Evaluating the Role of Local Government and Project Stakeholder Engagement In Choice Neighborhoods Transformation Planning and Implementation

DECEMBER 2015

ICMA

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Introduction

Throughout much of the U.S., the overall lack of affordable housing combined with ongoing problems in addressing older, obsolete, and rundown housing stock have created a housing crisis that is having an impact on the economic health of communities and on the quality of life for community residents and their families. As local governments struggle with how best to address these interlinked issues, it has become clear that traditional approaches to neighborhood and community planning are not producing the desired results for residents.

Public housing and subsidized rentals, originally designed as stop-gap measures for individuals and families in financial crisis, have become a way of life for many. Designed for a different era and lifestyle, these communities often isolate their residents from the broader community and the resources people need to build a higher quality of life for themselves. To address this need, the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development [HUD] Choice Neighborhoods Program defined a broader and more comprehensive approach to neighborhood planning that takes into account the economic and social needs of residents in public and assisted housing beyond those of their physical environment.

Traditional neighborhood plans developed by local governments tend to focus on maintaining or enhancing infrastructure including streets, sidewalks and public facilities. Residents debate and discuss desired streetscapes and the types of development needed, for example, more neighborhood-serving retail, entertainment opportunities, or recreational facilities. In older neighborhoods, preserving historic character and discussing façade improvements might be covered in the plan. Generally speaking, the vision and the goals of a traditional plan focus largely on the physical aspects of a neighborhood and what it should look like. Quality of life is often part of the discussion, but the delivery and coordination of social services to neighborhood residents rarely enters the picture.[1]

HUD introduced the Choice Neighborhoods program in 2010 as a means to redevelop the most severely distressed public and assisted housing communities. Drawing on the lessons learned about the importance of providing access to social and community services as a means for addressing resident needs from its predecessor, the HOPE VI program, HUD designed Choice Neighborhoods to take a more comprehensive approach to redevelopment. The goal is not simply to replace distressed housing within the community, but rather to create a supportive environment with opportunities for all residents. For the purposes of this study, "residents" are considered both the individuals living in public and assisted housing complexes as well as those living in the larger neighborhood. It should be understood, however, that individuals and families living in public and assisted housing are most directly affected by transformation plans, therefore a key focus of citizen engagement efforts.

HUD provides both planning grants and implementation grants for Choice Neighborhoods. This study examined only transformation plans which focus on developing site-specific strategies to turn around a neighborhood. The scope of a transformation plan is much broader and more comprehensive than that of a traditional neighborhood plan. The intention is to engage residents in a discussion of their needs and identify and secure available resources—both from within the community and outside of it—to address those needs. One of the most important by-products of a transformation plan may be the development of greater social capital, namely the human and organizational connections and relationships needed to create strong neighborhoods and healthy communities. The central question in developing a transformation plan must examine what it takes to provide greater access and more economic opportunities in distressed neighborhoods. For the Choice Neighborhoods program, there are three key areas to be examined: housing, people, and neighborhood.

Housing. The focus on housing is primarily on public and assisted housing that exists in the neighborhood. The goal is to replace substandard housing in the neighborhood using a minimum one-to-one replacement ratio whereby every public or assisted unit destroyed is replaced by another high quality and more suitable unit. The intention is to provide quality housing units for displaced residents who want to return to the development. HUD works with grantees to develop metrics to measure performance across sites and neighborhoods.

People. Transformation plans focus specifically on public and assisted housing residents, but also on the greater neighborhood. Any plan for a neighborhood directly impacts the lives of those who live there. Distressed neighborhoods do not have an abundance of resources available to them to address challenges or create new opportunities. Incorporating social services into a transformation plan helps address the needs of the people who make up the neighborhood. The challenge is to develop metrics that measure improvements in the quality of life for baseline residents—those living in public and assisted housing at the time of application for Choice funding—and residents of the revitalized neighborhood.

Neighborhood. Neighborhoods are defined by their physical location, but they also provide a social structure and an economic base for residents. Neighborhoods can offer a sense of belonging to their residents. Locating a grocery store in a neighborhood offers a common public space where people can meet others who live nearby, and also supplies a variety of jobs ranging from baggers to store management. Transformation plans recognize that neighborhoods are complex social structures that require more than physical maintenance to thrive. Transformation plans take into account the need to preserve that sense of place when approaching neighborhood redevelopment.

Over the course of three years, ICMA studied the experiences of three smaller cities—Salisbury, North Carolina, Suffolk, Virginia, and Norfolk, Virginia—to see what changes occurred in the neighborhoods selected to receive funding from Choice Neighborhoods for developing transformation plans. The study was undertaken to evaluate the factors that contribute to program success and that play demonstrable roles in transforming entire neighborhood of concentrated poverty. Factors evaluated included the level of engagement of the local government and local government entities, project partners and sectors, and resident engagement.

Previous Research Findings

Factors Contributing to a Lack of Affordable Housing

Demand for affordable housing in the U.S. has steadily increased in the past decade. To demonstrate demand, HUD issues a biennial "Worst Case Needs" report to Congress. Worst case needs are defined as renters "with incomes below 50 percent of the Area Median who do not receive government housing assistance and who either paid more than half of their income for rent or lived in severely inadequate conditions.[2]" In 2011, worst case needs in the United States hit an all-time high of 8.48 million renter households, almost 1.4 million more households than the previous high in 2009. Ninety-seven percent of these worst case needs were categorized as such because they paid more than half of their income in rent.

Several demographic and economic factors contributed to this increase: 37.3 percent of the increase in worst case needs were due to previous homeowners switching to become renters; 15.4 percent were attributed to the creation of new households; 14.7 percent were attributed to renter income loss bringing them below 50 percent of the Area Median Income (AMI); and 9.2 percent were attributed to the gap in rental assistance needed versus the assistance available.

One way to address these worst case needs is through an increase in affordable and adequate rental housing stock. Affordable rental units—defined as those with rent representing 30 percent or less of household income—are scarce. In 2011, enough affordable rental units existed to house only 58 percent of extremely low-income renters (less than 30% of AMI). Availability also imposes a constraint on renters, as competition for affordable housing is fierce. Oftentimes, higher-income renters may occupy more affordable units. Only about 36 percent of extremely low-income renters could find affordable and available units, even if location were not a factor. Ideally, rental housing should provide adequate living conditions where units have no serious heating, plumbing, electrical, or maintenance problems. Using this final parameter, there were only 31 units per 100 in the U.S. that could be considered affordable, available, and adequate for extremely low-income renters. With these numbers, it becomes clear that housing assistance

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and public housing are greatly needed throughout the United States. Currently the federal government has several programs in place designed to alleviate these conditions.[3]

Efforts Preceding Choice Neighborhoods

Hope VI

HUD introduced HOPE VI, a public housing redevelopment program that targeted severely distressed public housing, in 1992. The aim of HOPE VI was to replace obsolete units and deconcentrate poverty. Key elements of HOPE VI included: major rehabilitation or reconstruction of public housing; establishing positive incentives and comprehensive services for resident self-sufficiency; promoting mixed-income communities; and forging partnerships with other agencies.[4]

HOPE VI produced mixed results but important lessons for neighborhood redevelopment. The program improved the housing stock, but also significantly reduced the number of available units. Some neighborhoods were improved, but some resulted in islands of high-quality housing surrounded by a distressed neighborhood. Resident displacement from established neighborhoods was also an issue. Many people simply ended up moving from one troubled neighborhood to another.

Long-term, the goal of HOPE VI was to promote the creation of a thriving mixed-income community as part of the public housing redevelopment. Despite the underwhelming results for the individuals displaced from public housing, there were positive effects found in the surrounding neighborhoods as a result of HOPE VI. Based on a study of four HOPE VI sites in Washington, D.C. and Boston, MA, the redevelopments had positive effects on economic conditions in the surrounding neighborhoods. Three of the four sites displayed notable increases in residential property values and decreases in violent crime rates after the demolition of the housing project. Violent crimes decreased by 51.5 percent and 66.2 percent in the two Boston neighborhoods and by 75 percent in the Townhomes area of Washington, D.C. In adjacent neighborhoods, the public housing redevelopment was also associated with an increase in residents' incomes.[5] In San Francisco, a HOPE VI project that replaced 229 low-income public housing units in a gentrified neighborhood enabled the local economy to retain its low-income workforce by not removing the public housing from the newly desirable real estate and add a supermarket and street-level retail to the development to promote further growth. The San

Francisco HOPE VI development was also significant because it replaced the low-income public housing one-for-one.[6] Although the demolition of the deteriorating housing projects has shown to have a positive effect on the surrounding neighborhoods, one clearly negative result of the HOPE VI program was that during the 15 years it was in place, the program tore down more than 96,000 units of distressed public housing and replaced them with 56,000 units affordable to the lowest income households.[7] Although this program improved the quality of housing, it limited the availability of housing due to the reduced number of affordable units.

Additional research shows that strategies to create mixed-income communities can improve lives through environmental changes such as access to better schools and neighborhood amenities, but have done little to overcome social and economic barriers.[8] In a Chicago housing project, younger residents with mostly high school degrees who were connected to the labor force reported using employment-related services the most, at 72 percent, and the sample as a whole experienced gains in employment.[9] HOPE VI participants may have been able to improve their employment circumstances through offered training programs, but still they rarely make enough money to leave public housing or purchase their own home.[10]

Housing Choice Voucher (HCV) Program

The redevelopment of public housing is not the only HUD program that seeks to create a safe and sustainable mixed-income neighborhood. Another way HUD provides rental assistance is through the Housing Choice Voucher (HCV) program. The vouchers allow participants to find their own private-market housing and have their rent subsidized by the local public housing agency.

Like the HOPE VI program, the HCV program has had mixed results. The HCV program is focused on people, not place, in contrast to programs like HOPE VI and Choice. Generally, the programs do improve the neighborhood quality for the voucher holders themselves, as they live in safer and lower poverty households than their public housing counterparts. However, they still live in areas with higher crime and poverty rates than the typical non-subsidized household in their city. On average, voucher households live in neighborhoods with crime rates 20 percent higher than the general population.[11] The high-crime rates of HCV neighborhoods are typically correlated with low vacancy rates and high rents in low-crime tracts in the surrounding area.

Tight rental markets make it difficult for HCV households to access low-crime neighborhoods.[12] When compared with place-based public housing and poor renter households, however, HCV households experience lower crime rates in their neighborhood even though there is no difference in poverty rates. HCV households also experience mixed results for other outcomes. One study found that before moving 73 percent of voucher holders worked, while after moving that number dropped to 52.2 percent. Those households that relocated experienced only minimal improvements in neighborhood poverty rates and school quality.[13]

Rental Assistance Demonstration (RAD) Program

HUD's RAD program was created in 2012 in response to a growing backlog of unfunded capital needs causing a loss of public housing and subsidized units to disrepair. Through the program, public housing authorities can access additional private and public funding sources by converting to Section 8 contracts. As of September 2014, 414 housing authorities have submitted 1,080 applications and 323 projects have been awarded. Of the 323 awarded projects, 57 have completed the conversion to Section 8 through RAD.[14]

The Choice Neighborhoods Program

Considered the successor to the HOPE VI program, Choice Neighborhoods addresses not just distressed public housing, but also the surrounding neighborhoods through two types of grants: planning and implementation.

There were 177 applicant neighborhoods for planning grants to produce Choice Neighborhoods Transformation Plans from 2010 to 2012. Applicant neighborhoods displayed high neighborhood distress characteristics. Twenty-four percent of all applicant neighborhoods had more than one-half of the population living below the poverty line. In the 49 successful applicant neighborhoods from 2010 to 2012, the average poverty rate was 45 percent whereas unsuccessful applicant neighborhoods had a mean poverty rate of 40 percent. Similarly, unemployment rates were higher in successful planning grant applications—19 percent—compared to 16 percent in unsuccessful grant applications.[15]

From 1990 to 2010, the average Choice applicant has shown an increase in the percentage of the population completing high school, some college, a bachelor's degree or a graduate degree, while the percentage of the population with less than a high school diploma has fallen by 33 percent. Successful and unsuccessful applications did not show significant differences in educational attainment. Overall, applicant neighborhoods had a mean of 68 percent rental housing and 32 percent owner-occupied, but successful applicants had an average of 72 percent rental housing. In the first three years of the Choice program, no "ideal" neighborhood in size, population, and density was apparent among successful grant applications. The only pattern to emerge was that the populations of successful planning grant applications were more tightly clustered around the mean, with the largest and smallest neighborhoods more likely to be unsuccessful.[16]

In August 2011, HUD selected the first five implementation grantees, committing a total of $122 million.[17] In a review of the five implementation plans, four of the five sites predicted increases in density and called for redevelopment of all or more than the number of low-income units demolished. Some plans also included mixed-income approaches to various degrees based on demand for non-subsidized housing. During the construction, two sites have identified models for relocation to alleviate stress by phasing development and all sites offered relocation assistance and services. Three sites have relationships and institutions in place to provide residents with services for physical and mental health, self-sufficiency, and academic outcomes. For the neighborhood element of the Choice implementation grant, four of the plans proposed mixed-use developments such as retail space and streetscapes or economic development projects on vacant properties. The fifth plan proposed using their Critical Community Improvement budget on space for youth and workforce programs.[18]

Summary of Findings

While a wide body of research exists that documents efforts to address affordable housing in the U.S., there are still many questions about what factors contribute to enhancing quality of life in distressed neighborhoods. Drawing on lessons learned from this past research, the Choice Neighborhoods program has taken an expanded approach to the redevelopment of public and assisted housing and the transformation of neighborhoods.

