

TECHNICAL REPORT

# Ascribing Outcomes of Complex Interventions to Social Networks

How “Sociomapping” Was Used to Assess Results for the Love Your Block Evaluation

Mary Bogle  
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Matthew Gerken

Leiha Edmonds

Christopher Davis



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# Acknowledgments

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# Ascribing Outcomes of Complex Interventions to Social Networks

Across the country, public, private, philanthropic, and nonprofit organizations develop and implement geographically targeted programs aimed at improving the social and economic outcomes of communities. These place-based initiatives—which include large federal programs like the US Department of Housing and Urban Development’s Choice Neighborhoods and small private grant programs like the Cities of Service Love Your Block (LYB) initiative—focus on enhancing neighborhood assets and engaging a broad community of stakeholders to increase investment and capacity in communities. This report describes an analytic technique that we call “sociomapping” as a way of ascribing effects of activities within a place-based initiative to increases in social connectedness across people and organizations within a community. This applies to cases in which relationships formed through intentional social-network building immediately and directly contributed to outcomes (e.g., changes in policy or public safety), as well as cases in which relationship building played an intermediate role in producing effects that led to concrete outcomes (e.g., an increase in trash removal that contributed to concrete health outcomes).

Assessing the results of a multifaceted initiative can be challenging for many reasons, including the amount of time needed to identify the sustained impacts of its investments and the difficulty of assessing who is responsible for collective changes that are influenced by numerous programs and stakeholders (Dillman and Peck 2012). Although researchers, program implementers, and other relevant audiences generally accept that the relationship-building elements of human services initiatives, such as peer-to-peer support groups, play an important role in shaping an initiative’s outcomes (Erickson and Benton 2019), the precise effects to which these elements contribute can be difficult to parse. As leaders of social change initiatives increasingly identify dimensions of social connectedness such as social capital as the “secret sauce”<sup>1</sup> in their theories of change, new methods that pinpoint the effects of building social networks within and across groups using direct observations of activities—like the level of resident engagement in programs or the strength of relationships among citizens, community leaders, nonprofits, and elected officials—will make a valuable contribution by substantiating the role of relationship-building elements and advancing the replicability of these efforts.

This technical report explores a promising mixed-methods approach for ascribing social outputs, outcomes, and policy changes to increases in “social connectedness” within and across groups. In our recently published evaluation of the Cities of Service Love Your Block program, *Reclaiming Shared Space through City-to-Citizen Collaboration*, we used data collected through focus groups and semistructured

interviews (the qualitative) with survey and administrative data (the quantitative) to map actions and interactions among citizens and city officials involved in the program (Edmonds, Gerken, and Bogle 2021). We leveraged that mix of qualitative and quantitative data sources to show how the synergies in these relationships produced results that extended beyond the program’s basic units for measuring success (e.g., pounds of trash removed), particularly in the realm of policy outcomes. These efforts built on analyses conducted for an earlier, related study, *Coming Together for Change: A Qualitative Study of Social Connectedness Outcomes Produced by the Love Your Block Program*, which, as the name suggests, focused on identifying social connectedness outcomes through qualitative methods, largely inferring—rather than documenting—the ways that new and strengthened relationships among various actors produced outcomes such as improvements in public safety (Bogle, Edmonds, and Gourevitch 2018).

In this report, we document our methods, which include collecting city- and neighborhood-level data, translating those data into social network analyses, and using those analyses to plot a limited set of effects onto outcomes maps (“sociomaps”). We end with insights for researchers, city officials, and others looking for more precise explanations of how weaving together formal and informal relationships promotes improved outcomes. We hope this report will serve as a resource for those looking to ascribe the outputs and outcomes created by complex efforts like place-based community change initiatives to improvements in social connectedness.

## Background

The Urban Institute has completed two evaluations of LYB (box 2). Both highlighted the importance of neighborhood-level relationships and the value of increasing residents’ connections to local government. A larger literature informs our focus on neighborhood-level connections and relationships in evaluations of social cohesion, social capital, and collective efficacy (Ansari 2013). Although scholars note that these terms (box 1) are difficult to define and measure, a consensus exists that measuring community-level social capital is valuable in program evaluation and development (Johnson 1999).

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### BOX 1

#### Crucial Concepts and Key Terms

Social cohesion, social capital, and collective efficacy are difficult to define, and researchers disagree on their working definitions.

- We define **social cohesion** as an emotional and social investment in a neighborhood and a sense of shared destiny among residents.

- **Social capital** is a community stock of social trust and reciprocity norms embedded in social networks that facilitate collective actions—a definition that integrates elements of several definitions provided by scholars (Uchida, Takahashi, and Kawahara 2014).
- **Collective efficacy** is a neighborhood-level concept whereby community members create a sense of agency and assume ownership for the state of their community, producing social action to meet common goals and preserve shared values (Sampson, Morenoff, and Earls 1999).

Scholars often link or overlap the three concepts. For example, social cohesion and trust, when high, help structure collective productive action, which becomes the cornerstone of collective efficacy. Collective efficacy is a form of social organization that combines social cohesion and shared expectations for social control (collective efficacy is a form of social capital, by some definitions) (Bogle, Edmonds, and Gourevitch 2018).

Most research about social capital and collective efficacy uses survey tools to measure how well communities are socially connected and efficacious. Researchers also suggest that mapping resident representation and strategic network formation can help assess social connectedness outcomes. However, much of the literature that discusses the application of social network analysis notes a lack of studies that explore the potential for using social network analysis to produce empirical data (Dempwolf and Lyles 2012). In our second evaluation, we piloted an approach to filling this gap that we label as sociomapping. Our method combines social network analysis with outcomes mapping to both visualize the individual relationships strengthened by LYB and identify the collective efficacy (formed because of the stronger relationships) that helped produce outputs and outcomes related to reversing neighborhood deterioration and informed changes in city policies and practices.

## BOX 2

### About Love Your Block and the Urban Institute Evaluations

Cities of Service, founded in 2009 by New York City Mayor Michael R. Bloomberg, has helped dozens of cities implement Love Your Block grant programs that connect mayors' offices with communities to revitalize neighborhoods one block at a time. In 2015, Cities of Service launched the LYB AmeriCorps VISTA program that provided grant funding, consulting, and two AmeriCorps VISTAs to mayors' offices in participating cities. Grant funding for the first cohort of cities broadly focused on impact volunteering—volunteer strategies that target community needs, employ best practices, and establish clear outcomes and measures to gauge progress.<sup>a</sup>

The LYB AmeriCorps VISTA program's second cohort was made up of 10 legacy cities—older, industrial, urban cities that have faced significant population and job loss, resulting in high rates of

property vacancy.<sup>b</sup> Grant funding for the second cohort focused on neighborhoods struggling to address properties in need of significant repair or remediation, including single-family homes, apartment buildings, commercial buildings, vacant lots, parks, and other public spaces.

The Urban Institute completed two evaluations of LYB, the first in 2018 and the second in 2021. The first examined the implementation of grants in the first cohort of cities and the social connectedness among small groups of residents who used minigrant projects for neighborhood beautification (Bogle, Edmonds, and Gourevitch 2018). The second examined how the LYB program in the second cohort of cities affected neighborhood solutions to address abandoned and vacant properties, city government collaboration, and resident engagement (Edmonds, Gerken, and Bogle 2021).

<sup>a</sup> The first cohort of cities was Birmingham, Alabama; Boston, Massachusetts; Lansing, Michigan; Las Vegas, Nevada; Phoenix, Arizona; Richmond, California; and Seattle, Washington.

<sup>b</sup> The second cohort of cities was Buffalo, New York; Gary, Indiana; Hamilton, Ohio; Hartford, Connecticut; Huntington, West Virginia; Lancaster, Pennsylvania; Milwaukee, Wisconsin; Newark, New Jersey; Richmond, Virginia; and South Bend, Indiana.

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## City-Level Data Collection

For our second evaluation of Love Your Block, we collected various city-level data that documented the connections between residents, changes in program outputs and outcomes, and changes in city practices. We spoke with the actors in each city's LYB program during semistructured interviews and focus groups. We designed and fielded a survey to city staff members to document changes in city practices across the program's two years. We also analyzed city administrative outputs and outcomes data to assess program impacts.

### Documenting Connections between City Residents

Civic engagement in any city involves exchanges among residents, who themselves cycle through multiple identities: they are city employees, neighborhood volunteers, staff members of local nonprofit organizations, parents, students—all collectively contributing to civic life. Qualitative data collection offers an opportunity to explore that web of connections, the nature of those relationships, and the ways they contribute to civic life.

As part of our evaluation, we sought to understand how the various actors interacted to implement LYB programs and make progress toward blight remediation goals through volunteer-led projects. We conducted in-person and virtual site visits to five cities—Buffalo, New York; Hamilton, Ohio; Hartford, Connecticut; Lancaster, Pennsylvania; and Newark, New Jersey—to speak with people involved with



the program. These site visits were invaluable for understanding the ways the volunteer-led projects operated on the ground, the neighborhood goals they hoped to achieve, and LYB's implementation at the city level. They also provided a glimpse into the connections LYB created or strengthened.

