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Introduction

Over the past five years, the Wachovia Regional Foundation, The Reinvestment Fund (TRF), and Success Measures at NeighborWorks America have forged a solid partnership to create a participatory outcome evaluation framework for the foundation's neighborhood revitalization work. This effort has been predicated on the foundation's desire to demonstrate the effectiveness of comprehensive, resident-driven neighborhood revitalization strategies in a rigorous and systematic way, which also benefits the revitalization work itself.

Through trial and experimentation, the framework that has emerged from this process has evolved into an original, practical approach that integrates the use of primary and secondary data and strengthens a comprehensive neighborhood revitalization effort by incorporating market dynamics to inform the development and sequencing of strategies, enhancing resident participation in the revitalization effort, and assessing the impact of sustained, strategic interventions.

This article examines the principles that guided the framework development and led to a fruitful collaboration that continues to evolve and mature. The value of this approach is seen in the practical application of data collected, analyzed, and used by grantee organizations. Articulation of lessons learned, how this process has affected the foundation's work, and next steps should reso-

Key Points

· The Wachovia Regional Foundation spearheaded the formation of a partnership to create a participatory outcome evaluation framework for its neighborhood revitalization work.

· The framework integrates the use of primary and secondary data and has been modified and improved to strengthen a variety of the foundation's comprehensive neighborhood revitalization efforts.

· Forty-one community-based organizations have utilized the framework as a key tool to craft and implement neighborhood plans in a 62-county region.

· The framework has enabled grantees and residents to better understand and capitalize on market dynamics, enhance their participation in revitalization activities and begin to demonstrate the impact of sustained, strategic interventions.

nate with those who are weighing incorporation of participatory evaluation processes into their grantmaking.

Wachovia Regional Foundation: Background and Theory of Change

The Wachovia Regional Foundation, a private institution affiliated with Wells Fargo, aims to improve the quality of life for children and families living in low-income neighborhoods in New Jersey, Delaware, and eastern Pennsylvania. In 2003, the foundation refined its grants program to a more place-based approach, focusing on the creation and implementation of comprehensive

neighborhood plans in its 62-county region by providing:

- *neighborhood planning grants* to support the creation of resident-driven neighborhood revitalization plans. The plans focus on developing strategies that address the community's affordable housing, economic development, and neighborhood-building needs, and identifying the service needs of neighborhood children and their families. Grants vary from $25,000 to $100,000 and are disbursed based on performance over a 12- to 18-month period.
- *neighborhood implementation grants* to support the programmatic aspects of a comprehensive set of community development projects that have been identified in a resident-driven neighborhood plan. Grants vary from $100,000 to $750,000 and are disbursed based on performance over three to five years.

The foundation's theory of change (Figure 1) rests on the creation of resident-driven, comprehensive neighborhood plans and the implementation of a set of high-priority strategies identified in those plans. In the short term, increased stakeholder communication and networking, as well as increased organizational capacity, will lead to more and better programs and services. These programs will be responsible for generating neighborhood assets such as new leaders, affordable housing, expanded business activity, enhanced jobs skills, and improved infrastructure. In time, this engagement and programming will build greater stakeholder collaboration and stronger, more strategic organizations able to produce higher levels of community engagement, more effective programs and services, increased family assets, and improved resident satisfaction with a range of neighborhood "quality of life" factors.

On a parallel track, the foundation will have field-building outcomes by enhancing regional collaborations, fostering communication and networking among regional stakeholders, sharing of best practices, and strengthening the capacity and sustainability of community development organizations in the region. Over the long term, this funding strategy will strengthen at-risk families and revitalize at-risk lower income neighborhoods.