This report examines how three smaller cities have adopted this approach—housing, people, and neighborhoods—in their development of a Choice Neighborhoods Transformation Plan and how it is being carried out in revitalizing their respective distressed neighborhoods. Consideration is also given to how each community can begin to interpret the results of their work on the transformation plan.

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Salisbury, North Carolina
Population - 33,710 (2014 US Census estimate)

Community Profile

City Government

Located in central North Carolina, Salisbury is a small town located between the cities of Winston-Salem to the north and Charlotte to the south. Salisbury has a population of 33,662 residents and operates under a Council-Manager form of government. The city is also the county seat of Rowan County. Although a separate legal entity independent of the county government, the city does provide overlapping services with the county, including police and recreational services.

The city employed 437 individuals across all funds in FY2014, and expects to increase to 450 for FY2015. The recommended budgeted expenditures for all city funds is $70,867,720. The projected general fund expenditures for Salisbury in FY2015 is $37,044,444. Table 1 details the expenditures and revenues for the general fund and the percent contributed or allocated by category.[19]

Additionally, Salisbury is a Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) Entitlement City, and receives annual grants based on a formula to provide decent housing, a suitable living environment, and the expansion of economic opportunities, principally for low- and moderate-income persons. Salisbury was the smallest jurisdiction granted funding in the first round of the Choice Neighborhoods program.

Salisbury Housing Authority (SHA)

The Salisbury Housing Authority was established in 1949. A Board of Commissioners, whose five members are appointed by the mayor of Salisbury, governs the SHA. An executive director manages the day-to-day operations, including 18 full-time and 2 part-time employees. The SHA owns eight public housing properties and one Tax Credit (Affordable Housing) property for seniors serving 545 Public Housing and 34 Tax Credit families. The FY 2015 budgeted operating expenditures for the housing authority total $709,420. Presently all funding is provided by the HUD Annual Contributions Contract; however, the housing authority applied for and received a "Commitment to enter into a Housing Assistance Payment contract" or a CHAP as part of the Rental Assistance Demonstration (RAD) program. Through the CHAP, Salisbury Housing Authority

Table 1   The City of Salisbury General Fund Expenditures & Revenues Allocations FY2015

SALISBURY GENERAL FUND			
Expenditures	**Percentage**	**Revenues**	**Percentage**
General Government	31.4 percent	Restricted Intergovernmental	7.2 percent
Education	0.1 percent	Unrestricted Intergovernmental	21.6 percent
Mass Transit	1.2 percent	Property Tax	49.7 percent
Environmental Protection	4.0 percent	Capital Lease	1.3 percent
Debt Service	4.7 percent	Misc.	1.0 percent
Culture & Recreation	6.8 percent	Charges for Services	19.2 percent
Transportation	10.9 percent		
Community and Economic Develop.	5.0 percent		
Public Safety	35.9 percent		

NOTE: Data collection for the case studies took place over time, using the most current data available at the time.

plans to convert several properties into Multifamily Housing and will then receive Section 8 Project Based Rental Assistance along with tenant rents.

West End Neighborhood and Civic Park Apartments

A significant percentage of Salisbury's population—25 percent—live in poverty. SHA works with this population "to promote adequate and affordable housing, economic opportunity, and a suitable living environment free from discrimination."[20] The larger West End neighborhood has a vacancy rate nearly 5 times the county average and a middle school that is characterized as low-performing, but is generally considered stable. The Civic Park complex is somewhat isolated with few connections to trails, roads, and sidewalks. There is a bus route that runs out to the neighborhood that helps with getting children to school. The Civic Park area is prone to criminal activity.

The West End neighborhood is a historically African American community. Covering 50 blocks about a mile from downtown Salisbury, the neighborhood has been the subject of numerous revitalization projects throughout the years. Civic Park Apartments, a public housing community, occupies roughly nine acres of the West End neighborhood. The complex, with additional offsite housing, includes 80 units ranging from one to four bedrooms.

As of the 2006-2010 American Community Survey (ACS), the West End neighborhood had a population of 3,200 in 1,100 housing units. The vacancy rate for parcels located within the West End was 7.1 percent— a difference of 2.5 percent from the City of Salisbury's overall vacancy rate of 4.6 percent.

For resident economic statistics, the gap between the neighborhood and the city overall is even more apparent. The median household income for West

West End Neighborhood. From the City of Salisbury's West End Transformation Plan

End is over $8,000 less than the city median income. The percent of families below the poverty level is ten percentage points higher in the neighborhood versus the city. The percentage of individuals unemployed is also 10 percentage points higher in West End. One area of similarity is the number of individuals with a high school diploma or equivalency with only a 2 percent difference between West End and Salisbury. This gap widens dramatically when examining higher education levels, with only 13 percent of West End representatives obtaining a bachelor's degree or higher versus Salisbury's 25 percent. For a comparison of the economic statistics of Salisbury and the West End neighborhood, see Table 2.

Education is another important factor in neighborhood revitalization. Ensuring that children have access to high-quality education is a crucial step to improving quality of life. Civic Park is served by Hurley Elementary school and only 55% of children attending were reported as developmentally ready for kindergarten.

Table 2 Comparison of West End Neighborhood and Salisbury Economic Indicators[21]

Economic Indicator	West End Neighborhood	Salisbury
Median Household Income	$27,591	$35,871
Families Below Poverty Level	30.4 percent	19.7 percent
Unemployment Rate	22.7 percent	12.2 percent
High School Diploma or Equivalent	27.7 percent	29.9 percent
Bachelor's Degree or Higher	13.3 percent	25.1 percent
Vacancy Rate	7.1 percent	4.6 percent

Civic Park is also served by Knox Middle School which has been consistently designated as a lowest-achieving school according to the Department of Education. Civic Park students graduate to Salisbury High where school performance in English I and Algebra I are 8.7 percent and 18.1 percent below the state average, respectively. In a survey of Civic Park households, 73 percent of households reported obtaining a high school diploma or GED.[22]

Public transit provides access to education and employment for individuals that may have no other option. According to a Civic Park Household Survey, only 42 percent of residents own a car. Over 21 percent of West End representatives do not have their own vehicle or rely on friends, family, or public transportation to get around. In regards to transportation availability, the West End neighborhood is served by two transit routes within the city bus system. Buses are on an hourly system running between 6:15AM-6:15PM on weekdays and limited service on Saturdays. There are 240 public bus stops across the city and 20 are located in West End. Of these 20, very few currently provide covered shelter and/or benches. The city also developed a sidewalk prioritization study to create more pedestrian activity by identifying factors such as proximity to schools, businesses, parks, and residential density. Within the West End, about one-third of the streets do not have sidewalks and most streets received a medium to high priority rating. Overall, a March 2012 Neighborhood Opinion Survey of West End revealed that Transportation/Access to Services/Infrastructure ranked third as a neighborhood representative priority concern.[23]

In the same Neighborhood Opinion Survey, the community rated crime prevention as one the most important neighborhood improvements. Seventy-three percent of West End representatives identified crime prevention as a top priority, making it the most common response among those surveyed. Violent crimes in Salisbury decreased from 2009 to 2011, and this trend was also reflected in the West End neighborhood. The number of Part I Violent Crimes in the West End dropped from 45 to 26 per 1,000 residents in 2011. Salisbury Police Department created a specialized unit in 2011 to combat street-level criminal activity through elevated visibility and covert surveillance. The Police Interdiction Team (PIT) was deployed in March 2011 and statistics showed that burglaries were down by 66.7 percent and disturbances were down 42.8 percent from the same one month period the previous year.

HUD Choice Neighborhoods Transformation Plan

Sam Foust, executive director of SHA, notes that for many years the authority worked to maintain existing housing, but did not do much for the residents. In 2010, former Congressman Melvin Watt came to visit Salisbury and took a tour of the Civic Park Apartments. "The facilities at the complex looked much like what they did in the 1950's," said Mr. Foust. Among the deficiencies needing to be addressed were a failing building structure, heavy water infiltration, and substandard electrical systems. The complex also had no designated play areas for children despite a high percentage—80 percent and above—of residents having children and adult children between the ages of 0 and 25 in 2013.

At the time of the congressman's visit, SHA was considering applying for funding from the HOPE VI Program administered by HUD to address the many challenges in the Civic Park Apartments as well as the West End neighborhood. The SHA established two primary goals for the area: first to develop a family self-sufficiency program to help residents help themselves, and to redevelop the Civic Park Apartments complex to address safety concerns as well as offer greater amenities to residents.

The congressman encouraged SHA and city officials to instead apply for funding from a new program, Choice Neighborhoods. The congressman's visit resulted in an in-depth discussion between the mayor and Foust regarding the West End neighborhood and its needs. A Choice Neighborhoods grant offered the city an opportunity to achieve self-sufficiency on a much bigger scale in the West End neighborhood.

Organizational Structure

Initial planning and organization work involved Foust, two staff members from the city's planning department, Joe Morris and Janet Gapen, and Chanaka Yatawara, executive director of the Salisbury Community Development Corporation. Bill Burgin, an architect and former city council member, was also asked to be a part of the effort. Morris and Foust took the lead and started brainstorming efforts.

The group formed a core planning team that started with seven members and grew to twelve including Community Action Agency staff. A more formal Steering Committee formed in 2011. Other city departments, including the zoning and engineering departments, engaged in the effort of putting together different sections of the proposal with the Steering Committee.

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The city received the planning grant, and began meeting with a HUD Advisory Team on the first and third Mondays of the month. Salisbury was one of seventeen sites selected in the first funding round for the Choice Neighborhoods planning grants, and the smallest city funded in the first round.

As the work in developing a transformation plan began in earnest, those involved developed a structure for getting tasks identified, assigned and accomplished. The Choice Neighborhoods program provided a more comprehensive approach to neighborhood revitalization, as compared to other city planning initiatives that focused on the physical and environmental issues affecting the neighborhood. "The city hadn't done anything like this before, so an organizational structure was adapted as we've gone along," said Foust. "It's been a very organic process."

Steering Committee
(20 members appointed by City Council)

Core Planning Team
(12 members)

Working Committees

| Neighborhood | Housing | People |

Three working committees took on the tasks of sorting through existing data, conducting needs assessments to help identify hot topics, and holding lots of community meetings. "We've never been turned down when we've asked for help in this effort," said Foust. "Everyone knows each other, so we don't step on toes, but it's sometimes hard to think outside the box. And brainstorming can lead to mission creep. We can't chase any and every idea."

As the need to set parameters for the plan arose, the Salisbury community looked to its popular downtown revitalization program, Downtown Salisbury. The program had pulled people together to achieve some common goals, and benefited from the hiring of one person to coordinate and run operations, while working with all of the committees. The same approach was used in West End. A local foundation funded a

> "Everyone is joining forces. It's not just about buildings any more, but the people and the neighborhood," said Chanaka Yatawara, executive director of the Salisbury Community Development Corporation.

new position for a neighborhood coordinator for the West End, providing two years of funding. The position was advertised locally and with state community development agencies, but the right candidate did not appear. As a result, a national consultant was retained to work with the group.

Local Government Support

The mayor was the driving force in selecting the West End neighborhood and worked with the city council to focus public attention on how neighborhood revitalization should proceed. The city's role has been to provide staff support and technical expertise, and move the operations forward. Janet Gapen with the city's planning department serves as co-chair for the Transformation Plan along with Sam Foust from the SHA. Several city departments became involved in the effort including:

- Planning
- Police
- Parks & recreation
- Public services
- Transit
- Engineering
- Community development
- Fire.

The departments in Salisbury have a history of working together. "One of the advantages of being in a small community is it's easy to talk to people and secure their support. We know each other, and we're small enough to do that," Gail Elder-White, Salisbury Parks and Recreation Department.

The city implemented several programs to support the Transformation Plan for the West End neighborhood. As part of its Block Works program, the city provides up to $10,000 in funding to fix streets within the community with one block being tackled each year along with other efforts to improve the block. The

first year of the program, the city received a handful of applications, the next year they had twenty applications. The program uses volunteers from area colleges and elsewhere to help with cleanup. Other examples of cooperative efforts include the Sidewalks Connections program, part of their Eat Smart, Move More program designed to encourage more active lifestyles. This project secured engineering easements for sidewalk installation, and involved collaboration among streets, parks and recreation, and the Rowan County Health Department. This documented history of cooperation helps with securing outside funding for federal and state grants. Most grant applications want to know what investment the community will make in a project, and this history provides part of the answer.

The police department has taken a leadership role in addressing neighborhood crime in recent years through adoption of a community policing approach. The police department established the PIT squad. The squad has seven members who are assigned to be out and about in the neighborhoods. They form relationships in neighborhoods and talk to people. The officers provide a face for the department. The department also established the Salisbury Neighborhood Action Group (SNAG). SNAG meetings are held monthly to given citizens an opportunity to meet with police leadership and discuss neighborhood concerns such as trash, overgrown trees, vacant lots, and drugs.