During the semistructured interviews, we spoke with a mix of actors. We interviewed each city's LYB point person in city hall, or "city lead," as well as the VISTA members who worked closely with the city lead to administer the program. We also spoke with other city staff members and with representatives of nonprofit or partner organizations. We asked respondents to discuss the relationships they built because of LYB and the nature of those relationships. As part of the interview, respondents provided the names and titles of the people they interacted with. We also asked them to note their engagements with others and whether these connections were new or were previous relationships that had been renewed through LYB.

In the two cities where our visits were in person (Lancaster and Newark), we held focus groups with the residents who served as LYB project, or "minigrant," leaders. We walked them through an exercise designed to help us better understand the volunteers and organizations that made their neighborhood projects possible (see appendix A). For each person and organization involved in a LYB minigrant project, we asked the minigrant leaders to provide the following information:

- name and job title (if relevant)
- the frequency of the person's or organization's engagement with the minigrant project ("rarely," "occasionally," "a fair amount," or "a great deal")
- a description of the person's or organization's role in the project
- a category ("city staff," "business," "nonprofit or community-based organization," "religious," or "other")
- whether the connection was because of LYB

The exercise allowed the Urban team to collect a consistent set of characteristics across the various actors in LYB minigrant projects. The exercise also precipitated a larger conversation with the minigrant leaders about what types of actors helped with multiple minigrant projects and the role of city staff members in particular.

An approach that engages all actors—neighborhood residents, city staff members, and representatives of nonprofit or partner organizations—makes an assessment of social connectedness more representative of different groups' experiences. Ideally, we would have spoken with as many people

as needed to reach a point where no new information would be gleaned from additional interviews. Faced with time constraints, we were purposeful about the people we spoke with, working with the city leads to identify key actors and minigrant leaders. We had hoped to conduct focus groups with neighborhood residents across all five cities and not just in Lancaster and Newark. The COVID-19 pandemic complicated those efforts, particularly because we scheduled site visits near the beginning of the pandemic, when the uncertainty was greater. Table 1 shows how many people we spoke with through the in-person and virtual semistructured interviews and during the two in-person focus groups with residents.

**TABLE 1**

**Number of Interviews in Five Love Your Block Cities by Respondent Category**

<b>Respondent category</b>	<b>Buffalo</b>	<b>Hamilton</b>	<b>Hartford</b>	<b>Lancaster</b>	<b>Newark</b>
Love Your Block city lead	1	1	1	1	1
AmeriCorps VISTA	2	1	1	2	1
City staff	3	3	4	8	4
Nonprofit or partner group	6	1	3	3	2
Neighborhood resident	0	0	0	6	4
<b>Total</b>	<b>12</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>9</b>	<b>20</b>	<b>12</b>

Sources: Interviews and focus groups.

## Documenting Changes in City Practices

Our evaluation also sought to document changes to city practices influenced by or attributed to Love Your Block. For LYB city leads, we designed a survey that asked about the technical assistance each city received from Cities of Service and each city's engagement within the larger Cities of Service LYB network of cities (see appendix B). The survey was administered in both years of the program. In year 2, we also asked about the city's responses to the COVID-19 pandemic, changes made to the programs from the first year to the second year, and the sustainability of the LYB programming. We also included several open-ended questions that allowed city leads to describe how LYB had contributed to changes in city practices, how the technical assistance had affected collaboration among city departments, how the city had benefited from interactions with other cities in the LYB network, and what the city did to ensure the continuation of LYB programming after the Cities of Service funding ended.

## Documenting Changes in Program Outputs and Outcomes

Cities participating in Love Your Block reported data on neighborhood minigrant projects to Cities of Service in semiannual reports. Their output data summarized both the level of participation from neighborhood volunteers and the progress that minigrant projects had made in meeting their blight

remediation and community beautification goals (table 2). We summarized these outputs across both years of the program for all cities to help quantify neighborhood volunteers’ efforts in revitalizing their communities.<sup>2</sup>

TABLE 2  
Love Your Block Output Data

Participation outputs	Project outputs
Number of meetings, trainings, or other events	Number of project sites
Number of participants at meetings, trainings, or other events	Instances of cleaning, repairs, enhancements, or repurposing across all project sites
Meetings, trainings, and events hours	Grounds cleaned, in acres
Number of volunteer events	Graffiti removed, in square feet
Total volunteers, new and returning	Trash removed, in pounds
Total volunteer hours	Number of new features, activation events, and new structures, as well as art displays created and trees planted

**Source:** Cities of Service’s Love Your Block city administrative data.  
**Notes:** New features are those such as lighting and fences that do not change the use of a space. Activation events are pop-ups and other activities that transform spaces for a limited time. New structures are items such as edible gardens, playgrounds, and picnic tables that do transform the use of a space.

Although outputs provide useful context for understanding the scope of neighborhood projects, they do not readily speak to outcomes—tangible, community-level benefits. Cities identified outcomes to track over time, organized into the following themes: code enforcement, 311 complaints, crime, and cost savings. We analyzed city outcomes data but encountered challenges in using those data to ascribe community-level changes to LYB, primarily because the quality and availability of data varied across cities and because we lacked data that would allow us to compare outcomes in areas affected by LYB to areas in which the program was not active. With more time and resources, our sociomapping efforts likely would have yielded stronger connections to program and community outcomes by undertaking, for example, additional surveys of more city staff members or neighborhood volunteers.

## The Sociomapping Process

Sociomapping is not a new method, *per se*, but is a combination of two analytic methods—social network analysis and outcome mapping—to trace specific effects of formal and informal group interactions. Researchers who have inventoried the use of social network analysis in neighborhood planning studies

have suggested that the ongoing “elusiveness” of tying increased social connectedness more firmly to other project outcomes might best be resolved by applying social network analysis with more intentionality because the technique is better suited to the task than traditional research methods alone. The sociomapping method, as described below, represents one approach.

## Producing the Sociograms

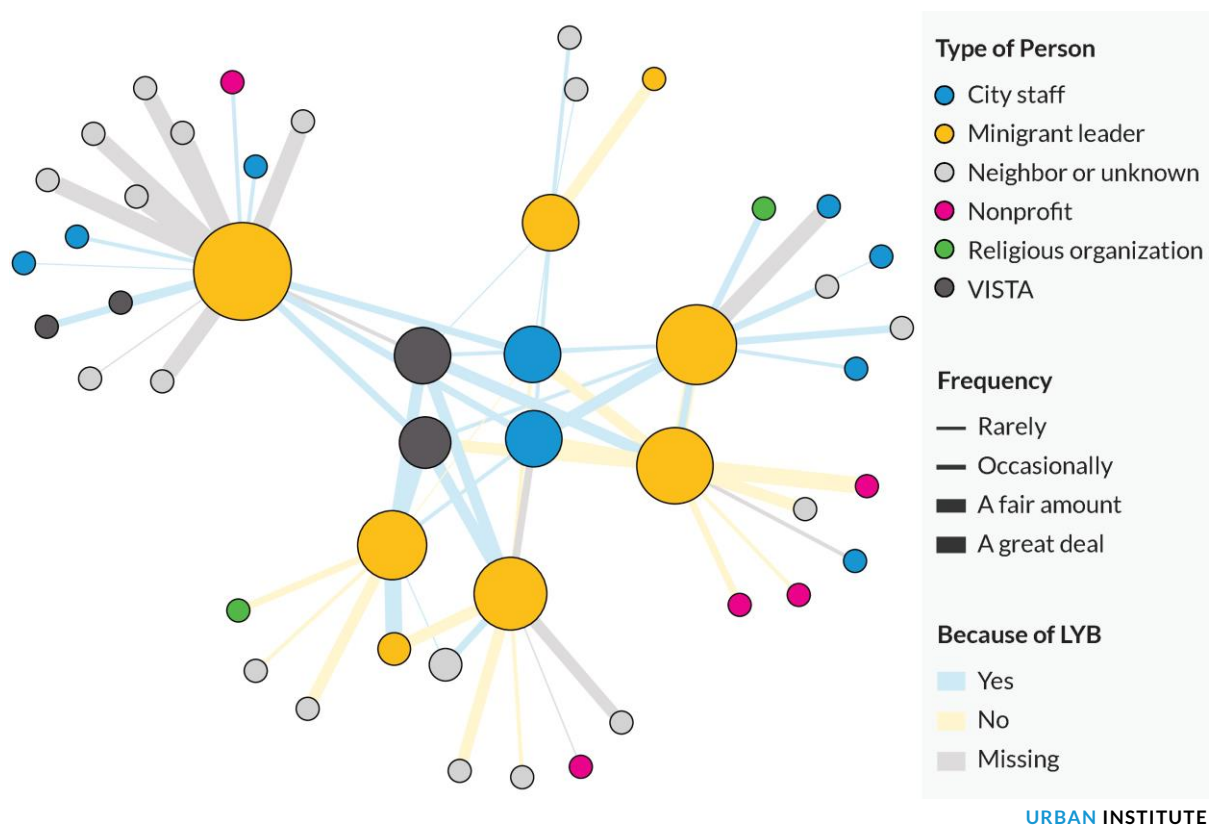
The semistructured interviews and focus groups gave us information on all the connections that grew out of Love Your Block. We organized this information in a spreadsheet, where each row was a one-way connection someone had mentioned. For each connection, we listed in the spreadsheet whom we spoke with, the person they mentioned, and any context for the connection that had been provided. For connections mentioned by focus group participants, we also included information on the frequency of the relationship and whether the relationship was the result of LYB.

