STRONG NEIGHBORHOODS
KEY TO REVIVING AMERICA AND BUILDING A FLOURISHING SOCIETY

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ABSTRACT

American neighborhoods have declined over the past few decades, contributing to rising isolation, mistrust, and polarization. Weaker social ties are leading to greater depression, anxiety, addiction, suicide, and alienation. Moreover, during the past 50 years, the number of high-poverty neighborhoods has tripled and the population of poor people in these neighborhoods has doubled, even as spending on welfare has soared. And yet, there are few systematic efforts to bolster neighborhoods. The role of institutions is key to reviving a neighborhood. The way these institutions structure—or fail to structure—relationships at the neighborhood and interneighborhood level affects the vitality of each locale and the well-being of everyone living there.

As many studies have documented, American neighborhoods have declined over the past few decades, contributing to rising isolation, mistrust, and polarization. Weaker social ties are leading to greater depression, anxiety, addiction, suicide, and alienation, affecting all socioeconomic strata—from the poor to the well-off.[1] Moreover, during the past 50 years, the number of high-poverty neighborhoods has tripled and the population of poor people in them has doubled, even as spending on welfare has soared (see figure 1). American cities now have more than 750 distressed communities,[2] with more in suburban and rural areas. And yet, there are few systematic efforts to bolster neighborhoods, especially where it is needed most. This lack is partly due to the complexity and long-term nature of the challenge and the need to work across silos in innovative ways that can tip broader social and economic dynamics.

This paper looks at what makes neighborhoods strong, why existing efforts to improve them have mostly failed, and how systems thinking at the neighborhood level might be the solution—and may even repair society in the process. It analyzes both cross-neighborhood quantitative research undertaken by academics and specific case-based reflections undertaken by practitioners.

1. See Anne Case and Angus Deaton, "Mortality and Morbidity in the 21st Century," *Brookings Papers on Economic Activity* (Spring 2017): 397–443, https://www.brookings.edu/wp-content/uploads /2017/08/casetextsp17bpea.pdf; US Congress, Joint Economic Committee–Republicans, "What We Do Together: The State of Associational Life in America," Social Capital Project, SCP Report No. 1-17, May 15, 2017, https://www.jec.senate.gov/public/_cache/files/6f670ee8-74de-497a-85f6-4cf6502 d52d4/1-17-what-we-do-together.pdf; and Robert D. Putnam, *Bowling Alone: The Collapse and Revival of American Community* (New York: Simon & Schuster, 2000).
2. Joe Cortright and Dillon Mahmoudi, "Lost in Place: Why the Persistence and Spread of Concentrated Poverty—Not Gentrification—Is Our Biggest Urban Challenge," *CityReport* (December 2014), https:// cityobservatory.org/wp-content/uploads/2014/12/LostinPlace_12.4.pdf.

FIGURE 1. DESPITE INCREASED SPENDING ON WELFARE, THE NUMBER OF DISTRESSED
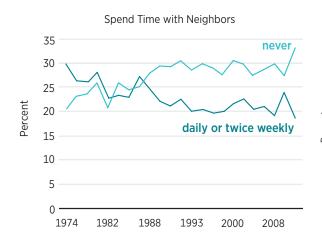NEIGHBORHOODS HAS BEEN RISING FOR DECADES

Note: (Newly high poverty) 3.2 million poor people in 2010 lived in neighborhoods that were not high poverty in 1970. The number of these census tracts nearly tripled, from 1,100 in 1970 to 3,100 in 2010. (Chronic high poverty) 75 percent of 1970 high-poverty neighborhoods were still high poverty four decades later. (Rebounded) Only 100,000 poor people in 1970 lived in neighborhoods of concentrated poverty that have since "rebounded" to poverty below the national average by 2010. The likelihood that a neighborhood rebounds was 1 in 20.

Source: (bar graph) Data are from Joe Cortright and Dillon Mahmoudi, "Lost in Place: Why the Persistence and Spread of Concentrated Poverty—Not Gentrification—Is Our Biggest Urban Challenge," *CityReport* (December 2014); (graph on top-left) Total spending on welfare from 1950 to 2016 data are from the Office of Management and Budget documents.
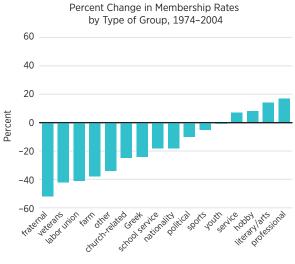
HOW DO NEIGHBORHOODS HELP SOCIETY FLOURISH?

Democracy depends on citizens learning the civic habits and practices necessary to sustain it, such as proactively participating in public service and communal institutions, being willing to listen, acting in a socially responsible manner, and balancing individual interests with the common good. James Madison explained, "To suppose that any form of government will secure liberty or happiness without any virtue in the people, is a chimerical idea."[3] These must be learned through repeated interactions with others—ideally in person and among various types of people—that are structured in a constructive manner by social institutions and norms, such that the interactions yield a posture of gratitude for one's community (see figure 2).

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3. James Madison, *The Founders' Constitution,* vol. 1, chap. 13, doc. 36, Virginia Ratifying Convention, June 20, 1788, https://press-pubs.uchicago.edu/founders/documents/v1ch13s36.html.

FIGURE 2. THE LESS WE INTERACT LOCALLY . . .

Spend Time with Neighbors

Source: General Social Survey

Percent Change in Membership Rates
by Type of Group, 1974–2004

Note: Displays percent change in the share of adults in a given organization type.

Source: General Social Survey, adapted from US Congress, Joint Economic Committee—Republicans, "The Space Between: Renewing the American Tradition of Civil Society," Social Capital Project, SCP Report No. 8-19.

. . . THE LESS WE TRUST EACH OTHER NATIONALLY

Social Trust

Source: General Social Survey

Trust the American People to Make
Judgments under the American System

Source: Gallup

Strong neighborhoods are the best incubator of civic habits and practices because they embed people in long-lasting relationships involving regular, in-person interactions. This is especially so for youth, who risk learning a different set of behaviors through social media, games, and other virtual activities. Without these relationships, alienation and disconnection are likely to result. Indeed, data show that places with the lowest levels of social connectedness—and thus constructive social norms—are most likely to elect politicians who exhibit authoritarian tendencies and break political norms.[4]

What are the characteristics of strong neighborhoods? Strong neighborhoods host institutions and norms that encourage an asset-building mindset, cooperation, trust, and mutual support among residents and businesses; nurture a sense of security, belonging, and meaning; promote skills and norms that help residents thrive in the broader society; attract investment and different types of residents (e.g., different socioeconomic status and stages in life); and maintain social networks that help residents access opportunities and resources locally as well as externally as needed. Fragile neighborhoods, in contrast, do the reverse, yielding stress, mistrust, frustration, and a sense of insecurity.[5] As Jane Jacobs often said, strong neighborhoods solve problems, rather than being consumed by them.[6] While material poverty plays an important role, social poverty is a separate phenomenon; it's possible to be economically poor but socially well off—as well as the reverse. The growing bifurcation of America by neighborhood is a growing problem; too few places bring together people across classes and political differences.

What is a *neighborhood*? Neighborhoods are specific geographies. Legal definitions may be suitable in some cases, but practical definitions are better. The area should reflect what residents themselves view as their neighborhood and its boundaries—a place where there is some sense of collective identity and mutual responsibility, if not a shared feeling of common community (a much higher bar). In an urban setting, a neighborhood should ideally correspond to the catchment

4. Timothy Carney and Michael Barone, "Does Lack of Social Connectedness Explain Trump's Appeal?," *Washington Examiner*, March 27, 2016; and Peter Beinart, "Breaking Faith," *The Atlantic*, April 2017, https://www.theatlantic.com/magazine/archive/2017/04/breaking-faith/517785/.
5. See William Julius Wilson, *The Truly Disadvantaged: The Inner City, the Underclass, and Public Policy* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1987); Purpose Built Communities, *Poverty and Place: A Review of the Science and Research That Have Impacted Our Work*, October 2019, https://purpose builtcommunities.org/wp-content/uploads/2019/10/Poverty-and-Place-White-Paper-Digital -Edition.pdf; Patrick Sharkey, *Stuck in Place: Urban Neighborhoods and the End of Progress toward Racial Equality* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2013); and Robert Sampson, *Great American City: Chicago and the Enduring Neighborhood Effect* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2012).
6. Jane Jacobs, mentioned by Alan Mallach, "Strong Neighborhoods" (Mercatus online workshop organized for this paper, July 6, 2022).

area of a primary school, include a commercial center that can provide everyday facilities and services, and contain physical assets and institutions that promote bonding and bridging social capital (e.g., parks, libraries, public transit, and community organizations).[7] In a more rural setting, a neighborhood may mean the whole county, with the county seat being the main point of congregation. If businesses have a robust way to cooperate to advance the common good—such as through a community investment district—the neighborhood can more easily build up assets and acquire outside resources for improvements. If the place has a brand name (e.g., Harlem) that can be promoted, these goals will be easier to achieve.

Institutions—some formal like families, churches, and schools; others informal like associations and study groups—play a crucial role in determining the neighborhood's social dynamics by how they shape relationships, norms, and networks, especially across various class, race, faith, and political divides. Institutions determine how safe a neighborhood is, how likely neighbors are to support one another, what kind of influences youth receive day in and day out, whether people come together to tackle common problems, and whether residents can influence government. While all institutions matter, some are more foundational—such as the family—with an outsized impact on neighborhood dynamics and residents (discussed later). Because institutions provide frameworks and structures for neighbors to relate, interact, and work together, they encourage constructive behavior and penalize unconstructive behavior. When working well, these institutions build up social capital that simultaneously benefits individuals, groups, and neighborhoods.[8] Both local (internal) and interlocal (external) institutions and networks matter.[9]

Of course, institutions do not function in a vacuum. A broad set of factors—the economy, employment opportunities, environment, transportation links, social infrastructure (e.g., libraries, parks, and gathering places), commercial infrastructure (e.g., retail and office), power dynamics, technology, demographics, and broad cultural patterns—frame the context in which neighborhood institutions (and norms) exist and grow.[10] These factors have changed tremendously

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7. Emily Talen, *Neighborhood* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2018).

8. See Sampson, *Great American City*.

9. Michael Woolcock, "Social Capital and Economic Development: Toward a Theoretical Synthesis and Policy Framework," *Theory and Society* 27 (1998): 151–208.