Police outreach in the Civic Park apartments has been particularly important for building community trust. Cierarra Butler, a Civic Park resident, explained that some apartment residents believe the police come to the neighborhood to harass people rather than to protect residents. Building personal relationships through PIT and SNAG has helped address past distrust and created a more positive relationship between the police department and residents.

Sustainability

The biggest difference between the Choice Neighborhoods Transformation Plan and past planning efforts is the comprehensive nature of the current effort and the scale of community involvement. "It's significant that every player was at the table on this," said Elder-White.

Gapen, with the planning department, acknowledges that the West End Transformation Plan has changed the way the city looks at neighborhood planning. Past planning efforts focused on physical aspects such as housing, streets, and parks. The transformation plan has taken a much more comprehensive approach to neighborhood planning. The focus is on all elements of the neighborhood with the biggest change being the addition of socio-economic considerations, the "people" aspect of planning. The committees have specifically looked at social services on a neighborhood basis.

Elder-White explains that the transformation plan has become part of the fabric of the community. This transformation plan is much broader-based than past neighborhood plans, and outreach efforts are discussed in depth. "Our thought process has changed. We now discuss how and who to engage in the effort," said White. As a result, the priorities have been set by the community because residents are telling the city what they need, for example, child care. "The big picture is this is not a plan to sit on the shelf. It may take us 25 years to do everything envisioned, but if we tackle it in pieces, it can be done," said Elder-White. "We've really institutionalized the process now. It's an impressive process."

Despite the strong community enthusiasm and excitement about the work of the transformation plan, concerns that could affect the long-term sustainability of the effort do exist. Gapen notes that small cities face a competitive challenge as a result of their size, and must find a balance in workloads so as not to overwhelm community leaders. Planning fatigue can set in over time, and the level of involvement will taper off if workloads become overwhelming.

Norma Honeycutt, executive director of Partners in Learning, an early childhood education center, suggested the adoption of a "divide and conquer" strategy can help insure long-term sustainability. The committees working on the plan have adopted three phases in order to keep workloads manageable. The adoption of a project timeline will also help insure that meaningful progress happens before the plan is finished. The formation of new neighborhood groups and taking ownership of the community improvement project is one example. Honeycutt also pointed out that the community needs to develop a succession plan for its leadership. While a shared leadership model has been adopted, there are several "what if" scenarios that should be discussed and a shared vision should be developed for moving forward.

Citizen Engagement

One of the most significant challenges the community undertook as part of the plan development was the strong engagement of the representatives from the West End Neighborhood, and more specifically, of the Civic Park Apartment complex. The West End Neighborhood has two neighborhood associations that have

some overlap in both membership and projects, and the Civic Park Apartment complex has a Residents Advisory Board. The active involvement of these three organizations was considered key to the success of the planning effort.

> "People can't do better unless they see better. It's a generational thing. People need models," said Honeycutt.

Cierarra Butler, a Civic Park resident, served on the Housing Committee. She observed that many neighborhood residents are too content and that it was hard to get them out of their comfort zones. She felt the design charrette that involved discussions with architects, contractors and blueprints was very important for helping people share the vision of what the Civic Park Apartment complex and the West End neighborhood could become. Displaying the drawings at the CDC building allowed those who couldn't attend meetings a chance to see and comment.

She noted that personal invitations were good for engaging residents. The invitations helped draw lots of people to meetings, oftentimes 40-50 people at a city council meeting and 20-30 at design charrette meeting. Working with SHA to put flyers on the doors of the Civic Park Apartments helped keep people aware of what was happening with the Transformation Plan.

She also felt that leadership training and observing what other communities had done was helpful. A team from the Civic Park Apartments and the West End neighborhood had traveled to High Point, North Carolina, for a site visit and workshops. "More residents need to be hands-on, both in Civic Park and West End," she said. "Assistance should be temporary." She pointed out that transition planning will be needed for moving people out of and back into the area. Some people have lived in the Civic Park Apartments for seven or eight years and have established relationships in the complex. The concern is that existing relationships in the apartment complex will be harmed during the transition.

Dee Dee Wright is a member of the West End Community Organization (WECO), a 55-year old neighborhood improvement association. The group provides activities for children and residents as well as crime reduction and safety. They also occasionally become involved with some local political issues, but only those with a small "p." The organization does not, for example, support political candidates. WECO members have very much been a part of the present effort, and have a vested interest in the success of the effort. Wright was passionate about the need to have people understand the importance of this effort. "This is your community. Your taxes are important, a cog in the wheel," is the message she works to get out to the neighborhood.

Shirley Johnson wears many hats in Salisbury. She is a member of WECO and the new West End Pride Neighborhood Association, which partially overlaps with WECO. She is also on the board of directors for the Salisbury Community Development Corporation. She notes that WECO and West End Pride are not in competition, and that both groups are interested in the health and wealth of the area. Members of the West End Pride saw a need to build more pride in the area, and so began organizing street clean-ups, community garden projects, and voter registration drives.

The West End Pride and the projects the group has taken on grew out of work done on the transformation plan. Neighborhood residents saw boarded-up homes and overgrown lawns, and wanted to do something to improve their neighborhood. They engaged staff at Livingstone College, which owned an old elementary school in the area. A group cleanup effort of Monroe Street was organized, and the college's football coach brought his

Social Capital and Why Citizen Engagement Is Crucial

The desire to live in a healthy safe neighborhood is seemingly a given in the U.S., but what does it take to create such a neighborhood? Social science research has shown that social capital—the links and connections among people and institutions–underpins such neighborhoods. Understanding the concept of social capital and how its growth can be encouraged holds promise for addressing the problems of distressed neighborhoods. Research by the World Bank and other development organizations has shown that "social cohesion is critical for societies to prosper economically and for development to be sustainable."[24] The central idea is that more can be achieved when people come together to pool their resources and solve problems.

players over to help. Another member of West End Pride donated property to start a community garden.

Johnson noted that citizen engagement needs to be undertaken using different formats and venues. "Not everyone is comfortable at big meetings. Person-by-person & coffee klatches also work," she said. She observed that churches particularly have a strong role to play in getting the word out in Salisbury. She emphasized the importance of hearing from different voices and all constituents.

Measures of Success

The three working committees for the transformation plan identified both short-term and long-term projects, which were established as priorities based on the results of surveys done in the West End neighborhood. The Neighborhood Working Committee identified issues West End representatives wanted addressed, including:

- Community store
- Public transportation
- Low-cost daycare
- Medical facility
- Parks
- Better housing
- Clean neighborhoods
- Better street lighting.

Janet Gapen with the planning department notes that the transformation plan includes specific goals that can be used to measure success over time. Center-pieces of the plan include:

- Redevelopment of the Civic Park Apartments
- Physical neighborhood improvements
- Development of site plans for the West End Neighborhood
- Rehabilitation of vacant school building.

The achievement of these goals over time would demonstrate measurable and highly-visible measures of success for the overall planning effort.

Less attention was devoted to identifying tracking mechanisms or performance measurements that would demonstrate quantifiable success over time. Norma Honeycutt indicated that additional measures for success need to be determined. She hopes that data can be tracked over time to show progress made on chronic concerns for the West End neighborhood. In the absence of an agreed-upon set of measures, Honeycutt suggested measurements such as parent reports, counts on the number of families involved, and changes to lifestyles would be useful to helping community leaders understand the real impact of their work.

Chanaka Yatawara also suggested potential key outcomes of the effort that may serve as useful performance measurements:

- Median household and per capita income
- Unemployment
- Student drop-out rate
- Number of residents entering college.

Several of those interviewed spoke to the need for both long-term and short-term projects. Honeycutt pointed out that given the overall scope and expected duration of the transformation plan, neighborhood representatives need to remain motivated in order to achieve long-term goals. She observed that small cities have a competitive challenge given the limited number of people available to work on projects. Planning fatigue can set in on large-scale efforts, and the level of active involvement can drop over time. The challenge is to find the right balance of effort expended and results achieved. Some meaningful progress happened before the transformation plan was finished, for example, new neighborhood groups formed and have taken ownership of key projects.

Biggest Accomplishments of the Transformation Plan

- Redevelopment of the Civic Park Complex
- Connecting with Purpose Built Communities
- Creating greater awareness of the issues facing the West End Neighborhood

Beyond the Transformation Plan

Following the completion of the Salisbury Transformation Plan, HUD approved the plan in 2012. Initially little additional work was done. The city did not have the necessary funding to redevelop the Civic Park apartments on its own. Applying for a Choice Neighborhoods Implementation Grant was not deemed feasible. While a few small projects were underway, it was largely a time of continued discussion and exploration by city leaders.

During this time, the core group of transformation plan leaders discovered an Atlanta-based nonprofit, Purpose Built Communities, that provides technical assistance to communities working to turn around distressed neighborhoods. The organization has spent fifteen years working to turn around the East Lake Meadows public housing complex and surrounding neighborhood in the

Atlanta with great success. The affiliation with Purpose Built Communities resulted in new ideas and new ways of thinking for the Salisbury team.

As a result, the Salisbury Housing Authority decided to apply to the North Carolina Housing Finance Agency for funding in January 2013. SHA was awarded 9 percent tax credits which enabled the authority to demolish the Civic Park complex. Construction on the new Brenner Crossing complex had two phases. Phase 1 construction began in August 2014. A second application for tax credit funding to support Phase 2 of the project was submitted in January 2014. Construction on Phase 2 began in October 2015 after which another 90 apartments will become available. A total of 80 households moved out of the Civic Park complex and 50 households returned to the new Brenner Crossing complex.

The application process for the tax credits was tremendously competitive, and SHA was the only housing authority to receive funding. The majority of available funding is awarded to developers. Foust and Gapen believe the work done in preparing the transformation plan along with the wide-spread community support for the project helped make the application for tax credits more competitive. As a result of the new housing complex, other new projects are being discussed for the West End Neighborhood. For example, a neighborhood church is considering expansion. A community building is being constructed with tax credit development funds which will be used to hold many community events for neighborhood residents, such as health and job training courses.

With financial support from the Robinson Family Foundation, the community has identified a project coordinator to bring more organization to the efforts underway in the West End. The new position will not only serve to better coordinate existing efforts underway in the neighborhood and will also bring in new resources. Long-term, the intention is to create a self-sustaining nonprofit organization that can move the West End agenda forward. The community is also hoping to form a sounding board group that will enable residents of the neighborhood to continue to have a voice. The idea is based on a group, the Northside Voyagers, which was established in Spartanburg, South Carolina. Voyagers are trained resident leaders who organized to keep their neighbors and community informed and engaged in the redevelopment efforts of Spartanburg's Northside Initiative.

Prior to the development of the transformation plan, the focus in Salisbury tended to be on what the city can do to solve neighborhood problems. Work on the transformation plan has demonstrated to many community leaders that it is important to look at neighborhood problems in a more comprehensive fashion. Especially important is learning to listen to residents and working to address their needs and concerns. While Salisbury's transformation plan includes a fairly diverse set of performance measures and includes both social and physical dimensions, more effort has been devoted to organization and establishing relationships needed to carry out the plan.

For example, the work on Salisbury's West End Transformation Plan created a new awareness about the challenges the neighborhood continues to face. The larger community and elected leaders talk about what is happening in the West End. For example, an uptick in crime in the West End in 2015 resulted in the neighborhood residents working with police on the reorganization of patrols to have a greater police presence in the neighborhood.

The transformation plan and the attention it brought to the West End Neighborhood did create hope that things could change. Several new initiatives began following the completion of the Transformation Plan. Man-Up Mondays involves male African American professionals going into neighborhood schools to meet with students. In 2014, a neighborhood block cleanup days brought together as many as 100 people. West End Pride, a self-organized group, has led voter registration drives and other civic-minded projects. Friday Night Walk Arounds serve as citizen patrols keeping an eye on what is happening in the neighborhood.

Many people involved in the transformation plan moved on due to job changes and other reasons. The search to find the right leadership takes time, but makes a significant difference in the ongoing success of the effort. Communication has opened up a public dialogue in Salisbury, helping to build trust between the city and West End residents.

Study Participants

Lt. Greg Beam, Salisbury Police Department

Ciearra Butler, Resident, Civic Park Apartments

Gail Elder-White, Director, Salisbury Parks and Recreation

Sam Foust, Executive Director, Salisbury Housing Authority

Janet Gapen, Director, Salisbury Planning Department

Norma Honeycutt, Executive Director, Partners in Learning

Shirley Johnson, Resident, WECO and West End Pride

Stan Wilson, Executive Director, Salisbury-Rowan Community Action Agency

Dee Dee Wright, Resident, WECO

Chanaka Yatawara, Executive Director, Salisbury Community Development Corporation

Suffolk, Virginia

Population 86,806 (2014 US Census estimate)

Community Profile

City Government

The city of Suffolk is located in Southeast Virginia and serves 85,181 residents. Suffolk covers a wide territory, encompassing 429 square miles of which 400 square miles is land and 29 square miles is water. The city was the fastest growing in the region from 2000 to 2010 with nearly 33 percent growth.