This approach has a few limitations. For one, it takes into account only the connections of the people we interviewed. Also, the approach’s potential for cross-validation can be limited—that is, determining whether the people in a paired connection assess their relationship similarly or differently can be challenging. The ability to cross-validate increases with the number of people included; however, some people are more difficult to include in an analysis than others. For example, scheduling interviews with additional city staff members or staff from nonprofit organizations was easier for us than recruiting neighborhood volunteers or residents would have been because of accessibility and challenges in connecting with residents virtually during the COVID-19 pandemic. Nonetheless, the approach is useful and can reveal important insights.

We used focus group data from Lancaster to generate a social network analysis graph (also known as a sociogram). The social network analysis graph includes several elements to illustrate the focus and strength of the relationships. **Nodes** represent people or organizations and are presented as **points**, while **connections** are represented by **lines**. To create a sociogram that visualizes the connections made by people involved with LYB in Lancaster, we used the *igraph* package that is available in the R programming language and software environment and provides a set of data types and functions for graphing sociograms. Plots generated by *igraph* have vertex attributes and edge attributes, which can each be altered to assign various colors, sizes, types of shapes or lines, and more. We split our data into two datasets—one for the vertexes (people) and one for the edges (connections). This enabled us to assign these attributes with relative ease. We then plotted the result using a function that allowed us to move objects to orient the graph in a more sensible way.

With these data, we document how just four city officials—Lancaster Mayor Danene Sorace, Director of Neighborhood Engagement Milzy Carrasco (LYB city lead), and two VISTAs assigned to Lancaster by Cities of Service—formed the core of the large social network created by LYB (figure 1). Shown as large blue and black nodes in the center of the diagram, these four people catalyzed substantial levels of commitment and action from at least 40 city residents and staff members who helped achieve the goals of year 2 LYB projects. We can display a wide array of information in this map, including the people connected through LYB, how often they meet or interact, and whether the relationship was formed through LYB. Sociograms like this can be useful in measuring civic engagement and mapping the relationships between implementers, recipients, and community partners.

**FIGURE 1**  
Connections between Implementers of Love Your Block in Lancaster, Pennsylvania



**Source:** Author's analysis of interview and focus group data from Lancaster Love Your Block.

**Notes:** This figure underrepresents the size of the social network formed by LYB projects in Lancaster because not all minigrant leaders participated in the focus group and worksheet exercise held during the evaluation team's site visit. The two blue circles in the middle represent Lancaster's mayor and the city's director of neighborhood engagement. The black circles in the middle represent two AmeriCorps VISTAs assigned to Lancaster by Cities of Service.

The data are also useful for quantifying interactions between groups. In table 3, we show the total number of connections that the different groups of people we interviewed in Lancaster formed. For example, the six neighborhood residents we spoke with mentioned 64 connections in total—19 with the LYB city lead or VISTAs, 13 with city staff members, 5 with nonprofit or partner groups, and 27 with other neighborhood residents.

**TABLE 3**

**Mapping Love Your Block Relationships in Lancaster, Pennsylvania**

*Number of connections by category*

The people we spoke with	Connections They Mentioned				Total
	LYB city lead or AmeriCorps VISTA	City staff	Nonprofit or partner group	Neighborhood resident	
Love Your Block city lead or AmeriCorps VISTA (n=3)	6	3	14	23	46
City staff (n=8)	10	18	5	20	53
Nonprofit or partner group (n=3)	8	6	3	4	21
Neighborhood resident (n=6)	19	13	5	27	64
<b>Total (N=20)</b>	<b>43</b>	<b>40</b>	<b>27</b>	<b>74</b>	<b>184</b>

**Sources:** Interviews and focus groups in Lancaster, Pennsylvania.

**Notes:** Connections are counts of relationships, not interactions. Because every interviewee's connections are included, some relationships may be counted twice. For example, if a city lead and an AmeriCorps VISTA both mentioned each other, that counts as two connections in our data. We included connections made with people who were not in the group we spoke with but who were in one of the relevant categories. For example, if a city staff person we interviewed mentioned a neighborhood resident we did not speak with, that connection would be included.

Because the number of connections a group mentions is influenced by the number of people we spoke with in that group, a measure that may be more revealing is the average number of connections each group had with other groups (table 4). In Lancaster, the LYB city lead and AmeriCorps VISTAs had the highest average number of connections overall (15.3) and the highest average number of connections with residents (7.7), a testament to their function as a connector of groups and a confirmation of what we found in the sociogram. Residents had a high average number of connections with each other (4.5), another theme that the sociogram demonstrated.

TABLE 4

**Mapping Love Your Block Relationships in Lancaster, Pennsylvania***Average number of connections by category*

The people we spoke with	Connections They Mentioned				Total
	LYB city lead or AmeriCorps VISTA	City staff	Nonprofit or partner group	Neighborhood resident	
Love Your Block city lead or AmeriCorps VISTA (n=3)	2.0	1.0	4.7	7.7	15.3
City staff (n=8)	1.3	2.3	0.6	2.5	6.6
Nonprofit or partner group (n=3)	2.7	2.0	1.0	1.3	7.0
Neighborhood resident (n=6)	3.2	2.2	0.8	4.5	10.7
<b>Total (N=20)</b>	<b>2.2</b>	<b>2.0</b>	<b>1.4</b>	<b>3.7</b>	<b>9.2</b>

**Sources:** Interviews and focus groups in Lancaster, Pennsylvania.

**Notes:** Connections are counts of relationships, not interactions. Because every interviewee's connections are included, some relationships may be counted twice. For example, if a city lead and an AmeriCorps VISTA both mentioned each other, that counts as two connections in our data. We included connections made with people who were not in the group we spoke with but who were in one of the relevant categories. For example, if a city staff person we interviewed mentioned a neighborhood resident we did not speak with, that connection would be included.

We also used this information to capture changes in city practices. We cross-validated what we heard in interviews with the administrative data and our survey of city leads to understand LYB's effects and inform the sociomaps we produced.

## Producing the Sociomaps

Our “sociomapping” technique involves analyzing the sociograms we created against our survey and coded interview data to explore whether and how outputs and verifiable changes in city policy and practice can be ascribed to the “web of reciprocal relationships” created by deeper city-to-citizen engagement. Although we do not claim that sociomapping is a fully mature technique, we believe this approach is worthy of further exploration by other place-based researchers, given its suitability for tracing how relationship building can produce key outcomes in complex, nonlinear processes—such as the implementation of comprehensive community development plans.

Our literature scan confirms that few studies have made empirical connections between the relationships displayed on sociograms and outcomes at the level of neighborhood, population, or policy in the eight years since a literature review of social network analysis techniques in planning drew that conclusion in 2012 (Dempwolf and Lyles). Much of the literature on the application of social network analysis reveals that the technique is typically limited to describing the role and reach of interpersonal connections, leaving outputs and outcomes to be inferred rather than documented. Some discussion

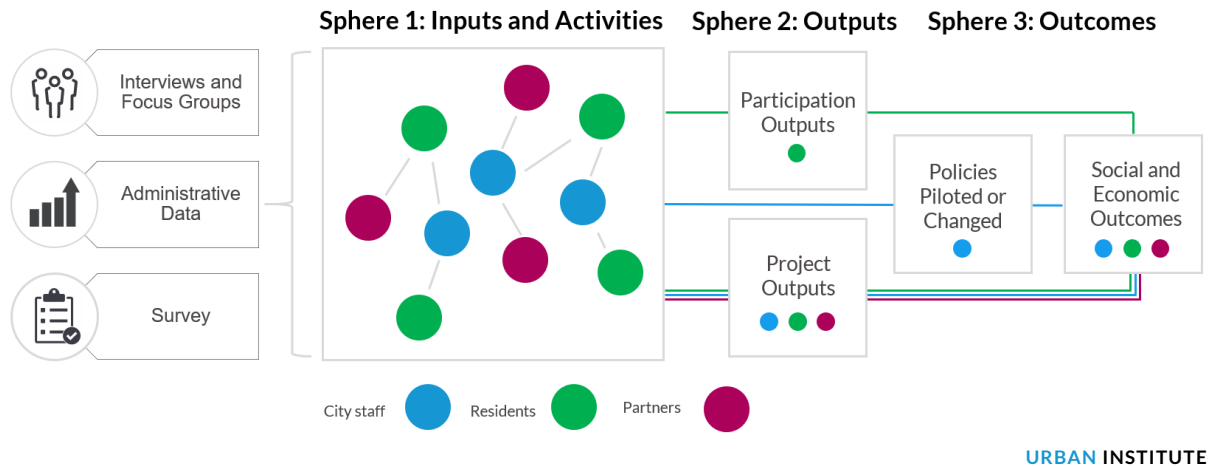
papers go so far as to point out that this gap represents a failure by researchers to exploit the potential of social network analysis as a tool for producing new empirically based insights on the outcomes of complex processes. However, some notable exceptions to this observation exist, including a handful of studies that use survey methods to trace how people with low incomes use networks instrumentally to seek out and acquire jobs of lesser and higher quality. Because this variety of studies based on social network analysis aims to trace relatively simple individual-level outcomes, the gap in analyses that clearly connect social networks with neighborhood- or policy-level results remains largely unfilled.