FIGURE 1 Wachovia Regional Foundation Theory of Change

Evaluation Framework: Testing the Theory

From its inception in 1998, the foundation viewed metrics as an important part of its institutional culture, believing that data should inform and drive programs. The foundation's evaluation program had always included the assessment of a project's performance against grantee-defined milestones and activities, and was characterized by a willingness to learn from both successes and failures in meeting benchmarks. However, the foundation's programmatic shift toward place-based neighborhood revitalization work required a broadening of its evaluation approach. The foundation's grants program was based on the premise that neighborhood revitalization requires a layering of a comprehensive set of programs, defined by residents themselves, to propel positive change in both physical and human capital. Meaningful evaluation, therefore, needed to assess not only the effects of individual programs, but also to gauge effects that the confluence of such programs and behavioral changes in stakeholders have on the quality of life for families in targeted neighborhoods.

In keeping with its primary tenet – to require only activities of real utility to grantees – the foundation sought an evaluation approach that would be grantee-driven and -designed. Through consultation with grantees and field experts, the foundation implemented a robust evaluation process designed to inform neighborhood stakeholders of the performance of individual programs, and to assess the impact of revitalization initiatives on a neighborhood's physical condition and quality of life. This participatory evaluation framework has yielded heightened collaboration and resident engagement with significant programmatic results. The framework includes systematic surveying of residents about community quality of life, quarterly reporting on project milestones and deliverables, and assessing change in select neighborhood indicators (e.g., census data, housing data, economic activity) against baseline information collected either during the planning process, or at inception of an implementation grant.

Challenges to Accessing and Using Quality Secondary and Primary Data

The foundation quickly learned that the dynamic set of evaluation practices it required exceeded the skills and resources of its grantees. For example, the foundation's neighborhood indicators were primarily based on secondary data, which foundation staff assumed would be readily available to the public. However, grantees discovered that, while some secondary data sets existed for larger municipalities, these were often limited to aging census data or kept at the municipal or political level, rendering use at the neighborhood level difficult. In smaller communities, accessibility to relevant data was often simply not available.

> *In smaller communities, accessibility to relevant data was often simply not available.*

Likewise, foundation staff realized that its grantees needed assistance with the development, administration, and interpretation of the required neighborhood survey. Grantees consistently requested a survey template, preferably accompanied by a Spanish translation. Without technical assistance, grantee survey methodology was poor, often limited to surveying those residents who attended meetings or community events. In addition, grantees who successfully administered a survey typically did not have a system for inputting, aggregating, managing, and sharing data; for effectively analyzing or using those results to improve programs; or for incorporating the evaluation process into a continuous feedback loop.

Recognizing these capacity limitations, but committed to its evaluation program, the foundation sought its own technical assistance and reached out to two powerhouse organizations in the community development field for help – first, The Reinvestment Fund, and later, Success Measures at NeighborWorks America.

Secondary Data Solution: The Reinvestment Fund

The Reinvestment Fund is a leading innovator in the financing of neighborhood and economic revitalization in the mid-Atlantic region. Dedicated to putting capital and private initiative to work for the public good, TRF manages $678 million in capital and has made $1 billion in community investments. Since 1985, it has financed more than 2,500 projects. TRF supports its financing with a research and policy analysis arm that has become a highly regarded source of unbiased information for public officials and private investors.

> *Multiple sites can be objectively compared and ranked based on overall redevelopment potential.*

In 2005, the foundation engaged TRF to provide its grantees with three data analysis tools to help them better understand neighborhoods in which they were working and to target limited resources in places with the opportunity for greatest impact. TRF provided:

- an analysis of market data to assist each grantee in incorporating data into the development and sequencing of neighborhood revitalization strategies,
- workshops to assist each grantee in examining its target neighborhood and understanding market data presented visually in maps, and
- access to secondary market data with an ability to overlay investment and activity data.

TRF's Market Value Analysis

Although designed by TRF for governments and private investors, the proprietary Market Value Analysis (MVA) proved to be another valuable tool for foundation grantees. Its goal of targeting investment and prioritizing action is particularly useful when resources are limited. Understanding where and how to invest these resources is critical to the success of grantees working to revitalize neighborhoods. The MVA provides this under-

standing in the form of a data framework for restoring market viability and wealth in distressed urban real estate markets. Using various statistical and analytic techniques, the MVA is able to reduce data on hundreds of thousands of properties and areas to a manageable, meaningful typology of market types that can inform program and investment decisions. Key sets of information included in the MVA analysis are:

- existing home values,
- occupancy/abandonment rates,
- vacant land,
- environmental conditions,
- owner/renter mix,
- public assets and liabilities,
- private assets and liabilities,
- existing level of investment,
- median income of immediate and surrounding communities, and
- transportation linkages, assets, and liabilities.