 Incorporated in 1910, the city operates under the council-manager form of government with 32 departments and a budgeted 1,321 personnel for the 2014-2015 fiscal year. In 1974, the city merged with the county. As an "independent city" in Virginia, Suffolk is responsible for providing both city and county services and includes schools, health, and welfare. The total adopted budget for FY2014-2015 is $538,716,817 in expenditures. The General Fund contributes roughly a third of that amount and a breakout of the general fund budgetary expenditures and revenues can be seen in Table 3.

Suffolk Redevelopment and Housing Authority (SRHA)

The Suffolk Redevelopment and Housing Authority was established in 1971 to address public housing site

plans, zoning subdivisions, and minimum housing ordinances. The SRHA is governed by a Board of Commissioners that is appointed by the City Council. The commissioners are responsible for setting policies and procedures for the Housing Authority and hiring the executive director to oversee day-to-day operations. The Housing Authority serves a total of 1,093 housing units (466 public housing units, 627 HCV units) with a staff of 42 employees. For the 2014-2015 fiscal year, the Suffolk Housing Authority has $9,960,974 total funds. The sources and amounts of the funds are detailed in Table 4.

East Suffolk Community and White Marsh Neighborhood

The White Marsh neighborhood serves as an anchor for the greater East Suffolk Community. The city of Suffolk selected the East Suffolk Community and White Marsh Neighborhood for a transformation plan because it contains two of the most distressed public housing developments—Parker Riddick and Cypress Manor—in the city. The neighborhood is approximately four square miles, composed mainly of residential blocks in the northwest section of the city which contains part of downtown Suffolk. Cypress

Table 3   The City of Suffolk, VA General Fund Expenditures and Revenues FY2014-2015

General Fund Category	Expenditures		General Fund Category	General Fund Category
General Government	$10,121,665		Local Tax Revenue	$144,240,000
Judicial	$7,495,309		Fees/Charges Revenue	$7,474,735
Public Safety	$49,521,182		State Revenue	$21,147,137
Public Works	$3,741,715		Federal Revenue	$4,931,032
Health & Welfare	$14,505,982		Other Revenue	$2,405,554
Education	$50,193,952			
Parks, Recreation & Cultural	$9,101,177			
Community Development	$3,349,645			
Other Public Services	$971,905			
Non-Departmental	$31,195,926			
Total	**$180,198,458**		**Total**	**$180,198,458**

Table 4   The Suffolk Redevelopment and Housing Authority Funding Sources FY2014-2015

FY 2014-2015 FUNDING SOURCES	PLANNED $
Federal	
Public Housing Operating Fund	$1,743,176
Public Housing Capital Fund	$540,000
Annual Contributions for Section 8 Tenant-Based Assistance	$5,612,436
ROSS Coordinator Grant	$165,719
HCV FSS Coordinator Grant	$62,978
PH FSS Coordinator Grant	$12,499
PH FSS Coordinator Grant	$40,284
Prior Year Federal Grants (unobligated funds only)	
Choice Neighborhoods Planning Grant	451,131
2012 Capital Fund Grant	$57,000
2013 Capital Fund Grant	$283,765
Public Housing Rental Income	
Dwelling Rent	$1,057,640
Fees (Maint, late, etc.)	$83,401
Other Income	
Interest	$12
Commissions	$4,624
Miscellaneous Income	$96,309
Non-federal sources	
Development Funds City of Suffolk	$150,000
Total resources	**$9,960,974**

Manor and Parker Riddick are adjacent public housing developments covering 20 acres and 206 housing units in the southeast portion of the neighborhood. These two buildings are the only large multifamily properties in the area. The majority of the neighborhood consists of single-family homes.

White Marsh Plaza, a strip retail center with a high vacancy rate, is the main commercial development in the area. As of the 2010 Census, almost 14,000 people resided within the neighborhood.

In a comparison of detached homes between the East Suffolk Community and the larger Southern Suffolk Market Area, homes in the neighborhood were

The Choice Neighborhoods Initiative area. Picture from Real Property Research Group's Preliminary Market Assessment

older and lower cost. The median detached unit sold for $53,950 in East Suffolk and was over 25 years old. By way of comparison, similar units in the Southern Suffolk Market Area sold for $199,900.

The median household income was $34,310 as of 2012, 34 percent less than the Southern Suffolk Market Area. For households in the East Suffolk Community, 38.6 percent earn less than $25,000. Only 8.6 percent of households earn more than $100,000 in East Suffolk, while 19.3 percent earn more than $100,000 in the Southern Suffolk Market Area. According to the 2012 ACS 5 year estimates, poverty rates in the East Suffolk census tracts range from 14.8 percent to 40 percent.

The East Suffolk Community contains nearly 5,000 households, 46.7 percent of which are renters. A Rental Housing Survey was conducted by a private company, Real Property Research Group (RPRG) that provided vacancy rates for fourteen rental properties located in the Southern Suffolk Market Area. Four of these properties were located in the Choice Neighborhoods area and reported a vacancy rate of 3.3 percent. This is higher than the average market area vacancy rate of 2.5 percent, but both figures remain fairly low. Cypress Manor and Parker Riddick were not included in the housing survey, and both have only one unit vacant, for an average vacancy rate of 1 percent. The 2008-2012 ACS estimates provided the vacancy rates for all parcels located within the four census tracts comprising the East Suffolk Community. The overall vacancy rate for the neighborhood was 9.55 percent. A comparison of the East Suffolk Community and the Southern Suffolk Market Area can be seen in Table 6.

Several Suffolk Public Schools operate in the East Suffolk Community, including Booker T. Washington Elementary and JFK Middle School. None of the three public high schools in Suffolk are situated within the East Suffolk Community neighborhood boundary. According to the 2012 ACS 5 year estimates, 63.7 percent of the population over 25 within the East Suffolk Community had graduated from high school, or received an equivalency or higher. Only 11.34 percent of the population over 25 had obtained a bachelor's degree or higher.

The unemployment rate of the civilian labor force in the East Suffolk Community was 15.9 percent. Of those employed in East Suffolk, the most common occupations were in production, transportation, and material moving, employing roughly 28 percent of the workforce. The next most common occupations were service and sales/office occupations, each at over 20 percent of the workforce. Overwhelmingly, the most common form of transportation to work was driving alone at 78 percent. Carpooling was the next most common, while public transportation and walking both came in at less than 2 percent.

The city of Suffolk recently deployed crime mapping software so that residents can track crime reports in their community. Examining the months of January 2015 through April 2015, 306 crimes occurred in the approximate Choice Neighborhoods designated area. Of those crimes, 120 crimes roughly fall under the definition of the Uniform Crime Reporting (UCR) violent crimes, including the categories of assault[25], homicide, robbery, sex crimes, and weapons. Ninety crimes fall into the UCR property crimes definition, including arson, burglary, motor vehicle theft, larceny-theft, and vehicle break-in theft. The majority of the remaining crimes were either drug/alcohol violations (31 crimes) or vandalism (52 crimes).[26]

HUD Choice Neighborhoods Transformation Plan

Suffolk is the largest city in Virginia by land area and the second-largest by total area. The city is home to the Great Dismal Swamp, which is protected as a National Wildlife Refuge. As a result of its immense

Table 5 Select East Suffolk Community and Southern Suffolk Market Area Economic Indicators

Economic Indicator	East Suffolk Community	Southern Suffolk Market Area
Median Unit Sold Price	$53,950	$199,900
Median Household Income	$34,310	$52,132
Household Income <$25K	38.6 percent	24.5 percent
Household Income >$100K	8.6 percent	19.3 percent
Vacancy rates	3.3 percent	2.5 percent

physical area, the city has both intensely developed land (commercial and manufacturing), and a substantial amount of undeveloped rural land within the city boundaries. Residential housing is spread throughout the city in both urbanized and rural areas with numerous vacant lots to be found in otherwise developed neighborhoods.

Perhaps a reflection of the complex character of the city itself, the boundary of East Suffolk Community: White Marsh Neighborhood — the subject of the city's Choice Neighborhoods Transformation Plan — spans a width of five miles from one end to the other covering a very diverse set of land uses. Within a five-mile radius, the Suffolk Redevelopment and Housing Agency (SRHA) manages five public housing complexes for the city including:

- Hoffler Apartments (1983) – 80 units
- Cypress Manor Apartments (1969) – 113 units
- Parker Riddick Village (1969) – 93 units
- Colander Bishop Meadows (1985) – 80 units
- Chorey Park Apartments (1987) – 100 units

Some complexes are geared toward families while others serve the needs of disabled and elderly.

Two of five SRHA public housing complexes – Parker Riddick and Cypress Manor – are located within the boundaries of the neighborhood. Parker Riddick and Cypress Manor are the two oldest public housing complexes, and need to be replaced as the buildings are well beyond their functional life. The Parker-Riddick complex, in particular, is located directly adjacent to the Great Dismal Swamp. It is an isolated area and located near high-tension wires. HUD has urged the community not build back in the same location. Additionally, SRHA has funded the development and redevelopment of affordable housing throughout the neighborhood.

Johnnie Edwards, a commissioner on the Suffolk Planning Commission, explained that Suffolk has a rich history in planning, but it is also a complicated history. Suffolk became an incorporated town in 1808. In 1910, it incorporated as a city and separated from Nansemond County. In 1974, the county and city merged under Suffolk's name and charter. It was a contentious merger with the city and county at odds over how development should take place.

Little formal planning has been done in the county neighborhoods, but construction of Interstate 664 and plans for an Interstate 460 bypass have driven new development in North Suffolk. The new transportation routes have positioned the area for economic growth,

but city and former county leaders have little history of working together. With many new people moving into North Suffolk, a tension began to develop regarding how the city should grow.

In 1999, the city retained a consultant who developed a master plan with neighborhood initiatives, including one for the East Washington Street Neighborhood, which defined how rehabilitation of the neighborhood should proceed. SRHA began planning the revitalization of East Washington Street in 2008. Early in this effort, discussions with a developer expanded plans to involve an adjacent 80-acre parcel; the completion of a market study for residential, office and retail development; a preliminary master plan concept; and a zoning analysis. The vision for the East Washington Street neighborhood includes redevelopment to produce a mixed-use (retail, residential, and recreational), mixed-income community, with one-for-one replacement of the public housing units and a new senior community center. With the addition of new parcels, the East Washington Street Neighborhood expanded into the new East Suffolk Community and White Marsh Neighborhood.

To capitalize on these previous planning efforts, SRHA employed the planning firm, The Communities Group, to help the community achieve six primary goals:

1. Establish all partnerships necessary to carry out the redevelopment.
2. Develop a financing plan and phasing model for the development so that the replacement public housing units are integrated throughout the redeveloped area.
3. Address the "edges" of the target area to ensure that the broader community benefits from the initiative.
4. Devise strategies for making community and support services available to all representatives throughout the target area.
5. Study storm water problems exacerbated by the Great Dismal Swamp, including road network issues and connectivity to downtown.
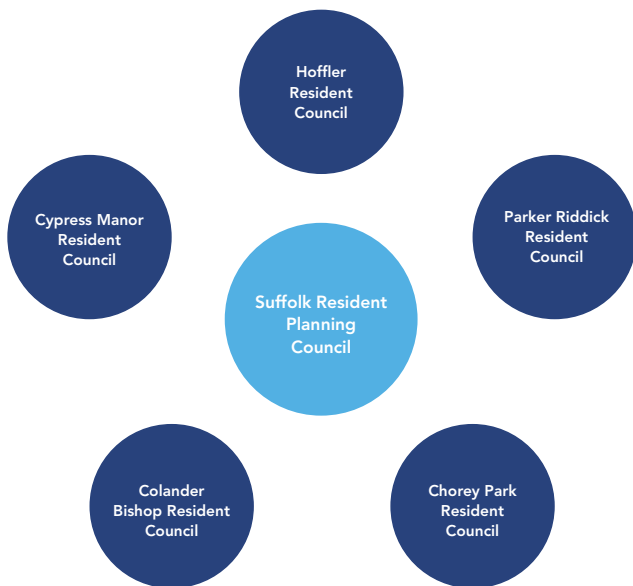6. Develop an organizational framework for implementation.

The supplemental support from the consulting team enabled SRHA to better coordinate the multitude of projects undertaken as part of the transformation plan.

Organizational Structure
SRHA has assumed an overarching leadership role in the development of the Choice Neighborhoods Transformation Plan with the city of Suffolk providing

support on key plan elements. Additionally, SRHA has entered into cooperative agreements with the Suffolk Police Department, Suffolk Public Schools, and Suffolk Parks and Recreation. The authority also has a close working relationship with the city's planning department.

Citizen engagement from the city's five public housing complexes was identified early on as a priority in developing the transformation plan. Each of the complexes has a resident council that meets to discuss issues and concerns within the community. For work on the transformation plan, SRHA drew from these councils to form the Suffolk Resident Planning Council, and leadership training was provided to members of the council.