An essential component in our approach was the adaptation of outcomes maps that typically explore the actions and interactions of partner organizations in a collaborative social change initiative to understand whether and how they led to system changes and other outcomes. Outcomes mapping is found mostly in the field of international development research as a way of planning, monitoring, and evaluating development initiatives to bring about sustainable social change.<sup>3</sup> Outcomes mapping often uses a visual framework (usually concentric circles that delineate “spheres”) to trace easily observable, short-term changes fomented by organizational members of a collaborative along a pathway to longer and more transformative change, thus allowing for credible attribution of specific results to specific actors or combinations of actors.

The sociomapping process (figure 2) uses social network analysis to reach beneath the level of organizational action, where most outcomes mapping exercises typically stop, to the level of individual-level interactions and relationships, which—though often less structured and/or less bounded than interorganization exchanges—can be observed and documented through careful qualitative data collection, such as what we described earlier. Outcomes maps typically follow changes in behavior, actions, or relationships that can be influenced by a specific team or program in a collaborative effort along a logic-model-type sequence that covers “spheres” of control (inputs, activities, and outputs), influence (outcomes), and interest (impact) (Earl, Carden, and Smutylo 2001). One modification we made early on was to delineate inputs and activities under the sphere of control, moving outputs to the second sphere, and outcomes to the third, recognizing that impacts on larger social outcomes at the population level (e.g., reductions in eviction rates) were beyond the scope of both the LYB study and our particular innovation.



**FIGURE 2**  
**Sociomapping Process**

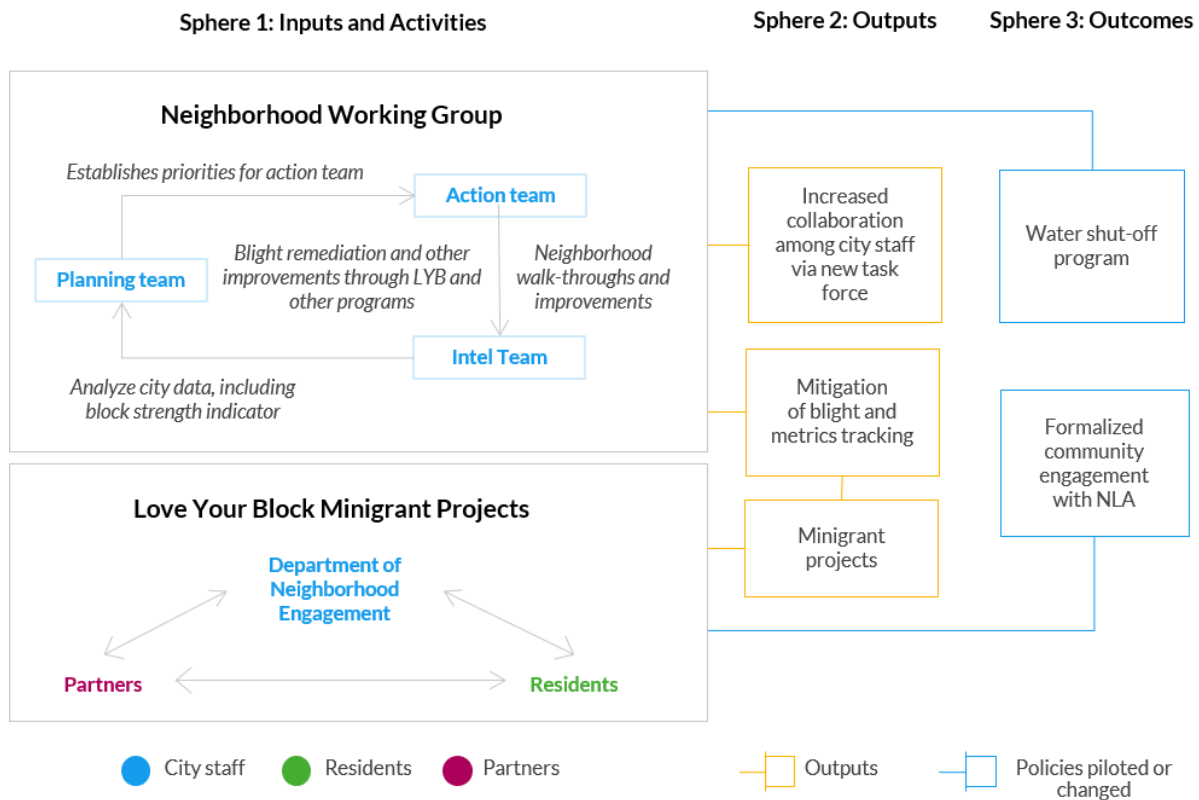


Source: Urban Institute.

By combining findings produced by our sociograms with other data from LYB sites, we demonstrated how the web of relationships formed by LYB led directly to short-range outputs in improving properties and land that is vacant or in disrepair, as well as to longer-term outcomes in municipal policy and practice. For example, in Lancaster, we showed how the minigrant projects and a team known as the Neighborhood Working Group contributed to outputs—increased collaboration among city staff and blight mitigation—as well as outcomes, including a new city program and formalized community engagement (figure 3).<sup>4</sup> We used our data to show that nearly 1 ton of trash was removed from city streets largely because LYB citizen teams were acting with city officials to monitor and pick up garbage via quasi-public trash cans installed for this purpose. And thanks to data we collected during an interview with Mayor Sorace, we tied the creation of a new early-alert program for reaching citizens who were in arrears on their water bill directly to citizen engagement under LYB. Although we do not attempt to do this on the sociomap for Lancaster, the mayor herself links this practice to larger outcomes like reducing evictions, saying: “A lot of people who fall behind in keeping their household going [properly] will stop paying their water bill first. And then...eviction. That’s the worst possible outcome.”

FIGURE 3

# Sociomap of the Love Your Block Program in Lancaster, Pennsylvania

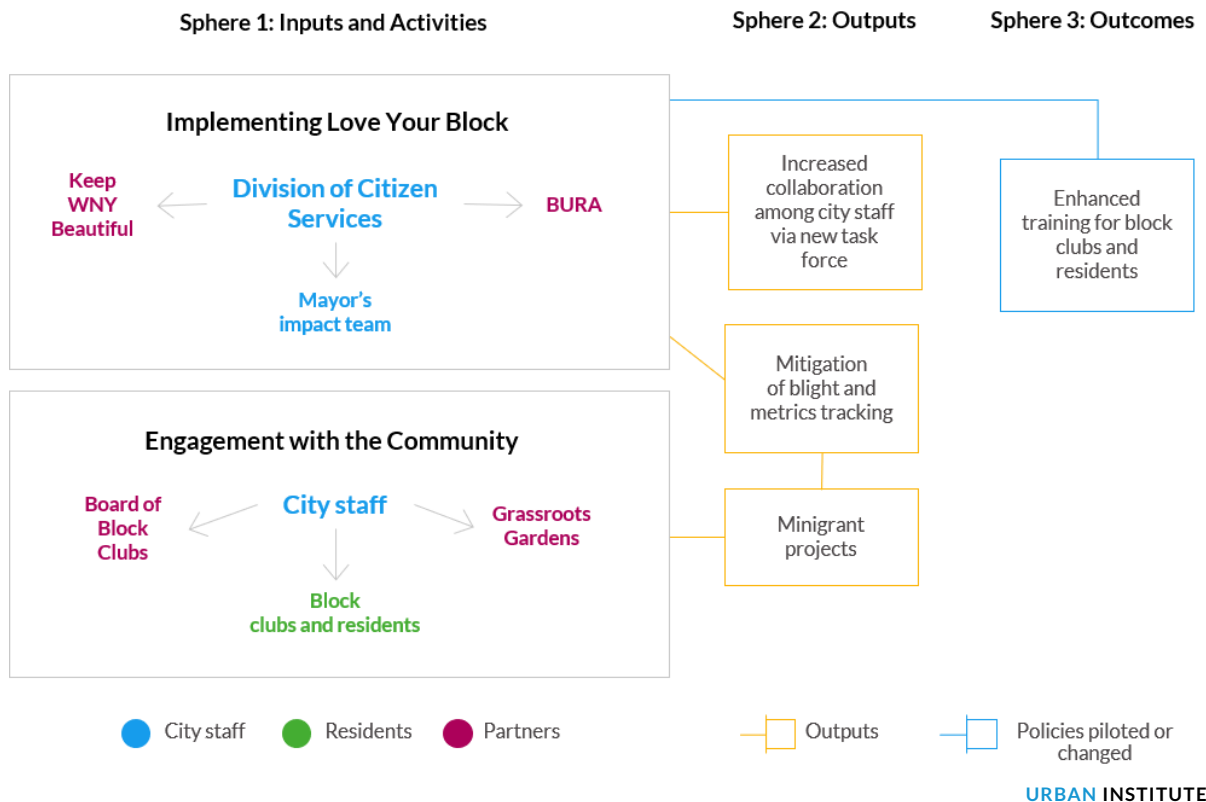


Source: Authors' analysis of Love Your Block data.