10. The influence of these structural factors on institutions is laid out in the standard sociopolitical analysis framework used globally by development and conflict-prevention practitioners. See United Nations–World Bank, *Pathways for Peace: Inclusive Approaches to Preventing Violent Conflict* (Washington, DC: World Bank, 2018), 77–108, https://openknowledge.worldbank.org/handle/10986/28337.

over the past half century, along with the institutional landscape. More recently, seismic shifts in American media, especially since the rise of the internet and social media, have reshaped relationships and exacerbated forces that were already weakening many institutions.

This paper concentrates on the unique elements that make specific neighborhoods strong or weak, setting aside national, regional, and urban dynamics—and economic issues—as secondary for the analysis. It seeks to answer the question, How do relationships at the neighborhood and interneighborhood level affect people's well-being? What might improve the institutions and neighborhood settings that play an outsized role in shaping the nature of such relationships? While this paper focuses more on distressed neighborhoods, this merely reflects where the research has been concentrated rather than where the problem is; growing social poverty is affecting a significant proportion of American neighborhoods across all classes.

WHY DO SO MANY SOCIAL INITIATIVES FAIL?

Neighborhoods sit upstream from many social ills, such as the steadily rising inequality, children raised in unstable households, and deaths of despair (e.g., suicide, unintentional drug overdose, and alcohol use and intoxication). Indicators show that everything from life expectancy to crime rates to student test scores to social mobility are not only correlated with each other but also with a physical location—and the nature of neighborhood institutions, such as norms around marriage, interhousehold cooperation, and cross-class friendship, play a large role in this dynamic. As a result, many social problems are magnified when their concentration in specific locales creates a multiplier effect on everyone living there.[11] This concentration has grave effects on children and youth. In the more challenged places, they are significantly more likely to end up with poor coping skills, poor stress management, unhealthy lifestyles, mental illness, and chronic physical conditions. As a result, children who are born poor are increasingly likely to stay that way.[12]

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11. See, among others, Christopher Jencks and Susan Mayer, "The Social Consequences of Growing Up in a Poor Neighborhood," in *Inner-City Poverty in the United States*, ed. Laurence E. Lynn Jr. and Michael G. H. McGreary (Washington, DC: The National Academies Press, 1990), 111; Purpose Built Communities, *Poverty and Place*; Robert Sampson, "What 'Community' Supplies," in *The Community Development Reader*, ed. James DeFilippis and Susan Saegert (New York: Routledge, 2007), 163–73; and Sharkey, *Stuck in Place*.

12. See Opportunity Insights, "Neighborhoods Matter: Children's Lives Are Shaped By the Neighborhood They Grow Up In," accessed October 4, 2022, https://opportunityinsights.org/neighborhoods/.

Many government, philanthropic, and nonprofit initiatives and reforms have sought to heal America's social ills, but the efforts have not produced the expected results. Though programs sometimes produce inspiring cases of individual success, most rarely make a dent in the overall picture. Why? Some combination of structural (economic, government policy, racism) and institutional (family, social, norms) conditions over multiple generations has created relational systems that work so badly for residents that whatever is being tried is insufficient to overcome them.

Yet efforts to help almost always try to tackle specific goals (e.g., education, housing, health, security, food, and work), rather than to build foundational institutions (e.g., the family) or to reshape neighborhood settings by challenging, for example, inequitable power dynamics that isolate or marginalize certain places. This siloed approach ignores the neighborhood's social dynamics that make interventions necessary in the first place and limit their effectiveness once undertaken. A country of fragile neighborhoods produces a fragile society.

Other obstacles that inhibit social and material investment in place-based change are as follows:

- *Time:* Building a health clinic, for example, produces results more quickly than reconfiguring the housing mix or extending transportation links.

- *Financing:* It is easier to finance quick tangibles, such as programs for the homeless population, than the long-term intangibles, such as institutions and education.

- *Permanence:* There is the risk that people will move, whereas investment in infrastructure is fixed.

- *Values:* Leaders need to believe that it is worthwhile to invest in the low socioeconomic strata of the community.[13]

- *Resources:* Nonprofits and local government agencies often lack the capacity to implement successful place-based policies, owing to their limited staff to design, implement, and manage cross-sector stakeholders.[14]

- *Rural communities:* These communities face unique challenges, including the difficulty of finding and training leadership, managing fundraising

13. Alan Berube, "Policy to Help People and Help Places Is Not a Zero-Sum Game," Brookings Institution, August 7, 2019, https://www.brookings.edu/research/policy-to-help-people-and-help -places-is-not-a-zero-sum-game/.

14. The American Assembly-Columbia University, *Middle Neighborhoods: Action Agenda for a National Movement*, March 13, 2018, https://static1.squarespace.com/static/5cb1ec93a56827157ef5d749/t/5d853 a3e47101b6c86852903/1569012286890/mn_actionagenda_digital_7.24.pdf.

streams not set up for such work, developing a visionary plan without exposure to what has been done elsewhere, and advocating for funding with such a small or low-density population (relative to other locations).[15]

- *Gentrification:* Although it is rare, many people fear gentrification and so block such changes; for every gentrifying neighborhood, there are 10 that are stagnant or declining.[16]

Part of the problem is the nature of incentives. Complex, long-term problems require a sustained effort that targets foundational institutions, or the neighborhood settings that influence these institutions, in a large enough way to catalyze enough cross-cutting change in a given place. Talented and better-off residents who might jump-start these changes from within often move away, and many residents who remain may not have the time or wherewithal to invest enough in a struggling community.

Meanwhile, philanthropists, nonprofits, government officials, and politicians are drawn to projects that target specific goals, like those listed earlier—projects that can be planned for, easily measured, and achieved in short time horizons. Initiatives that slowly build up neighborhood institutions, capacity, and wealth require an acute understanding of the local context, a long-term commitment, and the flexibility to adjust to changing circumstances—all of which do not have the same appeal. As a result, in some cases, these organizations run programs that weaken a place by crowding out local initiatives and undermining local resources or programs that are inappropriate to local conditions (e.g., establishing low-income housing in a way that concentrates poverty, running initiatives that encourage talent and money to leave).

Furthermore, companies follow the market, which may yield national benefits while damaging the prospects of specific places. For example, they may choose to move operations, outsource, or simply concentrate investment in some places and not others. There will always be winners and losers, but losses that seem small for the country as a whole can be catastrophic for specific neighborhoods and those living there. The resulting pessimism can be reinforcing, encouraging businesses, investors, the talented, and the young to flee—thus making any recovery more difficult and anyone left behind more disadvantaged.[17]

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15. Community Strategies Group, *Rural Development Hubs: Strengthening America's Rural Innovation Infrastructure* (Washington, DC: The Aspen Institute, 2019), https://www.aspeninstitute.org/wp-content/uploads/2019/11/CSG-Rural-Devel-Hubs.pdf.
16. Purpose Built Communities, *Poverty and Place*.
17. Nick Timothy, *Remaking One Nation: Conservatism in an Age of Crisis* (Cambridge, UK: Polity Press, 2020), 83 and 185.

Thus, both collective action[18] and market failures hold back efforts where they are most needed.

The decline of neighborhood organizations and religious bodies that once pervaded residents' lives has also made social repair work more difficult. In the past, the great majority of Americans were deeply embedded in overlapping, dense social structures that supported them in various ways throughout their lives. Today, however, many are left alone and isolated, unprepared for both crises and opportunities. The nonprofits that have arisen in place of these social structures may contribute to improved lives in various ways (e.g., employment, financial resources), but they are run by professionals who typically live far from the places they serve and who see their jobs as ameliorating poverty in a technical fashion rather than empowering locals so that their services would no longer be needed. The result is an emphasis on increasing services and making the work more efficient rather than eliminating the need for help. This explains why there is little emphasis on foundational institutions, collective capacities, and social innovation, and little flexibility for experimentation and adaptation. While this change from neighborhood social institutions to national and regional professional nonprofits has built "bridging" social capital (weak ties) for some, it has weakened essential "bonding" social capital (strong ties) for many.[19]

The difference between these two types of social capital relates to the nature of the relationships or associations involved. Bonding social capital is a product of ties within a group, and it is thus stronger, based on deeper levels of trust, and has more overlapping relationships. Bridging social capital is a product of ties across groups, and it is thus weaker, based on thinner trust, and is often unique to a person. The first, typically between people with something important in common, is more helpful for getting by, especially when in need; the second, typically between people from different backgrounds, is more valuable when seeking out opportunities to get ahead. In other words, bonding capital is more important for neighborhoods to thrive socially, whereas bridging capital is more important for members to advance materially. Both are essential. When communities foster strong families, networks, institutions, and leadership (strong ties), they can better connect people to one another as well as to opportunities (often

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18. Elinor Ostrom is especially good at describing the challenges to collective action and the role of norms. See Elinor Ostrom, "Collective Action and the Evolution of Social Norms," *Journal of Economic Perspectives* 14, no. 3 (Summer 2000): 137–58.

19. See Theda Skocpol, *Diminished Democracy: From Membership to Management in American Civic Life* (Norman, OK: University of Oklahoma Press, 2003); Robert Nisbet, *The Twilight of Authority* (Indianapolis: Liberty Fund, 2000); and Elisabeth Clemens, *Civic Gifts: Voluntarism and the Making of the American Nation-State* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2020).
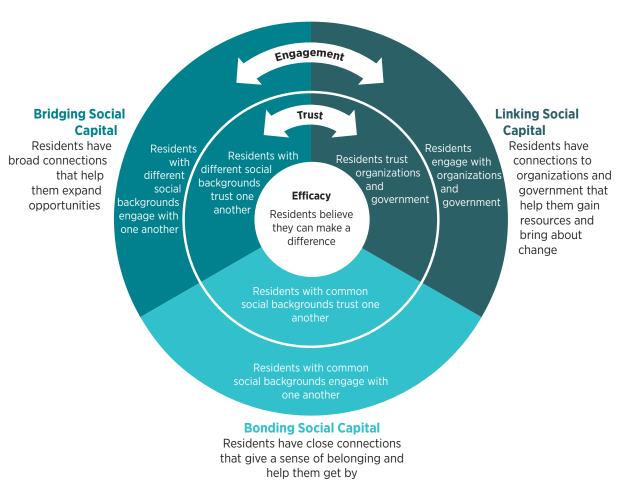
FIGURE 3. COMMUNITY SOCIAL CAPITAL MODEL

Engagement

Bridging Social Capital
Residents have broad connections that help them expand opportunities

Linking Social Capital
Residents have connections to organizations and government that help them gain resources and bring about change

Trust

Residents with different social backgrounds engage with one another

Residents with different social backgrounds trust one another

Residents trust organizations and government

Residents engage with organizations and government

Efficacy
Residents believe they can make a difference

Residents with common social backgrounds trust one another

Residents with common social backgrounds engage with one another

Bonding Social Capital
Residents have close connections that give a sense of belonging and help them get by

through weak ties), which help develop social capital and collective efficacy necessary to address social challenges (see figure 3).