Hoffler Resident Council

Cypress Manor Resident Council

Parker Riddick Resident Council

Suffolk Resident Planning Council

Colander Bishop Resident Council

Chorey Park Resident Council

Initially there were a number of different agendas which made it difficult to formulate the team. The goal of creating a real community, not just providing better public housing, helped leaders coalesce and begin talking about what elements needed to be included in a transformation plan. With the East Suffolk: White Marsh Neighborhood largely located in former county territory, there was little history of neighborhood planning since 1999. An all-out effort was required to get residents of the five complexes involved in the planning process. The SRHA resident service coordinator and manager organized leaders to send out notices and knock on doors. Community leaders were nominated by their peers, elections were held, and people voted for who they wanted to serve on the Resident Planning Committee. The swearing-

in ceremony when Board members took an oath of office helped stimulated the participation in ongoing, monthly meetings.

Additional support in development and coordination of the transformation plan comes from external consultants including The Communities Group, Real Property Research Group for market analysis, Urban College as an urban planner, and Thomas Point Associates for economic analysis and planning.

Local Government Support

Jaime Bordenave, president of The Communities Group and a national consultant working on the transformation plan, observed that the city provides $150,000 in funding to SRHA. This contribution is more than most local governments provide. Such long-term financial commitment is critical to successful implementation of SRHA programs.

With the significant influx of new residents to the Suffolk area, the need to create more affordable housing serves as a strong link between the city and SRHA. The SRHA enjoys a good relationship with the city, and in turn, the city has benefited from its relationship with SRHA. When the city began work on the fairgrounds project, which is adjacent to the East Suffolk Community: White Marsh Neighborhood, SRHA was invited to be a project.

Sustainability

Sustainability is a concern for the community leaders involved. "The state of the economy is like a cloud that hangs over the project. But we find new opportunities to keep people pushing and put energy behind this plan. There's a sense of urgency," said Clarissa E. McAdoo, executive director, SRHA. She goes on to explain that getting more people involved has resulted in new leaders stepping up. "It's going to happen," she said.

Cindy Creede, director of Transit and Wellness with Senior Services of Southeastern Virginia, notes that her organization's vision is that South Hampton Roads [located within the East Suffolk Community: White Marsh Neighborhood] will have a livable community for all ages, which fits cleanly with the goals of the transformation plan. She also believes that other partner organizations are vested in and own their related projects. "This is a broad range effort. You're going to have people of different means and all ages helping sustain the businesses. With a wide mix of lifestyles and age ranges, it balances out the neighborhood in a much more thoughtful way," said Creede. She also believes the community leadership would not just abandon the work that has been done to date.

"My concern is the community." Lue Ward, Council Member-Nansemond Borough, City of Suffolk, Virginia

Citizen Engagement

When North Suffolk first started its phenomenal growth in the late 90's, the city needed to construct new infrastructure and provide other public services to the area. As a result, other areas of the city became neglected and a perception of inequity within the community grew. In the U.S., a pattern of economic development – preferring to develop raw land over redeveloping existing infrastructure – has been a standard development practice in the U.S. for decades. Revitalization of historic downtowns and neighbor-hoods has only become a trend in the last 20 years.

"Suffolk is one of the fastest growing cities in the area, and with the new transportation routes, we know that there is going to be a boom of growth. What Ms. McAdoo has started doing is talking about a revitalization of the whole neighborhood. We started to get excited, because they were creating a vision for the lower part of the city [the East Suffolk Com-munity: White Marsh Neighborhood] that reflects the growth already being seen in North Suffolk. This is an area of the city that needs some light," said Johnnie Edwards, Suffolk Planning Commission.

The redistricting process in Suffolk, following the 2010 census, moved district boundaries significantly, including reducing the physical size of Nansemond Borough which was largely former county territory. Representatives of the East Suffolk Community: White Marsh Neighborhood were not actively engaged in the redistricting process. As a result, several new council representatives were elected, and a new power struc-ture is forming within the community.

Before embarking on a poverty de-concentration effort, however, it was necessary to give the commu-nity a voice. A lack of information and communica-tion caused concern in the neighborhood. How would relocated public housing affect the neighborhood? Beyond the public housing complexes, housing condi-tions in the larger neighborhood are poor. The SRHA saw a need to take a more active role in organizing the community and reached out to the community's Civic

Leagues to help get neighborhood residents involved in developing the transformation plan.

The Board of Directors for the transformation plan took a creative approach to engaging citizens in the planning process. Leaders knocked on doors to talk to residents, gave away door prizes at meetings, and sponsored social events such as a Christmas party for children and families. An all-out communica-tions effort helped produce good participation from neighborhood representatives. SRHA took advantage of multiple communication methods to get word out about transformation plan activities including:

- Flyers
- Door-to-door personal visits
- Posters at hospitals and the medical center
- Flyers posted and announcements made at church
- Word of mouth
- Public TV channels
- Tweeting
- Facebook website
- E-newspaper.

While the social activities helped bring people to the meetings, lots of work was accomplished as well. Development of the transformation plan was designed to be open and inviting. Residents developed ques-tions and prepared surveys, encouraged other resi-dents to get involved, and shared data to determine what things they wanted to see in the community. Nearly 70 percent of the residents in the public hous-ing complexes responded to the survey to define what amenities they wanted in their neighborhood. In addi-tion to all these means for getting the word out, SRHA sponsored design charrettes to help neighborhood resi-dents visualize what the community could look like. Both long-term and short-term projects were defined by the group. Perhaps most importantly, residents' opinions were valued at every step.

Transition planning is the next critical step. SRHA is working with a local developer, the Davis Boulevard Group, on developing plans for an 80-acre tract the company owns next to the Parker Riddick and Cypress Manor public housing complexes. SRHA is also exploring the potential of HUD's RAD Program, a new program that lets housing authorities convert from public housing projects to long-term Section 8 rental assistance contracts.

Measures of Success

Leaders working on the transformation plan see steady progress as a requirement simply because stalling

tends to make people nervous. Their goal is to have something, even subtle changes, happening all along the way. Smaller efforts, such as the establishment of a lending library in the neighborhood, are viewed favorably.

Data collection and analysis has been part of the transformation plan since day one. SRHA tracks demographic data for all of its public housing complexes. Among the data being tracked are:

- Census data
- Residents
- Neighborhoods
- Economic growth
- Families moving into the neighborhood
- Racial diversity
- Age diversity

Why Performance Measurements and Neighborhood Indicators?

Literature on performance measurements and neighborhood indicators abounds with numerous methodologies for tracking results offered. The purpose of adopting performance measurements and neighborhood indicators is to determine how much progress is being made toward achieving community goals. While the task at first blush seems fairly straightforward, capturing the right data can be challenging.

For example, let's say a community decides it wants to curb juvenile crime by building a new recreation center. Has that goal been met when the center is built? Has it been met when X number of recreational programs are being offered at the center? Has it been met when X number of children are participating in the center's programs? And assuming juvenile crime does go down, has the recreation center made the difference or are there other reasons at play?

Specifying which performance measurements and neighborhood indicators will be tracked over time provides a starting point for community leaders to determine which strategies are proving effective at meeting long-term goals and which are not. This information, in turn, allows them to adapt and refine strategies that work best in the neighborhood.

- Special population groups such as military, ex-military and disabled folks.

"Ultimately we'll realize success when public housing fades away and the area looks like any other neighborhood. It [the East Suffolk Community: White Marsh Neighborhood] should just be part of the fabric of the community with people who are thriving and flourishing," said McAdoo. In the long-term, she wants to see a continuum of housing needs being addressed by the community. Construction – the bricks and mortar projects – take time to realize. In the mid-term, she hopes to see more jobs and transportation options available in the neighborhood. She points out that much of the low-hanging fruit—projects that can be easily taken on in the short-term—have already been undertaken.

Biggest Accomplishments of the Transformation Plan

- Much more methodical review of programs offered by SRHA.
- Provision of another tool for engaging public housing residents in a meaningful discussion of their needs and wants for the community.
- Greater understanding of the lifespan of buildings and the need to think strategically how to expand the useful life of public housing.

Beyond the Transformation Plan

After the East Suffolk Community and White Marsh Neighborhood Transformation Plan was accepted by HUD in June 2014, SRHA worked with a group of residents from their public housing complexes to keep communication efforts going. Group members were charged with staying abreast of how implementation was proceeding and relaying that information to residents in their respective complexes. The intention was to keep everyone upfront and personal, so they could not say that were not involved or had not heard anything about plans. The same approach was used in keeping representatives of the larger East Suffolk Community informed and up-to-date.

The SRHA is studying life span of buildings in order to provide residents with decent sanitary housing. In particular, community leaders are studying

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EVALUATING THE ROLE OF LOCAL GOVERNMENT AND PROJECT STAKEHOLDER ENGAGEMENT IN CHOICE NEIGHBORHOODS TRANSFORMATION PLANNING AND IMPLEMENTATION

how the military plans for and manages its housing. SRHA believes that more effort is needed at the beginning of a building's life cycle. Attention early on to building maintenance will help prevent the compounding of problems until housing deteriorates. Community leadership has explored what kind of budget is required for modernization of existing buildings and how the longevity of a building can be lengthened. SRHA intends to assess the building conditions of their properties to determine where they are at in their lifecycle. Knowing that modernization will not be the answer for all facilities, replacement costs are also being factored in and a capital building fund to take on larger efforts is planned. Other options such as greater use of HUD's Rental Assistance Demonstration (RAD) program will be another strategy considered. The intention is to deal with potential problems early on before housing conditions become unsafe for residents.

While in the summer of 2015 SRHA had not yet applied for a Choice Neighborhoods Implementation Grant, it does intend to apply. In the interim, the authority has worked to build an environment supportive of a healthy community. Programs to support the residents of the SRHA complexes have been in place for a long time. For example, SRHA received a $110,000 grant from the Obici Health Care Foundation, located in Suffolk, to fund a number of health initiatives in the neighborhood. Among the projects funded is a program for peer advocates to establish an end-to-end methodology to provide assistance and coverage from residents from conception to completion. The intention is to involve residents on a consistent basis.

The Transformation Plan effort involved 85 partner organizations that have collaborated together to provide services to public housing residents and the greater East Suffolk Community. The FSS Program Task Force agreed to take on that additional task as part of its work.

One set-back in Suffolk's implementation efforts has been the loss of a partner developer that had agreed to work with SRHA on the development of an 80-acrea parcel near the SRHA's Parker-Riddick Village and Cypress Court public housing complexes. The intention had been to relocate public housing residents to a nearby development as new units were completed, thus causing less disruption. However, financial difficulties resulted in the developer auctioning off the property in February 2015. The new owner of the property has priced the parcel beyond the assessed value of the land, putting it out of the reach of SRHA.

SRHA is looking for a new developer to partner with, and hopes to secure tax credit financing to build elsewhere in the neighborhood.

Suffolk intends to submit a proposal for $30 million for a HUD Choice Neighborhoods Implementation Grant, which would take a significant step forward in the anticipated $70 million project required for redeveloping the neighborhood. At present, conditional approvals are in place from the City Council and the Planning Board through 2016. SRHA does have a relocation plan in place for new construction that minimizes displacement of residents. SRHA is working with residents that have been identified as good candidates for home-buying, and has proved home-buying classes required to be certified for loans from local banks in the area.

After completing their two-year planning effort, Suffolk is hopeful it will be able fully implement the transformation plan. The authority has branched out working with other organizations in the community to provide new services that they would not otherwise have and a good foothold has been established for strengthening the neighborhood. They continue to move forward with smaller projects that demonstrate progress. For example, a new task force is developing strategies for enhancing economic opportunities for the greater neighborhood. This sub-committee is comprised of many from the greater Suffolk business community including retail and other Main Street businesses. The recognition is that unless residents can earn the $21/hour wage required to pay for a two-bedroom apartment in Suffolk, the community will not have the affordable housing stock needed to house its residents.

Study Participants

Jaime Bordenave, President, The Communities Group

Sybil Bullock, Housing Operations Director, Suffolk Redevelopment and Housing Authority

Cindy Credde, Director of Transit & Wellness, Senior Services of Southeastern Virginia

Johnnie Edwards, Commissioner, Suffolk Planning Commission

Clarissa E. McAdoo, Executive Director, Suffolk Redevelopment and Housing Authority

Debbie Schwartz, Director of Development & Community Relations, Senior Services of Southeastern Virginia

Lysandra Shaw, Director of Development, Suffolk Redevelopment and Housing Authority

Lue Ward, Council Member-Nansemond Borough, City of Suffolk, Virginia (Interview 17)

Norfolk, Virginia
Population 245,428 (2014 US Census estimate)

Community Profile
City Government
The city of Norfolk, Virginia, is located along the Chesapeake Bay. Currently home to 245,782 residents, the city's population remained fairly static from 2000 to 2010 after a 10 percent decrease in the previous ten years. The city hosts the world's largest naval base, Old Dominion University, the North American Headquarters for NATO, and was recognized by USA Today as one of the Top 10 booming downtowns. The largest employment sectors are government, services and trade comprising almost 78 percent of the workforce.

Incorporated in 1845, the city adopted the council-manager form of government in 1918 and operates as an independent city. The FY2015 adopted budget allocates $817.8 million expenditures for the General Fund and provides for 3,860 employees (4,152 personnel if the Norfolk Community Services Board is included).

