



RESEARCH REPORT

Building Beyond Policing

A Case Study of Eden Night Live in Alameda County, California

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Building Beyond Policing

Ashland-Cherryland

How can law enforcement creatively support the revitalization of a community? This question has informed the Alameda County, California, Sheriff's Office (ACSO) as it has worked to provide a place for engagement with the community it serves and to rethink its internal practices. Through the Eden Night Live pop-up festival and marketplace, the department's Deputy Sheriffs' Activities League (DSAL) aimed to reduce crime and draw people to an underused space, provide a space for police-community engagement, and move the department to focus on a community policing model. In all these activities, the arts have played a role in drawing people in and providing spaces for interaction and opportunities for entrepreneurs.

In summer 2016, ACSO launched Eden Night Live in response to a lack of community space and high levels of crime. Eden Night Live began as a pop-up festival and marketplace, with music, arts, games, sports, local food, and vendors in a vacant lot in the middle of Ashland-Cherryland, an unincorporated part of Alameda County. Eden Night Live was expected to gradually reduce crime and draw people back into commercial corridors, increasing the local customer base of small businesses. It was one piece of a much larger, long-term effort to build community cohesion, public safety, and economic opportunity in Ashland-Cherryland. In partnership with various local organizations, Eden Night Live became a community hub and supported vendors of food, crafts, and toys, many making the first steps from informal home-based businesses into established local businesses. Overcoming many logistical challenges, including a change in location, Eden Night Live attracted thousands of attendees before ending officially in January 2018.

This case study seeks to explain the public safety goals of Eden Night Live and examine how it used artistic performance, community participation, and community-based economic development to turn a vacant lot into an activated community center. This project also reflected a shift from hotspot policing to hotspot community development through creative placemaking and community cohesion building. The Alameda County model required a shift in the way officers saw their role in community safety. Underlying this model is a strongly held belief that community development and flourishing are preconditions for public safety.

Box 1 discusses creative placemaking and public safety and describes the three case studies of creative placemaking that accompany this report.

BOX 1

Creative Placemaking and Community Safety: Research Agenda

Public, private, nonprofit, and community sectors have begun using creative placemaking strategies to address the challenges facing disinvested communities and their residents, with barriers to public safety being one area of focus. *Creative placemaking* is a strategic and collaborative approach to the physical, social, and economic development of neighborhoods around arts and culture. We understand “arts” broadly to include murals, music, sculpture, and dance, but it also incorporates creative work more generally, such as promoting entrepreneurship, creatively engaging stakeholders, and using space in novel ways.

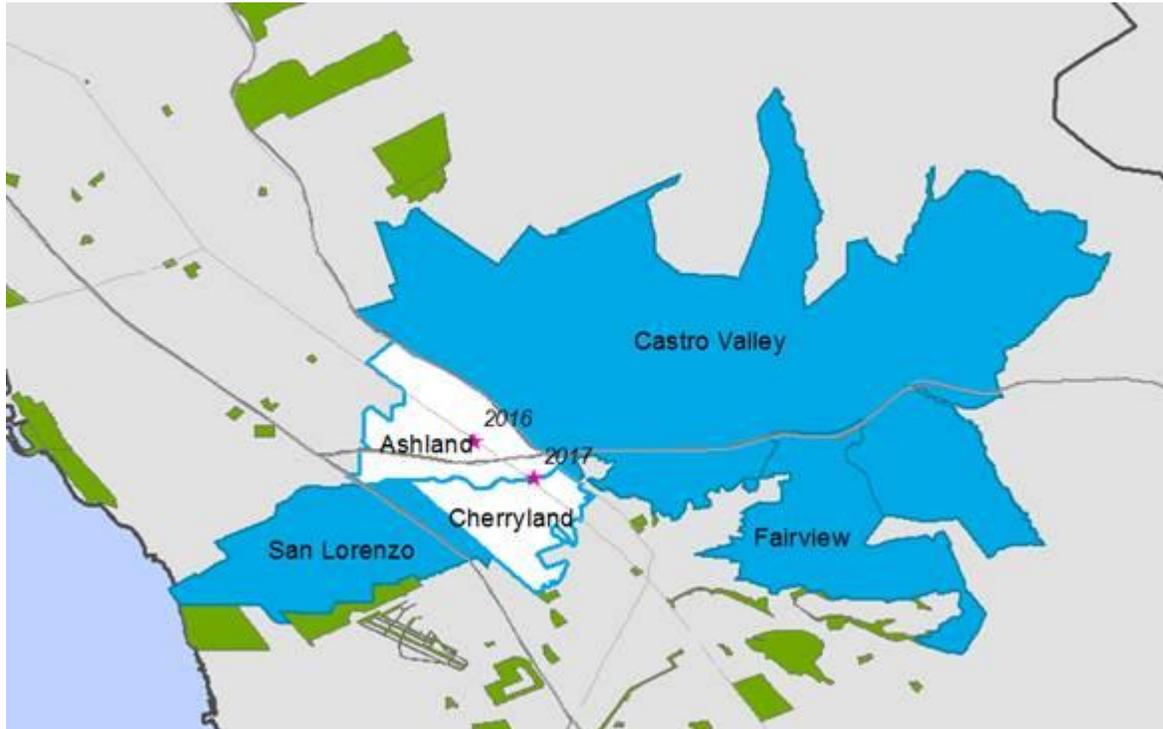
Although prior work has drawn links between creative placemaking and public safety, we lack specific knowledge about how public safety-oriented programs that integrate creative placemaking address public safety challenges. This is one of four case studies, and a report synthesizing common themes, that aim to fill this knowledge gap. The other studies include the following:

- **The Beerline Trail and ARTery** project in Milwaukee, Wisconsin, focuses on how cultural organizations are working with police, other local law enforcement agencies, and community groups to turn places perceived as unsafe or actually unsafe into community assets.
- **Eden Night Live** in Alameda, California, is an effort by the county sheriff’s department to build a community space by working with community developers, artists, and arts and cultural organizations and to rethink the department’s mission, priorities, and ways of engaging with the community.
- **The People’s Paper Co-op** in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, analyzes artist-led programs and initiatives aimed at reducing recidivism and working with formerly incarcerated residents through transformative artmaking.

The four programs featured in this series vary in how they address community safety through creative placemaking. The case studies discuss their design, implementation, challenges, and successes. This work aims to inform others interested in understanding how creative placemaking improves community safety, as well as how to measure the effectiveness of these interventions. Although creative placemaking is only one part of the work local stakeholders are undertaking to improve community safety, these case studies focus on that thread.

The Urban Institute collected information for the creative placemaking and community safety case studies between August 2017 and March 2018. Data we collected include semistructured phone interviews with ArtPlace/LISC staff, semistructured, in-person interviews with stakeholders, broadly defined to include community leaders, local artists, nonprofit partner staff, and city government agency staff, in-person focus groups with program participants, systematic observations of key events (i.e., planning meetings, public events), surveys administered by site staff, and a document review of quarterly reports, memos, grant applications, presentations, and other materials. Content, survey, and secondary data analysis methods were used to identify common themes and recommendations presented in the creative placemaking and community safety case studies.

