurement error just as the process indicators have been evaluated. (Thomson, Miller, & Perry, 2009, p. 115)

Collecting and monitoring longitudinal data on collaboration allows the Operations Committee to continue to test the theory of action that collaboration affects client satisfaction. In addition, with new indicators related to the goals of Neighborhood Place in the data scorecard, leadership can begin to examine the degree of collaboration by site and discover potential

connections not possible with current data collection. Future research to examine covariance between collaboration and the other collectively desirable outcomes tracked in the performance management tool will yield new understanding about the power of collaboration in public administration of a comprehensive community change initiative.

This level of detail will provide the leadership of Neighborhood Place with leading indicators for the

potential erosion of collaboration at a particular site or within a particular agency. In many respects, collaboration should be viewed as a scarce, but renewable, resource for Neighborhood Place. By monitoring collaboration regularly, the leadership of Neighborhood Place will be better positioned to respond to fluctuating levels of collaboration within the organization and proactively protect and nurture by site and agency.

Conclusion

In conclusion, we find that the underpinning characteristic of Neighborhood Place – collaboration – is on solid footing. The co-location of multiple services and agencies has yielded a unique, organic collaborative environment in which clients are highly satisfied and receive services in a timely manner. In addition, we believe that the collaboration between agencies is mutually beneficial. High levels of participation in the food stamp program should be just as important to JCPS leadership as it is to DCBS. For, without this high participation, students in poverty would have less nutritional meals, come to school hungry, and perform lower on academic metrics.

Reaching back to the founding principles and beliefs of the Breakfast Club, Neighborhood Place

must continue its evolution into this new era of data, return on investment, and continuous improvement. Over the 20-year history of Neighborhood Place, there is a story of resilience and evolution that is admirable, unique, and exceptional. The ability of the organization to maintain relevance over time with an ever-changing tide of policymakers is quite remarkable. Neighborhood Place has exhibited the ability to improvise over time and respond to external pressures, while maintaining a core identity that is the DNA of the organization.

The image of organization built around improvisation is one in which variable in-puts to self-organizing groups of actors induce continuing modification of work practices and ways of

relating. (Weick & Quinn, 1999)

To this end, Neighborhood Place leadership must embrace the idea that they will need to modify their practices and ways of relating to external stakeholders during times of change. For the current period, that includes a more intentional data system aligned to the stated goals of the collaborative. However, the leadership of Neighborhood Place should shape the narrative so that the use of data is for continuous improvement, not narrow, reductive evaluation. By committing fully to

the theoretical underpinnings of Neighborhood Place, data can be used to monitor performance over time and performance against similar cities on a wide array of indicators. This practice, combined with monitored continuous improvement protocols can continue to guide the evolution of Neighborhood Place in this era of accountability, return on investment, and data-driven decision making.

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Appendix A: Neighborhood Place Committee Assignments

