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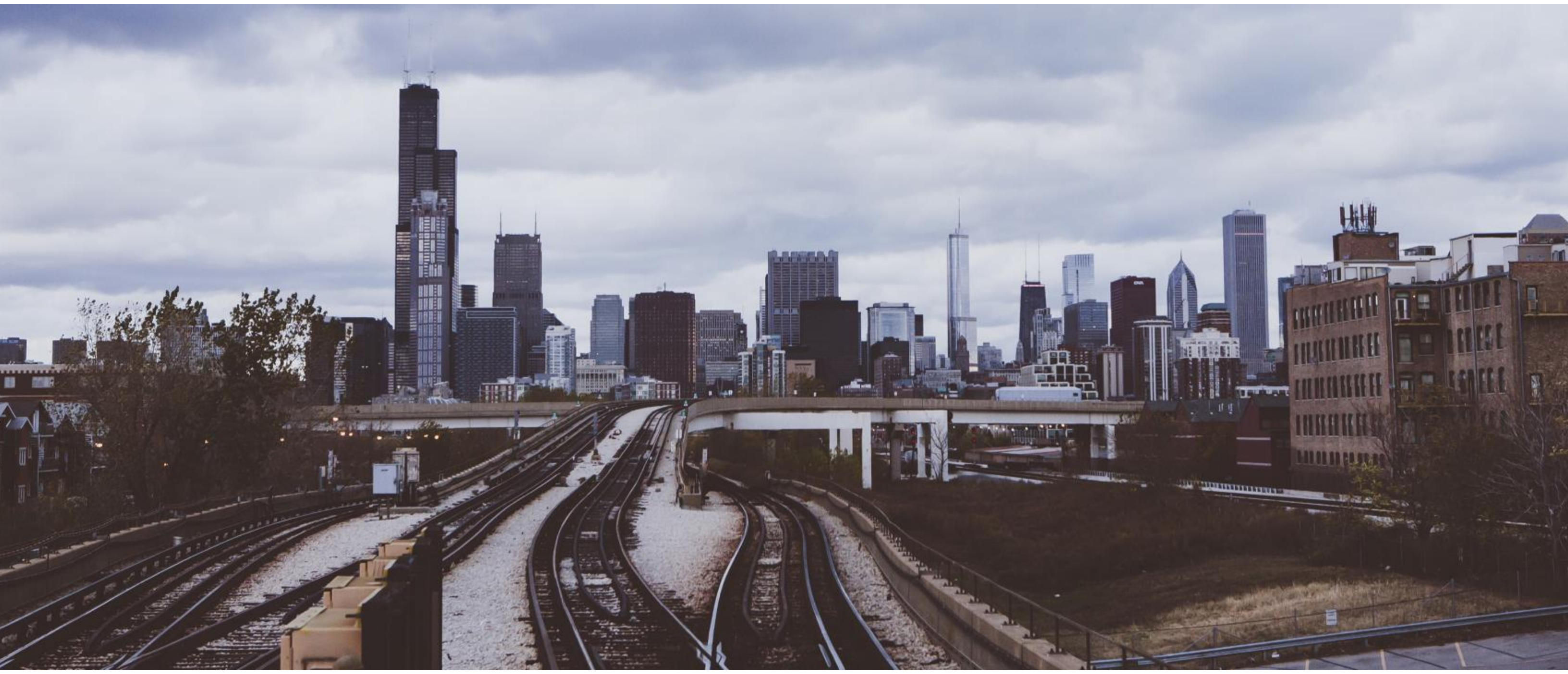

RESEARCH REPORT

# Catalyzing Neighborhood Revitalization by Strengthening Civic Infrastructure

## Principles for Place-Based Initiatives


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# Catalyzing Neighborhood Revitalization by Strengthening Civic Infrastructure

Addressing neighborhood disparities has become more important as recent socioeconomic research has shown that where you grow up strongly impacts your economic mobility, well-being, and health. The public and philanthropic sectors have traditionally sought to reduce these disparities through place-based revitalization initiatives that aim to make every neighborhood safe and healthy and connect their residents to high-quality services, schools, and jobs (Poethig, Milner, et al. 2018). Place-based revitalization initiatives share a few common characteristics. They concentrate resources in a specific geography; combine physical revitalization with the provision of services (e.g., health, education, and job training programs); leverage existing institutions, networks, and capital; and engage local leaders and residents. These initiatives often rely on real estate development projects to marshal additional resources, attract private investment, and catalyze other physical asset improvements and programming that help increase opportunities for neighborhood residents. But place-based initiatives have a mixed track record on whether and how much local residents benefit from such redevelopment. Thus, the public and philanthropic sectors continue to explore and test new models to revitalize neighborhoods.

Recent place-based initiatives more intentionally connect and align physical asset revitalization with strategies to develop social capital (i.e., the individual and collective relationships that facilitate collaborations and a sense of social cohesion and mutual support). This blended approach of place-based work focuses on using the development process to strengthen civic infrastructure with the goal of creating more equitable outcomes and increasing community benefits. Civic infrastructure is "made up of places, policies, programs and practices that enable us to connect with one another, to address our shared concerns, to build community and to solve public problems."[1] Investing in place-based initiatives that build and enhance civic infrastructure means that these investments must work within the larger ecosystem of actors, institutions, and policies present in a neighborhood both at start of the initiative and over time (Greenspan and Mason 2017). Collaborating across sectors, engaging residents, aligning resources, and deploying capital require a process, and the field is still determining what works. Making investments that can both enhance physical assets and strengthen civic infrastructure is still more art than science.

The Chicago Prize, a 2019 philanthropic challenge of the Pritzker Traubert Foundation, presents an opportunity to demonstrate how physical revitalization projects that strengthen civic infrastructure can catalyze economic activity that improves outcomes for residents. The Chicago Prize will award a $10 million grant to a community-led initiative that invests in the physical revitalization of neighborhood assets on the South or West Side of Chicago. The Chicago Prize is distinct from many past place-based efforts because it provides flexible, patient capital, and it encourages creative use of grant dollars. The hope is that these unrestricted resources can align other capital and build neighborhood organizations' capacities within the targeted area, leading to a transformative project that produces positive effects for residents. Using the John D. and Catherine T. MacArthur Foundation's 100&Change competition model, the Chicago Prize is designed to generate innovative and community-led solutions that will improve physical assets and generate economic and social benefits while mitigating the risk of displacing current residents.

This report offers some core principles, gleaned from years of place-based practice and research, that can provide guidance for those involved with the Chicago Prize:

- Apply an asset-based approach
- Match revitalization strategy to neighborhood conditions and context
- Align policies, programs, and investments across sectors, levels, and systems
- Leverage or build on-the-ground capacity to deploy capital
- Generate economic and social benefits for the community
- Promote equity and inclusion

For each principle, we offer a definition, discuss what the field has learned from experience, and offer an example of where it has been well executed. We conclude by discussing how the Chicago Prize could help answer several important questions about place-based revitalization practice going forward.