FIGURE 1
Study Area



Source: Urban Institute.

Although Ashland-Cherryland is unincorporated county land, it has the dense urban environment and economic challenges associated with a city (table 1). The area is a countywide hotspot for unemployment, poverty, vacancy, and chronic disease; it counts as a food desert; and it has mortality rates well above the county average (Garvey et al. 2013).

Counties, however, are generally not organized to provide municipal-level services, and Alameda is no exception. The area's inhabitants have little city infrastructure, no city council, and minimal citywide economic development initiatives. Cherryland and Ashland have few cultural institutions: there are no theaters, movie theaters, music venues, art galleries, libraries, or other communal gathering places.

"I kept driving and driving and driving. There is no downtown. There are vacant lots, strip malls, a closed down movie theater. There is really no place in the community for children and families to gather, to come together for positive experiences." – Stakeholder interview

TABLE 1

Snapshot of Cherryland, Ashland, and Alameda County Demographics

Factor	Cherryland	Ashland	County
White alone	41.0%	15.6%	33.9%
Hispanic/Latino (any race)	54.0%	42.8%	22.8%
Black/African American	11.5%	19.5%	13.0%
Asian	9.5%	18.4%	27.0%
Two or more races	7.2%	5.9%	5.1%
Under 18 years of age	27.0%	27.8%	22.3%
Median per capita income	\$19,506	\$20,357	\$34,937
Low income (50–80% area median income)	21.4%	16.5%	13.0%
Share of total population at or below federal poverty level	22.0%	16.6%	11.8%
Share of children at or below federal poverty level	28.4%	19.8%	13.9%

Sources: Alameda County Sheriff’s Office white paper (unpublished) and John, Garvey, Nic Aulston, Sara Marxer, and Steve Spiker, *Eden Area Community Profile 2013*, (Oakland, CA: Urban Strategies Council), <https://urbanstrategies.org/eden-area-livability-initiative-community-profile-2013-2/>.

Public Safety

Like the rest of the Eden Area, Ashland-Cherryland is policed by ACSO. In 2012, most of the 687 violent crimes reported in the Eden Area were concentrated in Ashland and Cherryland, which together had nearly three times the rates for assaults and robberies than the other communities in the Eden area (with robbery rates in Ashland more than double the next-highest community, Cherryland).

The top three calls for service in Ashland and Cherryland, according to ACSO, are mental health-related domestic battery or disturbance and drug-related issues. Other common call-outs include prostitution, auto theft, burglary, weapons possession, being or driving under the influence, driving without a license or with expired registration, and parole or probation violations. In 2011, 36 percent of the county’s formerly incarcerated people lived in or within three miles of Ashland-Cherryland. This percentage represents a disproportionate share, given that the area is home to only 8.5 percent of the county population.

Inputs: Building Eden Night Live

Founding and Development of DSAL

Since the late 1990s, high crime rates have been a persistent issue in Ashland-Cherryland. Patrol deputies, school resource officers, and detention and corrections deputies in Santa Rita Jail all saw the

same adults and disaffected youth in schools, on the streets of Ashland and Cherryland, and cycling through the jail. In response to this repetition and larger trends toward diversion or decarceration, ACSO concluded that the declining economic base, vanishing cultural infrastructure, frayed social fabric, and lack of positive activities for youth were driving crime. To address these factors, Sheriff Gregory Ahern, ACSO command chief of the Deputy Sheriffs' Association, launched the civilian-led not-for-profit DSAL in 2005. Founded by Sergeant (now Captain) Martin Neideffer, DSAL originally aimed to offer prosocial activities for children and youth in Ashland-Cherryland.¹ Hilary Bass, then resident coordinator at Eden House Apartments, was brought on as the program director under Captain Neideffer and became executive director of DSAL in 2011 to oversee its growing staff and programs. Today, more than 15 deputies participate in DSAL programs, working and mentoring with youth while on duty.

In part based on conversations with community members, I learned DSAL's priorities have expanded over time to focus more explicitly on social equity, community-led economic empowerment, and creative placemaking as ways to change how law enforcement serves the community.

DSAL and the sheriff's office have made community engagement a central focus of their work since 2005. Together, DSAL, ACSO, and community partners have employed various community policing and community development strategies to reduce crime and enhance public safety in Ashland-Cherryland. As described by ACSO and DSAL, initiatives have included DSAL's free-to-play soccer league; Dig Deep Farms, an urban farm that provides internships for the formerly incarcerated and youth on probation, as well as fresh produce for low-income families and consumers; securing funding and launching a Food Hub, an entrepreneurial incubator for Alameda County residents; recruiting and supporting youth advocates who catalyzed construction of the REACH Ashland Youth Center; establishing a pilot "Polis Station"² at the Hayward Adult School, where sheriff's deputies have office space and mix with residents at DSAL's Boxing Academy classes, Zumba, Baile Folklorico, jiu-jitsu, and community meetings; and developing and launching Eden Night Live.³

Funding and Assistance

In 2014, ACSO was awarded a three-year, \$1 million Byrne Criminal Justice Innovation (BCJI) grant⁴ from the US Department of Justice. As described on the Department of Justice website, this program helps communities "develop place-based, community-oriented strategies with coordinated federal support to change neighborhoods of distress into neighborhoods of opportunity." According to ACSO's BCJI final report, in 2014 ACSO collaborated with DSAL and Supervisor Nate Miley's office to create a

multisectoral collaborative “Engine Team” consisting of representatives from Alameda County agencies, elected officials’ staff, nonprofits, community groups, and the private sector.

As part of their involvement in the program, ACSO also received technical assistance from the Local Initiatives Support Corporation, which engaged experts like the Vera Institute of Justice to support the planning and development of ACSO’s strategy. Technical assistance provided by Vera was instrumental in developing Eden Night Live, and it led the Engine Team to visit the City of Sacramento and its Summer Night Lights project. This community festival is staged in the highest crime area of Sacramento, and, as implemented in Los Angeles, it has been a model shown to lead to major reductions in crime in the surrounding area (Cahill et al. 2015). After observing Summer Night Lights, the ACSO leadership involved with the BCJI grant decided they wanted to develop a modified version of Summer Night Lights that would create a local space for community development, interaction, and business in a vacant lot in a high-crime area in Ashland-Cherryland.

In 2014, the Local Initiatives Support Corporation introduced the Engine Team to ArtPlace. DSAL’s partnership with ArtPlace led to the idea of translating the creativity of local artists and residents into an economic development project. Through a series of conferences and grant applications for ArtPlace, DSAL developed a deeper understanding of creative placemaking and public safety and developed the long-term plan to turn the pop-up festival into a permanent site. In 2016, DSAL received grant support from ArtPlace.