On a larger scale, any effort to improve relationships in neighborhoods requires going against the grain of American society. There are many elements ingrained in the American way of doing things—plan cities, build housing, develop transportation, incarcerate, map out careers—that seem designed to promote social poverty and emphasize the individual at every turn. How many neighborhoods are designed for walkability? How many school districts are designed to promote collective efficacy? How often are marriage and family promoted in rhetoric, policy, and action? How much emphasis is put on the individual versus collective, place-based vitality? All could be envisioned differently—yet none is easy to change.

HOW CAN NEIGHBORHOODS BE BOLSTERED?

Improving social dynamics requires a combination of strong local leadership catalyzing neighborhood collective action (the "magic" energy seen in some dynamic turnaround efforts) and a systems approach to addressing the challenges posed by a specific place.[20]

This means thinking beyond silos and commonly used metrics. Instead of trying to improve individual lives through access to basic material necessities, social and political leaders should endeavor to create the conditions necessary for various types of local leaders and social entrepreneurs to emerge and for local institutions (formal and informal) to be strengthened. By going upstream to bolster the relationships and the forces necessary to bring about collective change, it becomes possible to build a *prevention society*—a strong society that helps every person and family thrive. This is achieved when every neighborhood thrives because it is supportive and catalytic (see figure 4).[21]

A systems approach requires focusing on the overall dynamics of a system as well as the relationship between various components rather than specific parts. This leads to greater consideration of often neglected issues (e.g., family, local support networks, boys) and of the interactions and feedback loops that can have an outsized role in how institutional, social, economic, and political factors contribute to systemic failures and poor outcomes.

Neighborhood social systems run the gamut from resilient to fragile. Some neighborhoods go from strength to strength despite little intentional effort to improve them, whereas other neighborhoods struggle no matter how much effort is invested in them. And then there are middle neighborhoods—places in the middle of the spectrum that can go either way. This is where strategic initiatives could make an outsized difference.[22] According to one estimation, almost half of the urban population lives in a middle neighborhood.[23]
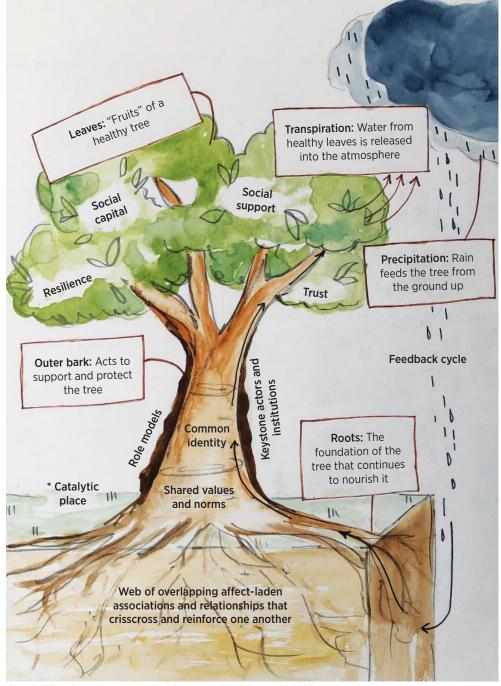
While there are two different entry points to spur change in a place—from within or from without—it is always better when the change comes from within;

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20. A systems approach entails examining and mapping all elements of a social system, including interactions among the various components, to inform holistic approaches that carefully select entry points for change and bring in a wide range of actors.

21. A prevention mindset has a long history in the United States. The Founders, for example, incorporated the separation of powers into the country's political institutions to prevent the rise of tyranny.

22. See Middle Neighborhoods, "Community of Practice," accessed October 4, 2022, https://middleneighborhoods.org/community-of-practice/.

23. Paul C. Brophy and Ira Goldstein, "America's Forgotten 'Middle Neighborhoods,'" *Governing*, January 4, 2017, https://www.governing.com/gov-institute/voices/col-cities-forgotten-middle-neighborhoods.html.

FIGURE 4. HOW A NEIGHBORHOOD THRIVES

Source: This redrawn illustration originally appeared on February 27, 2020, in *Comment* magazine (https://comment.org/what-is-community/), a publication of Cardus (https://www.cardus.ca/). Original illustration by Lisa Shirk.

that is, when local leaders, institutions, and residents play the central role. This is especially so in places where there is a long history of disenfranchisement and extraction at the hands of outsiders or of repeatedly being disappointed by revitalization promises that went unfulfilled. In such places, the *who* may matter much more than the *what*. After all, only a strong *who* can ensure what works, especially over the long term.

Initiatives to spur change require investing in significant relationship building such that there is buy-in from the residents on the importance of a neighborhood and the need to improve it. They also require transferring power or authority to local leaders and institutions so that everyone has ownership in the endeavor. Building hope, trust, and cohesion can catalyze collective efforts. Ensuring residents and leaders are in positions of authority guarantees initiatives are demand-driven rather than external supply–driven; that is, initiatives are not divorced from local realities.

Ideally, the change process should start within neighborhoods in an organic, asset-building fashion with local leaders constructing institutions and norms that yield more collective action and better management of common resources.[24] (This process of moving an initiative forward is outlined fully in appendix A.) When leaders emerge in a place and forge joint plans and actions, they encourage residents to join their efforts with a sense of purpose and belonging. Building on neighborhood strengths (local affections, institutions, capacities, and assets), rather than trying to overcome perceived weaknesses as outsiders tend to do, makes success more likely and lifts the dignity of local citizens.

Connecting organizations with one another boosts collective capacity. Partnering with organizations and networks outside the area brings in required resources and skills. Meanwhile, families can cooperate to build social networks around common identity and values, and then use the networks to mutually support one another on a daily basis and increase their ability to seek education, work, financing, and health care.

Outside groups seeking to help a given neighborhood need to gradually earn the trust of the residents by building relationships, learning what they are already doing and what they desire to do, establishing a deeply embedded local organization, hiring locals, establishing advisory councils with authority, and proving through action over and over again what words alone

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24. Elinor Ostrom, "Social Capital: A Fad or a Fundamental Concept?," in *Social Capital: A Multifaceted Perspective, ed. Partha Dasgupta and Ismail Serageldin* (Washington, DC: World Bank, 1999), 172–214.

cannot demonstrate.[25] Developing mechanisms that build peer networks to accelerate learning processes across families can help scale up homegrown successes.[26]

Appreciative inquiry is a time-tested method to identify community goals, capacities, and assets.[27] Building up leadership—connectors, role models, norm setters, institution builders, and community organizers—from within the community is essential.[28] This starts from the premise that locals—whether families or leaders or organizations—know their situation better than anyone else and that what they already are trying to do or would like to do is the best starting point for any plan development.

Launching an initiative that encourages local leaders to emerge and cooperate on a project can catalyze many spinoff efforts.[29] Outside institutions can also partner with local organizations on their efforts to address the myriad challenges simultaneously. An embedded neighborhood quarterback that can unify diverse local groups around a common vision, address long-term systemic challenges, coordinate various change efforts, work with a variety of government and philanthropic partners, and attract investment can be helpful for both internally and externally driven efforts.[30]

When intervening from outside a neighborhood, it is essential to not make government and nonprofits the central actors driving change, as this leads to distorted priorities and a continuation of unequal power dynamics. Turning residents into clients and dependents with needs who must be identified and ameliorated undervalues individual and communal capacities and encourages people to think of themselves as essentially deficient, incapable of improving their own lives and their community's futures. Often such interventions make ushering in service providers, experts, and money more important than building strong

25. See Anne Snyder, "Detroit Neighborhoods Remodel for Life," *BitterSweet Monthly*, January 2019, https://bittersweetmonthly.com/stories/life-remodeled#chapter-nav.

26. David Bornstein, "When Families Lead Themselves Out of Poverty," *New York Times*, August 15, 2017, https://www.nytimes.com/2017/08/15/opinion/poverty-family-independence-initiative.html.

27. See Keith Storace and Ann Hilbig, "Appreciative Community Building," *AI Practitioner* (blog), *International Journal of Appreciative Inquiry*, December 2017, https://aipractitioner.com/2017/12/11/appreciative-community-building/.

28. See John Kretzmann and John McKnight, *Building Communities from the Inside Out: A Path toward Finding and Mobilizing a Community's Assets* (Chicago: The Asset-Based Community Development Institute, 1993).

29. Storace and Hilbig, "Appreciative Community Building."

30. David Erickson, Ian Galloway, and Naomi Cytron, "Routinizing the Extraordinary," in *Investing in What Works for America's Communities* (San Francisco: Federal Reserve Bank of San Francisco, 2012), 377–406.

relationships among families and neighbors—which is the only way to scale up and sustain change.[31]

There has been significant research among academics and practitioners on what drives neighborhood success. (See appendix D for sources and details.) They conclude that the following factors are especially important:[32]

- Family stability and structure (e.g., percentage of children with single parents)

- Collective efficacy (e.g., strength of social institutions and community organizations)

- Segregation from opportunity (e.g., measurement of commuting times)

- Quality of schools (e.g., test scores, school dropout rates)

- Racial and income demographics (e.g., diversity, income inequality)

- Local economic vitality (e.g., local businesses, wealth creation, access to capital)

- Security and safety (e.g., crime levels)

- Built landscape (e.g., physical layout, prevalence of "third places" such as cafés, bars, public libraries, or parks)

Strengthening a neighborhood means working on two levels: the *institutions* (marriage, family, informal interfamily dynamics, school, business, civic organizations) and the underlying *landscape* (housing infrastructure, streetscape, regional economy, transportation links, broad cultural forces). The institutions determine how healthy or strong a neighborhood is, but it's the landscape that determines what kinds of institutions are likely to take root and grow in a neighborhood. Both levels are important, and each requires different strategies with different time horizons. While weak institutions, relationships, and norms can be ameliorated in the short to medium term, a poor landscape takes longer to improve. Local leaders can make a substantial impact on the former, but improving the latter often requires partnering with deeper-pocketed organizations and

31. See Majora Carter, *Reclaiming Your Community: You Don't Have to Move Out of Your Neighborhood to Live in a Better One* (Oakland, CA: Berrett-Koehler, 2022); and Mauricio Miller, *The Alternative: Most of What You Believe about Poverty Is Wrong* (Durham, NC: Lulu Press, 2017).
32. Raj Chetty, Nathaniel Hendren, Patrick Kline, and Emmanuel Saez, "Where Is the Land of Opportunity? The Geography of Intergenerational Mobility in the United States," *Quarterly Journal of Economics* 129, no. 4 (November 2014): 1553–623; Sampson, *Great American City*; Jane Jacobs, *The Death and Life of Great American Cities* (New York: Random House, 1961); and Daniel P. Aldrich and Michelle A. Meyer, "Social Capital and Community Resilience," *American Behavioral Scientist* 59, no. 2 (February 2015): 254–69.

government agencies. (See appendix B for a summary of the frameworks many philanthropists and nonprofits use to successfully change a neighborhood.)