Note: NLA = Neighborhood Leaders Academy.

Figure 4 displays the results of our sociomapping of Love Your Block in Buffalo, New York, where the program complemented the city's strong block club infrastructure.<sup>5</sup> The city's Division of Citizen Services engaged with other city staff members and partnered with block clubs, neighborhood residents, and organizations in the surrounding community—including Keep Western New York Beautiful, the Buffalo Urban Renewal Agency, the Board of Block Clubs, and Grassroots Gardens. Although the COVID-19 pandemic limited our data collection efforts, the data we collected informed how this engagement contributed to outputs—increased collaboration among city staff and progress toward blight mitigation goals—and an outcome in providing enhanced training to the city's block clubs and residents. LYB provided training on Crime Prevention through Environmental Design and data analysis to residents. It also led to the creation of Block Club University, a city program that provides free trainings and education to block club leaders and residents to further empower them in running block clubs, addressing quality-of-life issues, and becoming more civically engaged.

**FIGURE 4**  
**Sociomap of the Love Your Block Program in Buffalo, New York**



**Source:** Authors' analysis of Love Your Block data.

**Notes:** Keep WNY Beautiful = Keep Western New York Beautiful. BURA = Buffalo Urban Renewal Agency.

## Looking Ahead

Sociomapping is still an emerging method in the “formative evaluation” toolbox, a new approach that combines social network analysis with outcomes mapping. Although more mature forms of the process will never exceed the evidence produced by methods like randomized controlled trials as the “gold standard” for evaluation, we believe sociomapping’s potential to fill the gaps in understanding how the formation of stronger social networks can drive larger gains in social and economic well-being left by more traditional research methods is high. To that end, the following are some possibilities that city planners, community organizers, and others who implement complex, place-based initiatives might consider as they engage in their own sociomapping processes:

- **Identifying larger social and economic outcomes.** As is true in any study, our use of sociomapping as an analytic technique was constrained. Chief among the limitations was budget: we collected as much data as we could with the resources available. Another constraint was the COVID-19 pandemic, which hit early in our site-visit phase, forcing us to forgo many of the focus groups we wanted to do in LYB cities. These data are crucial to developing more informative sociograms that pinpoint factors like the VISTA volunteers' role in driving outputs and outcomes in LYB. In the absence of these constraints and for future applications of this method, we would be more intentional about designing and fielding surveys to additional city officials or neighborhood residents that when combined with interview and administrative data could help unpack things like the Lancaster mayor's insight that a seemingly small change in policy emanating from the relationships formed in sphere one and then carried forward by various actors across spheres two and three might prevent evictions of city residents in the short term. We would also collect relationship data at the beginning of the program to produce a baseline sociogram that future sociograms could be compared against to understand how networks had grown or become more or less effective over time.
- **Recognizing “community” as both a spatial and social idea.** Reviews of the literature on community development research efforts over the past few decades have uncovered a “shifting terrain” in which examinations of neighborhood change cross over from purely spatial realms to social realms, where relational space mediates what “happens” as much as, if not more than, physical space to improve outcomes (Clark 2007). From this vantage point, sociomapping can be used to examine flows of communication and resources across actors who belong to subpopulation communities (e.g., immigrants in a census tract) or professional communities (e.g., planners or city officials) as their interactions flow through small gatherings, the public square, or even online forums. Also, to the extent that powerful social networks often lead to the exclusion of people and communities of color (Putnam et al. 2004), this application of sociomapping offers an important means of tracking who is at the table and *who is not* when resources move within and across groups.
- **Creating real-time feedback loops that engender citizen trust in municipal actors.** As we note in *Reclaiming Shared Space through City-to-Citizen Collaboration*, events like the pandemic and the killing of George Floyd have brought citizen frustration with city functions that do not always work in their best interests (e.g., policing) to a boiling point. One benefit of sociomapping is that it can visualize natural feedback loops between citizens and city hall in programs like LYB, effectively demonstrating the actions that emerge from deep listening and other forms of citizen engagement. Using the sociomapping process, we demonstrated the high levels of

reciprocity that occur when various actors engage in deep work together. Namely, we saw how the insights of people from underresourced neighborhoods were valuable to city officials in producing better policies and practices. In turn, we also saw how valuable direct links to high-level officials were to those same residents in accessing the resources they need to improve the quality of life in their neighborhoods.

# Appendix A. Love Your Block Focus Group Exercise

## Directions

Urban Institute is interested in understanding how city staff, nonprofit and community organizations, religious groups, business or other key organizations supported your LYB projects. We want to know which organizations you connected with as a minigrant leader and how important that person's or organization's support was to the success of your project.

On the back of this paper, please list the people and/or organizations involved in your minigrant project who represented the following professions or organization types.

- ☐ **City staff:** Anyone in the government or public sector
- ☐ **Business:** Anyone who owns or manages a business
- ☐ **Nonprofit or community based org:** Anyone who represented a neighborhood organization, social service organization, block club or other community-based group
- ☐ **Religious:** Anyone who represented a place of worship
- ☐ **Other:** Anyone who doesn't fit in the categories above

Please categorize the people's and/or organizations' frequency of LYB support on the following scale.

- ☐ **Rarely:** Participated in one meeting and/or made a small donation (of food, supplies), did not attend minigrant event
- ☐ **Occasionally:** Participated in minigrant event and/or made a donation (of food, supplies, funding)
- ☐ **A fair amount:** Attending meetings regularly, participated in the minigrant event, and/or made a donation (of food, supplies, funding)
- ☐ **A great deal:** Played a key role in planning and executing the minigrant project

Make sure to provide a description or title of the person you listed (e.g., Sara Malone, firefighter captain). Also, note if you met the person or organization because of LYB or if you were already connected and working with them before the project.

Minigrant project name/description: \_\_\_\_\_

Minigrant project location: \_\_\_\_\_

Name/job title	Frequency of LYB support	Description of role	Job category	Is this connection due to LYB?
	<input type="checkbox"/> Rarely <input type="checkbox"/> Occasionally <input type="checkbox"/> A fair amount <input type="checkbox"/> A great deal		<input type="checkbox"/> City staff <input type="checkbox"/> Business <input type="checkbox"/> Nonprofit or community-based org <input type="checkbox"/> Religious <input type="checkbox"/> Other	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No
	<input type="checkbox"/> Rarely <input type="checkbox"/> Occasionally <input type="checkbox"/> A fair amount <input type="checkbox"/> A great deal		<input type="checkbox"/> City staff <input type="checkbox"/> Business <input type="checkbox"/> Nonprofit or community-based org <input type="checkbox"/> Religious <input type="checkbox"/> Other	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No
	<input type="checkbox"/> Rarely <input type="checkbox"/> Occasionally <input type="checkbox"/> A fair amount <input type="checkbox"/> A great deal		<input type="checkbox"/> City staff <input type="checkbox"/> Business <input type="checkbox"/> Nonprofit or community-based org <input type="checkbox"/> Religious <input type="checkbox"/> Other	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No
	<input type="checkbox"/> Rarely <input type="checkbox"/> Occasionally <input type="checkbox"/> A fair amount <input type="checkbox"/> A great deal		<input type="checkbox"/> City staff <input type="checkbox"/> Business <input type="checkbox"/> Nonprofit or community-based org <input type="checkbox"/> Religious <input type="checkbox"/> Other	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No
	<input type="checkbox"/> Rarely <input type="checkbox"/> Occasionally <input type="checkbox"/> A fair amount <input type="checkbox"/> A great deal		<input type="checkbox"/> City staff <input type="checkbox"/> Business <input type="checkbox"/> Nonprofit or community-based org <input type="checkbox"/> Religious <input type="checkbox"/> Other	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No

# Appendix B. Year 2 Online Qualtrics Survey of Love Your Block City Leads

## Questionnaire

### SECTION 1 – INFORMATION ON CITY AND RESPONDENT

First, we would like to confirm your city and your role.

1) Which Love Your Block 2018 city do you represent? [Select one city.]

- a. Buffalo, NY
- b. Gary, IN
- c. Hamilton, OH
- d. Hartford, CT
- e. Huntington, WV
- f. Lancaster, PA
- g. Milwaukee, WI
- h. Newark, NJ
- i. Richmond, VA
- j. South Bend, IN

2) What is your name? [Open-ended question]

3) What is your position? [Open-ended question]

### SECTION 2 – COVID-19

We understand that the COVID-19 pandemic has likely affected your city's Love Your Block program and your engagement with Cities of Service.

4) Over the last year, have calls with Cities of Service for technical assistance occurred more or less frequently during the COVID-19 pandemic (March 2020 to now) than before the COVID-19 pandemic (September 2019 to February 2020)? [Select one.]