With this information, multiple sites can be objectively compared and ranked based on overall redevelopment potential. Figure 2 is the MVA for the Walnut Hill neighborhood in Philadelphia, Pa.; boundaries are outlined in red. Purple areas in the south and east of the target area are stronger markets; yellow and orange areas are in transition or distressed. This MVA map allowed a foundation grantee to consider whether investment in a distressed area bordering stronger markets has greater potential for success than investment in a distressed area without strong borders.

Analysis Workshops

Once area information is collected and mapped, TRF and the foundation convene groups of grantees to review data and consider potential sites for investment. The foundation conducts these sessions with multiple grantees from different neighborhoods in the region to give participants an opportunity to learn how others are addressing similar challenges, to understand what types of stresses are at play in other places, and to think about how to apply those lessons to their own work. Grantees have consistently commented that the TRF workshops and analysis provide useful

FIGURE 2 Market Value Analysis of Walnut Hill, Philadelphia

information that can be incorporated into their strategy development.

Access to Secondary Market Data

When its partnership with the foundation began in 2005, TRF collected secondary market data for each neighborhood on a case-by-case basis and prepared maps containing basic census demographics, home sale data from local municipalities or third-party data providers, vacancy data, foreclosures, lending activity, etc. This information was then presented to grantees in visually powerful printed maps of their neighborhoods. TRF collected and mapped data at either an address or block-group level so grantees could see how areas within their neighborhoods differed. These maps served as a point-in-time picture of an area and, along with the MVA, helped shape a set of investment recommendations.

TRF recognized that while this work was valuable to grantees, the data and maps were static. As vacancy rates or home prices changed, grantees had no way of accessing that updated information to see how their neighborhoods were shifting over time. By 2007, based on its work with the

foundation's grantees and others, TRF began to explore how improvements in technology and the advent of online mapping application could expand opportunities to access timely data. In 2008, TRF launched PolicyMap.com, an award-winning national data warehouse and mapping tool. The tool provides users with simple, online access to 10,000 data indicators in tables, maps, charts, and reports in a sophisticated, user-friendly format, allowing them to not only access data and maps, but also to upload their own data, share it with others, and view others' contributions.

In 2009, the foundation began to provide its grantees with access to PolicyMap.com, enabling them to see their investments and target areas overlaid on thematic maps of a variety of indicators, generate a profile of an area around a potential investment, and keep abreast of changing neighborhood conditions. During this initial year of using PolicyMap.com, grantees have reported that the system has been useful for:

• enriching their case for support from funding sources with compelling and market-specific data,

- creating enhanced efficiency in tracking key neighborhood indicators over time, and
- visually displaying information and maps for community meetings and public presentations.

The use of a common survey tool allows the foundation to assess trends across its grantee footprint, identifying correlations in neighborhood conditions and quality-of-life perceptions.

Primary Data Solution: Success Measures at NeighborWorks America

While its collaboration with TRF continued to add value to the evaluation efforts of grantee organizations, the foundation recognized that grantees still struggled with meeting its survey and perception assessment requirements. Thus, in 2006, the foundation initiated a relationship with Success Measures at NeighborWorks America to help grantees design and implement participatory assessments and evaluations, including a sound, reliable resident-satisfaction survey.