HOW CAN PRACTICABLE INITIATIVES AND POLICIES CONTRIBUTE?

Preventing social problems is much more effective—and far less expensive—than responding to them. Moreover, many initiatives may unintentionally weaken local social systems, such as by concentrating too many low-income people in specific places, directing resources in a way that undermines the attractiveness of a neighborhood, or drawing away the role models and leaders who could build organizations or invest in ways that enhance social dynamics.

Focusing change efforts on incrementally enhancing place-based social systems offers a better approach. As a start, practicable initiatives need to put much greater emphasis on the institutions that shape relationships on a daily basis (e.g., families, bonding ties, peer and bridging networks, role models, leaders) and determine people's ability to help themselves. They also need to focus on the landscape that determines the nature of institutions that are likely to exist in a place. Loosely grouped under the two levels, these initiatives (some will overlap) include the following:

1. Institutions

    • Identify and build up local leaders—their capacities; their networks; and their ability to work together, launch new initiatives, and manage organizations. Set up a community platform for these leaders to come together to shepherd change in their neighborhoods. Where necessary, establish a neighborhood quarterback to plan and nurture systematic change, establish a wide range of partnerships, and leverage resources. Take steps to reverse brain drain.

    • Strengthen the institution of marriage (or at least long-term cohabitation) and the social norms related to being responsible for and supporting children at neighborhood, city, and regional levels.[33] Elevate expectations toward parenting, education, hard work, and pursuit of apprenticeships or post–secondary school.

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33. This approach includes, for example, getting rid of marriage penalties in the tax code, reducing the incarceration rate, and extending subsidies for childcare.

- Significantly upgrade family social support (parent groups, peer networking, intergenerational links) and education infrastructure (schools and early childhood and college preparation). Restructuring school catchment areas (places where students are eligible to attend school) so as to bolster neighborhood collective efficacy while boosting the quality of teaching, reducing dropout rates, and establishing partnerships with outside actors can make family support more likely to improve.

- Nurture local businesses and the local economy neighborhood by neighborhood, or county by county if in rural areas. Build up indigenous capital (so-called wealth that sticks) by training residents and small businesses in entrepreneurial undertakings, such as developing property;[34] providing opportunities to learn what is possible, especially in rural areas or isolated neighborhoods; and bolstering access to financing, so local leaders can invest in their own neighborhoods and varied local institutions.[35]

- Build a sense of pride in the local area and community such that relationships have more meaning and affection. Establish a culture of hospitality, neighborliness, reciprocity, and active citizenship in local institutions as well as a sense of responsibility for neighbors and neighborhood.[36] If a nonmainstream culture, such as African American, Appalachian, evangelical, Hispanic, or indigenous, is predominant, build a sense of pride in that culture. If crime is a problem, make reducing it a priority.

2. Landscape
   - Rethink urban planning and architecture. Design neighborhoods—rich and poor—around fountains, churches, green spaces, commercial streets, and municipal buildings; improve the quality of parks, street landscaping, public areas, housing, retail options, and transit

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34. See, for example, Jumpstart Germantown (website), accessed September 27, 2022, https://www.jumpstartgermantown.com/.

35. For example, establish place-based investment funds and incentivize entrepreneurs to start businesses, especially labor-intensive businesses that provide much-needed amenities (e.g., supermarkets, restaurants, and gyms) where they are most needed.

36. See John McKnight and Peter Block, *The Abundant Community: Awakening the Power of Families and Neighborhoods* (San Francisco: Berrett-Koehler Publishers, 2010); and Abundant Community Edmonton (website), accessed September 27, 2022, https://www.edmonton.ca/programs_services/for_communities/abundant-community-edmonton.

connections; and make public buildings glorious celebrations of place again.[37]

- Prioritize neighborhood revitalization and income diversification through well-coordinated private and public investment (e.g., mixed-income housing). Shift the focus of housing departments toward these goals.

- Enhance the physical connections to areas with better social dynamics and more vibrant economies by improving public transportation and roads and reducing the salience of segregation and discrimination.

- Improve the social infrastructure by increasing the quantity and quality of libraries, restaurants, religious organizations, supermarkets, parks, retail stores, businesses, gyms, clubs, after-school programs, and health organizations; repurposing abandoned land; and decreasing the number of vacated houses and sources of blight.

When planning initiatives, it is important to not try to "fix" neighborhoods—especially with one-size-fits-all policies formulated far away—and instead undertake a lot of on-the-ground experimentation and innovation. Solutions emerge from a process of discovery and adaptation rather than top-down planning. This requires substantial flexibility and adaptability in how change is approached. For neighborhood residents and leaders, this is part and parcel of their daily life. But outside organizations typically work in ways that undermine such process.

Some suggestions on how to work in this adaptable way are as follows:

- Encourage ingenuity by setting a clear goal, but without an overly prescriptive formula for how it should be achieved. Use a series of small "experimental" or "incremental" steps toward that goal, monitor results, and then adapt. Aim for efficacy, not efficiency. Ensure design, implementation, and evaluation provide the scope needed to weather nonlinear processes involving learning and adapting over time.

- Prioritize monitoring, evaluating, and reflecting on lessons learned. Ensure the right metrics and goals are established to fit the context by leveraging local actors to define and design them (e.g., use appreciative inquiry).

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37. Charles Marohn Jr., *Strong Towns: A Bottom-Up Revolution to Rebuild American Prosperity* (Hoboken, NJ: Wiley, 2019), 10 and 43–44.

- Recruit high-quality staff and ensure that they stay focused on a specific place for an extended period of time to maximize knowledge of context and relationship building. Invest in relationship building with a wide range of stakeholders—inside and outside the neighborhood—to understand their interests as well as to seek out opportunities to forge coalitions and shift positions to improve collaboration.

- Avoid the temptation to oversimplify how change may occur; reality is messy and dependent on the past, constraining what is possible in what time frame. Pay attention to the amount of time required for different kinds of change—for example, structural conditions can take a decade or more; large, established institutions can take many years; and even popular expectations can take a significant period of time. Be realistic about what is possible given the context and adjust goals appropriately.

- Use microgrants with limited paperwork to reach a wider range of actors, including underserved communities. Reduce quarterly reporting requirements for beneficiaries receiving grants to ensure that such stipulations do not privilege large organizations.

Returning to a more traditional pattern of development—one that existed from time immemorial to the Depression—would help improve the social dynamics of American neighborhoods. Back then, by starting small, evolving incrementally, and being driven by daily human needs, development was much more in tune with human ecology (and its need for social connection) than our current model, which emphasizes planning and scaling in the name of efficiency, yielding rows of suburban houses with little connection to one another. The former nurtured a sense of community, whereas the latter focuses on individual needs. This is a major driver of our current social poverty, contributing to the stress and disorientation many people experience.[38]

Building on strong neighborhoods to bolster nearby neighborhoods is more likely to work than focusing on an isolated place far from any dynamic area. Such efforts extend the strength of strong neighborhoods and create positive spillover effects, especially when the two places are adjacent to each other.[39] In places with few, if any, strong neighborhoods—factory towns that have lost their

38. Charles Marohn, "Romancing the Stone Age," Strong Towns, October 30, 2017, https://www
.strongtowns.org/journal/2017/10/30/romancing-the-stone-age.
39. Alan Mallach, *The Divided City: Poverty and Prosperity in Urban America* (Washington, DC:
Island Press, 2018), 110–11; and author's phone interview with David Edwards about Purpose Built
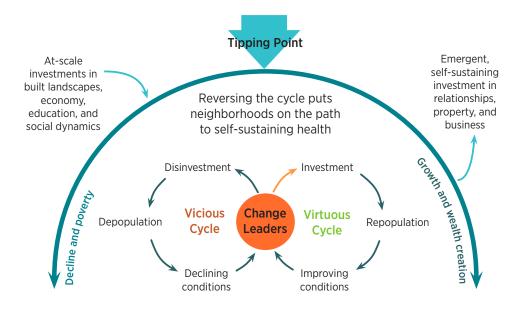Communities, March and June 2020.

FIGURE 5. CREATING HEALTHY, SELF-SUSTAINABLE, THRIVING NEIGHBORHOODS REQUIRES JUMP-STARTING A VIRTUOUS CYCLE OF SOCIAL AND ECONOMIC INVESTMENT

main employers, poor rural areas, parts of cities seeing significant depopulation—consolidation, bolstering whatever strengths exist, and attempting to link up or partner with the closest success pockets may be the only way forward. Similarly, focusing on a neighborhood that already has major assets—whether cultural, built, natural, economic, or educational—and many residents determined to improve it is more likely to succeed than any work put into a place that has few assets or committed residents.

Underutilized assets represent untapped potential and make a good entry point. A neighborhood full of historical buildings, near a university, or close to good transportation links or a beautiful park is easier to turn around than one with no useful assets, because the former can be repositioned into a place with social (and economic) vibrancy, attracting residents and investments. Scale also matters. But scaling up should be focused on incrementally enhancing the structural and institutional landscape enough to generate the necessary momentum and the changes in expectations (see figure 5).

While there are various ways to spur change in many locales simultaneously, the best approach is to build on what succeeded historically in America—that is, some adaptation of the cross-class, chapter-based model used by translocal organizations that once dominated American social life, such as the

Odd Fellows, the Grange, General Federation of Women's Clubs, Grand Army of the Republic, and the Order of the Eastern Star. Unfortunately, most of these organizations have faded from the scene since the 1960s and are barely known today. They were both place-based and national in scope, operating as federations of chapters with state and national support structures and reaching thousands of towns and cities across the country (the largest had 15,000 to 17,000 chapters). Managed by millions of volunteers (an estimated 3 to 5 percent of the adult population served in leadership roles in at least one organization), they built fellowship across classes and political views as well as friendships with neighbors as members worked to solve local problems. Moreover, these organizations enabled citizens across the country to feel they were part of something much larger than themselves and reached into far more parts of American society—every class, every kind of geography, every race (though rarely across them), and every political perspective—than any social initiative does today.[40]

The government can also make a significant contribution, but only if it decentralizes authority of the programs and money to the government entity closest to the locale targeted (known as subsidiarity) and shifts from hierarchical silos to neighborhood-focused teams. In urban areas, where local governments oversee large populations, this approach may mean establishing neighborhood governance structures to determine priorities. These teams would then be evaluated based on the success of their neighborhoods, not on the subsidies dished out, permits issued, roads completed, or boxes checked—as is typically the case today.