# Chicago's Community Development Legacy and Context of the Chicago Prize

Chicago has long been a leader in in developing and testing community development strategies to revitalize its distressed and disinvested neighborhoods. Over a century ago, Jane Addams brought attention to the living conditions of low-income, largely white European immigrant communities in

Chicago. She and other sociologists associated with the "Chicago school" argued that urban environments directly shaped human behavior and that the quality of neighborhoods and homes for working-class families deeply mattered to the kinds of success that people could obtain when living in those settings. These arguments spawned an entire field of study with neighborhood change at the center and helped establish Chicago as an incubator for new ideas in urban research and reform movements (Gordon 2004). Despite the reforms driven by Jane Addams's settlement house movement, pernicious private-sector practices of redlining and contract-selling, as well as racially discriminatory public policies, such as urban renewal, accelerated disinvestment in communities of color. Chicago-based advocacy efforts in the early 1970s pressured Congress to pass the Community Reinvestment Act in 1977, which was designed to reverse discriminatory lending practices and channel more resources to low- and moderate-income communities by requiring banks to lend to communities where they collected deposits (Von Hoffman 2012). And the Low-Income Housing Tax Credit, which became law in 1986 and is now the major source of capital for affordable housing, has its roots in the design and investment principles of the Chicago Equity Fund.[2]

Chicago also changed how the nation approaches public housing. In the 1950s and 1960s, Chicago politicians intentionally built public housing in predominantly black neighborhoods that, coupled with disinvestment from those neighborhoods and poor management of the housing, concentrated severe poverty and limited residents' access to opportunity. A successful court challenge by longtime housing advocate Dorothy Gautreaux against the Chicago Housing Authority led to a landmark 1976 US Supreme Court decision to deconcentrate public housing and create opportunities for public housing residents to move to lower-poverty, less racially concentrated neighborhoods. Follow-on national research demonstrations, such as Moving to Opportunity, tested "mobility" programs that focused on equipping people to leave high-poverty neighborhoods. These programs emphasized "people-based" policies, which enable access to resource-rich communities, over "place-based" policies, which expand opportunities within disinvested neighborhoods (Turner 2017). This people-versus-place debate played out in Chicago during the intense planning and implementation of city's Plan for Transformation for its public housing in the late 1990s and early 2000s.

These debates within the field seem counterproductive: government and nonprofit revitalization policies, programs, and investments should advance both goals simultaneously. That is, we should recognize "the importance of neighborhoods in the lives of families but look beyond narrowly defined neighborhood boundaries to address market-wide opportunities and barriers, capitalize on demographic and market trends underway at the regional scale, and envision alternative models of how neighborhoods can function for their residents" (Turner 2017, 306). One of the early illustrations of a more place-conscious approach was MacArthur's New Communities Program. It responded to the historical exclusion of low-income residents from large-scale redevelopment initiatives by creating a more collaborative model that incorporated residents' ideas into a network of redevelopment plans throughout the city (Greenberg et al. 2014; Gonzales 2017). These "quality-of-life plans" empower residents and provide a framework to build human capital and physical assets to collaboratively address issues while also creating a vision for their neighborhood.[3] The New Communities Program mobilized community stakeholders in 14 neighborhoods, including many of the highest-poverty neighborhoods in the city.

As influential as these Chicago-based programs have been for the community development field, they have not been sufficient to overcome the decline and disinvestment still felt by many Chicago neighborhoods and their residents. Despite the efforts of various revitalization initiatives, different place-based strategies have been unable to effectively address underlying structural issues such as segregation, racism, and uneven investment flows. For example, even though public and mission-driven actors invested 10 times more per household in high-poverty neighborhoods than in stable, low-poverty neighborhoods between 2011 and 2017, the median low-poverty neighborhood in Chicago receives over four times as much market investment per household as the median high-poverty neighborhood in Chicago. In other words, the amount of public and mission-driven capital investments in high-poverty neighborhoods does not come close to matching the volume of private capital that flows to low-poverty neighborhoods (Theodos et al., forthcoming).

Given those capital gaps, place-based initiatives in Chicago still struggle to improve the quality of life and provide tangible benefits for all residents. Recent research documents these neighborhood disparities and the impact they have on Chicago's economy. A 2018 Urban Institute study measuring economic and racial inclusion in 274 large US cities ranked Chicago in the bottom 25 percent of cities in terms of overall inclusion, based on indicators such as the education, income, and homeownership gaps between white people and people of color (Poethig, Greene, et al. 2018). Another study, focused on racial and economic segregation, reframed segregation as preventing Chicago from reaching its full potential. It quantified the costs of segregation to the Chicago region in the form of lost wages, lost lives, and lack of education at an estimated $4.4 billion each year (MPC 2017). Part of the challenge is that previous city and philanthropic initiatives and plans did not match neighborhoods' needs or relied on communities and organizations that may not have sufficient capacity and resources to transform these investments into meaningful results. The Chicago Prize seeks to provide that missing piece of capital and capacity building, thereby adding to Chicago's legacy of community development innovation and demonstrating a new model of inclusive place-based revitalization.

# Principles for Developing and Implementing Place-Based Neighborhood Revitalization Initiatives

Place-based revitalization initiatives tailor public and philanthropic resources to match community needs, address neighborhood disparities, and unlock additional private investment. As Hopkins and Ferris (2015) write, “Place is a powerful lens through which to view strategic efforts of philanthropy and government to improve the quality of life in our communities” (97). These place-based policies and programs can take place at the scale of a site (i.e., the specific building or location) or across sites (i.e., neighborhoods or communities), but they must also connect with the broader systems (e.g., parks or libraries) and with public policies (Greenspan and Mason 2018). Because so many systems, institutions, actors, and citizens interact in a community, place-based revitalization initiatives, if done well, pull together disconnected assets and actors to make decisions collaboratively and create a more effective “whole” (Greenspan and Mason 2018; Ferris and Hopkins 2015). Communities and neighborhoods function within the context of citywide and regional markets and networks, so place-based efforts must meaningfully reconnect disinvested places to broader markets. Early in development, leaders of place-based initiatives must identify strong local partners and cultivate relationships with local businesses and residents. These relationships and partnerships serve as the foundation for a more stable climate that can attract private capital and businesses back to the neighborhoods. This forges a more collaborative approach and helps maintain revitalized assets over time.

Place-based initiatives, however, are typically implemented in communities with long histories of failed initiatives and false promises from previous urban redevelopment and community change strategies, which creates hurdles for these new initiatives to overcome. They can suffer from the “big work-around” phenomenon, meaning that new programs launch but do not address underlying issues in the system (such as structural racism) that prevent capital from flowing to distressed communities, or they do not build the capacity to deploy capital in distressed communities (Hecht 2015). To remedy this, new revitalization initiatives must deliberately plan, engage, and partner with residents to better align new capital and programs with existing civic assets and leadership. These important first steps help situate a new intervention within the ecosystem of actors and projects within the neighborhood. In many neighborhoods, for example, current residents and businesses are already working to address shared issues, although they might not think of it as a formal “initiative” (Ferris and Hopkins 2015). Without having a process to incorporate these local dynamics, it is tough to successfully introduce new money and programs into the existing ecosystem and realize intended outcomes (Hecht 2015).

BOX 1

**Paying Closer Attention to Civic Infrastructure**

Community engagement and collaborative partnerships across sectors and geographies have long been critical components of place-based revitalization. These components are designed to foster and expand communities' social capital. These relationships, bonds, and networks within and across neighborhoods can help sustain and steward place-based revitalization efforts long after the initial capital investments. Recent place-based initiatives elevate the importance of strengthening civic infrastructure as a strategy to leverage improved physical spaces and enhance communities' social processes and cultural practices (Greenspan and Mason 2018).

Although specific definitions vary, civic infrastructure describes the relationships between physical places and the social and civic interactions that occur within or are enabled by those places. Sociologist Eric Klinenberg describes how these physical spaces lead to increased positive interactions. "People forge ties in places that have healthy social infrastructure—not necessarily because they set out to build community, but because when people engage in sustained, recurrent interaction, particularly while doing thing they enjoy, relationships inevitability grow."[a] Klinenberg includes a mix of public places (e.g., libraries, schools, playgrounds, and fields), nonprofit organizations (e.g., churches and civic associations), and commercial establishments (e.g., cafes, diners, barber shops, and bookstores) as places where people can assemble and build these social ties.

[a] Eric Klinenberg, "Worry Less about Crumbling Roads, More about Crumbling Libraries," *Atlantic*, September 20, 2018.

In this section, we interpret research and practices from the field to craft six principles that can guide applicants, judges, and other actors involved with the Chicago Prize. Few place-based initiatives have integrated all of these principles into a comprehensive approach that strengthens civic infrastructure, catalyzes neighborhood economic activity, and ultimately improves economic and social outcomes for nearby residents. These principles are as follows:

- Apply an asset-based approach
- Match revitalization strategy to neighborhood context and market conditions
- Align policies, programs, and investments across sectors, levels, and systems
- Leverage or build on-the-ground capacity to deploy capital
- Generate economic and social benefits for the community
- Promote equity and inclusion

We define each principle, discuss what the field has learned about how to execute well on the principle, and provide an example of where that has been done successfully. We hope that by reflecting on what we have learned from past place-based revitalization initiatives and incorporating a civic infrastructure lens, this report will provide insight for how future place-based initiatives can empower local residents and provide a broader range of economic and social benefits.