NEIGHBORHOOD PLACE COMMITTEE ASSIGNMENTS

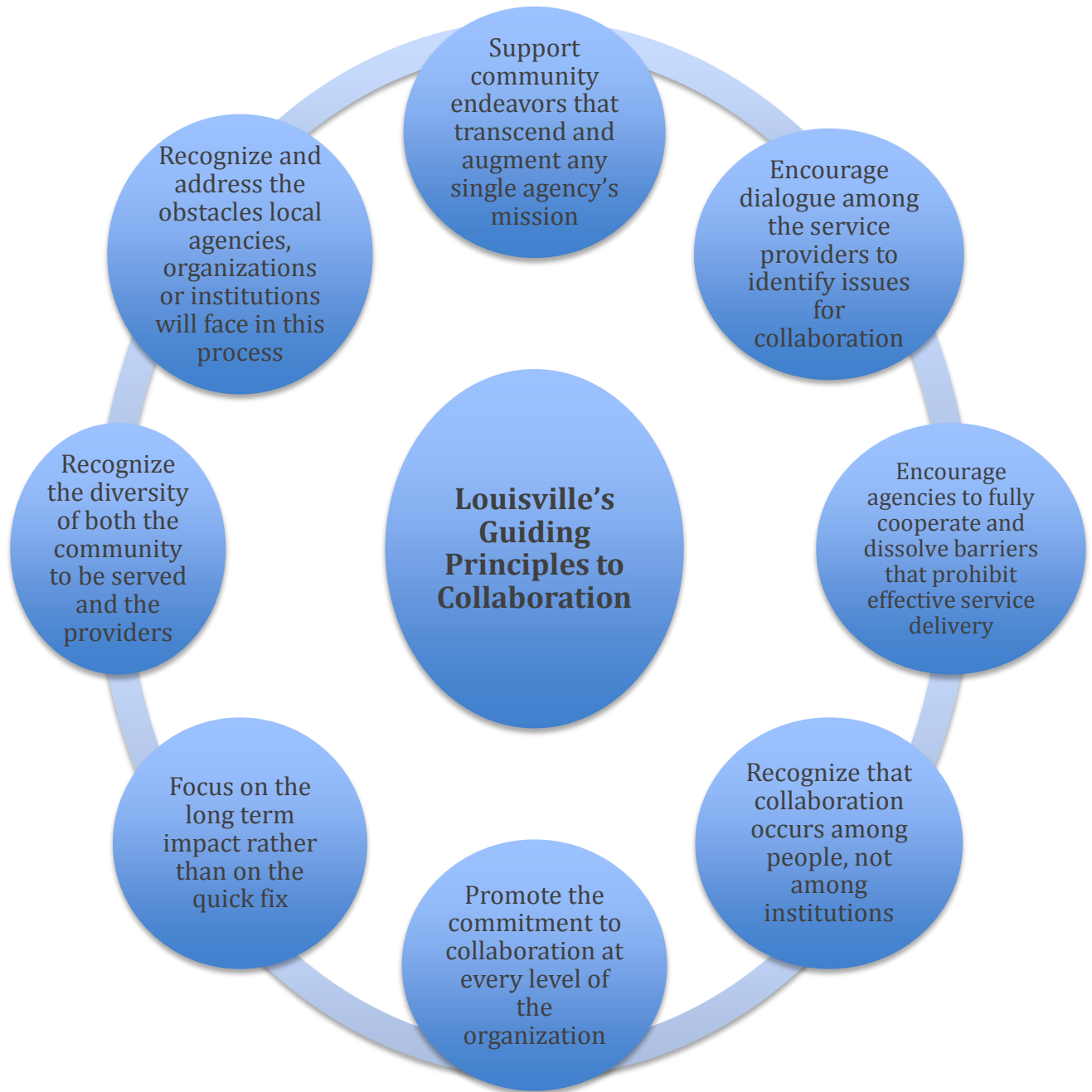
ORGANIZATIONS	MANAGING BOARD	OPERATIONS	PROGRAM	OUTCOMES	COMMUNICATIONS & SPECIAL EVENTS	F.O.C.U.S.	FINANCE
METRO GOVT. Family Services & Housing	*One representative from each agency	Regina Warren Cassandra Miller Tina Lentz	Cassandra Miller TeShawna Brown	Tina Lentz Toni Phelps	Cassandra Miller ⊕ Kyle Moorman	Cassandra Miller	Regina Warren
HEALTH	Operations; Administrators;	Ryan Irvine Naze Assef	Susan Boarders	Hariitha Pallam	Dave Langdon	TBD	Ryan Irvine
DCBS	Community Council Members	Jackie Stamps Becky Murphey Lona West	Lona West ⊕ ✓ Vickie Blewins Janet Washington Christy Atkinson	Becky Murphey ⊕ ✓ Patty Stocker	Lona West Kathy Mongeon	Kathy Mongeon	Jackie Stamps
JCPS	↓	Bernard Minnis Julie Scoskie Ben Langley ⊕ Carol Bartlett Tamara Lewis Barbara Ayers	Ben Langley Carol Bartlett Barbara Ayers	Julie Scoskie ⊕ Marco Munoz Bob Rodosky Tamara Lewis	Carol Bartlett ⊕ Ben Langley	Ben Langley ⊕ ✓ Carol Bartlett	Julie Scoskie ⊕ ✓ Ben Langley
SEVEN COUNTIES		Ron VanTreuren	TBA		Ron VanTreuren		Ron VanTreuren
KENTUCKIANA WORKS		Angela Wells	Angela Wells				
ADMINISTRATOR			All Administrators	Erin Paulin S. Freeze Vonderweidt	Terri Leasor	Polly Mayer	
University of Louisville		Anita Barbee		Anita Barbee Becky Antle			

⊕ = Chair of Committee


✓ = Liaison to Operations

Updated - 1/24/2011

Appendix B: Guiding Principles of Collaboration (Louisville)



Appendix C: Data Sharing Form



**NEIGHBORHOOD PLACE RELEASE OF INFORMATION
CONSENT FORM**

I, _____, am seeking services from Neighborhood Place for ___ myself, ___ my family, ___ my child (check all that apply). By signing this form, I am giving Neighborhood Place staff permission to communicate regarding services offered to me and/or my family. I understand that all records and information regarding services will be protected by regulations that govern the exchange of confidential information. I further understand that services may include an assessment of our needs and the development of a service plan to meet those needs.