This structure would shift power from specialists who jumped from project to project and place to place to generalists with a wide range of skills and who are committed to a particular geography for an extended period of time. Public servants would gain intimate knowledge of streets, businesses, and residents in their specific places and would learn to see their roles as facilitators rather than deciders. Legislation would delegate decision-making to the smallest or lowest level of government, encouraging competence and downward accountability rather than just implementing a predetermined mandate.[41] These steps would promote social innovation and demonstrate where government adds the most value, shifting priorities in ways that bolster community efficacy and making it less likely that resources are wasted.

40. Theda Skocpol, "The Narrowing of Civic Life," *The American Prospect*, May 17, 2004, https://prospect.org/special-report/narrowing-civic-life/.
41. Marohn Jr., *Strong Towns*, 180 and 198.

HOW DOES ONE DEFINE SUCCESS
AND EVALUATE PROGRESS?

Each neighborhood context requires a different definition of a "positive outcome" and a different set of outcome-based measurement tools to evaluate progress. Meta or aggregate indicators can track progress using the starting conditions—built landscape, social cohesion, and institutions—to frame what is possible. No two places will be the same. For one neighborhood, greater housing stock, safer streets, and better management of the local school would be a successful outcome, whereas for another neighborhood, it may be the strengthening of community platforms and institutions and the improvement of civic engagement and social networks. The meta indicators help ensure that everyone focuses on the larger picture, which typically requires efforts that advance multiple objectives simultaneously. Too much fixation on solving one or more social problems may undermine overall progress.

Although data are important, social and political leaders must ensure they have access to and can prioritize the use of the right kind of information at the right scale—neighborhood by neighborhood and block by block. Assembling a neighborhood indicators scorecard from a combination of publicly available data; having conversations with local organizations, block leaders, and teachers; and surveying each locale would enable community leaders and organizations—as well as their external partners—to accurately assess a community's situation and incorporate context- and culture-specific gauges. Regular updates would help track changes over time and allow better understanding of the effectiveness of various initiatives as well as pinpoint concerning trends. (Keep in mind that some important indicators are not easily measured or appear frequently enough.)[42]

Although it is important to ensure that initiatives produce gains for both people and place, meta measures of progress for each neighborhood, which correlate with desired neighborhood outcomes (e.g., social mobility), are the best markers of neighborhood progress or regression. These meta measures include the following:[43]

- Relative property values (e.g., changes in property value compared to average changes in urban areas or similar rural counties)

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42. Erickson, Galloway, and Cytron, "Routinizing the Extraordinary," 392.

43. These measures are based on a combination of factors noted earlier as well as the experience of organizations such as Purpose Built Communities. See Seth Kaplan, "Place-Based Strategies for Reviving America," *Stanford Social Innovation Review* 20, no. 2 (Spring 2022).

- Resident transiency rate (e.g., percentage of residents moving annually)

- Family stability (e.g., percentage of children living in single-parent households, fraction of married or divorced adults)

- Collective efficacy (e.g., wealth of organizational life, level of participation in community activities, ability to enforce norms)

- Crime rates (e.g., overall crime rates, violent crime rates)

- School performance (e.g., dropout rates, test scores)

Tracking these measures by social group (race, ethnicity) and area (blocks, subsets of neighborhoods) ensures inclusiveness. Similarly, monitoring how well residents do over time ensures that benefits are shared if gentrification changes a population mix too rapidly. (All neighborhoods regularly experience some churn.) On a larger scale, creating measurements that agglomerate neighborhood indicators across cities, regions, or country would not only track broader progress but also increase the likelihood that place-based dynamics are prioritized.

These data should drive the nature of initiatives and encourage collaboration. Aligning everyone involved—from local leaders to various organizations (e.g., real estate developers, healthcare providers, philanthropists, housing authorities, education authorities, and economic development agencies)—around a small set of common indicators measuring neighborhood progress is essential. The indicators should be shared across all stakeholders and used as neighborhood performance metrics. There are, of course, other ways to measure the strength of neighborhoods—for example, a bottom-up approach that better reflects resident priorities and goals (see appendix C).

CONCLUSION

Social dynamics are inherently local, woven into particular places, people, and commitments. Although work can be done nationally and regionally to strengthen society—such as improving the broader economic forces that shape every neighborhood—inevitably most of the work must be done locally and in person. As such, national revitalization may be better achieved by not focusing on it at all. Indeed, social renewal is possible only by changing the idea of what it entails and shifting efforts to what Americans already do quite well: social innovation and local organization building, neighborhood by neighborhood.

In most places, over the past half century, neighborhood social bonds have weakened, with severe implications for American social fabric, political life, and individual well-being. Scale is essential to enhancing social dynamics, but the

arena must be a human scale. Although national and regional initiatives are necessary, change inevitably requires concentrated efforts locale by locale.

Applying systems thinking, neighborhood by neighborhood, is crucial not only to this effort to strengthen society but also to reframe debates. Such an approach is politically neutral, incorporating concerns over individual empowerment, inequality, racism, family stability, and social breakdown into one framework; it can be quantified with enough effort; and it is clearly relevant to the future of the citizenry. It also challenges the *management* thinking that infuses most debates on social problems while taking a longer-term and deeper *prevention* perspective on underlying societal dynamics. These are all prerequisites for fostering a more honest public discussion on what ails the country and how Americans can foster the civic habits that will strengthen and preserve democracy.

APPENDIX A: PRACTICAL STEPS TO MOVE AN INITIATIVE FORWARD

This six-step place-based systems approach can be used to identify and revitalize distressed communities. Success stories using this approach can be found in appendix B.

Step 1: Determine Suitability

Every neighborhood is different, and not all may be ready for place-based change. A neighborhood ripe for revitalization has three characteristics:

1. *Interest in change:* Some communities are open to change, but not all. Many residents distrust so-called outsiders promising to fix their neighborhood after experiencing previous failed projects with similar promises. Many neighborhoods have been affected by systemic racism (Blacks) or condescension (poor Whites), exacerbating the lack of trust.

2. *Existing assets:* Neighborhoods with existing assets—whether cultural, built, natural, economic, or educational—can use them as a launching pad for change.

3. *Relation to a stronger neighborhood:* Proximity to or interdependence with a stronger neighborhood allows a place to build on or leverage its strengths and spillover effects. This relationship also makes it easier to create a virtuous cycle, whereby social and economic investments feed on themselves. Isolated locales and places bordered by vulnerable or distressed neighborhoods are disconnected from such opportunities. It should be noted that rural, Black, Hispanic, and Native American neighborhoods are more likely to be near other distressed communities than White urban or suburban neighborhoods.[44]

Step 2: Build a Change Team

The small, core team tasked with revitalizing a neighborhood needs to be trusted by the community; knowledgeable about the neighborhood's culture, history, and assets; able to raise investment; and capable of connecting and convening diverse groups of stakeholders. Residents should have a leadership role, whether initiatives are spearheaded by residents or external organizations.

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44. Dreama Gentry, "Strong Neighborhoods" (Mercatus online workshop organized for this paper, July 12, 2022); and Sampson, *Great American City*.

This step will need to be tailored to the neighborhood and situation, so it may result in various approaches. Some examples are as follows:

- Build a team around an anchor institution (e.g., university, church, hospital, schools, the police).[45]

- Assemble a small, core group consisting of:
    - Leaders of various networks and organizations (an association of associations), including community groups, religious groups, nonprofits, government entities, businesses, and local or locally invested philanthropies.
    - A set of committed volunteers from key institutions.
    - A mix of residents and nonresidents with an interest in the community; the more residents, the better.

- Establish a nonprofit organization to serve as the powerhouse of change. This approach is sometimes called a *neighborhood quarterback* or a *rural development hub*.[46]

All these approaches have a similar recipe for success: they connect diverse stakeholder groups, appoint residents into decision-making roles (e.g., advisory council), leverage outside stakeholders to fill capacity and investment gaps, and have a central driver (whether individual, group, or institution). *These approaches aim to find a balance between the bottom-up aspirations (grassroots) and top-down expertise (external stakeholders), resulting in a hybrid approach to change.* Within the hybrid team, the residents should continue to feel a sense of ownership and empowerment.

The team should be transparent and inclusive and actively involve the community in the process. It can be a formal, structured entity or a looser group; either way, it should meet regularly, be accountable to itself and the community, and be responsive to community feedback and results.

45. Patrick Sharkey, Robert D. Putnam, and Margery Turner, "Rebuilding Communities to Help Close the Opportunity Gap," in *Closing the Opportunity Gap, The Saguaro Seminar* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard Kennedy School, 2016), 50–61, https://cfon.org/assets/2020/02/2016-Opportunity-Gap-Working-Group-Report.pdf.

46. See Purpose Built Communities, "How We Work," accessed October 3, 2022, https://purpose builtcommunities.org/how-we-work/; and Community Strategies Group, *Rural Development Hubs: Strengthening America's Rural Innovation Infrastructure* (Washington, DC: The Aspen Institute, 2019), https://www.aspeninstitute.org/blog-posts/rural-development-hubs-report/.

Step 3: Develop a Shared Vision and Leverage Key Assets

The most important aspects to this step are developing trust, creating buy-in on the importance of a neighborhood, and getting the community to feel invested in the change.[47] The outcome may be a shared vision and agreement on what assets to prioritize. This approach requires consistent community involvement and ensuring that residents feel a sense of belonging.

This step should build hope, trust, and cohesion among residents, so they believe and invest in the change in their own neighborhood.[48] This frequently includes an effort to *gather input from residents on their vision, goals, priorities, aspirations, and current activities using appreciative inquiry*.[49] This effort could take the form of multiple conversations, focus groups, or workshops with different members of the community.[50] Targeted outreach ensures that the process is inclusive.

Concurrently, the change team (defined in step 2) should analyze and prioritize the foundational assets (defined in step 1). Focusing on the community's existing assets—instead of its gaps—mobilizes residents to build on an affirmative aspect of their neighborhood while increasing the likelihood that the effort will positively influence others in the community.[51] Although it may seem counterintuitive to not focus on the gaps, often focusing on the gaps reinforces negative perceptions, turning off investors and demoralizing residents.[52] This approach is called Asset Based Community Development (ABCD), which argues that "communities can drive the development process themselves by identifying and mobilizing existing but often unrecognized assets, and thereby responding to and creating local economic opportunity."[53]

47. Gentry, "Strong Neighborhoods" (Mercatus online workshop organized for this paper, July 12, 2022).

48. Gentry, "Strong Neighborhoods."

49. Daniela Mattos, "Community Capitals Framework as a Measure of Community Development," *Cornhusker Economics*, September 2, 2015, https://agecon.unl.edu/cornhusker-economics/2015/community-capitals-framework; and Mauricio Miller, "Strong Neighborhoods" (Mercatus online workshop organized for this paper, July 12, 2022).