## Apply an Asset-Based Approach

### WHAT IT MEANS

Discussions of disinvested neighborhoods often focus on current problems, such as what neighborhoods lack and the barriers that prevent revitalization, rather than on neighborhoods' assets. This deficit narrative can reinforce negative perceptions of those neighborhoods, inhibit the willingness of policymakers to intervene, and limit the interest of private-sector companies and financial institutions to invest. Even highlighting these disparities through research and data that measure neighborhood distress can contribute to perceptions that these neighborhoods do not have assets.

Every neighborhood, no matter its problems, has an array of physical assets, such as its buildings, transportation systems, green spaces, civic or institutional uses, and proximity to strong neighborhoods. Over time, many of these assets have declined through disinvestment, neglect, and the impacts of segregation and structural racism. Neighborhoods also have intangible assets such as a mix of residents, diverse cultures, history, social and civic organizations, and networks of relationships. The strategy for many place-based initiatives involves working on the ground and within policy systems and markets to shift from a mindset of declines and deficits to emphasize building on the strengths of existing assets and opportunities.

### WHAT WE KNOW

Early efforts by community development corporations (CDCs), community-based organizations, and community advocates sought to revitalize the built environment by developing affordable housing; cleaning up vacant lots; and improving streetscapes, main streets, and commercial corridors. By making visible changes to the neighborhood, they sought to leverage initial investments from government and philanthropy (often the only investors in distressed neighborhoods) to increase private-sector confidence and generate additional investments. CDCs and community-based organizations realized, however, that not everyone participated in the development process or, more importantly, benefited from these traditional revitalization initiatives. Further, physical revitalization did not address related deficits in social and civic infrastructure. During the 1990s, asset-based community development emerged as a framework and practice for elevating community leadership and empowering local resident ownership to drive neighborhood revitalization, which in turn would more directly benefit residents (Kretzmann and McKnight 1996). Many community-led revitalization projects, ranging from community gardens and urban greening to local social enterprises and business improvement districts, now apply asset-based community development principles.

Community empowerment and leadership is a cornerstone of asset-based community development, which typically occurs in a few basic steps. First, local stakeholders and residents identify assets. These include a blend of neighborhood groups and institutions, individual resident capacities, physical and civic assets, and the collective history of the place and the people who live there. The next step involves connecting the neighborhood actors, leaders, organizations, and groups with (typically) one institution that serves as the primary connector or coordinator (McKnight 2017). Once these groups are connected, they create a shared vision for their neighborhood that incorporates the strengths of their individual assets. After creating that vision, these groups approach local government, philanthropy, and other nonprofits to provide the resources, technical assistance, and capacity building to implement the vision (McKnight 2017). This theory of revitalization and community development foregrounds citizens as primary actors rather than as just the recipients of services.[4] In asset-based community development, residents and local businesses determine how new investments and initiatives can respond to the desires of community stakeholders. For example, if residents call for improved physical health, place-based strategies could range from creating a new park to building a new grocery store, but the ultimate decision for which strategy to pursue would depend on residents' choice.

#### EXAMPLE: MERCADO CENTRAL

The movement that eventually created Mercado Central in Minneapolis started with an effort within the Latinx community to create a Catholic church. This effort brought many people together, leading to strong relationships among the community. Once the church was created, congregants identified additional areas of common interest, which included economic and workforce development. Congregants then inventoried community talent in these areas: they engaged participants and brainstormed how to use their collective assets to accomplish common goals. This exercise revealed that many respondents had or sought to gain entrepreneurial skills, which led a local CDC to deliver training for would-be entrepreneurs on how to start and develop businesses. The training group subsequently formed a cooperative to allow each business owner to achieve success while supporting others (Snow 2001). The cooperative launched a plan for a real estate development—a community commercial hub that would become Mercado Central— that would support dozens of start-ups, growing enterprises, and more mature businesses.[5] The project received over $600,000 in public grants and loans as well as $2 million from private and philanthropic sources.[6] The businesses housed at Mercado Central together sold $2 million of goods and services in their first year of operations. Many communities create incubators as a first step to support local economic development, but this community in Minneapolis organized first, then identified an incubator as the best fit based on community preferences (Snow 2001). Mercado Central exemplifies how residents can use community assets (e.g., churches and neighborhood associations) to achieve a common purpose, in this case a mechanism that generates economic benefits for the larger community.

## Match Revitalization Strategy to Neighborhood Context and Market Conditions

### WHAT IT MEANS

Many revitalization projects seek to stabilize declining neighborhoods, while others seek to stimulate additional investment and development in transitional neighborhoods in order to push them over a tipping point and ultimately improve neighborhood conditions and residents' quality of life. Traditional revitalization efforts often emphasized large-scale redevelopment projects that treated each neighborhood the same way. Neighborhoods would get the same amount of funding to support a similar range of projects and programs despite differences in their assets, neighborhood conditions, socioeconomic characteristics, market dynamics, and civic capacities. This approach relied on a theory of change that an individual project's catalytic power would spread to adjacent sites, blocks, and neighborhoods. Early redevelopment projects relied on this "one-size-fits-all" model that produced many failed convention centers, shopping malls, and affordable housing projects. Eventually the field evolved and learned from these failures as it began to tailor revitalization strategies to address different types of neighborhood and market conditions.

To match strategy to local context, place-based initiatives must consider the links between socioeconomic barriers that limit resident opportunity in targeted neighborhoods, their proposed interventions, and the regional economy. The theory of change of a given intervention should match local conditions and markets. Therefore, sponsors of place-based initiatives should have a good idea of the current activity occurring within those neighborhoods, how that activity connects with the regional economy, and how their proposed initiatives could spur additional activity in a way that improves outcomes for residents.

### WHAT WE KNOW

Practitioners now pay increased attention to how projects align with diverse neighborhood conditions, specific market opportunities, and other realities on the ground (Ferris and Hopkins 2015). They consider data about physical and market conditions and consumer preferences and purchasing power and work closely with local leaders and residents to select the right blend of policies, programs, and projects to influence trajectories of different neighborhoods. By customizing the interventions, place-based revitalization efforts can be more responsive to dynamic conditions, complement and take full advantage of a neighborhood's civic infrastructure, and better ensure that the effort produces economic and social benefits for the people who live, work, or shop in the community.

Many community development practices have emerged to tailor approaches to neighborhood conditions. Cities, for example, can customize their projects and programs to address a single type of neighborhood. Some place-based initiatives, such as the federal government's HOPE VI and empowerment zones and the Surdna Foundation's Comprehensive Community Revitalization Program in the 1990s, targeted the most distressed neighborhoods. Other programs, such as Minneapolis's Neighborhood Revitalization Program, which invests $20 million a year in the city's neighborhoods, allocated public resources to tailor projects across a range of neighborhood types—from stable and declining to distressed (Turnham and Bonjorni 2004). Together, these and other examples highlight the importance of aligning the mix of place-based programs and projects to the type and trajectory of a neighborhood—now a cornerstone of effective place-based practice.