Norfolk Redevelopment and Housing Authority (NRHA)
The Norfolk Housing Authority was established in 1940 in order for Norfolk to take advantage of federally funded low-cost housing projects. The name was changed in 1946 to the Norfolk Redevelopment and Housing Authority (NRHA). Since that time, the authority has built up to provide better quality housing to over 7,000 households including almost 18,000 individuals according to a 2012 report.[1] NRHA manages 3,229 assisted rental units and 2,800 Housing Choice Vouchers with a staff of 350. The authority is headed by a Board of Commissioners appointed by City Council. The seven commissioners serve four year terms and are responsible for setting priorities, electing the chairman and vice chairman, and selecting an executive director. The total Housing Authority budget for FY2014 is $84.5 million with funding from various sources detailed in Table 7.

St. Paul Neighborhood and Tidewater Gardens
The St. Paul Neighborhood is a distressed low-income community which includes the public housing complex, Tidewater Gardens, as well as several areas of

Table 6 City of Norfolk Approved General Fund Expenditures FY2015

Department	FY 2015 Approved Expenditures
Legislative	$4,551,518
Executive	$4,093269
Department of Law	$4,035,246
Constitutional Officers	$54,308,241
Judicial	$1,203,696
Office of Elections	$661,520
General Management	$43,136,891
Community Development	$9,770,124
Non-Departmental Appropriations	$59,595,589
Cultural Activities, Parks & Recreation	$40,822,657
Public Health & Assistance	$49,776,592
Public Safety	$105,107,822
Public Works	$24,103,966
Debt Service	$73,084,865
Public School Education	$317,618,431
Norfolk Community Services Board	$25,960,711
Total General Fund	**$817,831,138**

Section 8 housing. The neighborhood sits on approximately 115 acres east of downtown Norfolk. The area contains the William A. Hunton YMCA and Tidewater Park Elementary School, which serve as community centers and provide access to community services. The Tidewater Gardens housing development was first occupied in 1955 and contains 618 units available for housing. Two census tracts encompass the majority of the St. Paul Neighborhood and using these designations and the 2012 ACS 5-Year Estimates, basic statistics about the area can be determined.

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[1] http://issuu.com/nrha.us/docs/2012-annual-report-final-final-final-web?e = 1708992/2578796

Table 7 Norfolk Redevelopment and Housing Authority Funding Sources FY2014

Funding Source	Amount	Percentage
HUD Grants	$53,943,144	64 percent
Tenant Income	$17,709,725	21 percent
City Grants	$9,795,312	12 percent
Appropriations from Program Reserves	$2,171,472	2 percent
Other Income	$931,726	1 percent
Total	**$84,551,379**	**100 percent**

St. Paul's neighborhood and Tidewater Gardens. Picture from the St. Paul's Area Plan prepared by Goody Clancy Architecture Planning Preservation.

The two census tracts contain 1,068 housing units. Of these 15 are owner-occupied and only 8 are vacant for a vacancy rate of 0.7 percent. The remaining housing units are renter-occupied with an average rent of $207 per month. For an estimated 27.5 percent of renters, monthly rent is less than 15 percent of their household income. However, the second largest percentage of residents at 26.4 percent reported that their rent required more than 35 percent of their household income.

The total population of the neighborhood is 3,340. The median household income in the St. Paul Neighborhood ranged from $9,694 to $13,313. This is in stark contrast with the Norfolk median household income of $44,164. In the Tidewater Gardens housing development, all residents have household incomes at or below 40 percent of the Area Median Income.[2] The two tracts reported individual poverty percentages of 67.8 percent and 74.6 percent. The neighborhood struggles with significant poverty, which is also reflected in the educational attainment of residents. Only 53.3 percent of the population over 25 has earned a high school diploma or equivalency. Bachelors or graduate degrees are rare, with only 2.7 percent of residents holding a degree from a four-year college or more.

Unemployment in the neighborhood is much higher than the general Norfolk population. While the city of Norfolk reported an 11.6 percent unemployment rate within the civilian labor force, the St. Paul Neighborhood had a 25 percent employment rate. The most common occupations of those employed were within the service industry, which contains 47 percent of the work force. The next two most common occupations were sales/office and production/transportation/material moving occupations. Tidewater Gardens conducted a resident survey in October 2006 reporting that of the 502 heads of households responding, 269 were unemployed (53.5 percent).

Roughly half of St. Paul residents either drove to work alone or carpooled. However, another 25 percent relied on public transportation. The Tidewater Gardens resident survey indicated that 43.8 percent of Tidewater residents used public transportation as their main form of transportation. Public transportation is a necessity for much of Tidewater Gardens as two thirds of households did not own or have access to a car. More than a dozen bus routes and the NET Downtown/Ghent Circulator operate near the St. Paul's Neighborhood. The Tide, a 7.4 mile light rail line, stops at three stations within 1/2 mile of the neighborhood. Residents have a number of public transportation options available to them, even though only one bus route directly passes through the neighborhood.

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[2] St. Paul's Area Plan http://www.norfolk.gov/documentcenter/view/1687

Table 8 Comparison of St. Paul Neighborhood and Norfolk Economic Indicators

Funding Source	Amount	Percentage
Median Household Income	$9,694 - $13,313*	$44,164
Individual Poverty Rate	67.8 percent - 74.6 percent*	18.2 percent
Unemployment Rate	25 percent	11.6 percent
High School Diploma or Equivalent	53.3 percent	85.3 percent
Bachelor's Degree or Higher	2.7 percent	25.4 percent
Vacancy Rate	0.7 percent	10.4 percent

*Numbers represent the two census tracts located around Tidewater Gardens

In the Tidewater Gardens resident survey, 79 percent of households indicated that they believe that crime was a problem in the neighborhood. The Norfolk Police Department uses crime mapping software that allows residents to determine where crimes have been committed in their neighborhood. For the months of March 2015 and April 2015, fifteen UCR violent crimes were committed in the census tracts surrounding Tidewater Gardens (6 robberies, 6 aggravated assaults, 2 homicides, and 1 rape). During the same time period, thirty-eight property crimes occurred around Tidewater Gardens including eight burglaries, twenty-five larcenies, and five stolen vehicles. Tidewater Gardens accounted for 8.4 percent of Norfolk's violent crimes and only 2.7 percent of Norfolk property crimes in these months. Although the percentage of violent crimes is slightly higher than expected, the property crimes is close to in line with the overall Norfolk crime rate.[3]

HUD Choice Neighborhoods Transformation Plan

The city of Norfolk, Virginia, focused on the St. Paul's Neighborhood and the Tidewater Gardens housing development for the Choice Neighborhoods program. The city encompasses a little over 96 square miles, 98 percent of which is developed property. There is not a lot of "new" land available for development. However, Norfolk's Central Business District experienced strong economic growth and revitalization in the 1990s and serves as an engine for economic growth for the city.

This vibrant downtown is directly adjacent to the St. Paul's Neighborhood. The neighborhood has extensive poverty and aging infrastructure including a storm water system that experiences routine flooding when it rains. Tidewater Gardens consists of 618 outdated public housing units and suffers from flooding, mold problems and damaged walkways. In 2010, the NRHA opted to partner with the city of Norfolk to develop a transformation plan targeting the neighborhood for revitalization.

The downtown covers 92 acres, while the St. Paul's quadrant which was the focus of Choice Neighborhoods planning effort covers 99 acres. The revitalization of the neighborhood could effectively double the size of Norfolk's downtown. The city has already acquired several commercial properties along the St. Paul's corridor. The neighborhood has the potential for a successful turnaround, with assets that include supportive community and service organizations, strong local churches, a community health center, and a light rail system. Local stakeholders participating in the planning process include the United Way of South Hampton Roads, local churches, tenant management councils, Head Start, Habitat for Humanity, and Norfolk State University. An earlier planning process for the area began in 2006, and the Choice Neighborhoods Transformation Plan will help achieve several goals from the earlier planning effort including establishing necessary partners, developing a financing plan and phasing model to replace public housing units, studying infrastructure issues and connectivity to downtown, and developing an organizational framework for implementation of the plan.

Organizational Structure

A solid partnership between the NRHA and the city of Norfolk is at the heart of the organizational structure created to lead the transformation plan. The NRHA

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[3] http://norfolk.va.crimeviewcommunity.com/default.aspx

and the city have not always enjoyed a strong collaborative relationship. While the City Council provides funding for the NRHA and appoints the authority's governing board, the NRHA has its own charter and operates independently of the local government. Ultimately, leadership changes at both the city and the NRHA resulted in a better working environment for the major effort required by the transformation plan. Understanding and respecting the separate missions and roles of the NRHA and the city has been critical to moving the transformation plan forward. "The focus needs to be on coordination and communication," Shep Miller, chairman of the NRHA Board of Directors said. "With the change in leadership and attitudes over time, we have a much better working relationship. We've gone from a C- to an A-."

 "We're all trying to do what's best for the city," said Shep Miller, chairman of the NRHA Board of Directors.

In order to foster greater involvement from the people most directly impacted by the transformation plan, NRHA worked with the Tidewater Garden Resident Advisory Board and Tenant Management Council to form a leadership group. This group, which is comprised of 12 public housing residents, reached out to the residents of Tidewater Garden to solicit their involvement in decision making and keep them informed as different elements of the transformation plan came together. Among the outreach efforts used to engage residents were Tenant Management Council meetings, resident forums, public charrettes, newsletters, and direct correspondence. A St. Paul's Task Force met monthly and involved residents, area churches, service providers and other stakeholders.

Local Government Support

Neighborhood development has been an ongoing concern for the city of Norfolk, and the city has a number of resources and programs it employs for engaging the community. Not all of the city's resources have directly contributed to the Transformation Plan, but the programs do promote community development and improved quality of life for the community as a whole. This was not always the case according to Frank Duke, director of planning and community development.

"What was owned by the city was not always owned by the community," explains Duke. "Old perceptions do die over time as new history emerges. More and more success stories have emerged as the result of delivering on promises thoroughly and quickly."

Among the resources the city has available to help communicate and coordinate efforts for the St. Paul Neighborhood Transformation Plan are:

- The city works with neighborhood groups through its Neighbors Building Neighborhoods Program. The program was developed as a result of the recognition that the city cannot do it all. "We need our citizens and the community involved," Darrell Hill, assistant city manager said. "The city can't be all things to all people, but each community can lift itself up." The program came about as a result of a year-long planning process of the city working with the community to determine where citizens wanted the city to spend its time and resources. The idea behind the program is to work with citizens to create an environment where all members can work together to identify and mobilize the positive attributes of their neighborhood, look out for each other as good neighbors, invest through improvements to their homes and neighborhood blocks, and position their neighborhoods as excellent places to live.

- The city employs five neighborhood service specialists, each of which is assigned to one of five areas in the city. The specialists work to facilitate increased communication between the city and community groups, connect those groups with the appropriate persons within the city, and consult on neighborhood improvement projects and problem solving strategies. Each of the representatives has the responsibility to know what is going on in their community.

Another city resource, which was not initially involved in the transformation plan, but could potentially provide valuable information, is the Norfolk Cares IMPACT Call Center. Citizens can contact the center to ask for information on city programs, services or facilities, or to request a specific service such as repairing a pothole or reporting graffiti. Halima Arias, director of the Norfolk Cares IMPACT Call Center, points out that there is much that the city can learn about needed services in the St. Paul's Neighborhood by reviewing the requests for services that come in from area residents. "We know when graffiti and vandalism complaints are on the increase, and can provide that data to the appropriate city department for better service delivery," she said.

Sustainability

There are concerns about the long-term sustainability of the transformation plan. Most of the concerns center on financing. Norfolk is an old city with an outdated storm water system that needs to be replaced. Without new infrastructure, the neighborhood will continue to be susceptible to flooding. Redevelopment of the neighborhood requires that the flooding problem be addressed, but estimates to fix the infrastructure problems range from $200 million to $300 million, well beyond the city's capacity to fund on its own. The timeframe for fixing this problem will also be quite long. Unless city leaders can determine how to finance the needed infrastructure improvement, implementation of transformation plan may not come to fruition.

Another challenge of establishing a sustainable collaborative effort is the ongoing coordination and management of activities. Sarah Bishop, director of education initiatives at the United Way of South Hampton Roads, pointed out that often members of a planning team are not chief executives and lack the decision-making authority needed to move forward on projects. Bishop described the need to build in "layered leadership" for collaborative efforts like the development of the transformation plan. Buy-in and involvement of senior leadership has tremendous value because it can break down and remove organizational silos. With organizational silos, people can see only their part and do not blend the power of their respective programs to accomplish more. If leaders can remove such barriers and encourage people to create new links between organizations, then mid-level managers should feel free to work together as they pursue shared organizational goals. "When the goals of the organizations are intertwined, systematic change can occur that will lift people up," Bishop said.

Another concern expressed is related to the need for a process of shared responsibility and accountability. For any organization to function well over time, processes and procedures must be agreed upon all parties. In hierarchical organizations, there is a stair-step system of reporting from the bottom levels of the organization to the top with the chief executive held responsible for the overall performance of the organization. When no one person is in charge of an effort and multiple organizations are participating, an alternate process needs to be adopted to enable members of the group to report to and be accountable to each other. To remain sustainable, a large-scale community effort such as the transformation plan must define how stakeholders will work together.