Though ACSO led the planning of Eden Night Live, they received crucial assistance and expertise from local organizations. They worked closely with Alameda Public Works Agency to make sure the space was accessible and safe, and they donated time for deputy sheriffs to build and set up the various activities for Eden Night Live and allowed the deputies to be paid to attend the event. Additionally, ACSO subcontracted the Alameda Chamber of Commerce to reach out to local businesses and individuals to sell their food and wares at Eden Night Live. The Chamber of Commerce was tasked with finding a creative manager to advertise the festival, reach out and recruit local creative talent, and train local youth and community members to staff Eden Night Live. DSAL depended on the local supporters to maintain the equipment. The staff of County Supervisor Miley’s office helped convene stakeholder meetings, set the agendas for the site development, and ensured that the Eden Night Live team had the support of Alameda County and the broader community.

Goals and Theory of Change

Eden Night Live Goals

ACSO and DSAL had a variety of goals for Eden Night Live. One of their initial goals was to create a space for the community to congregate and participate collectively. This focus on community cohesion and togetherness was evident in Eden Night Live's wide range of healthy activities. From dance parties to soccer games to rock-climbing walls, Eden Night Live was designed to give residents and families events and activities to experience together. Eden Night Live also focused on supporting local vendors by creating a space for local entrepreneurs to start formalizing their businesses and build rapport with the community. Residents and project leads said Eden Night Live was a way to increase the local economy and redevelop the area without gentrifying or displacing residents. They hoped Eden Night Live would be a place for people who had "side hustles" (e.g., home cooking, knitting, and soapmaking) to legitimize their business and gain exposure.

Another goal of Eden Night Live was the creation of a destination spot for the Eden Area where families could go for healthy entertainment. Various stakeholders noted the lack of a downtown area in Ashland-Cherryland and a lack of a sense of collective identity prior to Eden Night Live. Eden Night Live was designed to grab people's attention and become a fun place to be on weekend nights. One stakeholder noted that after the addition of the soccer fields, Eden Night Live really became a destination for the large community of soccer attendees and youth soccer programs. Another goal of Eden Night Live was to create an outlet for local artists to gain more exposure. Like local vendors, performers at Eden Night Live were not well-known, so Eden Night Live's goal was to help them build rapport with the community.

Eden Night Live was also designed to promote positive police-community relations. By having deputies attend Eden Night Live and talk to residents, officers developed relationships with community members outside of crisis situations. ACSO staff believed that officers becoming more integrated into the community would reduce social distance, reduce community fears such as deportation and police brutality, and improve community trust.

Some stakeholders admitted they expected the community to be skeptical and wary of Eden Night Live. They expected the presence of police would lead to low attendance and community engagement at first. They also thought the blighted and "infamous" reputation of the area could pose a serious obstacle to creative placemaking efforts, but they were hopeful that good will generated from previous

community engagement programs would help overcome these obstacles. Taken from an ACSO planning document, figure 2 shows that Eden Night Live was the cornerstone of a larger effort to make the area a vibrant corridor.

FIGURE 2



Source: ACSO.

Logic Model

The logic model in figure 3 illustrates the complex mechanisms through which Eden Night Live’s placemaking activities were designed to improve community activity and public safety in Ashland-Cherryland. The appendix identifies the entities involved in the creation and maintenance of Eden Night Live and describes how each aspect of Eden Night Live related to its larger goals and outcomes. DSAL and ACSO were key, but they were not the only stakeholders guiding this work.

FIGURE 3

Logic Model: Alameda County's Eden Night Live



Figure 4 simplifies the intended process of how Eden Night Live would help build altered policing tactics. By having on-duty deputies build and participate in Eden Night Live (as well as other DSAL programs), DSAL and ACSO are attempting to make community investment and engagement a central part of police practice. Overall, creating a distinct artistic place by designing, expressing, envisioning, performing, and making together leads to authentic relationships; empathy among neighbors leads to an animated, humanistic, distinct sense of place.

FIGURE 4

Logic Model: Changing Policing Paradigms



Activities: Eden Night Live Explained

Site Selection

Eden Night Live was launched in July 2016 on a long-vacant, 2.6-acre lot at Hampton Road and Mission Boulevard between Cherryland and Ashland. The site was along a busy four-lane boulevard with poorly maintained sidewalks and significant noise pollution. According to one stakeholder, “On E. 14th street, in particular, there is an infamous reputation for an unwelcoming, blighted area.” The area between Mission Boulevard and E. 14th Street was classified as a hotspot, or an area with high levels of criminal activity, according to ACSO contacts. ACSO picked this site for its potential to address a unique blend of crime prevention efforts, social capital building, arts and culture, recreation, and economic development in an area with significant public safety challenges.

Layout, Major Activities, and Creative Programming

In its first year, 2016, Eden Night Live was held from 5 to 8 p.m. every Friday and Saturday through early October. Eden Night Live returned with Halloween fest later in October and continued with a “Winter Night Live”⁵ run from Thanksgiving to Christmas. In the month preceding its debut, more than half a dozen on-duty but not in uniform sheriffs’ deputies built several structures on the Eden Night Live site, including a fitness and recreation area, a mobile climbing wall, a sand volleyball court, a pop-up civic center, a basketball court, and a stage. A dining and seating area next to the stage had picnic tables and heating lamps. In 2017, the layout changed and event frequency decreased when Eden Night Live changed its location (see “Challenges” section) (figure 5).

FIGURE 5

Community Members, DSAL Staff, ACSO Deputies, Sheriff Ahern, and County Supervisor Miley at Opening of Second Eden Night Live



Courtesy of DSAL.

One of the most important aspects of Eden Night Live was the fully operational mobile kitchen or “food truck” that offered participants local food (figure 6). The food truck functioned as an incubator for local cooks and caterers wanting to increase their visibility and local customer base. In the process of setting up the truck, DSAL had to learn about the needs of emerging food vendors. They also discovered the Environmental Health Department permitting process posed a significant barrier to becoming a legitimate business. DSAL let vendors use the Eden Night Live address as their business address so they could be permitted to prepare and sell their products, and the Environmental Health Department allowed new vendors to use the fully permitted food trailer as their “commissary kitchen.”

Local vendors sold everything from toys to soaps to blankets. They were given tables and chairs as well as tents to cover their wares. For many of the vendors, Eden Night Live was the first time they had sold their items outside their home. To incubate local small businesses, ACSO and DSAL subcontracted the Alameda Chamber of Commerce to recruit vendors to sell at Eden Night Live. The Chamber of

Commerce worked with these vendors to build a client base, legitimize their businesses, and complete their permit paperwork.

FIGURE 6

Food Truck at Eden Night Live



Photo by Andrea Gil.