50. Mattos, "Community Capitals Framework."

51. Collaborative for Neighborhood Transformation, "What Is Asset Based Community Development (ABCD)," DePaul University, Asset-Based Community Development Institute, accessed September 29, 2022, https://resources.depaul.edu/abcd-institute/resources/Documents/WhatisAssetBasedCommunityDevelopment.pdf.

52. Aaron Shroyer, Joseph Schilling, and Erika C. Poethig, *Catalyzing Neighborhood Revitalization by Strengthening Civic Infrastructure: Principles for Place-Based Initiatives* (Washington, DC: Urban Institute, April 2019), https://www.urban.org/research/publication/catalyzing-neighborhood-revitalization-through-strengthening-civic-infrastructure.

53. Collaborative for Neighborhood Transformation, "What Is Asset Based Community Development (ABCD)."

Sometimes, what residents think their community needs is different from what they themselves want in a community. Majora Carter discovered this during her work in the South Bronx. Residents said their community needed more low-income housing, homeless shelters, and health clinics, but they wanted to live in a community with family restaurants and parks. Carter argues in *Reclaiming Your Community* that some residents in distressed communities have been trained to think of their community only as poor and distressed and therefore may struggle to see its potential or value. In these cases, an aspirational individual or organization may need to spearhead developing a positive vision while still drumming up local support.

To analyze a neighborhood's assets, the change team can use different tools, such as real estate data, market value analysis, and the Urban Institute's Opportunity Zone Community Impact Assessment Tool.[54] Asset mapping and ripple-effect mapping illustrate how investing in one asset can affect other assets and explain potential downstream effects. This exercise should clarify which assets the change team and community should prioritize for the next step.

Step 4: Identify Entry Points for Change

The change team should analyze the social context and assets to identify opportunities to move forward. These opportunities become entry points for change: key leaders and networks, avenues of influence, anchor institutions, assets to leverage or build on, sources of funding, and so forth. Then the team should work with the community to identify specific initiatives that fit these entry points—essentially, designing the first stage of the larger vision. The neighborhood should focus on a few initiatives first, and then expand its purview over time so the initiatives remain manageable and unintimidating.[55]

There are six guidelines for designing and selecting these initiatives. First, ideally, the initiatives should connect or support multiple assets and aim to avoid taking actions at the expense of other assets.[56] Second, they should bolster the collective action capacity of the neighborhood by supporting local leaders, institutions, and networks. Third, they should attract individuals of diverse income levels and capabilities to the community while building on its history, traditions,

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54. Solomon Greene, Brett Theodos, Kathryn Reynolds, Brady Meixell, and Martha Fedorowicz, *Opportunity Zone Community Impact Assessment Tool: User Guide* (Washington, DC: Urban Institute, January 2020), https://www.urban.org/sites/default/files/publication/101483/opportunity_zone _community_impact_assessment_tool_user_guide_2.pdf.

55. Mattos, "Community Capitals Framework."

56. WealthWorks (website), accessed September 30, 2022, https://www.wealthworks.org/connect.

and culture. Fourth, they should be assessed for scalability. Do they provide an opportunity to achieve bigger results later? Do they serve as a catalyst for further changes? Fifth, they should bolster ties and linkages with stronger neighborhoods or areas and networks, increasing opportunity and decreasing isolation. Finally, sixth, they should be founded on proven strategies for revitalization.

These guidelines highlight the need for a multifaceted, multipronged effort. (A summary of these guidelines can be found in appendix B.)

Step 5: Build a Coalition for Action

Reach out and connect diverse groups horizontally—both across sectors and social groups (within or across neighborhoods)—according to the entry points for change (defined in step 4). This coalition is the broader group augmenting the permanent change team focused on supporting the implementation of the plan developed. It needs to buy into the vision for the neighborhood, so communication, transparency, and active stakeholder participation are key.

Approach possible partners—including philanthropies, government departments, nonprofits, and companies—to participate in the implementation. Start with the most willing. Promote collaboration and alignment across organizations, and, using meta data points (as described in the main text), ensure that everyone is focused on the larger picture rather than being fixated on solving one or more problems in a siloed manner. Where possible, blend public and philanthropic resources to take advantage of different funding streams and accelerate work.[57]

Building the coalition is a participatory process that brings the community and various stakeholders together. The community and coalition should have regular, inclusive meetings to discuss their agreed-upon common indicators and performance metrics. Furthermore, the change team will need to communicate regularly to all stakeholders to prevent misinterpretations or misunderstandings; change can be difficult, and good communication will limit detractors.[58]

Step 6: Build and Maintain Momentum

This step establishes a cycle of learning, measuring, refining, and reiterating while also celebrating progress. Throughout all the steps, the change team needs to preserve the community's trust by producing tangible results. Its focus should

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57. Shroyer, Schilling, and Poethig, *Catalyzing Neighborhood Revitalization*.
58. Carter, *Reclaiming Your Community*.

shift depending on the stage of revitalization. In the beginning, establishing early wins builds momentum and encourages more organizations and residents to participate (as the team proves commitment and builds trust). As the work advances, the team should look for tipping points—things that shift the revitalization process or the neighborhood itself into a different state—and for ways to scale up successful efforts.[59] Tipping points can be positive (e.g., improve the neighborhood) or negative (e.g., lose community trust). The change team should work toward positive tipping points, and once reached, leverage them to expand and accelerate the process to build a virtuous cycle that feeds on itself. Conversely, the team should develop prevention strategies to avoid negative tipping points. No matter the stage, the change team, coalition for action, and community should all celebrate positive changes and change agents. They should applaud everyone's hard work, boost morale, and highlight the possibility of further progress!

In some cases, it may be helpful to supplement the change team's role with a citywide or regional mechanism to sustain progress. This can be a formal entity, such as Building the Engine of Community Development in Detroit,[60] which provides a space for stakeholders throughout the city to gather and to develop and implement ideas on community development or a reimagination of the neighborhood quarterback.
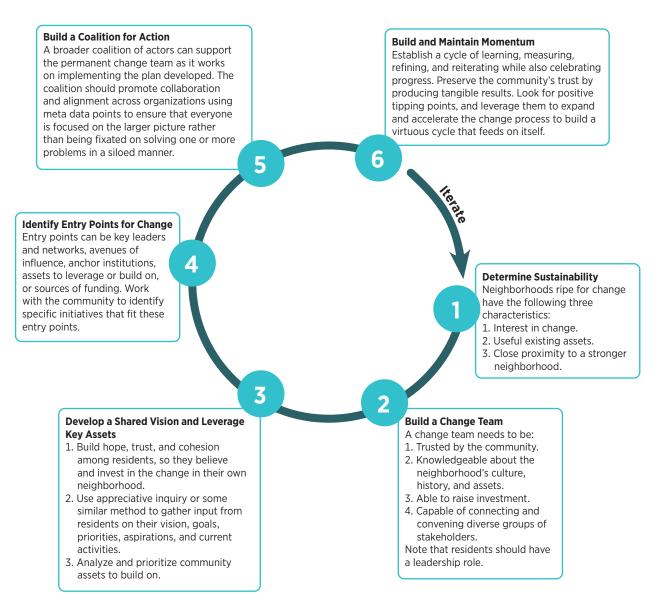
The change team and the entire community need to learn from the process—what works, what does not work, what should be changed—and invest those lessons into subsequent initiatives as well as into the policies and programs of various contributing organizations. Efforts are refined based on these lessons and reiterated based on their outcomes. This virtuous cycle requires tracking and measuring progress (see figure 6).

Setting clear goals is essential. But it is also important to avoid overly prescriptive formulas for how these goals might be achieved. Success, however it is defined, will inevitably depend on agility, adaptability, and persistence in the face of a fluid landscape. Initiatives should thus ensure that there is ample scope to monitor, evaluate, learn, adapt, and reformulate. Metrics used should allow for small experimental or incremental steps toward a goal rather than all-or-nothing scenarios. Funding mechanisms should be designed to respond rapidly to opportunities, with programming that can be altered as needs evolve. Change is accomplished through refining, reiterating, and scaling solutions to ensure positive, inclusive, and sustainable effect.

59. University of Southampton, "Thresholds and Tipping Points," accessed June 17, 2022, http://www.complexity.soton.ac.uk/theory/_Thresholds_and_Tipping_Points.php.

60. Building the Engine of Community Development in Detroit (website), accessed October 3, 2022, https://buildingtheengine.com/about/.

FIGURE 6. INFLUENCE AND ENGAGEMENT FRAMEWORK

Build a Coalition for Action
A broader coalition of actors can support the permanent change team as it works on implementing the plan developed. The coalition should promote collaboration and alignment across organizations using meta data points to ensure that everyone is focused on the larger picture rather than being fixated on solving one or more problems in a siloed manner.

Build and Maintain Momentum
Establish a cycle of learning, measuring, refining, and reiterating while also celebrating progress. Preserve the community's trust by producing tangible results. Look for positive tipping points, and leverage them to expand and accelerate the change process to build a virtuous cycle that feeds on itself.

Iterate

Identify Entry Points for Change
Entry points can be key leaders and networks, avenues of influence, anchor institutions, assets to leverage or build on, or sources of funding. Work with the community to identify specific initiatives that fit these entry points.

Determine Sustainability
Neighborhoods ripe for change have the following three characteristics:
1. Interest in change.
2. Useful existing assets.
3. Close proximity to a stronger neighborhood.

Develop a Shared Vision and Leverage Key Assets
1. Build hope, trust, and cohesion among residents, so they believe and invest in the change in their own neighborhood.
2. Use appreciative inquiry or some similar method to gather input from residents on their vision, goals, priorities, aspirations, and current activities.
3. Analyze and prioritize community assets to build on.

Build a Change Team
A change team needs to be:
1. Trusted by the community.
2. Knowledgeable about the neighborhood's culture, history, and assets.
3. Able to raise investment.
4. Capable of connecting and convening diverse groups of stakeholders.
Note that residents should have a leadership role.

APPENDIX B: EXAMPLES OF SUCCESS STORIES

The following four neighborhoods applied the six steps in appendix A to create positive change.