It is understood that by authorizing the release of such information, it will be used for the sole purpose of providing and enhancing services to me, my family and/or my child and to avoid duplication between the agencies. The disclosure of information will be limited to staff at Neighborhood Place and within these organizations and will not be released to anyone else without my written consent.

The agencies below have my written consent to share information of a confidential nature unless I have indicated otherwise by putting my initials next to those agencies I want excluded.

Government or Private Non-profit Providers
Please initial those agencies you want excluded. Write in additional agencies you want to add.

_____ Ky. Cabinet for Families and Children - Division of Protection and Permanency _____ Ky. Cabinet for Families and Children - Division of Family Support _____ Louisville/Jefferson County Metro Human Services _____ Louisville/Jefferson County Metro Health Department	_____ Jefferson County Public Schools _____ Seven Counties Services, Inc. _____ Other: _____ _____
--	--

(Please initial the information you wish to have excluded from this authorization. Please write in information you wish to add to this authorization.)

_____ The full name and other identification of myself, my family or my child _____ Records pertaining to juvenile justice proceedings, including arrests/adjudication _____ Social and educational history and observations _____ Records pertaining to dependency proceedings in juvenile court	_____ Treatment, service or education plans _____ Recommendations to other providers _____ Medical records and information pertaining to medical history, physical condition, services rendered and treatments given _____ Medical records and information pertaining to mental health _____ HANDS records _____ Other: _____ _____
--	--

I have read and understand the contents of this form; I have received a copy and I agree to its provisions with the exception of any items I initialed above.

This authorization to receive services from the above agencies and to exchange confidential information shall remain in effect for a period of twelve (12) months. I understand that this release may be revoked by me at any time if requested in writing, but understand my records may have been released and re-released to others before I request that this consent be revoked.

 Signature for self or children Date Witness Signature Date

 Parents/Guardian (please list children's names)

THIS DOCUMENT DOES NOT AUTHORIZE THE RELEASE OF INFORMATION RELATIVE TO HISTORY OF DRUG/ALCOHOL TREATMENT, SEXUALLY TRANSMITTED DISEASES, AND/OR HIV STATUS. PURSUANT TO FEDERAL LAW, PROTECTED HEALTH INFORMATION MAY BE RELEASED WITHOUT YOUR AUTHORIZATION FOR TREATMENT, PAYMENT AND HEALTH CARE OPERATIONS. AUTHORIZATION IS NOT REQUIRED TO COMPLY WITH LAWS REGARDING MANDATORY REPORTING OF SUSPECTED ABUSE OR NEGLECT OR ASSESSMENT THAT THERE IS A DANGER OF SERIOUS HARM TO SELF OR OTHERS.

Rev. 7/03

Appendix D: Survey Instrument

Conceptualizing and Measuring Collaboration Survey

Ann Marie Thomson, James L. Perry, Theodore K. Miller
Indiana University, Bloomington

Annual Day Survey for Neighborhood Place
October 2012

Introduction:

Neighborhood Place is continually seeking ways to document and understand the collaboration that exists between agencies through strategic partnerships and to what extent our collaboration contributes to the desired outcomes of Neighborhood Place. To this end, Neighborhood Place has partnered with Vanderbilt University to review outcomes and collaboration among agencies.

Participation in this survey is voluntary and your responses will remain confidential, but your feedback will be helpful as the Operations Committee seeks to enhance the services of Neighborhood Place. This survey is an opportunity to offer your perceptions of collaboration among individual agencies within Neighborhood Place. No identifying information will be included in any reports on this project. All responses will be reported in the aggregate. The survey should take approximately 20 minutes to complete.

<i>Demographic Information</i>			
1.	Are you a site level coordinator?	Yes	No
2.	Are you a member of the Neighborhood Place Operations Committee?	Yes	No
3.	What organization do you work for?	a. Seven Counties Services b. Jefferson County Public Schools c. Louisville Metro Department of Community Services and Revitalization d. Louisville Metro Department of Public Health and Wellness e. Childcare Council of Kentucky f. Department for Community Based Services g. Other Collaborative Partners	
4.	What site do you work at?	a. 810 Barrett b. Bridges of Hope c. Cane Run d. First NP e. Northwest f. South Central g. South Jefferson h. Ujima	
5.	What is your sex?	Male	Female
6.	How long have you worked in your field?	a. 0—3 years b. 4 – 7 years c. 8 – 12 years d. more than 12 years	
7.	How long have you worked at this particular agency?	a. 0—3 years b. 4 – 7 years c. 8 – 12 years d. more than 12 years	

<i>Governance</i>						
1.	Partner organizations take your organization's opinions seriously when decisions are made about the collaboration.	SA	A	N	SD	D
2.	Your organization brainstorms with partner organizations to develop solutions to mission-related problems facing the collaboration.	SA	A	N	SD	D
3.	Your organization is involved in implementing specific solutions to mission-related problems facing the collaboration?	SA	A	N	SD	D