As a nationally recognized outcome evaluation innovator, Success Measures represents more than a decade of development, testing, and use. More than 300 community development practitioners, intermediaries, funders, researchers, and evaluators participated in the program's development. Since 2005, Success Measures has assisted more than 235 community development nonprofits and 25 funders and intermediaries to measure both short-term outcomes and broader, long-term impacts (NeighborWorks, n.d.). Success Measures is based at NeighborWorks America, a leading community development intermediary that supports a nationwide network of more than 240 community development corporations through capital investments, program funding, training, and technical assistance as well as thousands of other nonprofits and municipalities across the country annually

by providing training, evaluation, and community revitalization tools and programs.

The Success Measures approach is designed to build nonprofit and philanthropic capacity to carry out useful evaluation processes. Success Measures provides consulting, training, technical assistance, and a user-friendly, web-based data system – the Success Measures Data System (SMDS) – that includes a suite of 80 tested outcome indicators and 180 data-collection tools, available in English and Spanish, to measure the results of community development and asset-building programs. SMDS helps users collect, manage, and tabulate evaluation results. Funders and intermediaries use SMDS to share custom evaluation frameworks, indicators, and data-collection tools with grantees.

Success Measures provides the foundation's grantees with targeted evaluation training, technical assistance, data analysis, and technology services to systematically gather information from residents about how satisfied they are with neighborhood conditions, as well as data on the results of specific programs. Using a common tool, all grantees conduct a neighborhood-wide perceptual survey before beginning their programs and repeat the survey either three or five years later, at the conclusion of the grant period. The use of a common survey tool allows the foundation to assess trends across its grantee footprint, identifying correlations in neighborhood conditions and quality-of-life perceptions. Over time, the foundation hopes to assess correlations in *changes* in quality-of-life perceptions with particular projects or sets of projects implemented. Specific assistance provided to foundation grantees by Success Measures includes:

- *outcome evaluation training* to help grantees learn the basics of outcome evaluation and sound data collection practices;
- *customized evaluation planning* through the aid of a Success Measures coach, who assists grantees in developing a theory of change diagram, a map of expected program outcomes, and a plan to carry out evaluations;
- *technology orientation and assistance* through

distance learning sessions, which help organizations learn to use SMDS to access evaluation tools, input and manage data, and easily share data with the foundation;

- *ongoing evaluation and analysis* support over the course of the evaluation, through both site visit and phone/email contact, to help organizations draw appropriate samples for their target neighborhoods, train data collectors, manage the evaluation process, and analyze and use the resulting data; and
- *data aggregation and analysis* to assist the foundation in aggregating and analyzing data from grantees across the portfolio on an annual basis.

Grantees have found this combination of peer-group training, individual coaching support, and online technology demystifies evaluation and gives them the skills and ongoing support needed to tackle a comprehensive primary level data collection effort. With support and full engagement, grantees report many unexpected benefits of the process. In the case of IMPACT Services, described below, the organization benefitted from both an analysis of neighborhood assets and a resident survey that revealed growing satisfaction among both owners and renters.

Example From the Field

Founded in 1974, IMPACT Services, a multiservice nonprofit, has been working to revitalize the Heart of Kensington neighborhood in Philadelphia, Pa., through programs to create jobs, strengthen community, and help people enter the work force. This community of 30,000 residents has undergone significant demographic change in the past two decades as its older, predominantly white population has been substantially replaced by one that is much younger, lower income, and more diverse. Located five miles from central Philadelphia, the neighborhood has easy access to regional transit and transportation corridors and is home to anchor medical institutions and both existing and emerging commercial and nonprofit enterprises.

In 2005, with support from the Wachovia Regional Foundation, the Pennsylvania Department of Community and Economic Development, and the city of Philadelphia's CDC Tax Credit Program, IMPACT Services crafted a five-year plan for the comprehensive revitalization of the Heart of Kensington. Using a planning process that involved more than 300 residents and stakeholders in focus groups and community meetings, IMPACT Services' goal was to guide housing investment and redevelopment while preserving key neighborhood assets. The plan featured:

- building community collaborations, strengthening community anchors and businesses, and increasing activities and resources for community children;
- enhancing health and safety through the demolition and sealing of abandoned houses, and preserving recreational facilities and cleaning green spaces; and
- improving economic well-being of families through employment and training programs, creating a family literacy program, and establishing a VITA (tax assistance) Center in the neighborhood.