In Norfolk, the concept of "collective impact" has guided the effort to develop a transformation plan for the neighborhood to the real benefit of the residents. For example, coordinating education programs to achieve higher graduation rates for neighborhood residents might involve daycare operations, after school programs, summer parks and recreation activities, mentoring programs, and other stakeholder groups.

Citizen Engagement

Earl Fraley, a member of the Norfolk Planning Commission, as well as a church leader with Saint Paul's Episcopal Church, noted that one of the most important lessons the community has learned is the value of involving people early on. "People will become invested, especially those affected by the plan," he said. "As a society, we don't listen enough to those

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Collective Impact and the Idea of Better Together

Achieving large-scale social change requires community leaders to recognize that fixing just one problem in a neighborhood will not alone create a healthy neighborhood. "Collective impact" suggests that all challenges must be addressed at the same time and recognizes that no single organization, however innovative or powerful, can accomplish such a mission alone. Instead, a unifying mission must be adopted by all stakeholder organizations in order to coordinate improvements in a comprehensive and integrated manner. If all organizations operate independently from each other, they will not have the same impact as if they work together for a common cause.

A key element in the success of adopting a collective impact approach is to determine where capacity exists and then maximize the impact of that capacity through collaboration. In the case of the St. Paul's Neighborhood, there are high needs, but there is also high capacity for addressing those needs with many stakeholders being engaged in the planning and implementation process. In considering the long-term sustainability of transformation plan, Bishop points out that "Residents are ready for something to happen. We can't hold things back at this point. They want it. They know it's going to happen."

[people] with limited resources. We need to under-stand their needs better. For me, physical planning won't make a difference without social planning. That's what makes a difference in people's lives."

Leaders involved in bringing the transformation plan to life worked hard to secure widespread buy-in from residents throughout the neighborhood, but most especially with those directly impacted by the trans-formation plan—the residents of Tidewater Gardens. The team wanted to treat residents fairly and to assure residents that there were no hidden agendas.

Shurl Montgomery, executive director of NRHA, noted that the authority had taken a balanced approach in its efforts to secure greater citizen engage-ment. In particular, NRHA sought to have equal rep-resentation from across the St. Paul's Neighborhood involved in discussions about the transformation plan. "We wanted lots of residential buy-in, but we also wanted to avoid going overboard. We wanted mean-ingful involvement for our citizens, so we worked to avoid overkill—too many meetings and not enough action. We don't want to get into a holding pattern where people aren't seeing progress and begin to drop out," said Montgomery. "As a result, I think we've seen very active and continued participation."

"People don't always know how to take advantage of the tools of power. They come to the dance, but don't know how big the dance floor is. It's a bit of a culture shock. We need to continually educate people with limited resources." Frank Duke, director of planning and community development.

A number of different strategies were employed to engage neighborhood representatives. A personal letter was sent to every resident asking for his/her participation. Door-to-door surveys were distributed to residents to obtain their input on plans. The team also worked closely with intermediaries such as the Tenant-Management Council (TMC) to communicate

with and involve residents in planning for their future as well as the neighborhoods. Church representatives and pastors were at every meeting. Church members came from throughout the region, not just the immedi-ate St. Paul's Neighborhood.

"To me, this is new — getting churches, city planners, businesses involved." Michelle Cook, Tidewater Resident

Michelle Cook, a resident of Tidewater Gardens, noted the importance of offering people an opportu-nity to become involved. "Key players need to come together at a bigger table. They need to listen in order to help their citizens more. You need to make people feel good and proud about their contributions. This experience [developing the transformation plan] has given me more insight into the process."

Darrell Hill, assistant city manager, pointed out the need to build more community leaders and support people who want to be leaders. "When we have com-munity conversations such as this, we don't want staff outnumbering citizens. To some extent then, those who participate become de facto leaders," he said. "We want them to become advocates in the neighbor-hood." He went on to praise the core planning team for seeking strong buy-in from NRHA Board mem-bers as well as the City Council. "Good community relationships begin at the leadership level," said Hill. Montgomery, executive director of NRHA, confirmed this thought, "We did a lot of front-end work ahead of time," he said. "We wanted all stakeholders to be comfortable with this process."

Frank Duke observed that "Neighbors working together can solve a lot of problems themselves." He went on to highlight new approaches that the city has employed to encourage greater citizen interaction, for example, paying for a consultant who was hired by the neighborhood. The city also developed a small grant program for beautification projects around the community that bring neighbors together to work on a common cause. "We need to recreate a sense of com-munity for all our citizens," said Duke.

Sharon Phillips, principal of Tidewater Elementary School, noted the importance of having a heart in working with neighborhood representatives. "We hired

a family engagement specialist because we need to establish a mindset [among neighborhood residents] that education has to be a priority for both children and parents. Children need a strong school that's invested in the population. We offer parent workshops where they can learn nearly anything from reinforcing positive behaviors to cooking healthy meals to doing basic math," she said.

Measures of Success

Questions about the need for performance measures for the transformation plan drew several thoughtful responses from stakeholders. "We are already seeing some outcomes as we roll out new programs, but we need to measure the difference in attitudes. All programs have some measurement element to them," said Donnell Brown. "I'd like to see us someday follow the Harlem School Zone model to measure student success in going on to college and careers. But we have to take baby steps first. We are working with the elementary school and hope to tie in with the junior and senior high schools over time. We can then begin to compare results of past students with the results of current students," explained Brown.

"This is the hard part with lots of different pieces to consider," said Shep Miller. "How does it [success] feel and what does it look like? If there's economic change, how does it affect the neighborhood, and what's around it? And for the people who live there, are you improving their success?" He went on to explain that for the people who live in the neighborhood, the community needs to consider the crime rate, educational attainment, and social family structure – all factors difficult to measure in a strictly cause and effect manner. Program dollars for the Choice Neighborhoods Implementation Grants are allocated primarily for housing though there is some latitude for social services. No more than 15 percent of the total award may be dedicated for supportive services. Likewise, no more that 15 percent may be spent on critical community improvements. Given these restrictions on the use of grant funds, there is limited funding left for the development of strong measures for tracking performance.

Sarah Bishop of the United Way shared that the leadership for the transformation plan has made a commitment to data-driven decisions and to looking at needs for the neighborhood together with citizens. "Can't we do better?" she said. "We want to own the outcome together." The group's intent is to look at data for the neighborhood as a whole. In order to do so, a shared data committee was formed to lead the

measurement effort. Their intent is to examine and track the following types of neighborhood data:
- General demographics
- Educational attainment
- Social family structure
- Crime rates
- Health statistics
- Public housing residents and children
- Property values
- Extent of flooding.

Bishop also notes the difficulty in determining what the community needs to measure. "There are things that we're going to need to measure that we don't even know how," she said. As an example, she points out that new playground equipment will lead to better development and coordination in young children, but how do they measure those improvements?

Biggest Accomplishments of the Transformation Plan

- Recognition that Norfolk cannot address its flooding issues alone.
- Greater awareness of the problems facing the St. Paul's Neighborhood
- Buy-in for the vision of a mixed income, mixed use development adjacent to Downtown Norfolk.

Beyond the Transformation Plan

Prior to the development of the St. Paul Neighborhood Transformation Plan, Norfolk had undergone a substantial planning effort to develop the St. Paul Quadrant Plan as part of the city's planning efforts. This plan was the first to propose the vision of a mixed-income, mixed use urban development adjacent to downtown Norfolk. The Choice Neighborhood Transformation Plan piggy-backed onto this early planning effort and expanded the vision to include providing social and economic services for residents in the St. Paul Neighborhood. After the transformation plan was completed, a type of planning fatigue set in which was compounded by the decision of the City Council not to officially adopt the transformation plan.

At the center of the continuing dialogue on implementing the transformation plan is how to offer more housing choices to the residents of the Tidewater

Garden public housing complex. Rebuilding on the current site without addressing flooding issues would only result in continuing problems. Infrastructure, particularly the storm water system in St. Paul Neighborhood, is inadequate. The estimated costs to address the flooding issues will require $200-$300 million. The city has recognized that it cannot address the scope of such problems on its own and rebuilding on the site without major infrastructure improvements would not in the best interest of current and future residents.

With no other available building sites in downtown Norfolk, the community leadership opted to adopt an attrition-based strategy for moving residents out of the Tidewater Garden complex. This policy decision means that NRHA will be demolishing current housing stock, redesigning and installing new infrastructure, and redeveloping the site in several phases. The NRHA anticipates consolidating six public housing complexes into three complexes over the course of ten years, resulting in a loss of 1,200 housing units. The hope is to turn over 45 percent of current housing units in five years, and two-thirds in ten years.

In order to provide sufficient affordable housing for the city, the transformation plan vision calls for a high density mixed income, mixed use development with 2,100 apartments in a much larger area involving no mass involuntary displacements. As a result, NRHA has expanded the boundaries of the St. Paul's Neighborhood and hopes to relocate Tidewater Garden residents to two other NRDA properties, Young Terrace and Diggs Town, which do not have the same infrastructure problems as Tidewater.

Since the transformation plan was completed and approved by HUD in April 2014, the city has also worked with the Rockefeller Foundation's 100 Resilient Cities and the Dutch Initiative Sustainable Cities (DISC) on appropriate strategies. A planner for the city presented the scenario as moving away from Norfolk 1.0, where the city was focused on meeting the developer's expectations. Under the new scenario, Norfolk 2.0, the city must engage the private sector to provide a greater share of the infrastructure needed for the development.

The difference between a Norfolk 1.0 approach and a Norfolk 2.0 approach is significant. Political headwinds have emerged as Norfolk 2.0 makes it more expensive developers to build on a key property in this land-locked city. While there are many moving parts to consider in redeveloping the property, city leaders are much more aware of the need to build a resilient community and have largely committed to this approach.

The city has committed $1.0 million to start a housing trust fund to support redevelopment efforts. Establishing the fund enables the city to earmark public dollars for affordable housing in the future.

In addition to its work with the Rockefeller Foundation's 100 Resilient Cities and the Dutch Initiative Sustainable Cities (DISC), the community hopes to secure at least partial funding through the National Disaster Resilience Competition (NDRC). According to the HUD website, the competition will provide funding for areas that experienced a Presidentially-declared major disaster in 2011, 2012, and 2013. Communities will compete for almost $1 billion in funding for disaster recovery and long-term community resilience efforts. Finalists in the competition will further develop their disaster resilience strategies and propose specific projects. From a total pool of nearly $1 billion, 40 states and communities will be able to request up to $500 million for cutting-edge projects that address unmet needs from past disasters while addressing the vulnerabilities that could put residents in harm's way during future disaster.

By piggy-backing with previous efforts, community leaders intend to address poverty and homelessness head on and develop an authentic urban center with a residential population in the downtown. To do so will require several proverbial homeruns on the part of the community including a strong inter-agency collaborative effort. Working together, the community hopes to weave all the pieces needed to redevelop the St. Paul Neighborhood.

Study Participants

Sarah Bishop, United Way

Donnell Brown, Chief Housing Officer, Norfolk Redevelopment and Housing Authority

Darrel Hill, Assistant City Manager, City of Norfolk

Shep Miller, Chair, Norfolk Redevelopment and Housing Authority

John Kownack, Norfolk Redevelopment and Housing Authority

Steve Morales, Norfolk Redevelopment and Housing Authority

Shurl Montgomery, Executive Director, Norfolk Redevelopment and Housing Authority

Michelle Cook, Tidewater Resident

Earl Fraley, Chair, City of Norfolk Planning Commission

Sharon Phillips, Principal, Tidewater Elementary School

Oneiceia Howard, Neighborhood Development Specialist, City of Norfolk

Halima Arias, Director, Norfolk Cares IMPACT Call Center

Frank Duke, Director of Planning and Community Development, City of Norfolk

Study Findings

Factors in Achieving Success

- **The Choice Neighborhoods effort demonstrates that the economic and social needs of public housing residents must be addressed if plans to transform the greater neighborhood are to work.**

  Traditional community planning focuses on the physical environment. One of the more significant differences between Choice Neighborhoods Transformation Plans and traditional neighborhood improvement plans is the focus on the provision of social and economic services for residents through partnerships with community groups and nonprofit organizations. Recognizing that neighborhoods are comprised of more than bricks and mortar, transformation plans include strategies for addressing education, health and human services, public safety, and other social services needed by residents.

  When asked about what made this planning process different than previous efforts, the majority of those interviewed in all three case study sites spoke about the comprehensive nature of the transformation plan. Many study participants commented on the new partnerships and relationships that were formed during the planning process. The need for early child care and education among public housing residents resulted in collaborations with Partners in Learning. In Suffolk, work on the transformation plan resulted in a partnership between SRHA and the Senior Services of Southeastern Virginia to provide improved transit services to the Eastern Suffolk Community: White Marsh Neighborhood.

  Study participants shared that the diversity of organizations and individuals involved contributed to the long-term sustainability of the effort. With so many people having a vested interest in the transformation plan, Clarissa McAdoo, executive director of SRHA in Suffolk, notes that new opportunities continue to pop up which spurs people to keep working and putting energy into the plan. "It creates a sense of urgency to get things done," she says.