- a. More often
- b. Less often
- c. About the same



- 5) Over the last year, has your city contacted Cities of Service beyond scheduled calls, such as over email, more or less frequently during the COVID-19 pandemic (March 2020 to now) than before the COVID-19 pandemic (September 2019 to February 2020)? [\[Select one.\]](#)
  - a. More often
  - b. Less often
  - c. About the same
- 6) Which challenges has your city experienced with Love Your Block because of COVID-19? [\[Select all that apply.\]](#)
  - a. Delays in planned events across mini-grant recipients
  - b. Delays in soliciting and awarding Year 2 mini-grants
  - c. Adjusting communication and engagement to comply with social distancing measures
  - d. Reduction in staff time and/or resources as a result of budget cuts
  - e. Shifting city priorities in responding to COVID-19
  - f. Other (specify)
- 7) Has your city used Love Your Block as part of its COVID-19 response?
  - a. Yes
  - b. No
- 8) What has been the most helpful in terms of the technical assistance you have received from Cities of Service in responding to COVID-19? [\[Open-ended question.\]](#)
- 9) What has been the least helpful? [\[Open-ended question.\]](#)

### SECTION 3 – CITY ENGAGEMENT WITH COS

We would like to know more about the technical assistance your city has received from Cities of Service since the Year 1 survey (September 2019).

- 10) Which of the following webinars, group calls, or events has your city participated in? [\[Select all that apply.\]](#)
  - a. LYB Year 1 Reflections: City Leads Group Call (September 5<sup>th</sup>, 2019)
  - b. Second LYB Academy: Love Your Block and Guiding Opportunities Academy (November 12-13, 2019)
  - c. Cities of Service Annual Convening (November 14-15, 2019)
  - d. LYB / Experience Matters City Lead Group Call (February 21<sup>st</sup>, 2020)
  - e. COVID-19 Response: Local Approaches to Serving Vulnerable Populations Webinar (April 7<sup>th</sup>, 2020)
  - f. Cities of Service Grantee Peer Learning Zoom (April 20<sup>th</sup>, 2020)
  - g. Cities of Service Peer Huddle Hour (May 4<sup>th</sup>, 2020)
  - h. COVID-19 Response: Local Approaches to Food Access Webinar (May 12<sup>th</sup>, 2020)
  - i. Cities of Service Grantee Peer Learning Zoom (May 18<sup>th</sup>, 2020)
  - j. Cities of Service Peer Huddle Hour (June 1<sup>st</sup>, 2020)

- k. Cities of Service Grantee Peer Learning (June 15<sup>th</sup>, 2020)
- l. None of the above

11) Which Cities of Service virtual engagements did your city's VISTA(s) participate in? [Select all that apply.]

- a. VISTA Orientation for onboarding VISTA members (September 5<sup>th</sup>, 2019)
- b. Introductions and Outreach Strategies Google hangout (October 29<sup>th</sup>, 2019)
- c. Welcome to Cities of Service webinar for onboarding VISTAs (November 1<sup>st</sup>, 2019)
- d. VISTA Impact Volunteering webinar (November 11<sup>th</sup>, 2019)
- e. Additional Impact Volunteering Webinar for onboarding VISTAs (November 19<sup>th</sup>, 2019)
- f. Metrics 101 Webinar (December 18<sup>th</sup>, 2019)
- g. Work Management and Task Distribution Google hangout (January 28<sup>th</sup>, 2020)
- h. Strengthening Public-Private Relationships Google hangout (January 29<sup>th</sup>, 2020)
- i. Passing on the Torch between Year 1 and Year 2 Google hangout (January 29<sup>th</sup>, 2020)
- j. Time Management Webinar (February 28<sup>th</sup>, 2020)
- k. Managing Relationships VISTA working group call (March 10<sup>th</sup>, 2020)
- l. Burnout Danger VISTA working group call (March 11<sup>th</sup>, 2020)
- m. Maximizing VISTA Resources VISTA working group call (March 11<sup>th</sup>, 2020)
- n. Cities of Service VISTA COVID-19 support call (March 24<sup>th</sup>, 2020)
- o. Cities of Service VISTA COVID-19 support call (March 25<sup>th</sup>, 2020)
- p. Life After VISTA webinar (March 30<sup>th</sup>, 2020)
- q. Getting Things Done in Your PJs VISTA COVID-19 group call (April 3<sup>rd</sup>, 2020)
- r. Getting Things Done in Your PJs VISTA COVID-19 group call (April 10<sup>th</sup>, 2020)
- s. Getting Things Done in Your PJs VISTA COVID-19 group call led by Buffalo VISTAs (April 17<sup>th</sup>, 2020)
- t. Getting Things Done in Your PJs VISTA COVID-19 group call (April 24<sup>th</sup>, 2020)
- u. Content During Quarantine Google hangout (April 28<sup>th</sup>, 2020)
- v. Graphic Design Tutorial Google hangout (April 29<sup>th</sup>, 2020)
- w. Getting Things Done in Your PJs VISTA COVID-19 group call (May 1<sup>st</sup>, 2020)
- x. Getting Things Done in Your PJs VISTA COVID-19 group call (May 8<sup>th</sup>, 2020)
- y. Getting Things Done in Your PJs VISTA COVID-19 group call (May 15<sup>th</sup>, 2020)
- z. Getting Things Done in Your PJs VISTA COVID-19 group call (May 22<sup>nd</sup>, 2020)
- aa. Self-Care VISTA webinar (May 26<sup>th</sup>, 2020)
- bb. Getting Things Done in Your PJs VISTA COVID-19 group call (May 29<sup>th</sup>, 2020)
- cc. VISTA Social Hour group call (June 12<sup>th</sup>, 2020)
- dd. VISTA Social Hour group call (June 26<sup>th</sup>, 2020)
- ee. Getting Back on Track VISTA Google hangout (June 30<sup>th</sup>, 2020)
- ff. Media Outreach VISTA Google hangout (July 8<sup>th</sup>, 2020)
- gg. VISTA Social Hour group call (July 10<sup>th</sup>, 2020)
- hh. Program Sustainability VISTA webinar (July 23<sup>rd</sup>, 2020)
- ii. VISTA Social Hour group call (July 24<sup>th</sup>, 2020)
- jj. None of the above

12) Over the last year in the time before the COVID-19 pandemic (September 2019 to February 2020), how frequently on average did calls with Cities of Services for technical assistance occur? [Select one frequency.]

- a. Multiple times a week
  - b. Once a week
  - c. Once every two weeks
  - d. Once every month
- 13) During the COVID-19 pandemic (March 2020 to now), how frequently on average do calls with Cities of Service for technical assistance occur? [\[Select one frequency.\]](#)
- a. Multiple times a week
  - b. Once a week
  - c. Once every two weeks
  - d. Once every month
- 14) Over the last year in the time before the COVID-19 pandemic (September 2019 to February 2020), how often on average did your city contact Cities of Service beyond scheduled calls, such as over email? [\[Select one frequency.\]](#)
- a. Multiple times a week
  - b. Once a week
  - c. Once every two weeks
  - d. Once every month
- 15) During the COVID-19 pandemic (March 2020 to now), how frequently on average has your city contacted Cities of Service beyond scheduled calls, such as over email? [\[Select one frequency.\]](#)
- a. Multiple times a week
  - b. Once a week
  - c. Once every two weeks
  - d. Once every month
- 16) What topics have you discussed with Cities of Service on these calls? We recognize that your city may have discussed the following topics specifically within the context of COVID-19. Please identify topics that were discussed both outside and within the context of COVID-19. [\[All options appear as rows in a table. Columns are “Outside the Context of COVID-19” and “Within the Context of COVID-19.” Select all that apply.\]](#)
- a. Your city’s identified blight-related problem
  - b. Refining your city’s proposed initiative
  - c. How volunteers will be engaged
  - d. Mini-grant development and dissemination
  - e. Identification and engagement of city partners
  - f. Identification and engagement of non-city partners
  - g. Development of initiative metrics (i.e., outputs and outcomes)
  - h. Data collection
  - i. Sustaining the initiatives
  - j. Communication with and engagement of neighborhood leaders

- k. Role of VISTAs / VISTA Management
- l. Spending or budget
- m. Changes in the mini-grant application from Year 1 to Year 2
- n. Sustainability after Cities of Service funding
- o. Other (specify) [Open-ended.]

17) For each of the topics you selected, please rate how helpful the discussions were in pursuing your Love Your Block objectives. [All options selected in Q16 appear as rows in a table. Columns are a scale with the following options: Extremely helpful, Very helpful, Moderately helpful, Slightly helpful, Not helpful.]

18) Considering all of the technical assistance you have received from Cities of Service since September 2019, including technical assistance directly related to COVID-19, please indicate the extent to which you agree or disagree with each of the following statements. [All options appear as rows in a table. Columns are a scale with the following options: Strongly agree, Somewhat agree, Somewhat disagree, Strongly disagree.]

- a. The technical assistance we received helped us refine our blight-related initiative.
- b. The technical assistance we received helped us better engage non-city partners in implementing our initiative.
- c. The technical assistance we received helped us better communicate with neighborhood leaders.
- d. The technical assistance we received led to beneficial changes to policies or practices within the city.
- e. The technical assistance we received improved collaboration between my city's departments.
- f. The technical assistance we received helped us adjust our Love Your Block program given COVID-19.

[IF STRONGLY AGREE OR SOMEWHAT AGREE IS SELECTED for "d"]

19) What were the specific changes that occurred within the city since September 2019 that were influenced by the technical assistance you received from Cities of Service? [Open-ended question.]