Practitioners use different strategies and tools to understand community context and neighborhood trajectory. Some synthesize national socioeconomic datasets; others seek to track and measure more regional and local dynamics. The Reinvestment Fund's Market Value Analysis examines national and local real property and real estate data along with property condition surveys to create a typology of neighborhood trajectories that characterize local conditions.[7] Cities such as Baltimore, Philadelphia, and New Orleans have used the Market Value Analysis to identify neighborhoods and deploy corresponding policies and programs. The Market Value Analysis rests on an important policy and market assumption: that scarce public resources alone cannot create a market where none exists. Instead, public subsidies must clear the path for private investment, and interventions in distressed or weak markets should build from nodes of strength. Comprehensive tools, such as those advanced by Economic Innovation Group and Enterprise Community Partners, use indicators of housing stability, vacancy, education, health and well-being, economic security, employment, mobility, and other metrics by zip code or census tract.[8] The Urban Institute created an "investment score" to show the level of investment occurring within every census tract (Theodos, Hedman, and Meixell 2018). Each of these indices helps decisionmakers understand whether that type of investment will gain traction within those particular neighborhoods. Such choices should be made in a way that allows for public input and is consistent with the intended outcomes of the initiative.

#### EXAMPLE: VACANTS TO VALUE

In 2010, Baltimore launched an ambitious program—Vacants to Value (V2V)—to address its mounting inventory of vacant and abandoned homes. V2V involved a portfolio of complementary strategies that were tailored to the city's diverse neighborhood conditions and markets. Acknowledging that it did not have the resources to address every vacant property, the City identified neighborhood clusters where the markets were comparatively stable for streamlined code enforcement coordinated with private investments by infill development contractors. V2V's strategy was established using a 2008 housing market typology created by The Reinvestment Fund. The Reinvestment Fund's Market Value Analysis classifies the city's neighborhoods into 10 categories based on average sale price, sales activity, owner-occupancy rates, foreclosure rates, and number of vacant homes, among other variables (Goldstein 2012). The strongest neighborhoods have high market demand and few, if any, vacant properties. Neighborhoods further down the scale have some market activity but lower average sale prices and higher foreclosure rates. The weakest neighborhoods have little to no demand, have very low housing prices, and have experienced significant population loss.[9] Because V2V targeted its resources where neighborhood and market conditions could support a blend of streamlined code enforcement and private housing rehabilitation, its designation of community development clusters excluded neighborhoods with very strong market demand and neighborhoods with very weak market demand. In neighborhoods with weak market conditions that would require a large public subsidy to make redevelopment feasible, V2V focuses on maintaining existing residents' quality of life through demolition, maintenance and greening of vacant lots, and helping individual homeowners upgrade their homes. The V2V approach to urban redevelopment breaks from an earlier generation of redevelopment strategies in which cities would assemble large tracts of land and then request proposals from large developers. Instead, the city relies on the underlying market fundamentals to drive development and works with developers in neighborhoods that have demand or the potential for demand.

## Align Policies, Programs, and Investments across Sectors, Levels, and Systems

#### WHAT IT MEANS

Place-based revitalization efforts work best when they intersect with site and market factors, broader systems, citywide policies, and relevant social dynamics and cultural contexts. Neighborhood distress stems from a combination of market forces and public policy, and the mechanisms to address distress are spread across sectors and levels of government (Turner et al. 2014). Different sectors, such as local government, philanthropy, and nonprofits, often have their own challenges and sometimes differing or competing goals and visions. Nonprofit developers have to raise multiple layers of financing before they can acquire a property for development. Each source often comes with its own set of complex rules and conditions that nonprofit developers must navigate along with simultaneous attention to in-depth community engagement to ensure the neighborhood supports the project. The private sector has its own challenges independent of the public and nonprofit sectors' challenges. When working on development projects, the private sector may encounter issues in assembling real estate, identifying promising markets, and assembling capital (e.g., loans) to cover design and development costs. Moreover, private redevelopment projects must still meet internal goals for short- and long-term returns on investment to ensure the project and development are financially stable. Where the markets are still weak or even nonexistent, the market may not yet support the returns needed to get the deals done or make them profitable. Thus, it becomes critical to blend private capital with public and philanthropic resources.

No one entity or leader makes revitalization efforts succeed (Greenspan and Mason 2018). Thus, place-based initiatives must be nested within public policies and programs that seek to address the underlying drivers of poverty and distress, which include structural racism and regional market forces. In this way, place-based initiatives can serve as vehicles to connect policy-level changes to efforts on the ground (Ferris and Hopkins 2015). These different policy and program silos also apply to philanthropic, public, and private sector capital, creating multiple challenges for communities trying to assemble resources to complete projects and create lasting change. It is often difficult, in part because of limited incentives, for actors to collaborate across programs and funding streams. Therefore, place-based revitalization efforts are most effective when they infuse capital that also builds on existing plans, investments, community assets, and cross-sector partnerships.

### WHAT WE KNOW

Aggregating and coordinating resources from different sectors makes comprehensive place-based initiatives more feasible and potentially more effective (Ferris and Hopkins 2015). This braiding of funds vertically (across levels of government) and horizontally (across sectors) can harness different programmatic funding streams with the goal of accelerating initiatives and allowing the collaborative to achieve its goals faster and more effectively. Local politics often lead to public dollars being allocated evenly across neighborhoods or council districts, limiting their effectiveness. For example, officials in Dallas cited local politics as the primary cause of its "peanut butter" approach to community development—meaning that local government spread pots of economic development money evenly across neighborhoods no matter the conditions within them.[10] But philanthropic dollars do not face the same political dynamics that make it difficult to coordinate and target resources. For example, the Living Cities Integration Initiative provided $85 million in grants, loans, and program-related investments to five urban regions (Baltimore, Cleveland, Detroit, Newark, and Twin Cities). The funding helped cross-sector coalitions of nonprofits, government, and philanthropy partners devise innovative ways to revitalize and improve access to education, housing, health care, transit, and jobs. But in many places, local government is still the conduit for cross-sector investments because, among other reasons, it administers federal grants (such as Community Development Block Grant and HOME Investment Partnership dollars) and is involved in the creation of neighborhood plans and zoning. Thus, place-based initiatives are often created by, or carried out in concert with, local governments because cities and counties can marshal funding from different sources that comport with their visions for a given neighborhood. Further, integrating these investments into existing plans and processes increases the likelihood that this additional capital can be catalytic and demonstrate more results over the life span of the investment and beyond.

Sustainable improvements to neighborhoods are more likely to occur when interventions lead to relevant policy reform, mobilize resources at various levels of government, and break out of conventional programmatic and institutional boundaries at the neighborhood level (Turner et al. 2014). In addition to braiding capital, aligning policies and programs also extends the potential impact and influence of place-based interventions to the policy and systems scale. That is, place-based initiatives can increase neighborhood organizations' access to and impact of policy and program levers while also helping to expand their capacities to influence the relevant policy systems. For example, efforts in one neighborhood can inform the development of a citywide initiative. To achieve this dynamic, place-based initiatives must create opportunities for neighborhoods to organize. The goal is for that organization to build relationships with other civic actors and ultimately allow neighborhood groups to successfully influence public policy.

### EXAMPLE: NEIGHBORHOODS IN BLOOM

Richmond, Virginia, launched Neighborhoods in Bloom (NiB) as a new targeted neighborhood investment strategy. Previously, the City had scattered its federal Community Development Block Grants and HOME Investment Partnership funds throughout its neighborhoods. This strategy, although politically effective, did not provide sufficient public investment to stimulate additional investment activity or affect targeted indicators. NiB, on the other hand, relied on a data-driven process that categorized neighborhoods based on their current conditions. NiB's success also depended on a close collaboration between the LISC Richmond Office and the city manager that influenced other city agencies. LISC took the lead convening an advisory group that included most of the city's CDCs and neighborhood groups to provide input and buy-in on the process and on neighborhoods that were ultimately selected as target areas. Once the target areas were selected, the City organized a team of public and civic-sector partners to develop a spending and work plan in each area. Between 1999 and 2004, the City spent $16.6 million on property acquisition, demolition, construction, and rehabilitation in NiB neighborhoods, with nearly 80 percent of that coming from CDBG and HOME funding (Galster, Tatian, and Accordino 2006). The City simultaneously enhanced other services, such as code enforcement and rehabilitation programs, within those neighborhoods. Richmond LISC also invested nearly $5 million in predevelopment, construction, rehabilitation, and down-payment assistance, with most of the funding going toward single- and multifamily housing (Accordino, Galster, and Tatian 2005). This LISC funding helped CDCs attract private capital. An evaluation of the program found that this braiding of capital both across sectors (nonprofit and public) and within sectors (City and federal funding) positively affected nearby housing prices. And these nonprofit and public-sector investments reached enough of a critical mass to encourage private development and rehabilitation in these same targeted areas (Accordino, Galster, and Tatian 2005).