- **The more excitement that can be generated about a transformation plan for a neighborhood, the easier it is to extend the network of stakeholders and partners who will invest in those plans.**

  In Salisbury, community interest in the transformation plan began to grow as teams and committees formed. Within smaller cities where human connections are generally tighter and there are fewer degrees of separation, word-of-mouth publicity can generate tremendous interest. Individuals working on the transformation plan became excited about different elements and projects included in the plan. The more that people talked about the transformation plan, the more people began to make new connections, suggest new projects, and bring in new resources to help the cause.

- **The organizational structure for the planning process needs to be carefully considered and discussed among all the partners and stakeholders.**

  With so many volunteers involved in the development of the transformation plans, a discussion of roles and responsibilities at the outset of the planning process helps established lines of accountability. In Salisbury, the larger steering committee (20 members appointed by the city council) established buy-in and creditability for the transformation plan while the smaller core planning team (12 members) enabled a division of responsibilities and assignments to be made so work got done.

- **The analysis of data can help local teams determine what services are most needed in troubled neighborhoods, but determining what to measure is a challenge.**

  In all three case study sites, surveys of residents living in the public housing complexes provided crucial information to understanding what residents' concerns and issues were. Having this data available helped identify topics that needed further community deliberations, for example, involving parents in discussions regarding the academic performance of the Tidewater Park Elementary School in St. Paul's Neighborhood in Norfolk and whether the school building should be closed and a new school built.

  Agreeing on what performance measurements to use is one of the most challenging elements of developing a transformation plan. While measuring the outputs of a project is relatively easy to calculate—for example, the redevelopment of a playground cost X number of dollars and resulted in the installation of X number of new pieces—measuring the outcomes of a project can be much more difficult as Sarah Bishop in Norfolk pointed out. How many children are using the new playground? How does playing on the equipment affect their physical and social development? Does the new playground encourage a greater sense of community? In all

three case studies, discussions on what to measure and how to measure had begun. Over time, leaders will need to review the measurements selected to determine if measurable progress is being made or if adjustments should be made to the plan.

The Role of Local Government

- **Local governments have an important role in providing services to neighborhoods, and can help in identifying and understanding the needs of neighborhood residents and representatives.**

  Housing authorities and local governments have a vested interest in working together to transform neighborhoods. All local governments deliver a wide variety of public services such as public safety and community policing, parks and recreation programming, street and roadway maintenance, graffiti remediation, and community and economic development to name a few. And most local government departments maintain some form of a work order management system to track demand for these services. The data produced by department systems can be extremely valuable for understanding what services are needed in neighborhoods. For example, local police departments can tell if robberies are up or down for the year. Public works can report on how many street repairs have been made, and the recreation department can share how many people have registered for their programs. The ability to analyze this data for the specific neighborhood provides a basis for understanding what issues are priorities for citizens.

- **Local governments can work to engage neighborhood residents and representatives serving as a critical link for troubled neighborhoods.**

  The theory of social capital—the critical linkages among people and groups—represents an important factor in the ability to redevelop a neighborhood. Social capital theory holds that the more people can connect with each other, bringing new ideas, resources and solutions to bear, the greater their ability to solve problems and create a new future. In developing their transformation plan, all three communities made an intense effort to involve residents from the public housing complexes in the discussion about plans for the neighborhood from resident surveys to special invitations to attend community meetings. These efforts to engage residents appeared to lead to a greater sense of ownership in their respective neighborhoods.

After the completion of transformation plans in all three case study sites, links to organizations outside the immediate community helped move the implementation of the plan forward. In Salisbury, Purpose Built Communities (Atlanta, GA) provided technical assistance and guidance to community leaders on redeveloping the West End Neighborhood. The Northside Voyagers (Spartanburg, SC) provided an example of how residents could unite to create a safer neighborhood. In Suffolk, the National Low-Income Housing Coalition (Washington, DC) has offered critical data on the private rental apartment and what type of hourly wages are needed in the community. In Norfolk, the community engaged with several organizations external to the community, including Rockefeller Foundation's 100 Resilient Cities (New York, NY), the Dutch Dialogs (The Netherlands), HUD's National Disaster Resilience Competition, and DOT's TIGER Grant which funds capital improvements in transportation infrastructure. The ability to link to resources outside the immediate community– be they nonprofits, businesses or other levels of government—enables a community to achieve more than it could on its own.

- **The regulatory powers of local governments can be used to promote the goals of the Choice Neighborhoods Transformation Plan.**

  In Suffolk, Virginia, in-fill housing development has played a critical role in addressing the community's need for affordable housing. The city covers a wide physical area, some of which is highly urbanized and other areas are much more rural in nature. As a result of new zoning ordinances that enable development on vacant lots in built-up areas, SRHA has been able to undertake development of several affordable housing units throughout the city, relocating lower-income residents to mixed-income neighborhoods and de-concentrating low-income residents.

The Role of Partners and Other Stakeholders

- **In small communities, building relationships makes transformation plans work.**

  The theory of "six degrees of separation," whereby everyone on the planet is no more than six steps away from everyone else on the planet, holds some validity in a small city. As a result, the reputations of community groups and their leaders play an important role in securing buy-

in and support for the transformation plans. In Salisbury, North Carolina, this was especially true where the SHA had developed a reputation for following through on its commitments over the years.

- **Smaller projects demonstrate continued progress and keep the transformation plan as a priority in the mind of residents and community groups.**

  Redevelopment of public housing is a mammoth project that generally requires a long process of relocating current residents and rebuilding new units. In Norfolk, upgrading the necessary infrastructure to prevent flood in the St. Paul's Neighborhood will cost hundreds of millions of dollars, and this funding will take time to assemble. Large projects such as this take time and progress is not always visible to the general public.

  In order to keep residents and community groups engaged, the leaders working on the transformation plans all noted the importance of incorporating smaller projects into the plan so that people could see progress being made. In Suffolk, for example, projects like locating a neighborhood site of a library branch or the introduction of the I-Ride transportation services for seniors were well received by neighborhood residents.

The Role of Resident Engagement

- **Securing active engagement from public housing residents and neighborhood representatives requires supporting and training local leaders from within the neighborhood**.

  Public housing residents in both Salisbury, North Carolina and Norfolk, Virginia commented on the value of field trips and leadership workshops they were able to attend through their respective planning processes. In Norfolk, resident leaders traveled to New York to learn more about how the Harlem Children's Zone project operated. In Salisbury, resident leaders attended leadership training offered by HUD.

- **Personal invitations are critical to getting and keeping residents involved.**

  While all three case study sites used a number of different methods for recruiting residents to work on their respective transformation plans, interviewees reported that personal invitations—face-to-face invitations and personal phone calls—yielded the best results.

- **Those individuals most directly impacted by a transformation plan need to be able to trust that local government leaders will hear residents' concerns and follow through on commitments made.**

  Neighborhood residents from all three sites reported that past interactions with their city government had not always been positive. As a result, there were some trust issues that needed to be addressed. If a contentious relationship has existed between the neighborhood and the larger community in the past, a trust building effort needs to be included in the transformation plan. This lack of trust issue tended to be resolved through officials' follow-through on commitments made to neighborhood residents.

- **Public housing residents and neighborhood residents should have both formal (such as establishing a resident advisory committee) and informal (such as working with area churches on neighborhood cleanup activities) ways to enable citizens to become engaged in a transformation plan.**

  The advisory committee established by SHA in Salisbury and the resident advisory group established by SRHA in Suffolk are two examples of more formal structures for engaging residents in the planning process and helping identify new neighborhood leaders.

  In Suffolk, staff with SRHA worked with neighborhood residents to hold a neighborhood Christmas party for children at the outset of the transformation plan process. Informal activities like the party helped introduce public housing residents to the purpose of the transformation plan as well as helped build relationships.

Measuring Success

In developing their respective Choice Neighborhoods Transformation Plans, the three case study sites were charged with the need to define measures of success. These measures demonstrate progress being made toward the transformation plan's goals and objectives over time. Table 9 below represents a compilation of the proposed measures of success by individuals involved from all three sites.

Determining appropriate measures of success for the transformation plans is challenging. "Economic growth" for Choice Neighborhoods is certainly a measure of success, but how does a neighborhood measure "economic growth?" More jobs created? Higher household income achieved? More investments made?

Higher assessed property values? Some combination thereof? Likewise, does more accessible childcare in the neighborhood lead directly to higher education attainment levels over time? Are all higher education attainment levels equally desirable? What about "brain drain," whereby young people leave the community they grew up in after completing their advanced education? Determining what to track and how to track measures of success is critical to the long-term sustainability of the transformation plan.

Table 9   Compilation of Proposed Measures of Success

Choice Neighborhoods Transformation Plans—Compilation of Proposed Measures of Success	Salisbury, North Carolina	2013	Suffolk, Virginia	2013	Norfolk, Virginia	2013
INCOME						
Median household income		X				
Per capita income		X				
Unemployment		X				
EDUCATION						
Daycare		X				X
Enrollment in Pre-K education programs						X
Student drop-out rates		X				
Education attainment levels		X				X
ECONOMIC STABILITY						
Economic growth				X		
Vacancy rates						X
Property values						X
Crime rates						X
POPULATION CHARACTERISTICS						
Public housing demographics		X		X		X
Racial diversity				X		X
Age diversity				X		X
Special populations				X		X
PUBLIC HEALTH						
Changes in lifestyle		X				
General health statistics						X

Developing a Framework

The overall vision for transformation plans is to revitalize distressed neighborhoods by addressing service delivery in a more comprehensive fashion. There are many elements that go into the development of a healthy and vibrant neighborhood, and these elements often serve to reinforce each other. For example, greater education attainment levels generally result in higher per capita and median household incomes. Lowering crime rates in a neighborhood can indirectly influence an increase in property values.

Bowie and Inkelas point out that communities are complex organisms, and data analysis needs to reflect the "how" and "why" of change.[27] The relationship between cause and effect is difficult to define with many unpredictable interactions. So how can success be measured when there are so many moving parts to consider? Of critical importance is establishing the ability to track whether neighborhood improvements result in better lives for existing public housing residents and neighborhood representatives. If new better-off residents move into an area, the neighborhood and individual residents' lives really are not being improved.

Neighborhood leaders must first determine what "success" will look like for their community. Achieving success may include well-maintained stock of homes with a mix of different housing types. It may represent a good standard of living and economic viability with adequate access to good paying jobs. A strong sense of safety, health and public welfare may be part of the picture. A high quality of life and abundant recreation opportunities could also be part of "success." All of the case study sites had worked through design charrettes and other planning exercises to develop a vision of what success would like for their respective neighborhoods.

Identifying Data Sources and Possible Indicators

Determining what data is readily available and what data will need to collected is part of establishing measures of success. Among the types of data related to neighborhood transformation and redevelopment that commonly available through the U.S. Census Bureau, local governments and community nonprofits are:

- Census population data
- Property values
- Tax assessment values
- Vacant properties
- Crime rates
- Building code violations
- Incidents of graffiti and vandalism
- Incidents of illegal dumping
- Number of abandoned cars
- Per capita income of residents
- Number of jobs accessible
- Unemployment rate
- Test scores and academic performance
- High school graduation rates
- Number of high school seniors moving to post-secondary education
- Reach and frequency of public transportation options
- Diversity in retail offerings
- Community walkability
- Incidents of disease such as childhood asthma, obesity, alcohol and drug addiction, etc.

Nonprofits and other community groups may have access to different data sets that could be useful as well. For example, chambers of commerce and real estate associations often maintain databases with market information on local properties available for sale. Combining such information with local government property assessment and infrastructure data would add value in marketing sites for redevelopment.

If the priority is to have a more economically viable neighborhood, the performance measures reviewed over time might include property values and tax assessments. It might also be valuable to review vacant properties and the type and condition of housing stock in the neighborhood. If the priority is improved quality of life, looking at community walkability and recreation opportunities might be more beneficial. Reviewing data on the type and condition of housing stock might also be appropriate.

All three case study sites had begun identifying data sets they intended to use for measuring success, but none of the three sites had a working performance measurement or program improvement effort underway at the time of the initial site visits.

Using Data for Program Improvement

Data can help organize people around broadly shared concerns and issues. Data, especially when shared on a map, can bring a greater understanding about the nature and scope of problems a neighborhood may be facing. Analyzing data can help develop arguments and business cases to advocate for change in policies or allocate more resources. Data can also encourage change in individual behaviors, such as setting aside time for children to study more or parents to cook healthier meals.

Acknowledgments and Methodology

The primary author, Cory Fleming, conducted in-depth interviews with a total of 31 individuals covering all three of the case study sites (10 people in Salisbury, 8 in Suffolk, and 13 in Norfolk). The individuals selected for interviews represented different interests and perspectives. Three interview protocols, each designed with a specific audience in mind, guided the questioning. The protocols included one for local government officials, one for partner organizations working on the transformation plan, and one for residents of the public housing complexes and associated neighborhoods. The author used a conversational interviewing technique in order to more fully explore the participants' experiences and perceptions.

All interviews were tape recorded and reviewed in compiling notes for this report. The author sought written permission prior to attributing any quotes to an individual or organization. The author wishes to thank all the study participants for taking the time to discuss their work on the respective transformation plans. Their contributions to the study were invaluable.

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