[IF STRONGLY AGREE OR SOMEWHAT AGREE IS SELECTED for "e"]

20) How has collaboration within your city's departments improved as a result of the technical assistance you received from Cities of Service since September 2019? Please be as specific as possible. [Open-ended question.]

[IF STRONGLY AGREE OR SOMEWHAT AGREE IS SELECTED for "f"]

21) What COVID-19-specific changes to the Love Your Block program were informed by the technical assistance you received from Cities of Service? [Open-ended question.]

22) What has been the most helpful in terms of the technical assistance you have received from Cities of Service since September 2019? [Open-ended question.]

23) What has been the least helpful? [Open-ended question.]

#### SECTION 4 – CITY ENGAGEMENT WITH CURRENT LYB COHORT

Now we would like to know about your city’s engagement with 2018 Love Your Block cities. Let’s start with engagement **through formal** Cities of Service programming since September 2019.

24) Describe how your city has benefitted from engagement with LYB 2018 cities **through formal** Cities of Service programming since September 2019. Interaction includes both indirect interaction, such as listening to past LYB cities on a webinar, and direct interaction, such as in-person meetings. [Open-ended question.]

25) Has your city learned **through formal** Cities of Service programming about how other LYB 2018 cities responded to COVID-19?

- a. Yes
- b. No

[IF “YES” IS SELECTED]

26) Describe whether and how learning about other LYB 2018 cities’ responses to COVID-19 **through formal** Cities of Service programming influenced your city’s response to COVID-19. [Open-ended question.]

Now, we would like to ask about your city’s engagement in the LYB network **outside of** formal Cities of Service programming.

27) Select the LYB 2018 cities that you have interacted with **outside of** formal Cities of Service programming since September 2019. This includes interactions not initiated by Cities of Service, such as communications with other cities over email, phone, and over a Slack channel. [A list of all LYB 2018 cities will be shown. Select all that apply.]

- a. Buffalo, NY
- b. Gary, IN
- c. Hamilton, OH
- d. Hartford, CT
- e. Huntington, WV
- f. Lancaster, PA
- g. Milwaukee, WI
- h. Newark, NJ
- i. Richmond, VA
- j. South Bend, IN

[REPEAT Q28-Q32 FOR EACH CITY SELECTED IN Q27]

- 28) Since September 2019, how frequently on average have you interacted with [LYB 2018 city-i] **outside of** formal Cities of Service programming? This includes interactions not initiated by Cities of Service, such as communications with other cities over email, phone, and over a Slack channel. [\[Select one frequency.\]](#)
- a. Multiple times a week
  - b. Once a week
  - c. Bi-weekly
  - d. Monthly
  - e. Less frequently than every month
- 29) Which best characterizes your relationship with [LYB 2018 city-i]?
- a. Our city first connected with them via formal Cities of Service programming.
  - b. Our city had a pre-existing relationship with the city.
- 30) What were the reasons for your city's interaction with [LYB 2018 city-i] since September 2019? [\[Select all that apply.\]](#)
- a. We wanted to learn about [LYB 2018 city-i]'s blight-related problem.
  - b. We wanted to learn about how [LYB 2018 city-i] engages volunteers and neighborhood leaders through LYB.
  - c. We wanted to learn about how [LYB 2018 city-i] developed and disseminated mini-grants.
  - d. We wanted to learn about how [LYB 2018 city-i] identified and engaged city and/or non-city partners.
  - e. We wanted to learn about how [LYB 2018 city-i] developed initiative metrics (i.e., outputs and outcomes).
  - f. We wanted to understand [LYB 2018 city-i]'s approach to data collection.
  - g. We wanted to learn how [LYB 2018 city-i] engages and manages its VISTA(s).
  - h. We encountered a challenge that [LYB 2018 city-i] had also encountered and wanted to learn how they overcame challenges.
  - i. We wanted to learn about how [LYB 2018 city-i] has adapted during COVID-19.
  - j. Other (specify)
- 31) Since September 2019, how useful has your city's relationship with [LYB 2018 city-i] been in helping you achieve your current objectives? [\[Select one.\]](#)
- a. Extremely useful
  - b. Very useful
  - c. Moderately useful
  - d. Slightly useful
  - e. Not useful
- 32) Since September 2019, how useful do you believe your city's relationship with [LYB 2018 city-i] has been in helping them achieve their current objectives? [\[Select one.\]](#)

- a. Extremely useful
- b. Very useful
- c. Moderately useful
- d. Slightly useful
- e. Not useful

[END LOOP]

[IF 30i-i IS SELECTED]

33) How did information you learned **outside of** formal Cities of Service programming about other LYB 2018 cities' responses to COVID-19 influence your city's COVID-19 response? [Open-ended question.]

34) Since September 2019, were there any LYB 2018 cities you wanted to connect with **outside of** formal Cities of Service programming that you didn't? [Select one.]

- a. Yes
- b. No

[IF "YES" IS SELECTED]

35) Which LYB 2018 cities are those? [A list of all LYB 2018 cities will be shown. Select all that apply.]

- a. Buffalo, NY
- b. Gary, IN
- c. Hamilton, OH
- d. Hartford, CT
- e. Huntington, WV
- f. Lancaster, PA
- g. Milwaukee, WI
- h. Newark, NJ
- i. Richmond, VA
- j. South Bend, IN

[ASK FOR EACH CITY SELECTED IN Q35]

36) For each of those LYB 2018 cities you had wanted to connect with since September 2019, why had you wanted to connect? [Select all that apply.]

- a. We had wanted to learn about [LYB 2018 city-i]'s blight-related problem.
- b. We had wanted to learn about how [LYB 2018 city-i] engages volunteers and neighborhood leaders through LYB.
- c. We had wanted to learn about how [LYB 2018 city-i] developed and disseminated mini-grants.
- d. We had wanted to learn about how [LYB 2018 city-i] identified and engaged city and/or non-city partners.

- e. We had wanted to learn about how [LYB 2018 city-i] developed initiative metrics (i.e., outputs and outcomes).
- f. We had wanted to understand [LYB 2018 city-i]'s approach to data collection.
- g. We had wanted to learn how [LYB 2018 city-i] engages and manages its VISTA(s).
- h. We had encountered a challenge that [LYB 2018 city-i] had also encountered and wanted to learn how they overcame challenges.
- i. We had wanted to learn about how [LYB 2018 city-i] has adapted during COVID-19.
- j. Other (specify)

[ASK FOR EACH CITY SELECTED IN Q35]

37) For each of those LYB 2018 cities you had wanted to connect with since September 2019, what prevented you from connecting? [Select all that apply.]

- a. We had planned to connect but have not had the time to do so.
- b. We felt uncomfortable reaching out to [LYB 2018 city-i] directly.
- c. Other (specify)

## SECTION 5 – CITY ENGAGEMENT WITH OLDER LYB CITIES AND COALITION CITIES

Now we would like to know about your city's engagement with older Love Your Block cities and other coalition cities since September 2019. Let's start with engagement through formal Cities of Service programming.

38) Describe how your city has benefitted from engagement with LYB mentor cities Lansing (Andi Crawford) and Phoenix (Michael Hammett) **through formal** Cities of Service programming since September 2019. Interaction includes both indirect interaction, such as listening to past LYB cities on a webinar, and direct interaction, such as in-person meetings. [Open-ended question.]

39) Not including Lansing or Phoenix, has your city engaged with any older LYB cities or other coalition cities **through formal** Cities of Service programming since September 2019? [Select one.]

- a. Yes
- b. No

[IF "YES" IS SELECTED]

40) Describe how your city has benefitted from engagement with other older LYB cities and/or other coalition cities **through formal** Cities of Service programming since September 2019. Interaction includes both indirect interaction, such as listening to past LYB cities on a webinar, and direct interaction, such as in-person meetings. [Open-ended question.]

41) Has your city learned about COVID-19 responses of older LYB cities and/or other coalition cities **through formal** Cities of Service programming?



- a. Yes
- b. No

[IF “YES” IS SELECTED]

- 42) Describe whether and how learning about older LYB cities’ and/or other coalition cities’ COVID-19 responses **through formal** Cities of Service programming influenced your city’s response to COVID-19. [Open-ended question.]

Now, we would like to ask about your city’s engagement with older Love Your Block cities and other coalition cities **outside of** formal Cities of Service programming since September 2019.

- 43) Select older LYB cities or other coalition cities that you have interacted with **outside of** formal Cities of Service programming since September 2019, including LYB mentor cities Lansing and Phoenix. This includes interactions not initiated by Cities of Service, such as communications with other cities over email, phone, and over a Slack channel. [A list of all older LYB cities and other coalition cities will be shown. Select all that apply.]

- a. Birmingham, AL
- b. Boston, MA
- c. Erie, PA
- d. Flint, MI
- e. Kalamazoo, MI
- f. Kettering, OH
- g. Lansing, MI
- h. Phoenix, AZ
- i. Richmond, CA
- j. Round Rock, TX
- k. Seattle, WA
- l. Tulsa, OK
- m. Other (specify)

[REPEAT Q44-Q48 FOR EACH CITY SELECTED IN Q43]

- 44) Since September 2019, how frequently on average have you interacted with [older LYB/coalition city-i] **outside of** formal Cities of Service programming? This includes interactions not initiated by Cities of Service, such as communications with other cities over email, phone, and over a Slack channel. [Select one frequency.]