## Leverage or Build On-the-Ground Capacity to Deploy Capital

### WHAT IT MEANS

The lack of private capital and reinvestment has starved many neighborhoods of color and created insidious cycles of distress and disinvestment. As Richard Rothstein (2017) outlines in his book *The Color of Law*, the racial segregation of our cities is the result of a long legacy of systematic decisions at all levels of government as well as structural racism in markets. This racial policy and program landscape (e.g., exclusionary zoning, redlining of home sales and bank loans, and segregation of schools and public housing) set in motion decline and disinvestment, which serve as roadblocks to economic opportunity for many communities of color. As these neighborhood populations decrease and poverty continues to concentrate, housing, business, and job markets fluctuate and become unstable, making investments in these neighborhoods a big risk for most mainstream private companies and financial institutions.

Public and philanthropic capital are often the only investments to help stabilize these neighborhoods. Given the dearth of capital, nonprofit organizations in these neighborhoods may have little capacity to absorb resources. Therefore, coordination and collaboration between actors and institutions working in place is a precondition for the successful absorption of capital. Capital absorption capacity is defined as the "ability of communities to effectively use investment capital to serve pressing needs" (Hacke, Wood, and Grace 2012, 2). Within a community or neighborhood, this capacity is not held by one institution or organization. Rather, a variety of stakeholders support the various functions that enable investment to occur. Community-based organizations also provide technical expertise and deliver services, often by designing or offering financial products that fit the context and risk profile of distressed neighborhoods. These capabilities, often provided by community development financial institutions (CDFIs), can help make markets work or create nontraditional products to help deploy capital (Theodos, Fazili, and Seidman 2016). The challenge is in building and enhancing these financial and technical capabilities in relevant community-based organizations to maximize the use of public and nonprofit investments and ensure sufficient return on investment for private capital.

### WHAT WE KNOW

The ability to absorb and deploy capital is not incumbent on one institution, although a single entity often coordinates and facilitates the activities occurring at other partner institutions (Janson 2016). Rather, many stakeholders must support community development functions that enable community investment to increase human capital and social equity (Hacke 2012). Although stakeholders' specific roles can vary, three core functions must be present in a community ecosystem for it to absorb capital (Hacke, Wood, and Urquilla 2018):

- **Shared priorities,** meaning the investment reflects a community's strategic goals and presents actionable opportunities
- **Investible pipeline of deals,** meaning projects are identified, align with public resources, and achieve the shared priorities of the community
- **An enabling environment,** meaning policies and tools are in place to support investment

Although this framework does not provide an "on switch" that allows investors to discern when a community has enough capacity to let investments start flowing, it does provide a guide that can help CDFIs, CDCs, and would-be investors assess the relative strengths and weaknesses within a given ecosystem.

CDFIs, in particular, play an important role in enabling communities to absorb and deploy capital. The mission of CDFIs is to serve low- and moderate-income people and communities (Theodos et al. 2017). In service of that mission, CDFIs essentially serve as public-private partnerships: they connect government, philanthropic, and business sectors, and they help coordinate and execute the deployment of capital in distressed neighborhoods (Fricks 2019; Theodos, Fazili, and Seidman 2016). CDFIs, through flexible grants and programs that fit the needs of the community, provide seed capital and allow local organizations to raise additional private capital (Neri 2019). Although CDFIs initially receive public or mission capital, over time they deploy more private than public capital (Fricks 2019).

CDFIs also play an important intermediary role in distressed neighborhoods, as evidenced by Living Cities' experience in the Integration Initiative. The Integration Initiative was a multiyear project that aimed to increase cross-sector collaboration as a way to improve socioeconomic outcomes for low-income people and to improve the neighborhoods they live in (Siegel and Winey 2014). As work began, Living Cities found a disconnect between the civic institutions that were applying for the programs and the capacity of the on-the-ground intermediaries that were supposed to deploy the capital.[11] Many communities had not completed the interim step of developing capacity that would facilitate deal making, meaning they did not have a CDFI or another entity to play that lead role. Considering the importance of this role, the Integration Initiative shifted its focus to strengthen CDFI capacity in each site. These CDFIs benefited from increased financial resources in the form of debt issuances, but they also became embedded into the governance structure in each site and thus improved their relationships with other community partners (Siegel and Winey 2014).

#### EXAMPLE: ADELANTE PHOENIX!

CDFIs serve an important civic role by connecting disinvested neighborhoods with economic growth. They function as bridges between places that do not have traditional financial options and functioning capital markets (Nowak 2001). For example, Adelante Phoenix!, a partnership of four CDFIs, formed to pursue equitable transit-oriented development after Phoenix, Arizona's light rail system was extended into South Phoenix, a working-class area with a large immigrant population. The goal of this collaborative is to harness the economic development from the new light rail line to benefit residents of nearby disinvested communities. In 2013, they received $6 million from Partnerships for Raising Opportunities in Neighborhoods, a $125 million initiative by JPMorgan Chase, that helped increase their capacity and expand their community engagement (Wood and Shackelford 2018). Each of the partners in Adelante serve different roles. Raza, the largest of the group, helps finance the larger deals and contributes capital to the other three partners. The Neighborhood Economic Development Coalition offers loans and trainings to small business owners. MariSol offers microloans and consumer loans. Trellis provides homeownership counseling and down-payment assistance. As of 2017, the group made $32 million in loans and leveraged $180 million in outside financing, including tax credits, block grants, and other sources of capital. This example highlights the variety of roles that CDFIs play in deploying capital. In the initial stages of working in place, CDFIs share their expertise and help plan projects (von Hoffman and Arck 2017). As projects move along, CDFIs play an intermediary role, often by coordinating outside funding to assemble the resources necessary to advance the project. Even when they are not in the lead, CDFIs can align their programs to support geographies that other initiatives target (von Hoffman 2019). The roles that CDFIs play, which vary based on context, are vital to successfully deploy capital.

## Generate Economic and Social Benefits for the Community

### WHAT IT MEANS

Economic benefits remain the primary goal of many revitalization initiatives. These benefits include direct impacts, such as increases in property values and affordable housing units, and indirect impacts, such as increasing access to jobs through associated transit improvements. But a critical challenge in the field is identifying who actually benefits from these economic gains, what types of benefits occur, and when. Often, the beneficiaries are developers and property or business owners, not the residents. At the same time, rapid growth and development can have deleterious effects on a neighborhood if they displace current residents. Revitalization initiatives must include deliberate policies and strategies to expand economic benefits to the community.

More recent place-based revitalization initiatives focus on strengthening civic infrastructure, which can bring other important benefits. Civic infrastructure serves as the glue that connects the actors and institutions in a place. Therefore, the processes and activities, such as community engagement and cross-sector collaboration, that accompany place-based initiatives can also yield social benefits, including increased interactions and improved community ties that stem from the investments and activation of public spaces and civic assets.

### WHAT WE KNOW

Scholars and practitioners have documented that place-based revitalization produces a wide range of economic, social, health, public safety, and environmental benefits,[12] but economic benefits are the most commonly documented outcome of revitalization and redevelopment efforts. The most easily identifiable direct economic impacts are increases to property values, which are well documented given the field's primary focus on physical asset improvements. Other direct economic impacts include increases in affordable housing, which can improve residents' net income.