> *Grantees have found this combination of peer-group training, individual coaching support, and online technology demystifies evaluation and gives them the skills and ongoing support needed to tackle a comprehensive primary level data collection effort.*

Once the plan was developed, the foundation provided IMPACT Services with assistance from TRF to analyze and map neighborhood market data as well as to draw on other secondary data through PolicyMap.com to help geocode and analyze a range of neighborhood assets and its existing housing development projects (Figure

FIGURE 3 Market Value Analysis of IMPACT Services Target Areas, Philadelphia
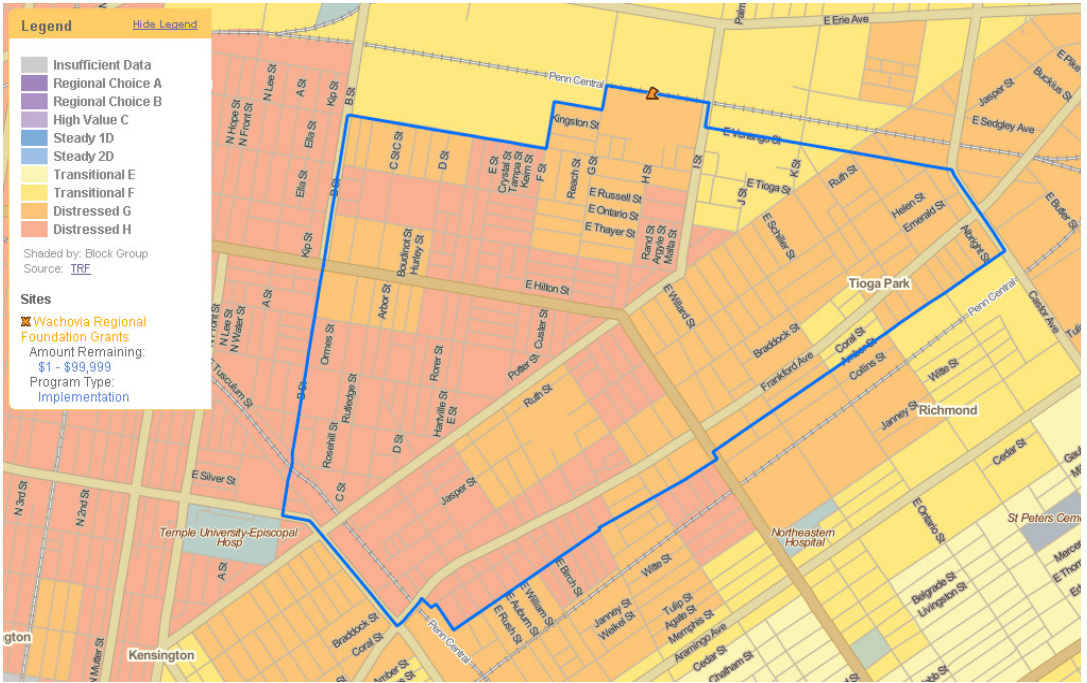
3). This contribution proved to be "a revelation" for the organization, enabling it "to see how [a] broader context could alter one's world view and sense of what was possible" (Martino, 2010). As a result of this analysis, IMPACT Services shifted investment strategies to leverage market strengths in adjoining neighborhoods as well as in Heart of Kensington.
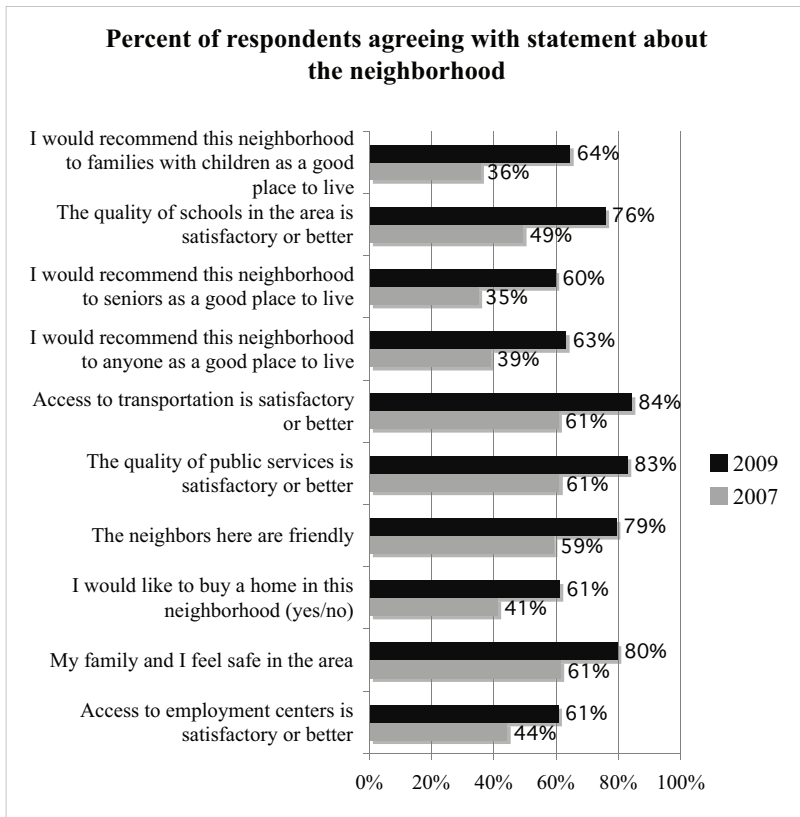
Neighborhood Survey, Evaluation Methodology, and Findings