Another key component of Eden Night Live were spaces for team sports. Volleyball, basketball, soccer, and other sports were played throughout the festival (figure 7). Eden Night Live's soccer field was a major draw for local adults and youth. Entire families would come to watch their teenagers and young children play soccer. For activities like rock climbing, deputies and Eden Night Live staff assisted participants and monitored safety. Depending on the weather, different sports-related activities were offered.

FIGURE 7

Men Playing Soccer in the Futsal Courts



Photo by Cameron Okeke.

The creative arts and events at Eden Night Live were envisioned by ACSO and DSAL and various stakeholders in the planning process. Led by Eden Night Live’s event coordinator, Raul Navalta, the staff of Eden Night Live ran creative programming. A range of local amateur and professional dancers, singers, bands, poets, and comedians were featured onstage each night. Eden Night Live staff recruited, managed, and paid local artists and performers. They also were responsible for supplying music and maintaining the creative agenda. A stakeholder recounted that on one occasion, a local community group hosted a posada with traditional Aztec dancers and musicians, drawing large crowds. Most programming occurred on the main stage, which was elevated and located in front of the communal space. Staff created a website and used several outlets, including social media, to advertise Eden Night Live. DSAL used Facebook to boost posts to a specific geographic area around the site to promote the events and recruit local artists and vendors.

Local artist Bobby Arte made several murals in partnership with ACSO, including a large mural depicting local officers and community residents overlooking Eden Night Live. According to DSAL, the development of the mural was a community-engaged process in which residents requested including deputies as part of the mural to show they are seen as part of the community fabric (figure 8).

On a typical night, a local singer started the event with the national anthem, followed by various singing and dancing acts. Depending on the season, there were holiday-related events like meeting Santa Claus or lighting the Christmas tree. Eden Night Live staff also decorated a section of the stage so local teens could take selfies and promote Eden Night Live on social media. A portion of the programming was dedicated to events of local importance. For example, there was a fundraiser for a local community leader who had fallen ill during the December 2017 Eden Night Live.

FIGURE 8

Mural Depicting Various Sports and Dancing with Deputies and Local Residents



Photo by Cameron Okeke.

Community Feedback and Evaluation

Several methods were employed to engage community residents in the planning, development, and execution of Eden Night Live. ACSO and DSAL put out a broad call for artists to design and lead activities throughout the neighborhood at schools, the REACH Ashland Youth Center, the Cherryland Community Association, Eden Area Livability Initiative working groups, and large low-income housing complexes in Ashland. As deputies met residents throughout the week, they would talk about the events and encourage them to participate in Eden Night Live. Additionally, DSAL partnered with organized parent groups to cohost Eden Night Live. Giving community members decisionmaking power for a night increased attendance greatly. For example, when Padres Unidos cohosted, over 500 people from their network attended.

To continually improve Eden Night Live, ACSO and the deputies involved with Eden Night Live used several methods to gauge its effect, including soliciting feedback about the event from the community.

They did one-on-one interviews and attendee surveys and had several conversations with local community groups. The survey was designed to gather both attendees' perceptions and feedback on Eden Night Live's activities as well as to provide insight on community perceptions of crime and safety in the neighborhood. When asked what they liked the most about Eden Night Live, most community residents said music. They also made several suggestions that later became a part of Eden Night Live. The majority of respondents were very concerned about crime in the neighborhood, particularly robbery and car theft. Many said crime led them to feel unsafe in their neighborhood, and the majority of respondents had been or knew victims of crime. The department tracked attendance through surveys. DSAL also consulted local community partners on what activities local youth would like and sought feedback about Eden Night Live from the Parent Coffee Club, a school-based organizing group.

The vendor interviews allowed DSAL to learn which businesses needed help getting licenses, whether they could charge a fee without losing vendors, and the impact of Eden Night Live on the vendors' businesses. The vendor interviews revealed that for some vendors their business was their main income. It also captured their desire for greater publicity and foot traffic during Eden Night Live.

Through the BCJI grant, Hatchuel Tabernik & Associates conducted a formal third-party evaluation of ACSO's efforts. In September 2018, they reported there were 63 Eden Night Live events that engaged 195 to 222 vendors (including recurring vendors). Including the events that took place after their evaluation, there were 68 events in total. In partnership with the Alameda Chamber of Commerce, the department also tracked the progress of vendors participating in Eden Night Live and how many jobs were created through their success. This information was reported to DSAL, which used it to make the appropriate changes.

Reflections and Challenges of Eden Night Live

Creative Placemaking and Public Safety

All the stakeholders (project leads, officers, board members, and so forth) interviewed for this case study agreed that Eden Night Live was trying to reduce crime and improve public safety in the surrounding area. Each stakeholder viewed creative placemaking, public safety, and the relationship between the two differently, but there were a number of common themes.

In interviews, stakeholders noted that people often think of public safety solely in reference to the police, but many argued that public safety was, in fact, all aspects of the health of the community. To

them, public safety included financial, physical, medical, and mental health, and these factors related directly to the community environment. For example, antisocial behavior was fostered by the antisocial environmental and communal factors. Conversely, creating a prosocial environment and community would increase prosocial behavior and reduce fear. Some stakeholders claimed that people “are afraid of doing something without a safety net,” and when people feel safe, connected, and satisfied enough to step outside their home, opportunities and prosperity appear in these communities. To these stakeholders, public safety was about helping people feel comfortable enough to take chances to create opportunities and build the capital needed to pursue their dreams. To many of these stakeholders, public safety was about creating a community strong and resilient enough to police itself in a “natural and authentic way”. For law enforcement, this view meant that public safety helped make the community so healthy that their enforcement services would be rarely needed (figure 9).

FIGURE 9
Deputies at Eden Night Live



Courtesy of DSAL.

To many stakeholders, creative placemaking involved creating a positive space that the community feels is its own through the creation of jobs, art, and recreational opportunities. By representing and showcasing a sense of community and identity, more people were out and about in the neighborhood, in turn further developing a sense of place and community. Stakeholders saw creative placemaking as the creation of a space to be creative and experience the creativity of others.

I think human beings have an innate need to create, to collaborate, to communicate. A lot of times we don't have opportunities in our lonely lives to come together to a place, to connect, to create, to experience. When you create a community event, when you experience other people's art or music, that's how I would define [creative placemaking]. – Community stakeholder

Some stakeholders believed that creative placemaking efforts like Eden Night Live could establish a safe place for community members to interact with each other and the police. By strengthening these community relationships, Eden Night Live could positively affect other public safety efforts. To support this claim, some stakeholders pointed out that neighborhoods with higher mutual trust had been linked with lower homicide rates (Uchida et al. 2013). Some stakeholders saw creative placemaking as a crucial component of the economic development of the Ashland-Cherryland area. For them the logic was simple: to make the area safer, people should be more economically empowered. For the community to be more economically empowered, events like Eden Night Live were needed. These stakeholders expected Eden Night Live to build a sense of place, to allow local vendors to be patronized by residents, and to expose the community to local art and artists (figure 10). According to various stakeholders, this type of creative placemaking builds an economic base for entrepreneurship, which lays the foundations for public safety. The consensus was that if a program supports fun, jobs, eateries, arts venues, and activity, it will inherently be a safer place because people will feel safe getting to know and look after each other in that space.