Broader economic impacts, such as employment growth and increases in businesses sales, are not as well documented, although several models exist to forecast the anticipated effects from proposed redevelopments. When revitalization projects improve streetscapes and transit, these projects can lead to an increase in access to jobs, although these indirect impacts are tougher to document and discern. New and nontraditional data sources can provide additional insight into the economic benefits of revitalization. For example, analysis of Mastercard data shows that redevelopment within Chicago's Pullman neighborhood led to an increase in shoppers in the neighborhood 10 times greater than the citywide increase. Similarly, between 2012 and 2016, the growth in spending in Pullman was 86 percent compared with 17 percent citywide.[13]

Revitalization initiatives can also lead to important social benefits. Research shows that proximity to activated public spaces, including arts-based activities and green spaces, can produce a sense of empowerment among residents, more opportunities for interactions, and closer social ties (Westphal et al. 2003; Kuo et al. 1998; Nicodemus et al. 2014). There is also a relationship between social capital and the number and quality of resources, facilities, and public spaces in a neighborhood (Curley 2010). This finding motivates place-based initiatives to not only create the settings that can foster increased interactions but also to intentionally give residents a chance to inform the project while building their own voice and power.

Discerning the social impacts of revitalization initiatives is more difficult than discerning the economic outcomes. Measuring social impact often requires direct and intensive methods to gather the insights and evidence, such as pre-post surveys and focus groups with residents, case studies, or ethnographies. Part of the difficulty in measuring social outcomes involves the overlapping conceptual frameworks used for analysis. For example, social cohesion focuses on how people and groups function together, and collective efficacy focuses on the actions those people and groups take to address shared priorities. Similarly, civic infrastructure describes the networks of relationships, institutions, and organizations, with increased social capital being a potential outcome of high-functioning civic infrastructure (see the appendix for more details).

#### EXAMPLE: PHILADELPHIA HORTICULTURAL SOCIETY

In 1974, the Philadelphia Horticultural Society (PHS) and a few local CDCs sought to address the problems of blighted, vacant lots in their neighborhoods by instituting a relatively simple and inexpensive landscape treatment: they would clean the vacant lots and then plant trees and install wooden fences. For the next 20 years, PHS expanded this effort to other neighborhoods as part of its Philly Green initiative. Early studies by Susan Wachter from the Wharton School of Business documented property value increases of 17 to 37 percent to homes and properties adjacent to the greened vacant lots. This data and analysis gave sufficient return on investment that city leaders decided to invest $12 million in redevelopment bonds to PHS to scale the Philly Green Initiative as part of the city's Neighborhood Transformation Initiative. Now known as the PHS LandCare program, it takes care of roughly 30 percent, or 12,000, of the city's lots annually. It also includes a portfolio of special applications and related services and programs, such as stormwater treatment projects and workforce development programs. Given this substantial investment of public resources, PHS, the William Penn Foundation, and other partners commissioned a series of studies by University of Pennsylvania researchers to support what their experience in the field told them—that greening vacant lots can benefit the economic, social, and health outcomes of local residents and neighborhoods. For example, residents use these small, greened lots as nature havens and community gathering spaces, and research found that this was associated with decreased neighborhood violence and better mental health relative to areas without improved lots (Branas et al. 2011; South, Hohl, and Kondo 2018). A subsequent University of Pennsylvania study found that removing abandoned buildings and greening vacant lots led to a 39 percent reduction in nearby gun violence (Branas et al. 2018). The study estimates that each dollar spent repairing vacant land yields a direct return of $26 to taxpayers and yields indirect savings of $333 through ripple effects such as reduced violence. All told, around 15 major studies over the course of the past 10 years have documented a range of positive benefits from the greening of vacant lots under the LandCare program.

## Promote Equity and Inclusion

### WHAT IT MEANS

Promoting equity and inclusion through place-based revitalization is a matter of process and substance. From a process standpoint, it involves authentically listening and responding to community needs. Substantively, this means policies, programs, and projects must create equitable access to key determinants of social, physical, and economic well-being without displacing communities of color. Doing this work of infusing equity and inclusion is important because it increases "the capacity of people of color to strengthen their communities and determine their own future and that of their neighborhoods" (Curren et al. 2016, 1).

But this work is difficult. Many residents in distressed neighborhoods do not trust government or philanthropic interventions to revitalize their communities because of the legacy of large-scale, government-led urban renewal projects devastating low-income African American communities (Fullilove 2004). Other residents fear that revitalizing physical assets could lead to gentrification, a negative effect of neighborhood change marked by rapidly increasing property values and the creation of businesses and amenities that cater to the interests and income of more affluent and white residents (Hyra 2017). These concerns are not unwarranted—projects such New York City's High Line have been criticized for creating an amenity that did not serve the nearby residents and businesses and, in many cases, contributed to their displacement.

### WHAT WE KNOW

Promoting economic opportunity for residents is a stated goal of place-based revitalization, but historically it has been secondary to the goal of revitalizing blighted areas. To elevate the role neighborhoods play in creating the conditions for economic mobility, the field needs a more nuanced understanding of urban inequality, neighborhood change, and the interplay of race within those dynamics (Ferris and Hopkins 2015; Jackson 2019). For example, urban planners, developers, funders, and community leaders must adopt a new framework that does not view all new development in distressed neighborhoods as good. Rather, they should think critically about whether and how the presence of that new development could leverage neighborhood assets and other interventions to expand opportunity for residents (Jackson 2019). The goal of this new framework is to design interventions that better allow residents to benefit from changes occurring in their neighborhoods. But to improve the design of these interventions, these initiatives must empower residents and community organizations through community dialogues that inform the development and execution of the initiative.

Over the past 20 years, placemaking has become a common urban design practice to more intentionally include community interests and voices in physical redevelopment processes. Placemaking aims to be the connective tissue that brings resources, capital, and actors together to focus on the transformation of a particular place and provide a pathway to advance equity. Although placemaking strategies and tools strongly emphasize community engagement, one critique of these design processes is that they do not always reflect the interests of the diverse populations living in targeted neighborhoods. Considering these limitations and challenges, placemaking must take meaningful steps to ensure inclusive processes and address inequalities within a neighborhood.

More inclusive and equitable placemaking, however, must happen at various scales and stages in the revitalization process. This could include land development and real estate site considerations; urban planning, land use, and urban design at the neighborhood scale; and related programming and activities once the space is activated. Reflecting on its investments and initiatives, the Kresge Foundation published a 2018 report articulating practices for helping ensure that creative placemaking becomes more equitable (Jackson 2018). The report called for making the processes of community development planning more inclusive and for the resulting plans to more intentionally address inequalities. It illustrates how marginalized and vulnerable communities can become equal partners in the transformation process, creating opportunities for them to have extensive ownership of the transformation process, receive benefits from the revitalization, and play meaningful roles in the stewardship of the initiative.

#### EXAMPLE: 11TH STREET BRIDGE PARK

The 11th Street Bridge Park in Washington, DC, which is under construction, will revitalize a defunct bridge into a park that will connect residents east and west of the Anacostia River, a historic dividing line in DC. The goal of the project is to create a safe community space for residents while harnessing the new economic activity to benefit low-income residents. Because the park is not yet open, the project has focused on creating an equitable development plan that produced strategies around workforce development, small business development, and housing (Bogle, Diby, and Burnstein 2016). One of the first activities of Building Bridges Across the River, the DC nonprofit that has shepherded the 11th Street Bridge Park project, was to hold design charrettes with neighborhood residents (Bogle, Diby, and Burnstein 2016). The nonprofit continued to engage residents during the production of an equitable development plan and had them vet goals and the plan's recommendations. The plan outlines baseline metrics that will be used in the future to gauge how successful the park was in implementing those strategies. This equitable development plan, although falling short of guaranteeing equitable outcomes, articulates proactive strategies, policies, and programs that create increased opportunities for residents and provides metrics to track progress and create accountability.