A key component of the foundation's support for implementation of the plan also included support to conduct a quality-of-life survey of neighborhood residents in 2007 and again in 2009. The Success Measures coach and IMPACT Services senior staff (the "evaluation team") used the Success Measures "Resident Satisfaction With Neighborhood Survey" (NeighborWorks America, nd) as its primary measure, adding questions specifically about Heart of Kensington interactions and perceived benefits, including questions about hope for the community's future. The evaluation team drew a random sample of street addresses in two target areas in the neighborhood, one covering a five-block radius and the other a three-block

radius. IMPACT Services conducted an initial survey between June and September 2007 and a final survey between September and December 2009. IMPACT Services staff and volunteers under staff supervision conducted door-to-door surveys; survey teams were required to make two attempts at each address. In 2007, 205 surveys were completed, in 2009, 181 surveys; each in the poorest part of the target area. Spanish language versions of the survey tools were also available.

The Success Measures coach applied formal statistical analysis of results, including *t*-tests on changes in satisfaction scores. IMPACT Services' president reported being "surprised and gratified" by the survey results, which showed that resident satisfaction grew in every area of neighborhood quality between 2007 and 2009. The thirteen measures of neighborhood quality showed improvement that was deemed statistically significant (Hangden, 2010, p. 4). As Figure 4 reveals, satisfaction with the quality of public services in the target area showed the most improvement. The follow-up survey also showed statistically significant gains in the number of people who said they and their families "feel safe" in the neighborhood;

FIGURE 4 Resident Satisfaction With Neighborhood Survey, Heart of Kensington

Percent of respondents agreeing with statement about the neighborhood

Statement	2009	2007
I would recommend this neighborhood to families with children as a good place to live	64%	36%
The quality of schools in the area is satisfactory or better	76%	49%
I would recommend this neighborhood to seniors as a good place to live	60%	35%
I would recommend this neighborhood to anyone as a good place to live	63%	39%
Access to transportation is satisfactory or better	84%	61%
The quality of public services is satisfactory or better	83%	61%
The neighbors here are friendly	79%	59%
I would like to buy a home in this neighborhood (yes/no)	61%	41%
My family and I feel safe in the area	80%	61%
Access to employment centers is satisfactory or better	61%	44%

perceived friendliness of neighbors; and community engagement and activity levels. In addition, the percentage of renters interested in buying a home in the neighborhood grew significantly, with 61 percent of renters surveyed in 2009 indicating that they would like to buy a home in the neighborhood, compared with 41 percent in 2007. Figure 4 illustrates the percentage of respondents who said that they "agree" or "strongly agree" with the following positive statements about the neighborhood. For most questions, the number of respondents ranged from 197 to 204 in 2007 and from 171 to 180 in 2009. For the question on buying a home, the number of respondents was 133 in 2007 and 114 in 2009 (the question was only asked of renters).