- a. Multiple times a week
- b. Once a week
- c. Bi-weekly
- d. Monthly
- e. Less frequently than every month

- 45) Which best characterizes your relationship with [older LYB/coalition city-i]?

- a. Our city first connected with them via formal Cities of Service programming.
- b. Our city had a pre-existing relationship with the city.

- c. Our city reached out to them directly because we shared Love Your Block designation.

46) What were the reasons for your city's interaction with [older LYB/coalition city-i] since September 2019? [Select all that apply.]

- a. We had wanted to learn about [older LYB/coalition city-i]'s blight-related problem.
- b. We had wanted to learn about how [older LYB/coalition city-i] engages volunteers and neighborhood leaders through LYB.
- c. We had wanted to learn about how [older LYB/coalition city-i] developed and disseminated mini-grants.
- d. We had wanted to learn about how [older LYB/coalition city-i] identified and engaged city and/or non-city partners.
- e. We had wanted to learn about how [older LYB/coalition city-i] developed initiative metrics (i.e., outputs and outcomes).
- f. We had wanted to understand [older LYB/coalition city-i]'s approach to data collection.
- g. We had wanted to learn how [older LYB/coalition city-i] engages and manages its VISTA(s).
- h. We had encountered a challenge that [older LYB/coalition city-i] had also encountered and wanted to learn how they overcame challenges.
- i. We had wanted to learn about how [older LYB/coalition city-i] has adapted during COVID-19.
- j. Other (specify)

47) Since September 2019, how useful has your city's relationship with [older LYB/coalition city-i] been in helping your city achieve your current objectives? [Select one.]

- a. Extremely useful
- b. Very useful
- c. Moderately useful
- d. Slightly useful
- e. Not useful

48) Since September 2019, how useful do you believe your city's relationship with [older LYB/coalition city-i] has been in helping them achieve their current objectives? [Select one.]

- a. Extremely useful
- b. Very useful
- c. Moderately useful
- d. Slightly useful
- e. Not useful

[END LOOP]

[IF 46i-i IS SELECTED]

49) How did information you learned **outside of** formal Cities of Service programming about older LYB cities' and/or other coalition cities' COVID-19 responses influence your city's COVID-19 response? [Open-ended question.]

50) Since September 2019, were there any older LYB cities or other coalition cities you wanted to connect with **outside of** formal Cities of Service programming that you didn't? [\[Select one.\]](#)

- a. Yes
- b. No

[\[IF "YES" IS SELECTED\]](#)

51) Which older LYB cities or coalition cities are those? [\[A list of all older LYB cities and other coalition cities will be shown. Select all that apply.\]](#)

- a. Birmingham, AL
- b. Boston, MA
- c. Erie, PA
- d. Flint, MI
- e. Kalamazoo, MI
- f. Kettering, OH
- g. Lansing, MI
- h. Phoenix, AZ
- i. Richmond, CA
- j. Round Rock, TX
- k. Seattle, WA
- l. Tulsa, OK
- m. Other (specify)

[\[ASK FOR EACH CITY SELECTED IN Q51\]](#)

52) For each of those older LYB cities or other coalition cities you had wanted to connect with since September 2019, why had you wanted to connect? [\[Select all that apply.\]](#)

- a. We had wanted to learn about [older LYB/coalition city-i]'s blight-related problem.
- b. We had wanted to learn about how [older LYB/coalition city-i] engages volunteers and neighborhood leaders through LYB.
- c. We had wanted to learn about how [older LYB/coalition city-i] developed and disseminated mini-grants.
- d. We had wanted to learn about how [older LYB/coalition city-i] identified and engaged city and/or non-city partners.
- e. We had wanted to learn about how [older LYB/coalition city-i] developed initiative metrics (i.e., outputs and outcomes).
- f. We had wanted to understand [older LYB/coalition city-i]'s approach to data collection.
- g. We had wanted to learn how [older LYB/coalition city-i] engages and manages its VISTA(s).
- h. We had encountered a challenge that [older LYB/coalition city-i] had also encountered and wanted to learn how they overcame challenges.
- i. We had wanted to learn about how older LYB/coalition city-i] has adapted during COVID-19.
- j. Other (specify)

[ASK FOR EACH CITY SELECTED IN Q51]

- 53) For each of those older LYB cities or other coalition cities you had wanted to connect with since September 2019, what prevented you from connecting? [Select all that apply.]
- a. We did not have contact information for [older LYB/coalition city-i].
  - b. We had planned to connect but have not had the time to do so.
  - c. We felt uncomfortable reaching out to [older LYB/coalition city-i] directly.
  - d. Other (specify)

## SECTION 6 – CHANGES TO YEAR 2 AND PROGRAM SUSTAINABILITY

Lastly, we would like to ask about any changes from Year 1 to Year 2 and your reflections on sustainability for the Love Your Block program in your city.

- 54) Compared to Year 1 mini-grants, which of the following changes did you make for Year 2? [Select all that apply.]
- a. Expanded geographic scope of Love Your Block target areas
  - b. Lower average amount per mini-grant
  - c. Higher average amount per mini-grant
  - d. Focusing on entirely new geographic areas
  - e. None of the above

[IF “NONE OF THE ABOVE” ISN’T SELECTED.]

- 55) Why did you decide to incorporate these change(s)? [Open-ended question.]
- 56) Does your city plan to continue the Love Your Block program or a modified version of the Love Your Block program after the conclusion of funding from Cities of Service?
- a. Yes
  - b. No

[IF “YES” IS SELECTED]

- 57) Which of the following has your city put in place to ensure the continuation of Love Your Block programming? [Select all that apply.]
- a. Hiring additional staff or redefining roles for existing staff to take on responsibilities that had traditionally been conducted by VISTAs
  - b. Soliciting alternative sources of funding
  - c. Other (specify)

[IF “a” IS SELECTED]

- 58) Including yourself, how many full-time and/or part-time staff positions have you devoted to continuing Love Your Block in your city?

[IF “b” IS SELECTED]

59) What types of funding has your city acquired to continue Love Your Block programming?  
[Select all that apply.]

- a. Funds within city government
- b. Nonprofit organizations
- c. Foundations
- d. Private businesses
- e. Other (specify)

60) This is the last survey we will ask you to complete. Is there anything you would like to share about the technical assistance you received from Cities of Service, changes your city incorporated from Year 1 to Year 2 in the Love Your Block program, or your city’s future plans for the program? [Open-ended question.]

## CLOSING

You have completed the Year 2 Online Survey of Love Your Block City Leads. Thank you for your participation in this survey.

# Notes

- <sup>1</sup> Eddy Encinales, “The Secret Sauce: Strategies to Include Social Capital in Human Services,” Ascend: The Aspen Institute, November 10, 2020, <https://ascend.aspeninstitute.org/the-secret-sauce-strategies-to-include-social-capital-in-human-services/>.
- <sup>2</sup> See Edmonds, Gerken, and Bogle (2021) for outputs summarized across the 10 Love Your Block cities.
- <sup>3</sup> “Outcome Mapping Approaches,” US Agency for International Development, August 25, 2015, <https://usaidelearninglab.org/library/outcome-mapping-approaches>.
- <sup>4</sup> In Edmonds, Gerken, and Bogle (2021), we label this figure as an outcomes map. Here, we call it a sociomap. We did not include a discussion of our sociomapping methodology in the earlier report because it focused on findings from our evaluation of the Love Your Block program. Because the sociomapping discussion is in this technical report, we relabel the outcome maps as sociomaps.
- <sup>5</sup> In Edmonds, Gerken, and Bogle (2021), we label this figure as an outcomes map. Here, we call it a sociomap. We did not include a discussion of our sociomapping methodology in the earlier report because it focused on findings from our evaluation of the Love Your Block program. Because the sociomapping discussion is in this technical report, we relabel the outcome maps as sociomaps.

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# About the Authors

**Mary Bogle** is a principal research associate in the Metropolitan Housing and Communities Policy Center at the Urban Institute. She conducts formative and summative research on policies and place-conscious interventions intended to help low-income parents surmount the economic, equity, and mental health challenges that often interfere with their efforts to create healthy, productive, and protective environments for their children.

**Matthew Gerken** is a research associate in the Metropolitan Housing and Communities Policy Center. His areas of interest include affordable housing, homelessness, and community development. Before joining Urban, Gerken interned with several organizations engaged in affordable housing and community development, including Habitat for Humanity, the US Department of Housing and Urban Development, the Self-Help Credit Union, and Thrive DC, a homeless shelter in Washington, DC.

**Leiha Edmonds** is a research associate in the Metropolitan Housing and Communities Policy Center. Her research interests include community and economic development strategies to support more equitable cities and regions. Before joining Urban, Edmonds was a transportation and mobility planner for the City of Evanston, Illinois, and a community organizer in cities across the Midwest.

**Christopher Davis** is a data scientist in the Metropolitan Housing and Communities Policy Center. He is interested in the impact that housing inequities have on health, poverty, and career opportunities in disadvantaged communities.



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