## Reflections on the Chicago Prize and for the Field

The Pritzker Traubert Foundation will award $10 million to a single initiative on Chicago's South or West Side to revitalize physical spaces, such as land or buildings, in a way that catalyzes economic activity; fosters social cohesion; and improves the safety, well-being, and economic mobility of residents. In this report, we articulate six principles to guide how applicants, judges, and other actors approach the Chicago Prize and elevate the importance of civic infrastructure as a core element of current and future place-based neighborhood revitalization initiatives. Although these six principles are designed to inform those involved with the Chicago Prize, the Chicago Prize can also build knowledge for the broader economic and community development fields on how to design and implement place-based interventions that maximize community benefit. In addition to developing innovative ideas for community development, the process of applying to and receiving this $10 million investment can yield insight for how actors work in place. Because civic infrastructure uses place to facilitate resident engagement and build community, the Chicago Prize provides an opportunity to learn how catalytic investments can shape and change the relationship between place and people over time. More specifically, any evaluation of the Chicago Prize should consider the following five questions to assess the short- and long-term impacts of the prize and help build knowledge for the community and economic development fields:

- What concentration of resources—and at what scale—are needed to create lasting impact?
- Does the Chicago Prize's provision of no-cost capital and the braiding of that capital with other resources effectively accelerate and improve outcomes of community initiatives?
- Is there a baseline level of activity that needs to be occurring within the targeted geography for a new investment to have a catalytic effect?
- Did changes to the built environment create economic and social benefits for nearby residents? If so, what were the impacts, and how durable were they?
- Does raising the importance of resident leadership throughout the course of the project lead to better or different outcomes for residents or mitigate negative outcomes?

To discern how these investments affected outcomes for residents, any evaluation of the Chicago Prize must carefully consider the local policy and market context. These factors include the size of the investment relative to the size of the targeted geography and the volume of other investments occurring simultaneously; local, state, and federal policies; and the health of the regional economy. Because it takes time for effects to manifest and it is tough to track outcomes over time (Theodos and Firschein 2015), identifying and gathering reliable and recurrent data relevant to the targeted outcomes is critical (Kubisch et al. 2010). By evaluating the impact over time, the Pritzker Traubert Foundation will be able to yield insights for Chicago actors and for the field more broadly.

# Appendix: Evidence of Outcomes from Selected Place-Based Interventions

Here we illustrate what we know about the range of outcomes associated with these different types of evaluations. This appendix is not a comprehensive analysis or compendium; rather, it summarizes relatively recent studies and research about the economic, social, health, public safety, and environmental impacts of six common types of revitalization interventions—urban greening; civic assets, such as libraries and public art; demolition; housing rehabilitation and renovation; adaptive reuse of commercial properties; and trails, parks, and recreational activities. A wide variety of specific strategies, examples, and treatments exist under each of these six categories.

Another goal of this appendix is to shed light on gaps in knowledge and identify opportunities to learn more. Most of the studies examine public initiatives or investments (mostly by local governments, nonprofits, and foundations) across the spectrum of revitalization interventions, often evaluating a single type of intervention and a specific strategy in a particular community or neighborhood and on a particular population (e.g., adults, or children and families). Most studies focus on a single outcome, such as property value, as opposed to the interplay of outcomes on multiple populations. A handful of studies examine the range of outcomes that result from comprehensive community development initiatives. For example, a cross-sector coalition of organizations applied the Purpose Built Community model to the East Lake neighborhood in Atlanta and documented a wide range of positive changes, from reductions in crime rate to increases in reading levels and home values.[14] Research that compares how interventions work across different cities are rare.

Other knowledge gaps exist because some types of revitalization interventions and areas have been studied more than others. For example, over the course of the past decade, the economic and social impacts of urban greening have become a major focus within the literature on neighborhood revitalization, in part because of the common challenge of how to address surplus vacant properties in older industrial cities and the initial success found in the early interventions and studies. Other types of revitalization interventions, such as housing rehabilitation and adaptive reuse, have relatively less literature documenting outcomes, and the literature available does not always involve rigorous program evaluation methods. Given the dynamic nature of the place-based revitalization field, new research continues to emerge that will build upon and extend the methods and existing findings to other types of interventions and dimensions of place-based revitalization.

## Economic

The economic effects of physical asset interventions are often relatively straightforward to assess because conditions before and after the intervention, such as property values, can be compared to ascertain the impact of the policy or program. Municipal cost savings is another type of economic benefit that flows from revitalization strategies such as reclaiming and reusing vacant properties. Common metrics, such as property values or municipal budgets, are also accessible and comparatively simple to track over time; thus, we found relatively more literature that documents the economic impacts from revitalization initiatives.

- Property value increases from urban greening and demolition: Early research about the Philadelphia LandCare program, the pioneering urban greening initiative, found that property values of properties that were immediately adjacent to greened vacant lots increased 30 percent over the course of several decades (Wachter 2005). Another study of the same program found that the property value of properties within 500 feet of treated lots increased over an eight-year period (Heckert and Mennis 2012).
- Property value increases from demolition of derelict buildings in Flint, Michigan, and Cleveland, Ohio, were found to increase the property values within 1,500 feet and 500 feet, respectively (Griswold and Norris 2007; Dynamo Metrics 2016).
- Studies about brownfield remediation consistently find property value increases from the environmental cleanup and reuse of the former industrial or commercial sites along with nearby properties within a quarter-mile radius (De Sousa, Wu, and Westphal 2009; Linn 2012; Haninger, Ma, and Timmins 2017; Woo and Lee 2016).
- Housing rehabilitation and renovation interventions improved the property values or the sales prices of surrounding properties. A study of residential investments in Cleveland found that houses within 150 feet of new construction sell for $4,500 more, while houses within 150 feet of rehabilitation sell for $2,000 more (Ding and Baku 2000). Another study found increased housing prices within 500 feet of the 180,000 units that were constructed or renovated through New York City's $5.1 billion construction and rehabilitation program (Schill, Gould Ellen, and Voicu 2002).

- Demolition has also been found to decrease mortgage-foreclosure rates of surrounding property owners (Griswold et al. 2014).
- Revitalization efforts that specifically focus on arts have led to decreases in commercial vacancy (Walker, Nicodemus, and Engh 2017), increases in arts-related employment within targeted neighborhoods, and increases in rehabilitation permits within targeted neighborhoods (Treskon 2015).

## Social

Researchers, depending on their academic discipline, can apply several conceptual frameworks as their analytical lens:

- Social cohesion reflects the study of socio-psychological characteristics of how groups function together, often over a defined period and based on a defined goal/focus or geography. Researchers might study cohesion as a trait that combines with others in order to influence the way the group does things. Others might measure how the interlocking parts of the whole group interact to allow the group to function. They can also examine social cohesion at a larger scale, such as society, fields, movements, and networks, or at a smaller scale of individual communities, neighborhoods, associations, and groups.
- Social cohesion in some ways serves as the foundation of collective efficacy. Collective efficacy focuses on the actions that residents can take together to improve their neighborhoods; social cohesion describes the social connections of how residents may perceive, think, and interact with each other. Collective efficacy is the willingness to intervene and the capacity for informal social control where neighbors agree on what is acceptable behavior and reinforce it in each other. Together, social cohesion and collective efficacy are the qualities that distinguish well-functioning, harmonious neighborhoods from poorly functioning, disordered ones.
- Social capital, on the other hand, has no consistent definition or generally accepted theory as it varies depending on the context and situation. Harvard Professor Robert Putnam popularized the term in his book *Bowling Alone*, but classic definitions focus on the functions of a variety of different entities that contain social structures of some form and how that function facilitates certain actions of individuals who are within those structures (Coleman 1990). Thus, certain actions and structures, if done well, would produce more social capital, but the concept remains elusive to measure.

- Civic infrastructure, as defined by sociologists and others, is the foundation or platform that enables individuals and communities to develop a sense of shared responsibility, communicate more effectively, manage differences, and develop a mutual understanding of the public good (Blair and Kopell 2015). Civic infrastructure allows "people to solve their own community's problems in partnership with government, business, and community based organizations."[15] Civic infrastructure can also activate and sustain civic capacity for "smart collective action" (Briggs 2008).

Each framework offers a slightly different perspective when assessing the social and civic outcomes from revitalization. Despite these challenges, a growing number of studies are examining the social and civic implications of revitalization, especially urban greening–related programs and initiatives. Below, we identify the methods and framework from several studies of different revitalization interventions.