Feedback from the organization highlighted the importance of continuing to follow these indicators over time, and underscored the usefulness of surveys to better understand community needs and conditions. As noted by senior staff in a final report to the foundation:

> We wanted to show a difference in the final survey and found the final survey results both fascinating and affirming. The genuine helpfulness, concern, and friendliness of our outreach team seem to have been perceived and appreciated by the many people they worked with. We are grateful to have a tool that documented this impact in a credible way. … Without tools and metrics that look at social capital and a sense of well-being, we would not be able to talk about many of our areas of community impacts. (Martino, 2010, p. 13)

Learning From the Evaluation Process and Data

The foundation has applied insights gained from the evaluation processes to refine its grantmaking strategy. At the project level, the foundation can clearly demonstrate the creation of plans and the

TABLE 1 Wachovia Regional Foundation Neighborhood Grant Program Activities Summary 2003-2009

Program area	Results
Participatory neighborhood plans	· 30 comprehensive plans were created. · 8,600 residents participated.
Affordable housing development and counseling	· 8,800 individuals were counseled. · 330 people were trained in housing maintenance skills. · 820 rental and 540 owner-occupied units were developed. · 470 families were assisted to purchase first homes. · 120 energy and environmental health audits were conducted.
Economic development	· 190 new businesses were developed or attracted to neighborhood. · 500 new jobs were created. · 500 individuals received job training for trades and professions. · 3,000 people were placed in living-wage or professional jobs. · 11,600 people were coached in employment readiness. · 320 businesses received technical assistance. · 4,000 households aided in filing tax returns (total refunds $5.2 million).
Neighborhood building	· 1,040 green or recreational spaces were created/maintained. · 590 trees were planted. · 110 blighted properties were demolished. · 125 cleanups/streetscape enhancements; 440 trash receptacles placed. · 620 houses and businesses were rehabilitated. · 90 community groups were created or strengthened; 520 neighborhood leaders were identified/trained. · 60 community-based organizations received technical assistance. · 50 neighborhood communication products were created and 20 branding initiatives were implemented. · 270 neighborhood festivals or gatherings were held.
Child and family services	· 13,000 people received case management, health care, life skills or advocacy services. · 100 new child care slots were created. · 325 families received home computers. · 10,100 children benefitted from school-age programs. · 2,500 people received critical aid such as food and clothing.

introduction of high-quality and diverse programs in its target neighborhoods. As Table 1 illustrates, the foundation's neighborhood grants have supported programs with far-reaching results.

At the neighborhood level, where sustained change often takes 10 to 20 years to materialize, the foundation is tracking longer-term changes in residents' perceived quality of life alongside market and physical conditions of the neighborhood. Data from baseline surveys of an initial 32 communities (approximately 7,500 respondents) confirmed the foundation's views on the importance of its funded neighborhood-building strategies, including neighborhood cleanups, street festivals, resident associations, and housing and commercial revitalization and community beautification

programs. Statistical analysis uncovered some interesting correlations within the data:

- Residents who have a positive perception of cleanliness in the community are more likely to also have a greater sense of safety (0.467 positive correlation).
- Residents who have a positive perception of the physical conditions in the neighborhood also tend to have a greater sense of safety (0.419 positive correlation).
- Residents who feel neighbors would act to improve the neighborhood are more likely to also recommend the neighborhood (0.520 positive correlation).