<i>Administration</i>						
4.	You, as a representative of your organization in the collaboration, understand your organization's roles and responsibilities as a member of the collaboration.	SA	A	N	SD	D
5.	Partner organization meetings accomplish what is necessary for the collaboration to function well.	SA	A	N	SD	D
6.	Partner organizations (including your organization) agree about the goals of the collaboration.	SA	A	N	SD	D
7.	Your organization's tasks in the collaboration are well coordinated with those of partner organizations.	SA	A	N	SD	D

<i>Autonomy</i>						
8.	The collaboration hinders your organization from meeting its own organizational mission.	SA	A	N	SD	D
9.	Your organization's independence is affected by having to work with partner organizations on activities related to the collaboration.	SA	A	N	SD	D
10.	You, as a representative of your organization, feel pulled between trying to meet both your organization's and the collaboration's expectations.	SA	A	N	SD	D

<i>Mutuality</i>						
11.	Partner organizations (including your organization) have combined and used each other's resources so that all partners benefit from collaborating.	SA	A	N	SD	D
12.	Your organization shares information with partner organizations that will strengthen their operations and programs?	SA	A	N	SD	D
13.	You feel what your organization brings to the collaboration is appreciated and respected by partner organizations.	SA	A	N	SD	D
14.	Your organization achieves its own goals better working with partner organizations than working alone.	SA	A	N	SD	D
15.	Partner organizations (including your organization) work through differences to arrive at win-win solutions?	SA	A	N	SD	D

<i>Norms</i>						
16.	The people who represent partner organizations in the collaboration are trustworthy.	SA	A	N	SD	D
17.	My organization can count on each partner organization to meet its obligations to the collaboration.	SA	A	N	SD	D
18.	Your organization feels it worthwhile to stay and work with partner organizations rather than leave the collaboration.	SA	A	N	SD	D

Appendix E: Interview Protocols

Protocol for Neighborhood Place Operations Committee**Background Information**

What organization do you work with at Neighborhood Place?

What specific job do you do at with your organization?

How long have you worked with NP?

Have you worked in a similar job outside of NP?

Governance

What is the organizational structure of NP?

How are decisions made for NP?

Who drives your work in your specific job?

What obstacles are presented by joint governance?

How would you describe the efficiency of the combined effect of Neighborhood Place?

Administration

How are things communicated between organizations within NP?

Talk to us about the formal structures and processes between organizations in NP?

Who is responsible to coordinate the organizations with NP?

How does your supervisor feel about NP and its work?

What are their perceptions of the effectiveness of NP and the value of the work?

Autonomy

Do you ever feel like the whole of NP prohibits you from being fully effective?

Does the requirements of membership in NP ever distract you from your specific work?

How effective would your organization be without being a part of NP?

How would you describe the

Mutuality

How often do you refer your clients to other organizations within NP?

How dependent on NP is your organization for rent, utilities, and shared resources?

How is the working relationship between members in the office between organizations?

How does NP measure success and celebrate success?

Norms

What is the most important part of NP?

What is the level of trust and respect between organizational members at the NP site?

What are some of the biggest challenges in working with other organizations?

Describe how people get along between agencies?

Protocol for Agency Workers at Neighborhood Place Sites

Background Information

What organization do you work with at Neighborhood Place?

What specific job do you do at with your organization?

How long have you worked with NP?

Have you worked in a similar job outside of NP?

Governance

What is the organizational structure of NP?

How are decisions made for NP?

Who drives your work in your specific job?

What obstacles are presented by joint governance?

How would you describe the efficiency of the combined effect of Neighborhood Place?

Administration

How are things communicated between organizations within NP?

Talk to us about the formal structures and processes between organizations in NP?

Who is responsible to coordinate the organizations with NP?

Autonomy

Do you ever feel like the whole of NP prohibits you from being fully effective?

Does the requirements of membership in NP ever distract you from your specific work?

How effective would your organization be without being a part of NP?

How would you describe the

Mutuality

How often do you refer your clients to other organizations within NP?

How dependent on NP is your organization for rent, utilities, and shared resources?

How is the working relationship between members in the office between organizations?

How does NP measure success and celebrate success?

Norms

What is the most important part of NP?

What is the level of trust and respect between organizational members at the NP site?

What are some of the biggest challenges in working with other organizations?

Describe how people get along between agencies?