- Urban greening is associated with a greater sense of social cohesion among residents. For example, a survey of community gardeners in four greening sites in Chicago found positive outcomes such as an increased sense of ownership in the neighborhood and feelings of empowerment. But the researchers noted that these impacts are not automatic; rather, they are the product of the atmosphere created at the site (Westphal 2003).
- Another study of vegetation near public housing buildings found that increased levels of vegetation in common spaces led to more use of those spaces and the formation of neighborhood social ties (Kuo et al. 1998).
- Residents who lived on blocks where public art-based activities took place reported feeling more connected to their neighbors (Nicodemus et al. 2016). Public spaces and facilities create more opportunities for interaction. When neighbors interact and become more familiar with each other, they develop a sense of mutual trust and shared values.
- A study of households that were relocated through the federal HOPE VI program showed that social capital is higher in neighborhoods with more resources, facilities, and public spaces (Curley 2010).
- Civic engagement is a significant predictor of economic opportunity across states, and communities with higher rates of engagement and volunteering and tend to have lower levels of income inequality. Analysis for this project involved data collected from government sources to understand the relationship between civic engagement and economic opportunity (Opportunity Nation 2014).

# Health

Compared with economic outcomes, less research is available on health outcomes caused by or associated with place-based revitalization projects. Based on the “broken windows” theory’s association of physical disorder with crime and fear, there is a body of research that studies the potential health benefits from removing blighted buildings. Other research examines the positive health benefits from more productive reuse, such as with urban greening. Another strand of public health research under the umbrella of “active living” links improvements to public spaces and the public realm, such as parks, plaza, trails, sidewalks, and other types of infrastructure, along with urban design features and programming, with potential improvements to public health. Collecting and tracking the health of individuals and families over time and connecting any health improvements to the revitalization of physical asset presents challenges for researchers. For example, if there is no baseline survey of resident health before the revitalization, capturing the impact of a given intervention is difficult. Another challenge is that individual and health data have important privacy protections that make its collection time and resource intensive. Notwithstanding these limitations, we are seeing new research that links revitalization with a range of health benefits:

- Redevelopment of vacant and derelict land can improve the quality of a neighborhood, protect public health and safety, and therefore ease residents’ stress (Kotval-K 2016).
- Proximity to vacant lots that were greened through the Philadelphia LandCare program is associated with lower heart rate (South et al. 2015) and lower rates of depression (South, Hohl, and Kondo 2018).
- In some neighborhoods in Philadelphia, residents who lived near greened vacant lots report less stress and more exercise (Branas et al. 2011).
- Access to quality parks and green spaces raises concerns of environmental justice considering the environmental and health benefits (mental, physical and social) that parks can provide and the barriers that prevent quality facilities in many communities of color and disinvested neighborhoods (Heckert 2012).
- Research documents that neighborhoods with greater number of green and open spaces for recreation contributes to increased engagement in physical activities such as walking (Li et al. 2005). Additionally, the closer the population residents to the park and open space, the more likely they will use the space for active or passive recreation (Cohen et al. 2007; Walker and Crompton 2012).

# Public Safety

Many revitalization efforts seek to address the built environment as a way to affect the activities, such as crime, that occur within it. Crime and revitalization both have spatial components; therefore, it is often easier for researchers to track the impact of place-based interventions on crime within specific geographies, such as neighborhoods. In particular, there are strong links between urban greening and decreases in crime.

- Vacant lot remediation and greening in Philadelphia led to fewer assaults, including assaults in close proximity to the treated lots (Branas et al. 2016, 2018).
- Areas in Cleveland within one-eighth of a mile of a greened lot experienced a large reduction in crime in the first quarter after the intervention, although the effect diminished over time (Mallach, Steif, and Graziani 2016).
- Greened spaces in Chicago were associated with fewer total crimes nearby (Kuo and Sullivan 2001).
- A study in Baltimore estimated that a 10 percent increase in tree canopy is associated with a 12 percent decrease in crime (Troy, Grove, and O'Neil-Dunne 2011).
- Demolition of single-family or small multifamily buildings reduced nearby overall crime 5 to 8 percent in Saginaw, Michigan (Stacy 2017); doing so also reduced the incidence of nearby burglary and theft in Cleveland (Spader, Schuetz, and Cortes. 2015).

# Environmental

Environmental benefits from property revitalization range from the removal of contaminated soils to improvements of air and water quality through a range of strategies, interventions, and treatments that redevelop and reuse properties, buildings, and land. With increasing awareness about the impacts from a changing climate, a growing number of communities are elevating urban sustainability goals and environmental improvements as a priority in their redevelopment and revitalization initiatives. Brownfield redevelopment—the environmental cleanup, reclamation, and reuse of former industrial and commercial properties—provides a community of practice and body of evidence about the range of environmental impacts and outcomes (Kotval-K, 2016). Brownfield redevelopments also offer important lessons in the design and implementation of public-private partnerships because most government funds are limited to environmental cleanup, while private capital supports redevelopment and reuse. Environmental justice impacts are also a critical dimension of many brownfield redevelopments given the long legacy of locating polluting industries in communities of color. Recently the brownfield movement has experimented with various types of urban greening treatments to remediate soil and water containments and to enable temporary or permanent reuse.

- Remediating former industrial and commercial sites removes and secures the chemical and toxins left on the property, reducing the risk of exposure of air and water contaminants. This removal improves the public health of surrounding residents, especially among children and the elderly in socio-economically disadvantaged neighborhoods (Kotval-K 2016).
- Brownfield redevelopment can also improve air quality, reduce the pressures to develop greenfields, and reduce degradation of natural habitats (Goodstein, Trinward, and Lynch 2011).
- Studies of greened lots show that they have greater capacity for stormwater retention and thus reduce runoff (Shuster et al. 2014).[16]
- Increasing green areas through tree plantings, landscaping of vacant lots, and other interventions increase land moisture, cool the air, and reduce the urban heat island effect, which reduces energy consumption from air conditioning (Younger et al. 2008).
- The redevelopment of brownfields to open, green space has gained support within the US (De Sousa 2004). Further research by De Sousa (2006) showed that the greening of brownfields has brought people back to forgotten areas and complemented the redevelopment of residential, commercial, and industrial projects.

# Notes

[1] See Blair and Kopell (2015). The authors make the case for ensuring the civic infrastructure for the 21st century must cross sectors and facilitate cooperation across sectors, systems, and disciplines. This helps ensure communities have robust levels of connectivity among people, institutions, and organizations to solve the complex problems communities are facing and will face in the future.

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[8] See "Opportunity360," Enterprise Community Partners, accessed April 11, 2019, https://www.enterprisecommunity.org/opportunity360. See also "2018 Distressed Communities Index Map," Economic Innovation Group, accessed April 11, 2019, https://eig.org/dci/2018-dci-map-national-zip-code-map.

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[10] Teresa Wiltz, "This City Wants to Reverse Segregation by Reviving Neighborhoods," *Stateline* (blog), October 3, 2018.

[11] Robin Hacke, "From Transaction to Transformation: The Capital Absorption Capacity of Places," Living Cities blog, April 12, 2014.

[12] See the appendix for more details on specific research findings.

[13] "Data Snapshot: Bringing Retail to Chicago's South Side," Mastercard Center for Inclusive Growth, May 15, 2018, https://www.mastercardcenter.org/insights/data-snapshot-bringing-retail-chicagos-south-side.

[14] See "Research & Reports Archives," Purpose Built Communities, accessed April 10, 2019, https://purposebuiltcommunities.org/research-reports/.

[15] Caitlyn Davison, "Seven Ways to Increase Community Power in Local Decision-Making," Orton Family Foundation blog, March 25, 2018.

[16] See also "Residential Demolition, Vacant Lots, and Green Infrastructure," US Environmental Protection Agency, accessed March 27, 2019, https://www.michigan.gov/documents/deq/deq-tou-GLSL-GIC-Grosshans-DemoVacantGI_581478_7.pdf.

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## Statement of Independence

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