Bronzeville, Chicago[61]

Step 1: Determine suitability

- Interest in change.
- Existing assets: public transit, major employers, sports arena, and rich history.
- Relation to stronger neighborhood: connected to Lake Michigan and downtown Chicago.

Step 2: Build a change team

- The change team is led by a small, core group of local economic development organizations like the 51st Street Business Association and the Quad Communities Development Corporation.

Step 3: Develop a shared vision and leverage key assets

- Many projects were driven by community-led planning, but it is unknown if a shared overall vision was developed.
- In analyzing the assets, the change team conducted a retail scan, which demonstrated over $175 million worth of concentrated buying power per square mile, exceeding the city of Chicago's average and suggesting untapped potential for retail growth. The team prioritized the neighborhood's history and culture assets.

Step 4: Identify entry points for change

- The change team focused revitalization efforts on Bronzeville's major commercial corridors, prioritizing projects that addressed the housing and retail needs of residents, such as mixed-use developments (i.e., mixed-income housing with ground retail).

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61. Hannah White, "Opportunities for Transformative Placemaking: Bronzeville, Chicago," *Brookings Institution*, November 9, 2018, https://www.brookings.edu/research/opportunities-for-transformative-placemaking-bronzeville-chicago/.

Step 5: Build a coalition for action

- The change team worked with a variety of stakeholders, including local government agencies, developers, businesses, local organizations, and residents.

Step 6: Build and maintain momentum

- Complementing the main projects, the change team made smaller efforts to build and maintain momentum. For example, it facilitated neighborhood branding and beautification efforts to reinforce a sense of place and history (place-specific), opened an arts and recreation center, and established regular arts and music festivals.

11th Street Bridge Park, Washington, DC[62]

Step 1: Determine suitability

- Interest in change.
- Existing assets: Anacostia River and public transit.
- Relation to stronger neighborhood: across the river from Capitol Hill.

Step 2: Build a change team

- Building Bridges Across the River (BBAR), a nonprofit established in 1997, leads this work; it focuses solely on the Anacostia community.

Step 3: Develop a shared vision and leverage key assets

- BBAR held hundreds of neighborhood meetings with residents on both sides of the bridge and wove the feedback into the park design.
- Affected communities drove the design. Furthermore, BBAR partnered with the Urban Institute to create measurable goals.
- It is unknown how assets were analyzed or prioritized.

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62. Scott Kratz, "How a Washington, DC Park Can Serve as a Model for Bridging Social and Economic Divides," *Brookings Institution*, July 9, 2019, https://www.brookings.edu/blog/the-avenue/2019/07/09/how-a-washington-d-c-park-can-serve-as-a-model-for-bridging-social-and-economic-divides/; and Building Bridges Across the River, "Bridging DC," accessed October 3, 2022, https://bbardc.org/bridging-dc/.

Step 4: Identify entry points for change

- BBAR launched an Equitable Development Plan to outline housing, workforce, small business, and cultural equity strategies to drive inclusive growth. For example, BBAR offered a construction training program to Anacostia residents so they could gain employment in park construction.

Step 5: Build a coalition for action

- The BBAR leveraged philanthropy, local and external business partners, community development financial institutions, local government, nonprofits, and residents to build and implement this multifaceted plan.

Step 6: Build and maintain momentum

- The BBAR expanded to meet residents' needs and address barriers. For example, it organized a club to support local residents to become homebuyers—a quick win—held workshops to empower residents to organize and lead change, and created a Community Land Trust to provide permanent affordable housing.

East Lake, Atlanta[63]

Step 1: Determine suitability

- Interest in change spurred by Thomas G. Cousins, an Atlanta businessman.

- Existing assets: rich history and golf course.

- Relation to stronger neighborhood: located in inner-city Atlanta.

Step 2: Build a change team

- Thomas G. Cousins set up the East Lake Foundation in 1995 to serve as the neighborhood quarterback.

Step 3: Develop a shared vision and leverage key assets

- East Lake Foundation worked with residents, local and state governments, and private partners on a holistic model for revitalization, which was originally centered on creating a new mixed-income community.

63. Wilson Center, "Creating Communities of Hope and Opportunity: The Revitalization of East Lake," March 27, 2007, https://www.wilsoncenter.org/event/creating-communities-hope-and -opportunitythe-revitalization-east-lake; and East Lake Foundation, "An Extraordinary Evolution," accessed October 3, 2022, https://www.eastlakefoundation.org/our-impact/history/.

- The foundation met weekly with the Atlanta Housing Authority and representatives from the East Lake Meadows Tenants' Association to work on a plan.

Step 4: Identify entry points for change

- East Lake Foundation used development of mixed-income housing as an entry point for change. For example, it replaced substandard public housing with small mixed-income rental apartment buildings.

Step 5: Build a coalition for action

- The founder of East Lake Foundation, a wealthy businessman, leveraged his properties, including a local golf course, and his network to raise the initial funds. The foundation then built a coalition with philanthropy, local government bodies (e.g., Atlanta Housing Authority), businesses, and nonprofits.

Step 6: Build and maintain momentum

- The housing development was the first in a long list of activities to revitalize East Lake. Other examples include turning an elementary school into a charter school, and housing it in a light-filled building connected to a YMCA that is used by the community for both recreation and meetings.

- As the neighborhood flourished—reaching a tipping point with 50 percent of housing at market rate and median home value jumping from $47,000 to $153,000—the East Lake Foundation has adapted its work to preserving the community's affordable housing stock.

Hunts Point Riverside Park, New York[64]

Step 1: Determine suitability

- Interest in change with strong local leader driving it.

- Existing assets: Bronx River.

- Relation to stronger neighborhood: connected to New York City.

64. Jay Farbstein, Emily Axelrod, Robert Shibley, and Richard Wener, *Urban Transformation: 2009 Rudy Bruner Award for Urban Excellence* (Cambridge, MA: Bruner Foundation, 2009), 56–86, https://www.rudybruneraward.org/wp-content/uploads/2009/01/05-Hunts-Point-Riverside-Park-1.pdf; and Carter, *Reclaiming Your Community*.

Step 2: Build a change team

- Majora Carter, on behalf of THE POINT Community Development Corporation, formed a change team with community boards, the Bronx River Working group, and the Bronx River Project (supported by city government).

Step 3: Develop a shared vision and leverage key assets

- The change team convened community groups, elected officials, and New York City government bodies to discuss the park's future. It also met with residents about the possibilities.

- The team prioritized the Bronx River, an untapped asset, as the anchor institution. The team used this asset to leverage other community assets— for example, to better connect the neighborhood with other communities in New York.

Step 4: Identify entry points for change

- Creating a green space by the Bronx River in Hunts Point had a sense of urgency because of an upcoming event along the entire Bronx River.

- The change team held community cleanups, which served as quick wins and got the community involved and excited.

Step 5: Build a coalition for action

- The change team worked with numerous local and state government agencies and officials and collaborated with other community development bodies and nonprofits. Local and state governments provided significant funding, especially as the work scaled.

Step 6: Build and maintain momentum

- A successful 2017 event spanning the Bronx River served as a catalyst for additional activities celebrating the community asset and its revitalization. The event also changed the community's perception of itself and spurred additional projects and organizations focused on the South Bronx.

- The work scaled by turning a green space into a formal park and connecting the park to the other boroughs via bike and walking trails.

APPENDIX C: REVITALIZATION GUIDELINES

The revitalization guidelines outline strategies for improvement and key obstacles to place-based change.

Frameworks for Revitalization

Several frameworks have been developed to highlight key areas that are necessary to revitalize neighborhoods and make positive change self-sustaining. Many of them emphasize similar characteristics, and they are listed below:

- *Built landscape* should include high-quality mixed-income housing,[65] a variety of amenities that increases the attractiveness of the area, and first-rate transportation links. The housing and amenities should be geared toward families and children—the group most influenced by the social context and most likely to build the kind of social institutions that change a neighborhood.

- *Economy* should provide ample employment opportunities for residents by nurturing the development of skills, neighborhood investment, and local businesses while connecting residents and companies to regional markets, networks, and opportunities.

- *Social environment* should consist of strong family and community support structures and have the necessary infrastructure, institutions, facilities, and programs to advance community wellness. These structures should represent distinct cultural identities, promote interaction and trust across different segments of the population, and ensure residents are capable of collective action to influence key regional organizations and participate as co-owners in initiatives to improve their neighborhoods.

- *Education* should provide ample learning opportunities for babies (and their mothers), children, and youth, such that they can successfully develop their talents, build civic capacities, embrace opportunities for communal leadership, and enter college or high-level vocational programs that eventually lead to careers and a commitment to giving back to their neighborhoods.

Each framework, however, has a slightly different approach:

- *Asset Based Community Development (ABCD)* offers a strategy for sustainable community-driven development that mobilizes individuals,

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65. If a place was originally poor, this can attract the middle class to the area and enable existing residents to either move into better rentals or buy their homes.

associations, and institutions to come together to build on the assets already found in the community. It categorizes assets into five groups: individuals, associations, institutions, physical assets, and connections.

- Blue Meridian Partners' *Place Matters Framework* focuses on both the individual and the community. On the individual level, it looks at the educational and adult milestones and racial experience. This experience is surrounded by the broader community context, which includes the social environment and political capital, built environment, economic environment, and public systems and infrastructure.

- Brooking Institution's *Anne T. and Robert M. Bass Center for Transformative Placemaking Framework* offers a four-pronged approach to transformative placemaking: nurture an economic ecosystem, support a built environment, foster a vibrant and cohesive social environment, and encourage civic structures.

- Brooking Institution's *Anne T. and Robert M. Bass Center for Transformative Placemaking Playbook on Community-Centered Economic Inclusion* uses lessons learned from efforts in Indianapolis, Philadelphia, and Los Angeles to provide guidance on implementing a "community-centered economic inclusion" approach to build wealth in underinvested places. It offers advice on selecting subgeographies, organizing stakeholders, analyzing market opportunities and barriers, committing to a community-focused plan, and developing accountability and sustainability mechanisms.

- *Cornelia and Jan Flora's Community Capitals Framework (CCF)* identifies seven types of capital or assets that are then analyzed to understand the various elements, resources, and relationships within a community and their contribution to the community's operations. These seven capital types—natural, cultural, human, social (bonding and bridging), political, financial, and built—support a healthy ecosystem, vital economy, and social well-being.