Additionally, stakeholders expected Eden Night Live would lead people to spend their dollars locally to support one another, building an economic base for the area and making the surrounding area and communities safer over time. The public safety-improving efforts of Eden Night Live were also expected to radiate beyond the immediate area to all of Ashland-Cherryland, improving the area's reputation and laying the foundation for a larger streetscape initiative along Mission Boulevard.

FIGURE 10

Local Dance Team Performing on Eden Night Live Stage



Courtesy of DSAL.

Challenges

Two challenges facing Eden Night Live were common to creative placemaking efforts: “countering community skepticism” and “forging sustaining partnerships” (Markusen and Gadwa 2010, 15). These themes were brought to the forefront in several stakeholder interviews. One stakeholder recalled that the team erroneously focused at first on getting equipment for activities the community said it wanted, rather than on making people feel comfortable entering the space for robust participation. They assumed that community engagement (i.e., asking people what they wanted) would translate into participation. Though they had attractive equipment, they still needed to overcome community skepticism toward a festival with law enforcement attending. The existing disconnect between residents and local government further complicated efforts to increase participation and involvement in Eden Night Live.

Another challenge was not knowing where to start. Stakeholders shared that they struggled to prioritize at the start of Eden Night Live. It seemed that everything needed to be done at once. Executing a new idea took longer than anticipated, and keeping everyone in the loop was difficult. Stakeholders also voiced concerns about lacking the types of skills needed to run Eden Night Live.

Business principles were needed to keep the event space open and running well, so they needed to form new partnerships and hire more staff. These partnerships required constant communication to maintain.

One of the major challenges Eden Night Live faced was the siloed nature of local government. By its very nature, Eden Night Live intersected with the interests of workforce development, recreation, community development, and economic development agencies. For Eden Night Live to be feasible and effective, ACSO needed to partner with other county organizations, but it struggled to build partnerships with all the actors in each of these sectors. People within these sectors questioned whether public safety agencies should run community development activities; they believed ACSO was overstepping its boundaries. Throughout the run of Eden Night Live, ACSO and DSAL faced opposition from other local agencies that considered Eden Night Live to be outside the scope of policing.

People exist in the county and government jobs and CBOs to serve those other areas of work, such as community and economic development, public health, public works, and things. Once we start butting up, they look at us like, "What the hell are you doing in my lane?" They think we are interfering in their work or lack thereof. It's sheerly about bumping up against the lane. It's seen as an insult. – DSAL member

Also, because ACSO and DSAL are not development agencies, the team did not possess expertise in several important fields (e.g., real estate, site construction, zoning regulations). Thus, they struggled to acquire the appropriate insurance because DSAL, a not-for-profit, and ACSO, a county entity, had different operational roles. The team had to ensure that the space was properly zoned, that fire access was properly incorporated in the design, that the food trailer was properly permitted and transported to the site, and that the Alameda County Public Works Department would partner with them to make cost-effective site improvements. These issues were overcome, but they caused delays and raised doubts about the viability and sustainability of the project.

Another issue ACSO and DSAL faced was balancing their capacity and size with the volume of work they aspired to do. As mentioned above, DSAL engages in multiple projects that aim to address the structural impediments facing Ashland-Cherryland. DSAL's staff has grown over its tenure, but at times, they are overextended, leaving projects unfinished or delayed. DSAL and ACSO work together

symbiotically to close gaps in staffing and ensure projects stay on track, but as new upstream issues emerge in Ashland-Cherryland, the volume of work can be exhausting.

Finally, for the 2017 Eden Night Live season, the county required DSAL and ACSO to move the festival to accommodate a market-rate housing development planned for the initial site. Eden Night Live moved to another county-owned parcel on the corridor about a mile away that had been vacant for more than a decade. The new Eden Night Live space had considerably less space for activities and parking. However, according to various stakeholders, ACSO used this new space to their advantage. The smaller space, for instance, made the event far more intimate. The area surrounding the new site was more densely populated and was in the middle of six large apartment complexes, making it more walkable from surrounding communities, even if lacking the parking capabilities of the previous site. The new site was also closer to the REACH Youth Center and local businesses. Reopened in July 2017, Eden Night Live was held only on Fridays. This change was suggested by the Community Development Agency, which thought reducing the frequency of the event would make it more valuable, increasing community participation and vendor sales.

Limitations and Successes

From the perspective of stakeholders and community members, Eden Night Live had a notable impact on the Ashland-Cherryland area; however, this impact was difficult to quantify. Based on the components of Eden Night Live and the logic model, there is a strong case to be made that Eden Night Live, as a cultural resource, enhanced various aspects of resident well-being, improved the community fabric, and advanced multiple public safety goals (Stern and Seifert 2017). However, without certain quantifiable measures, I cannot say definitively that Eden Night Live had these effects. The following sections elaborate on the limitations of measuring outcomes of Eden Night Live, highlight the various successful accomplishments, and distinguish those from the verified outcomes of Eden Night Live.

Limitations

Three issues limit the accuracy and validity of measurements of the outcomes and impacts of Eden Night Live: a dearth of outcome measures of place-based interventions, unreliable traditional measures of public safety, and difficulty localizing quantifiable effects for a limited intervention. Many of the commonly cited outcomes of place-based interventions, like increased tolerance or development of community identity, are difficult to translate into quantifiable measures (Markusen 2013).

Measurements of place-based interventions often require large-scale community surveys and longitudinal assessments, neither of which were available for Eden Night Live.

Using traditional, easily accessible measures of public safety also poses a problem. For example, levels of crime fluctuate greatly depending on numerous factors (e.g., density of people, season, opportunity). Eden Night Live may have had an effect on these trends, but such an effect would need to be taken in the context of how crime reporting and calls for service can be affected by factors such as public trust in law enforcement, which, again, was an intended goal of Eden Night Live.

Place-based interventions like Eden Night Live may have effects that ripple through communities, but the intensity of those effects is not well understood. To get an accurate measure of the effects of a community festival, evaluators need to set parameters and localize the effects. Given that Eden Night Live drew people from all over the county, the effects of exposure on individuals and communities may be minimized or diluted by distance. Furthermore, DSAL has several community-development projects, like the soccer league and the boxing gym, that have potential effects on community health and well-being. Without a research or evaluation framework built into the event, it would be difficult to reliably isolate the effects of Eden Night Live from the effects of the other placemaking efforts. Finally, as a limited intervention with limited hours and over a limited period of time, the dosage (or intensity of the intervention) of Eden Night needs to be considered: as it was not a 24-7 intervention with full community participation, expecting significant local effects on outcomes of interest for the community at large is unrealistic.