Appendix F: Coding Framework

Coding Framework* for Interview Transcripts

A: Structural Dimensions	1: Governance	a: Rules
		b: Decision-makers
		c: Procedures
		d: Distribution of costs and benefits
		e: Negotiating conflict
		f: Shared responsibility
	2: Administration	a: Goal orientation
		b: Coordinating functions
B: Agency Dimension	1: Organizational Autonomy	a: Autonomy-Accountability Dilemma
		b: Empowerment to overcome inertia
		c: Dynamic equilibrium
C: Social Capital Dimensions	1: Mutuality	a: Complementarities (shared interests)
		b: Unique resources
		c: Negotiate from shared interests
		d: Joint identification of commonalities
		e: Commitment to similar populations
	2: Norms	a: Stable mores for interaction
		b: Trust
		c: Time to develop (interactions over time)
		d: Personal relationships
D: Challenges	1. Resources	
	2. Coordination	
	3. Regulations	


*Based on Thomson, et al., 2009

Appendix G: Client Satisfaction Survey



CUSTOMER SATISFACTION SURVEY

We would like to know your views about your experience at Neighborhood Place today.
Your answers to the following questions will help us continue to improve our services.



FIRST @ TJ

MARKING INSTRUCTIONS

- Make no stray marks on this form.
- Do NOT copy or staple this form.
- Make solid marks that fill the response completely.

Like this: ● Not like this: ④ ⑤ ⑥

After meeting with Neighborhood Place staff today, did you?

1. Receive needed information? Yes No

2. Have input in making decisions? Yes No

3. Learn about available services? Yes No

4. Have your questions answered? Yes No

5. Learn what to do next? Yes No

6. Did you give your address and phone number more than once today? Yes No

7. Was it easy for you to get here? Yes No

8. What type of transportation did you use?

Public Transportation (bus)

Own Car

Family/ Friend drove

Other

9. How long did you have to wait before you were seen?

Less than 15 minutes

16 – 30 minutes

31- 60 minutes

More than 60 minutes

During your visit today:

10. Were you served in a timely manner? Yes No

11. Were you treated courteously? Yes No

12. Were your rights respected? Yes No

13. Did you feel comfortable? Yes No

14. Were the hours of service convenient for you? Yes No

15. Would you recommend Neighborhood Place to someone who needs help?

Definitely will

Probably will

Probably won't

Definitely won't

16. I feel that Neighborhood Place met my needs:

A great deal

Somewhat

Very little

Not at all

17. How would you rate your overall experience at Neighborhood Place today?

Excellent

Good

Fair

Poor

18. How did you learn about us?

Referred by another agency

Through my child's school

From a friend, neighbor, or family member

From my doctor

Other

Rank your satisfaction on these items regarding your visit to Neighborhood Place: (1 = highly satisfied to 4 = highly dissatisfied)

19. Facility 1 2 3 4

20. Physical Location 1 2 3 4

21. Staff 1 2 3 4

22. Variety of services offered 1 2 3 4

23. Through Neighborhood Place I have been able to access the following services: (Mark all that apply.)

<input type="checkbox"/> Health Services	<input type="checkbox"/> Housing
<input type="checkbox"/> Home Visits	<input type="checkbox"/> School Services
<input type="checkbox"/> Financial Assistance	<input type="checkbox"/> Adult Ed. Services
<input type="checkbox"/> Employment Services	<input type="checkbox"/> Youth Services
<input type="checkbox"/> Mental Health	<input type="checkbox"/> Child Protection
<input type="checkbox"/> Substance Abuse	<input type="checkbox"/> Food/Nutritional

24. If Neighborhood Place was not here, what would you do?

I do not know.

I would not receive services.

I would go to the agency's home office.


I would pay for private services.

Thank you for your participation!

JCPS, Accountability, Research and Planning:RJRTI

4/25/2012

Appendix H: Intake Form



Welcome to Neighborhood Place

Home Visit (to be completed by staff member)

Today's Date: _____ Arrival Time: _____

Please print your answers to the following questions so that we can help you.

Name: _____ Your Birth Date: _____

Address: _____ Zip: _____ Phone: _____

Social Security#: _____

in your household: ○○○○○○○○○○
1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10+

Neighborhood Place offers a variety of services.
Please fill in the circle next to the services
you feel your family needs.

THANK YOU FOR ALLOWING US TO SERVE YOU!

How can we help you? _____

MARKING INSTRUCTIONS

- Use a No. 2 pencil only.
- Do not use ink, ballpoint, or felt tip pens.
- Make solid marks that fill the response completely.
- Erase cleanly any marks you wish to change.
- Make no stray marks on this form.