- *Main Street America Approach* develops a transformation strategy or path for revitalization through work in four areas: economic vitality, design (physical and visual assets), promotion (image and appeal of the central district), and organization (foundation for sustainable change). It provides some ready-to-use strategies.[66]

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66. Main Street America, "Catalyst Strategies 'Cheat Sheet,'" accessed October 4, 2022, https://higher logicdownload.s3.amazonaws.com/NMSC/390e0055-2395-4d3b-af60-81b53974430d/UploadedImages /Resource_Center/Toolkits/Main_Street_Approach_Toolkit/Catalyst_Strategies_Summary_Matrix.pdf.

- *Purpose Built Communities*'s approach establishes a neighborhood quarterback—a single-purpose, independent nonprofit—to lead the efforts to develop mixed-income housing, create a cradle-to-college education pipeline, and improve community wellness.

What Research Says

Different researchers and organizations have focused on different keys to success. The list below outlines proven policies and programs relating to three components: upward mobility, collective efficacy, and the physical environment.

Enhance *upward mobility* as follows:

- Limited intergenerational mobility is connected to place. Target the five factors that explain 76 percent of variance in mobility.[67]

  — *Segregation:* Decrease residential segregation (e.g., fraction of workers commuting less than 15 minutes to work).

  — *Inequality:* Decrease income inequality within the bottom 99 percent of the population.

  — *School quality:* Improve test scores and lower dropout rates at K–12 schools.

  — *Social capital:* Increase social capital, which is defined as the strength of social networks and community involvement (e.g., percentage of religious individuals, voter turnout rates, percentage of people who return their census forms, participation in community organizations).

  — *Family structure:* Improve family stability.

- Local labor market conditions, rates of migration, and access to higher education have no systematic correlation with mobility.[68]

Increase *collective efficacy*, which is defined as social cohesion and shared expectations for control, as follows:

- Design the community layout to include gathering points or "third places"—spaces that are not for residential or work purposes, such as

67. Chetty, Hendren, Kline, and Saez, "Where Is the Land of Opportunity?"
68. Chetty, Hendren, Kline, and Saez, "Where Is the Land of Opportunity?"

coffee shops, public squares, or libraries.[69] This strengthens bonding ties and can foster bridging and linking ties.

- Improve resident stability through increased homeownership and reduced resident transiency.[70] This builds residents' attachment to the community and rates of participation in activities, which promotes social networks and associations.

- Increase organizational density and organizational-based resources to enhance a neighborhood's collective action capacity across all diversity levels.

  — Organizations promote regular interactions among residents, forging stronger social bonds, a collective identity, and greater expectation of mutual action.

  — Build networks between organizations to solidify relations irrespective of leadership and strengthen horizontal links among institutions.[71] Strong links between institutions enables the community to better cooperate internally and advocate for resources externally.[72]

  — Organizations provide the neighborhood with unique access to resources, such as block grants, alcohol/drug programs, the local newspaper, or afterschool recreational programs for youths.[73] Bringing new nonprofit or association chapters to the neighborhood or establishing new organizations could provide access to new resources and support the public control.

- Provide incentives or rewards for those who volunteer through programs such as time banking or community currency.[74]

- Establish social events (e.g., parades, block parties, discussions) to increase trust.[75] Events relating to the neighborhood's history and culture can develop a shared identity.

- Encourage the establishment of informal social control groups, especially for children, such as neighborhood watch programs, block groups, and

69. Aldrich and Meyer, "Social Capital and Community Resilience."
70. Sampson, *Great American City*.
71. Sampson, *Great American City*, 351.
72. Sampson, "What 'Community' Supplies."
73. Sampson, *Great American City*, 169 and 191.
74. Aldrich and Meyer, "Social Capital and Community Resilience."
75. Aldrich and Meyer, "Social Capital and Community Resilience."

According to the Urban Institute, the Philadelphia Horticultural Society has cleaned vacant lots by planting trees and installing fences since 1974, and this effort has led to huge changes. Property values increased by 17 to 37 percent; greened lots were associated with decreased neighborhood violence and better mental health; removing abandoned buildings and greening vacant lots led to 39 percent reduction in gun violence; and each dollar spent repairing vacant lots yielded $26 return to taxpayers and savings of $333.

Source: Shroyer, Schilling, and Poethig, *Catalyzing Neighborhood Revitalization*, 18–19, https://www.urban.org /sites/default/files/publication/100033/catalyzing_neighborhood_revitalization_by_strengthening_civic _infrastructure_1.pdf.

tenant associations.[76] These groups should be nurturing, with an expectation for action.

- Develop bridging ties by connecting residents to stronger neighborhoods, often through organizational involvement, such as religious or sports groups. Bridging ties should span across social groups, such as class or race, and provide more employment and informational opportunities.[77]

- Implement community policing based on integrating crime policy, with efforts to build networks of informal social control. This could include holding meetings between residents and the police in a neutral location.[78]

- Support reentry programs for ex-prisoners, especially with regard to the job market.[79] Neighborhoods with an above-average portion of people in managerial/professional jobs have less violence.[80]

Improve *physical environment* and public spaces as follows:

- Clean up unoccupied lots and vacant properties, which are the most prominent symbol of a distressed community. There are many successful case studies of turning abandoned land or vacant properties into gardens or parks.[81] If maintenance is a concern, even a simple, fenced green space is effective at changing residents' attitudes about their neighborhood. This transformation costs about $1,000 to $1,500.[82]

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76. Sampson, *Great American City*.
77. Aldrich and Meyer, "Social Capital and Community Resilience."
78. Sampson, *Great American City*.
79. Sampson, *Great American City*.
80. Sampson, *Great American City*.
81. Mallach, *The Divided City*.
82. Mallach, *The Divided City*, 180.

- Improve public spaces using Project for Public Spaces's "Power of 10+" rule, which states that places thrive when users have 10+ reasons to be there (e.g., places to sit, playgrounds, art, music, food). Ideally, some of these activities will be unique to the location, reflecting the culture and history of the surrounding community.[83]

- Create a healthy physical environment for residents by keeping streets and sidewalks in good condition, ensuring streetlights work, and planting shade trees.[84] A city street should have three qualities: (a) clear boundaries between private and public spaces; (b) consistent "eyes upon the street, eyes belonging to . . . the natural proprietors of the street";[85] and (c) regular use, so that there are almost always people on the street.[86]

83. Project for Public Spaces, "The Power of 10+," accessed October 4, 2022, https://www.pps.org /article/the-power-of-10.
84. Mallach, *The Divided City*, 271.
85. Jane Jacobs, *The Death and Life of Great American Cities* (New York: Vintage, 1963).
86. Purpose Built Communities, "How We Work."

APPENDIX D: USEFUL RESOURCES

This appendix provides a list of relevant experts and organizations, along with a full bibliography.

Key Experts and Organizations

- Alan Mallach, https://communityprogress.org/about/our-team/alan-mallach/

- The American Assembly-Columbia University, *Middle Neighborhoods: Action Agenda for a National Movement,* https://americanassembly.org/publications-blog/middle-neighborhoods-action-agenda-for-a-national-movement

- The Aspen Institute, Community Strategies Group, and Rural Development Hubs, https://www.aspeninstitute.org/blog-posts/rural-development-hubs-report/

- Blue Meridian Partners, https://www.bluemeridian.org/funds/place-matters/

- Brookings Institution's Anne T. and Robert M. Bass Center for Transformative Placemaking, https://www.brookings.edu/center/anne-t-and-robert-m-bass-center-for-transformative-placemaking/

- Daniel Aldrich, Northeastern University, https://cssh.northeastern.edu/faculty/daniel-aldrich/

- David Edwards, https://www.linkedin.com/in/david-edwards-98174214/

- Emily Talen, Urbanism Lab, University of Chicago, https://urbanism.uchicago.edu/content/neighborhood

- Majora Carter, http://www.majoracartergroup.com/home.html

- Opportunity Insights, https://opportunityinsights.org/neighborhoods/

- Patrick Sharkey, Princeton University, https://www.patricksharkey.net/

- Purpose Built Communities, https://purposebuiltcommunities.org/

- Raj Chetty, Harvard University, https://rajchetty.com/

- Robert Sampson, Harvard University, http://robertjsampson.com/about

- Urban Institute, https://www.urban.org/research-area/neighborhoods-cities-and-metros

Organizations with Regard to the Built Environment

- Center for Community Progress, https://communityprogress.org/
- Congress for the New Urbanism, https://www.cnu.org/
- Main Street America, https://www.mainstreet.org/home
- PlacemakingX and PlacemakingUS, https://www.placemakingus.org/
- Project for Public Spaces, https://www.pps.org/

Organizations with Regard to the Economy

- The Chalmers Center and Steve Corbett and Brian Fikkert's book *When Helping Hurts*, https://chalmers.org/resources/books/when-helping -hurts/
- Common Future, https://www.commonfuture.co/
- KHEPRW Institute, https://kheprw.org/
- Local Initiatives Support Corporation, https://www.lisc.org/our-initiatives /economic-development/
- National Coalition for Community Capital, https://www.nc3now.org /mission-vision-values.html
- Neighborhood Economics, https://neighborhoodeconomics.org/
- Strong Towns, https://www.strongtowns.org/
- W.E. Upjohn Institute for Employment Research, https://www.upjohn .org/about/upjohn-team/staff/timothy-j-bartik
- WealthWorks, https://www.wealthworks.org/

Organizations with Regard to Education

- Collaborative for Neighborhood Transformation, https://www .neighborhoodtransformation.net/about-us/
- Communities in Schools, https://www.communitiesinschools.org/
- Harlem Children's Zone and the William Julius Wilson Institute, https://hcz.org/

- Leadership Foundations, https://www.leadershipfoundations.org/team/
- Partners for Education, https://www.partnersfored.org/

Organizations with Regard to Social Dynamics

- Communio, https://communio.org/join-communio/
- Community Foundation Opportunity Network, https://cfon.org/about/
- Community Renewal International, https://communityrenewal.us/
- Parish Collective, https://www.parishcollective.org/
- Reimagining the Civic Commons, https://civiccommons.us/about/

Organizations with Regard to Case Studies

- Bronzeville in Chicago, Illinois, https://www.brookings.edu/research/opportunities-for-transformative-placemaking-bronzeville-chicago/
- Building Bridges Across the River (BBAR) in Washington, DC, https://bbardc.org/
- Building the Engine for Community Development in Detroit, Michigan, https://buildingtheengine.com/about/
- East Lake Foundation in Atlanta, Georgia, https://www.eastlakefoundation.org/contact/
- Life Remodeled in Detroit, Michigan, https://liferemodeled.org/
- Memphis River Parks Partnership in Memphis, Tennessee, https://www.memphisriverparks.org/
- Thread in Baltimore, Maryland, https://www.thread.org/
- University City District (UCD) in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, https://www.universitycity.org/transforming-public-spaces

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