Successes

Eden Night Live aimed to fill a socially and economically disenfranchised community's need for safe, family-friendly artistic and social expression. In terms of what stakeholders wanted to gain from the initiative, it was successful. Several other goals were expressed by stakeholders and represented in the logic model. Major successes of Eden Night Live included

- providing opportunities for local commerce
- providing opportunities for socioemotional growth
- building a creative community space
- fostering community expression of art
- providing opportunities for greater cohesion and tolerance
- providing opportunities for mental and physical health improvement

- establishing an avenue for positive interaction with the police
- embodying a public display of community investment
- further testing community development as a policing strategy

The following sections highlight the major measurable outcomes of Eden Night Live. These outcomes are related to the successes listed above, but they differ because they are verifiable and often quantifiable. Additionally, I analyze how Eden Night Live potentially affected the public safety indicators outlined elsewhere (Ross 2016). I analyze how Eden Night Live could have affected each indicator by using relevant literature. I also explore how integrating longitudinal research and impact analysis into Eden Night Live would capture the quantifiable metrics needed to ground these potential impacts.

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

As a result of Eden Night Live, 27 new local vendors were launched in some capacity, creating 30 jobs. Eden Night Live had an impact on budding entrepreneurs and local business by giving them a chance to get off the ground. Many of the staff of Eden Night Live were local youth who learned important technical and arts management skills. Some of the small business that were displayed at Eden Night Live have been selected to have a permanent space in a soon-to-be-built market hall in Ashland. Additionally, Eden Night Live supplied local low-cost food to residents, saving them money they could then spend on vendors. The creation of local jobs and development of local business was a major success and a measured outcome.

Eden Night Live not only incubated local business but potentially did so without displacing residents. Some forms of community development and revitalization lead to the gentrification of public space and displacement of low-income residents (HUD 2018) By incubating local entrepreneurship and business, the Eden Night Live team was able to successfully build local capital and cultivate business without relying on large-scale redevelopment (figure 11). To evaluate this effect, ACSO could start monitoring changes in the local population and housing density near Eden Night Live. Longer-term research is required to understand the effects of Eden Night Live on housing and vacancy rates, but there is little evidence that Eden Night Live contributed to gentrification or displacement.

FIGURE 11

Eden Night Live Event Staff and Local Vendor-Artist



Courtesy of DSAL.

Creation of local business is crucial to the establishment of public safety, not only because economic development serves as an important indicator for public safety goals, but because neighborhoods like Ashland-Cherryland that face economic disadvantage face disproportionate public safety challenges (Ross 2016). This type of economic development through local art and business created a public good that directly and indirectly improved the well-being of the neighborhood by employing more residents and supporting the creative economy. Performers and artists working with Eden Night Live were paid.

Eden Night Live was a visible example of community investment by local organizations and local communities that showed the Ashland-Cherryland area was important. This display of commitment and investment may have generated a greater sense of community organization and community mobilization around resources and safety. Community investment could have a ripple effect across sectors, signaling and encouraging more investment in this area. The creative sector creates “natural” cultural districts that “anchor” a community and its economy (Cortright 2005; Stern and Seifert 2008) (figure 12). To evaluate this effect, ACSO could track the amount of government and private investment on Ashland-Cherryland post-Eden Night Live.

FIGURE 12

Art Installation in a Repurposed Shipping Container



Photo by Andrea Gil.

SOCIOEMOTIONAL DEVELOPMENT AND SELF-EFFICACY

Communities need creative and fun outlets, and Eden Night Live attracted over 18,000 residents⁶. Eden Night Live offered residents a space to create, engage, play, and build, improving their self-efficacy. Self-efficacy, the belief in one's ability to succeed or accomplish a task, is derived from four primary sources: performance, learned experiences, encouragement, and positive reactions to task completion (Bandura and Wessels 1997). Local artists expressed themselves through performance, and residents, especially young residents, were exposed to new ways of expression (e.g., dancing, painting, singing). Prosocial behaviors like sports participation and culturally based arts engagement can provide participants opportunities to succeed and boost their self-efficacy (Reeve and Lee 2014). By creating an encouraging environment for local youth and adults, Eden Night Live offered them opportunities to improve how they see and express themselves, which can have lasting effects on their self-esteem, productivity, and interpersonal relationships (Ferrer-Wreder et al. 2002; Yahner et al. 2015).

By creating a forum for people to interact with community members with races, classes, immigration status, languages, and professions that differed from their own, Eden Night Live may have changed the way people relate to one another. The artistic performances during Eden Night Live created a shared experience, creating common ground for dialogue. Arts engagement increases tolerance toward others and makes participants more receptive to diverse perspectives (McCarthy et

al. 2004). This promotion of tolerance is key to the creation of safe communities. The logic is that arts engagement has been shown to promote empathy and understanding, which in the public safety sector mitigates crime based on perceived differences (Ross 2016). This potential result is particularly important because Eden Area residents have become increasingly diverse in race and ethnicity. In 2010, the majority of Eden area residents were Black, Asian, or Latino. Given the changing demographics of Ashland-Cherryland, tolerance-building efforts are crucial to creating a cohesive and safe community. Arts engagement at Eden Night Live may have laid the foundation for more positive relationships across seemingly disparate racial, ethnic, age, class, and occupational groups, improving the socioemotional development of participants. To capture whether Eden Night Live affected the socioemotional development and levels of tolerance among participants, ACSO could look at trends in levels of hate crimes or administer a community climate survey on ethnic diversity at Eden Night Live.

Arts engagement increases tolerance toward others and makes participants more receptive to diverse perspectives (McCarthy et al. 2004).

COMMUNITY COHESION, COMMUNITY IDENTITY, AND COLLECTIVE EFFICACY

Beyond changing how people relate to each other, Eden Night Live may have changed how people both external and internal to the community relate to the community. Getting people to leave their homes and interact publicly was a major success (figure 13). This community contact is a first step to building community cohesion and collective efficacy. In criminology, collective efficacy refers to the ability of community members through social interaction to control the behavior of people in the neighborhood. Communities with high levels of collective efficacy have been found to have lower rates of violence (Sampson, Raudenbush, and Earls 1997).

Eden Night Live also may have had an impact on community identity and sense of place. Eden Night Live used public art, in the form of murals and installations, to visually “activate” the space and tell the story of the community. Promoted by the aesthetic quality and the lighting of the event, Eden Night Live potentially “attached” people to the Ashland-Cherryland community identity, which would make the neighborhood more livable (Knight 2010). Community surveys administered by ACSO support this finding, but an independent community-engaged longitudinal survey could confirm it.

FIGURE 13

Adults and Kids Eating and Talking at Eden Night Live



Courtesy of DSAL.