CORRECT: ● INCORRECT: ✓ ✗ ○ ●

1. When did you last visit Neighborhood Place?

<input type="radio"/> This is my first visit	<input type="radio"/> 2 - 5 months ago
<input type="radio"/> 2 weeks ago	<input type="radio"/> 6 - 12 months ago
<input type="radio"/> 3 weeks to 1 month ago	<input type="radio"/> 1 or more years ago
2. I need food stamps, financial assistance (K-TAP, formerly AFDC) and/or a Medical Card (K-CHIP, Passport).
3. I would like to learn more about WIC, which provides nutrition education and food vouchers to pregnant women, postpartum women, breast-feeding mothers, infants, and children under 5 years of age.
4. I am pregnant and would like to meet with a health worker.
5. There has been a crisis causing a loss of income in my household and I need help with rent or utilities.
6. I am homeless or about to be homeless and need emergency shelter and housing information.
7. I am interested in applying for subsidized housing.
8. I am concerned about a child who is having trouble attending or doing well in school.
9. Others have expressed concerns about my use (or a family member's use) of alcohol or drugs.
10. I have concerns about my child's behavior and would like to talk with someone.
11. I would like information on services for persons with developmental disabilities.
12. I am concerned about frequent feelings of hopelessness and/or fear.
13. I am interested in obtaining information about employment, a new career, or job training.
14. I am in need of medical services and/or a family doctor and do not have medical insurance.
15. I am interested in applying for child care assistance.
16. I am interested in obtaining information on Earned Income Tax Credit.
17. I would like information on how to make an appointment for: (BUBBLE ALL THAT APPLY)

<input type="radio"/> immunizations	<input type="radio"/> head lice check	<input type="radio"/> pregnancy test	<input type="radio"/> infant or toddler car seat
<input type="radio"/> TB Test	<input type="radio"/> lead test	<input type="radio"/> family planning	

Please Complete Other Side

Revised 9/05

18. I would like more information about: _____

Other Household Members

Name	Date of Birth	Social Security #

For Staff Use Only

Worker Name: _____

Site Information:
 BOH/L&N South Central First @ TJ 810 Barret SJ-Fairdale Northwest Ujima
 BOH/ALG Cane Run First @ Liberty 810 @ L&N SJ-Valley NW @ FHC

Limited English Proficiency (LEP) Client: Yes No

Limited English - Translation/Interpreter Services Utilized: Yes No

Agency of initial contact during this visit:
 HS HD/FCF DCBS JCPS SCS 4C CAP FHC

Agency referrals made to client during this visit:
 HS HD/FCF DCBS JCPS FRYSC SCS 4C CAP FHC Community Ministry

Service referrals made to client during this visit:
 Employment Childcare Immunizations Housing

Additional agency services provided during this visit: (Checked by all staff who see client during this visit)
 HS HD/FCF DCBS JCPS SCS 4C CAP FHC

Staff Notes: _____

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Appendix I: Item Analysis

Item Analysis and Variable Construction

Reliability Statistics for Composite Variables

	<i>Cronbach's α</i>	<i>N of items</i>
<i>Governance</i>	.716	3
Partner organizations take your organization's opinions seriously when decisions are made about the collaboration.		
Your organization brainstorms with partner organizations to develop solutions to mission-related problems facing the collaboration.		
Your organization is involved in implementing specific solutions to mission-related problems facing the collaboration.		
<i>Administration</i>	.597	4
You, as a representative of your organization in the collaboration, understand your organization's roles and responsibilities as a member of the collaboration.		
Partner organization meetings accomplish what is necessary for the collaboration to function well.		
Partner organizations (including your organization) agree about the goals of the collaboration.		
Your organization's tasks in the collaboration are well coordinated with those of partner organizations		

Autonomy**.703****3**

The collaboration hinders your organization from meeting its own organizational mission.

Your organization's independence is affected by having to work with partner organizations on activities related to the collaboration.

You, as a representative of your organization, feel pulled between trying to meet both your organization's and the collaboration's expectations.

Mutuality**.737****5**

Partner organizations (including your organization) have combined and used each other's resources so all partners benefit from collaborating.

Your organization shares information with partner organizations that will strengthen their operations and programs?

You feel what your organization brings to the collaboration is appreciated and respected by partner organizations.

Your organization achieves its own goals better working with partner organizations than working alone.

Partner organizations (including your organization) work through differences to arrive at win-win solutions?

Norms**.643****3**

The people who represent partner organizations in the collaboration are trustworthy.

My organization can count on each partner organization to meet its obligations to the collaboration.

Your organization feels it worthwhile to stay and work with partner organizations rather than leave the collaboration.