PHYSICAL AND MENTAL HEALTH

By offering an outlet for physical activity, Eden Night Live created the conditions for community members to improve their health. By simply getting people out of their houses and into contact with each other, Eden Night Live may have improved the health of community members (Umberson and Montez 2010). Dancing and partaking in other artistic aspects of Eden Night Live may have offered health benefits, including reductions in stress and anxiety and improved quality-of-life for people suffering from pain and depression (McCarthy et al. 2004). These potential benefits are particularly important in the public safety field, where stress, trauma, and mental health issues are pervasive in marginalized and previously incarcerated populations (Seng et al. 2012). ACSO has anecdotal evidence and testimony of Eden Night Live’s impact on physical and mental health. To quantitatively measure how Eden Night Live affected health outcomes, ACSO could incorporate a wellness questionnaire into its survey of participants; check the weekly use of the space for soccer clinics, camps, and adult Zumba; and compare pre- and post-Eden Night Live neighborhood health outcomes in the immediate area.

PUBLIC SAFETY AND CIVIC ENGAGEMENT

One of the biggest intended impacts of Eden Night Live was to change the way the community relates to law enforcement and civic engagement. Eden Night Live focused on transforming perceptions of both police and residents through the creation of genuine relationships and positive interactions (figure 14).

As a result of Eden Night Live, deputies felt community members knew them better. Officers reported having community members call on them more and interact with them more.

FIGURE 14

Deputy Talking to Eden Night Live Participants



Courtesy of DSAL.

According to ACSO, calls for service have increased since Eden Night Live began. This increase in calls for service is not necessarily indicative of more criminal activity, but instead could be the result of an increase in the willingness of residents to report crime. Along with looking at calls for service longitudinally, ACSO could partner with community members to monitor how perceptions of them change pre/post Eden Night Live through community-engaged surveying (La Vigne, Fontaine, and Dwivedi 2017).

Research indicates that higher levels of civic engagement not only improve the lives of participants, but those of their family members and communities as well (Catterall, Dumais, and Hampden-Thompson 2012; Wali, Severson, and Longoni 2002). Civic engagement has important public safety implications, such as enabling people to advocate for more responsive and community-oriented public safety policy. The issue of civic engagement is particularly pressing in communities with large populations of undocumented residents (Theodore 2013). Officers in Alameda County thought undocumented residents were unwilling to talk to them because they were afraid of being deported.

According to some of the officers, Eden Night Live presented them with the opportunity to interact with community members in a positive way instead of “only meeting people on their worst day.” As a result of relationships built during Eden Night Live, officers working in the neighborhood believed undocumented residents were less afraid of them and more likely to call on them for aid when needed. To see how widespread this sentiment is, ACSO should conduct an ACSO-wide department survey about officer interactions with the public both within and without Eden Night Live.

POLICING PRIORITIES

One major indirect impact of Eden Night Live was a change in the way deputies who attended Eden Night Live saw their role in the community. Many deputies reported feeling more connected to the community. They viewed building, setting up, and assisting Eden Night Live as part of their role as deputies. Moreover, they viewed Eden Night Live and events like it as part of public safety. Several of the officers at Eden Night Live viewed the time they spent talking to residents and playing with local youth as crucial to not only making the community safer, but also making their job safer.

We're on the ground with these people having conversations, seeing the issues that they're going through. They trust us enough because we are so accessible that they give us access to their lives, and with that level of access we're able to come up with solutions—not a helicopter approach, us landing on the community, but us being atomized in the community and being able to work together with our partners and the people who trust us and actually love us, to help make things better in the area. – Alameda County deputy

Often officers only see people on their worst days, and they are forced to “insert themselves” into people’s lives. Eden Night Live gave deputies a chance to be invited into the lives of community members and into the fabric of the neighborhood. ACSO should do exit interviews with all deputies who worked with Eden Night Live to better capture its effect on their views about community policing and their perceptions of the community.

According to ACSO officials, over the last decade ACSO has been shifted from traditional policing to a more community development view. ACSO and DSAL claim that Eden Night Live was a perfect proof-of-concept for their approach to community policing (see “Looking Forward” section). There is

undoubtedly room for improvement (further discussed below), but Eden Night Live was a definitive step toward aligning ACSO's policing priorities more with community policing standards (President's Task Force on 21st Century Policing 2015).

Looking Forward

Polis Station

Eden Night Live technically ended in June 2018, but due to its popularity, DSAL and ACSO are planning to build a "Polis Station"⁷ on the site where Eden Night Live was previously held. This Polis Station would serve as base-of-operations for ACSO, but unlike traditional police departments, it will be integrated into a larger suite of social and economic hubs. According to ACSO, this station is designed to cement the foundational concepts of Eden Night Live and creative placemaking. Though the plans are still in development, the department has big aspirations.

The whole intent would be to have as much social fabric-building opportunities as possible. I imagine live music on some regular basis, dance classes, salsa classes, talent shows, markets, and farmers markets. I imagine everything under the sun. Maybe [Eden Night Live] is more of a once a month type of thing that has a certain identity to it. That's a TBD. The site will allow us to expand a concept more broadly. – A stakeholder, about the Polis Station

Lessons Learned from Eden Night Live

The creation and execution of Eden Night Live required the collaboration of multiple historically siloed organizations. Community residents, however, do not experience their personal or community lives in siloes. The various dimensions of public life intersect to produce the daily challenges residents face. To make Eden Night Live a reality, many groups had to be pushed out of their comfort zone. To push these groups out of their silos and inspire them to take a chance on this community project, ACSO needed both a vision and imaginative strategies. ACSO and DSAL's mission acknowledges that public safety is intrinsically tied to health, creativity, and economics. Eden Night Live was an attempt to build public safety by improving community cohesion, health, and economic vitality. This idea of growing public

safety allowed ACSO to see creative placemaking as a viable and useful approach to building community capital. Furthermore, because this vision for public safety is not widely accepted, ACSO and DSAL had to creatively convince both the leadership of the sheriff's office and partners to invest in Eden Night Live as a community policing model.

To successfully execute Eden Night Live, ACSO needed to build and collaborate with a complex web of partnerships between the local community, government organizations, law enforcement agencies, local artists, and community organizations. For example, ACSO wanted Eden Night Live to help reduce and prevent crime by ameliorating the economic issues facing Ashland-Cherryland. The Alameda Chamber of Commerce has expertise in this area. Instead of potentially duplicating efforts or undermining existing initiatives, ACSO partnered with the Chamber of Commerce. This decision allowed both ACSO and the Chamber of Commerce to more effectively improve the lives of Alameda County citizens. Ultimately, any project that aims to holistically affect the well-being of a community must seek partnerships with other entities that impact the various domains of well-being. Undergirding the partnerships built by ACSO was constant communication. Without constantly convening, coordinating, and communicating across sectors, Eden Night Live would not have been possible.

None of the organizations that helped put on Eden Night Live had the resources, skills, and staff necessary to run the festival by themselves. Only through communication of their strengths and shortcomings were they able to strategically organize and execute Eden Night Live. Thus, conducting a project like Eden Night Live requires a wide array of skills functioning efficiently. Groups looking to put on a similar event would need a mixed set of skills and expertise to be successful. In this case, ACSO needed people with a wide range of expertise, from zoning and land use laws to how to attract and manage local artistic talent to community outreach and community event planning. This mix of skills was critical in the development of Eden Night Live because having people in the room with these skills allowed for more realistic planning and rich dialogue. Public safety and law enforcement groups cannot know what they do not know, so the presence of these skill sets among their partners allows them to respond to and address unforeseen challenges. In many cases, these challenges could only be overcome by being flexible and adaptive. DSAL and its partners built and maintained this flexibility by constantly orienting themselves toward the community. Through the solicitation of community feedback, Eden Night Live was built to constantly evolve and adapt as the community's needs and interests changed.

FIGURE 15

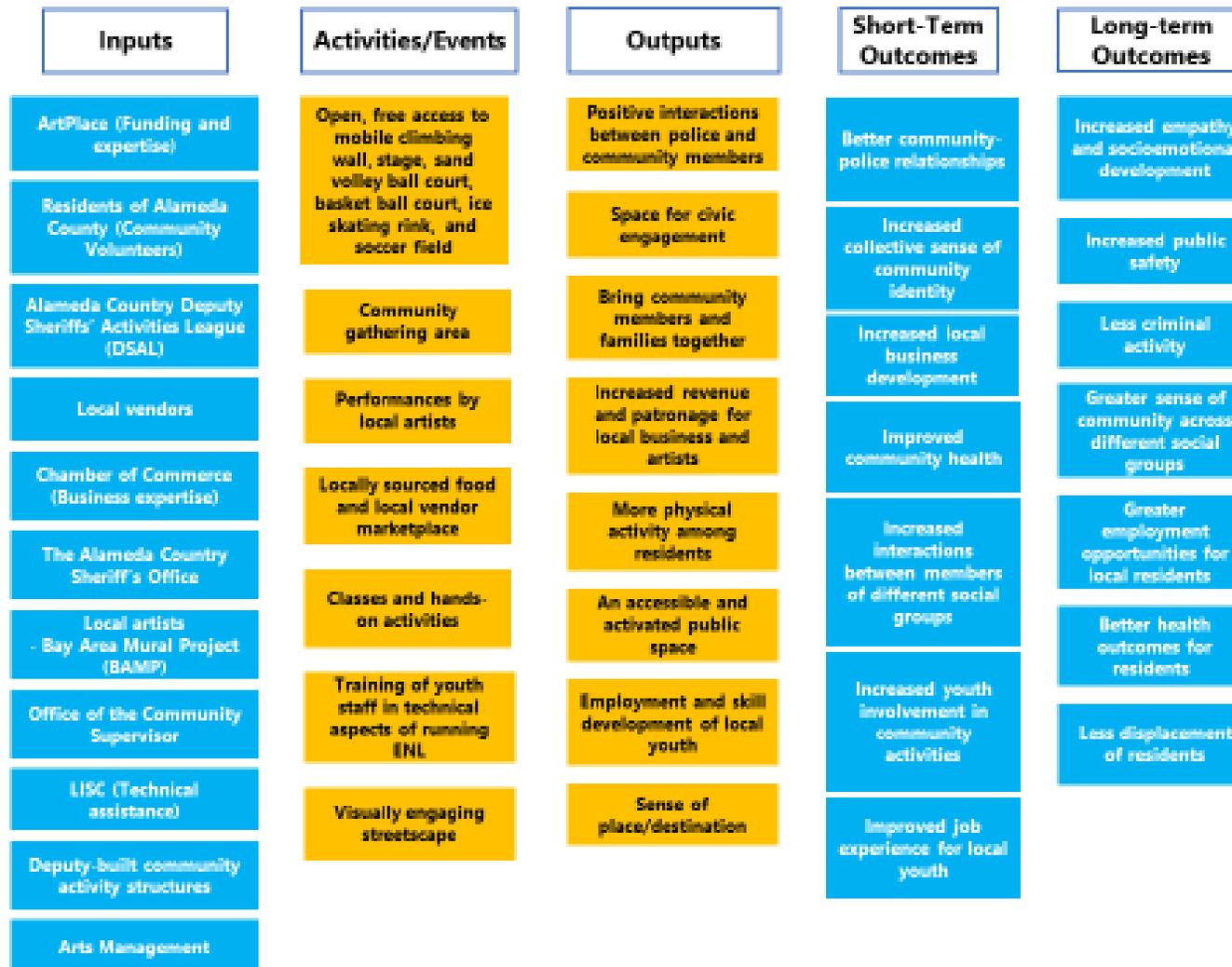
Capital Components of a Healthy Community



Source: DSAL.

Finally, Eden Night Live was part of a greater long-term community investment and empowerment plan by DSAL. A history of trauma and overpolicing has frayed relationships between vulnerable communities and police across the country. To begin the process of healing and build trust, police officers have to show they are invested in more than enforcing laws. They have to demonstrate a long-term commitment to improving the vitality of the neighborhood through positive acts of service. With Eden Night Live, ACSO and DSAL publicly showed their shift in policing priorities by building various types of capital in the neighborhood (see figure 15), laying the foundation for further investment in the Ashland-Cherryland area. Focused on community growth, this model of policing reimagines police as community supports instead of reactionary punishers. Eden Night Live and the radical shifts necessary for its creation and execution offer important insights into reconstructing public safety in historically marginalized communities.

Appendix



Notes

- ¹ Neideffer is currently the head of the Youth and Family Services Bureau, which comprises DSAL (civilians), community-oriented policing unit (sworn officers), and the behavioral health unit (health specialists).
- ² The original concept of a polis station was developed by Studio Gang (lead architect: Jeanne Gang) in Chicago (<http://studiogang.com/project/polis-station>). The ACSO was inspired by this work.
- ³ Eden Night Live is one of many projects organized and implemented by ACSO with the support of DSAL. Though not directly related, the success of Eden Night Live affects the success of ACSO's and DSAL's other projects and vice versa. As ACSO and DSAL move into more unconventional forms of policing through development, their projects face more and more scrutiny. Thus, the stalling or faltering of any one of these community-building efforts undermines faith in the underlying concept of community development as policing. Conversely, each successful project validates claims that this philosophy of policing is valuable, laying the foundations for future projects (see "Looking Forward" for more details).
- ⁴ This grant has since been renamed the Community Based Crime Reduction Program.
- ⁵ During December, DSAL used a Kresge Foundation grant to rent a synthetic ice rink and opened the site to visitors and skaters six days a week. This was the first time an ice skating rink had ever been brought to this community.
- ⁶ This number is the sum of the each event's attendance.
- ⁷ This model is heavily reviewed and was the inspiration for ACSO's model (<http://studiogang.com/project/polis-station>).

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