Appendix J: Neighborhood Place Logic Model

Needs	Goals & Objectives	Inputs	Outputs	Outcomes	
				Short-term	Long-term
<p>Families need to be self sufficient</p> <p>Mothers and babies as well as older children need to be healthy mentally and physically</p> <p>Children need to be safe</p> <p>Children need to do well in school</p>	<p>Goal 1: To improve economic self-sufficiency among families who receive NP services</p> <p>1) To transition families from welfare to by increasing employment among TANF recipients</p> <p>Goal 2: Improve the health of mothers and babies</p> <p>1) Reduce the rate of low birth weight babies</p> <p>2) Increase age-appropriate immunization rates</p> <p>Goal 3: Reduce violence within families who seek NP services</p> <p>1) Prevent child abuse and neglect, especially among those reported who don't meet the criteria</p> <p>2) Reduce the reoccurrence of child abuse and neglect in substantiated cases</p> <p>3) Reduce domestic violence, especially where children are present in the home</p>	<p>Goal 1:</p> <p>1) Engage TANF workers at NP to refer families to programs that will teach job getting and maintenance skills 2) Develop partnership with Kentuckiana Works</p> <p>Goal 2:</p> <p>1) Family Support workers at NP will find out what mothers qualify for WIC and refer to NP partner-Health Department</p> <p>2) Health Department will offer WIC program at NP</p> <p>3) Health Department at NP will enroll pregnant and parenting mothers in Healthy Start program or HANDS to enhance health, immunizations and prevent child maltreatment</p> <p>Goal 3:</p> <p>1) HANDS and Healthy Start</p> <p>2) FINSAs for cases that don't reach threshold for substantiated abuse or neglect</p> <p>3) Child Welfare workers ensure all</p>	<p>1) Number of heads of household that started with no job who completed job training, got a GED or went to trade school or college.</p> <p>2) Number who got GED</p> <p>2) Number who got college degree- AA, BA other</p> <p>3) Number of new WIC cases on rolls</p> <p>4) Number of new mothers in Healthy Start</p> <p>5) Number of new mothers in HANDS program</p> <p>6) Number of immunizations given at NP clinics</p> <p>7) Number of FINSAS- show increase over time</p> <p>8) Number of referrals within NP from Family Support to</p>	<p>1) Number of mothers who got job</p> <p>2) Weight of babies of mothers who received WIC in pregnancy- gets better over time?</p> <p>3) Number of children fully immunized in NP Health Department rolls- increase over time?</p> <p>4) Number of mothers in Healthy Start of HANDS who have maltreated children? Decrease over time? Fewer than in general population from the catchment area?</p> <p>5) Increase in FINSAS</p> <p>6) Fewer truant and suspended</p>	<p>1) Number of mothers who kept jobs- length of employment, get new job. Get better over time?</p> <p>2) Fewer low birth rate babies</p> <p>3) More children fully immunized</p> <p>4) Fewer maltreated children</p> <p>5) Fewer children in DV homes</p> <p>6) Fewer children truant</p> <p>7) Higher attendance rates in JCPS</p> <p>8) Fewer children suspended</p> <p>9) Suspension rate going down</p>

	<p>Goal 4: Improve student participation in school</p> <p>1) Increase school attendance rates</p> <p>2) Decrease repeat suspension</p>	<p>clients get mental health, substance abuse, domestic violence, family support and health services they need to reduce repeat maltreatment through referrals to other NP partners</p> <p>Goal 4:</p> <p>1) Work with truant/troubled youth</p>	<p>Kentuckiana Works</p> <p>9) Number of referrals within NP from child welfare to Family Support, Health, School, Mental Health and DV Shelters</p> <p>10) Number of youth who go to Truancy Court through NP referral</p>		
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Appendix K: Sample Performance Management Tool

Family Stability:

Improve the safety, permanency, and well-being of children, families, and individuals

Indicator	Responsible Reporter	Data Source	2010	2011	2012	2012 Indianapolis, IN	2012 Columbus, OH	2012 US Average
Domestic Violence Rate	NP Operations Committee	DCBS Twist & TAP						
Family Homelessness Rate	NP Operations Committee	Homelessness Coalition						
Emergency Financial Assistance	CSR	CSR CARE Report						
Recurrence of Abuse/Neglect	DCBS	DCBS Twist						
Reunification/Relative Placement	DCBS	DCBS Twist						

Healthy Families:

Improve the health status of families and individuals

Indicator	Responsible Reporter	Data Source	2010	2011	2012	2012 Indianapolis, IN	2012 Columbus, OH	2012 US Average
Birth Weight	NP Operations Committee	Healthy Start Data System						
Infant Mortality	NP Operations Committee	KAMES Data System						
HANDS # Served	Metro PHW	PHW Data System CDP Portal						
Health Start # Served	Metro PHW	Healthy Start and HANDS Data System						
JADAC Referrals	7 Counties / DCBS	JADAC NP Monitoring Report						
TAP Referrals	7 Counties / DCBS	TAP Data Base						

Economic Self Sufficiency:

Improve the economic self-sufficiency among families

Indicator	Responsible Reporter	Data Source	2010	2011	2012	2012 Indianapolis, IN	2012 Columbus, OH	2012 US Average
Unemployment	NP Operations Committee	US Commerce Dept.						
Graduation Rate	JCPS	JCPS Data base						
Food Security (Emergency Food Assistance & SNAP)	CSR / DCBS	NP Monthly Status Report and KAMES Data System						
Family Economic Success	CSR	CARE Data System						
KWP	DCBS	OTIS Data System						
Child Care Subsidies	3Cs	3Cs Data System						

Resilient Student Performance:

Improve the level of student attendance and academic success

Indicator	Responsible Reporter	Data Source	2010	2011	2012	2012 Indianapolis, IN	2012 Columbus, OH	2012 US Average
Attendance Rate	JCPS	JCPS Data System						
Dropout Rate	JCPS	JCPS Data System						
Truancy Diversion	DCBS/7 Counties/ JCPS	Family Team Meeting						
Student Registration	JCPS	JCPS Student Assignment Data						
Kindergarten Readiness	JCPS	JCPS Data System						

Collaboration:

Improve the effectiveness and efficiency of operations between partner agencies

Indicator	Responsible Reporter	Data Source	2010	2011	2012	2012 Indianapolis, IN	2012 Columbus, OH	2012 US Average
Referrals Across Agencies	NP Operations Committee	NP Intake Form						
Referrals from FRYSC to NP	NP Operations Committee	NP Intake Form						
Referrals from NP to 7 Counties	NP Operations Committee	NP Intake Form						
Client Satisfaction Composite	NP Operations Committee	NP Client Satisfaction Survey						
Staff Satisfaction Composite	NP Operations Committee	NP Staff Satisfaction Survey						
NP Annual Day Participation Rate	NP Operations Committee	Annual Day Roster						
Annual Collaboration Survey	NP Operations Committee	Collaboration Survey						

Appendix L: 2012 Competitive City Report

2012 Competitive City Update Report

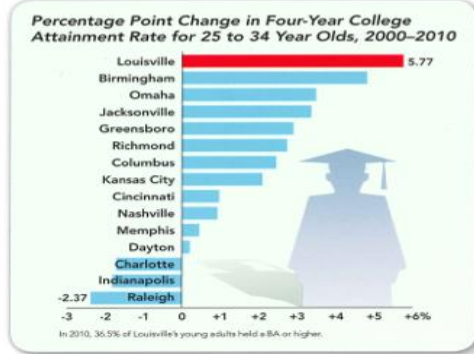
Greater Louisville Project
ADVANCING A COMPETITIVE CITY

2012: Updates on Education and Quality of Place with a New Look at 21st Century Jobs

Moving Louisville into the top tier of American cities requires building on gains made over the last 10 years and a different way to measure progress in the regional economy.



Education: Young Adults Make Louisville Number One



An increase of over 8,000 young adults with Bachelor's Degrees or higher between 2000 and 2010 has propelled Louisville into **first place in the rate of improvement among its peer cities**. For the first time, Louisville produced and attracted similar numbers of educated young adults as perennial top tier cities Charlotte and Columbus – a substantial accomplishment.

During this period, Louisville's population became more diverse and minorities increased their share of total Bachelor's Degrees. However, a troubling gap between minority and white degree attainment remains. In 2010, 21% of Hispanics and 16.5% of African

Americans held a Bachelor's Degree or higher, compared to 33.3% of whites age 25 and older – a reminder of the importance of community-based efforts like 55,000 Degrees and 15K Degrees.

Progress on both fronts is necessary if Louisville is to achieve its Deep Driver goal of 40% of the working-age population with college degrees. The city must continue to attract and retain young adults and eliminate its graduation gap if it is to move into the top tier of competitive cities, increasing its ability to grow, retain and attract 21st Century jobs.

Quality of Place: Louisville as the Heart of its Region

While Louisville's population grew 7% over the last decade, many surrounding counties grew at a faster rate and the city **lost ground in its share of the region's 1.2 million population**. If this trend continues, it could threaten the core density that is crucial to a city's vitality.

The combination of a vibrant city with well-paying jobs is essential in creating the quality of place that appeals to an educated, highly-skilled workforce. The addition of 7,200 young adults in the last decade may be an indication

that **Louisville's 20-year brain drain is reversing**. A comparison of the percentage change in the number of young adults across peer cities would rank Louisville at 5th place, cracking the top tier.

The imperative to strengthen the city's role as the employment and population center in the metropolitan area continues. Regional economic partnerships with Lexington and along the I-65 Corridor offer game-changing strategies to increase Louisville's national and international competitive footprint.

Population Growth in Most Rapidly Growing Louisville MSA Counties, 2000 to 2010