Equally interesting, the aggregated data dispelled

Sense of Safety by Owner/Renter (n = 6625)
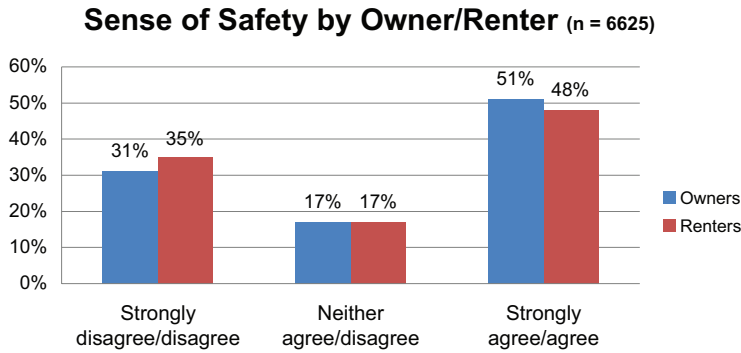
common misperceptions about low-income communities. All findings held fairly constant across localities of different sizes and different regions and, in the majority of locations, there was little or no difference between the responses of owners and renters on factors such as sense of safety, number of neighbors they could count on for assistance, and perceptions of friendliness of neighbors (Figure 5). Contrary to some research on homeownership, in many of these funded localities renters appear to be as linked to their communities as are owners; renters also have similar perceptions of safety and neighborliness across sub-regions and communities of differing sizes.

In a larger sense, the foundation's field-building activities are drawing increased visibility and credibility for neighborhood planning processes, at both state and local levels, as new public funding streams develop for both the creation and implementation of plans.

The recurring themes evident in the foundation's analysis are that neighborhood work relies on bonds of trust among key stakeholders that may not occur spontaneously (and therefore need to be nurtured); intentional, transparent communication is essential; effective implementation requires strong, sustained leadership combined with a dedicated stream of resources (that often exceed initial projections); and everything takes longer than anticipated (and nothing goes as planned).

Responding to these themes, the foundation

continuously reviews and refines its strategy to intensify the impact of its investments. Mid-course revisions have included:

- creating neighborhood planning workshops for community groups (and potential applicants) to enhance their readiness and understanding of neighborhood planning;
- strengthening the foundation's front-end analysis of an applicant's "neighborhood readiness" and organizational capacity to undertake the planning and revitalization effort;
- lengthening the average duration of implementation grants from three years to five years;
- allocating more funding for coaches to complete the statistical analysis, which allows grantees to focus on programming;
- instituting the use of a "key person clause" in grant agreements to provide the foundation with a "right of exit" should a specific manager leave the project and the organization no longer be able to complete it as planned;
- piloting renewal grants in high-performing communities to ensure continuity of work; and
- building relationships with key government funders and building regional networks of community development funders.

The foundation's board recommitted resources for the neighborhood grants program, elected to institutionalize the renewal program, and broadened the foundation's field-building activities during its 2008 strategic planning process, relying heavily on both project and early neighborhood-level evaluation findings and lessons.

Integrating Primary and Secondary Data: Evolving Opportunities and Benefits

New Opportunities

As the foundation's initiative has evolved, data and evaluation resources provided to grantees also have become more closely coordinated and the resulting benefits more integrated. In one instance, data and mapping can aid the sampling process. As Success Measures coaches help grantees determine the most appropriate sampling techniques for neighborhood surveys, they use maps and data available on PolicyMap.com. This ensures the most appropriate representation of demographic diversity in communities, understanding where, for example, the highest numbers of households live as well as their racial composition, age, and income levels.

In another instance, the results of mapping surveys can enhance analysis. Grantees can plot primary-level data sets on maps in PolicyMap.com to identify geographic clustering and underlying demographic trends in the data. By integrating primary and secondary data analysis, grantees can more effectively fashion interventions to problems using real data. When responses to the question about recommending a neighborhood to families with children is plotted (Figure 6), it is possible to determine if people who strongly agree or agree are clustered in a small area or scattered throughout the neighborhood. By overlaying these findings on other available secondary data, grantees find answers to questions such as, "Are people who feel the neighborhood is a good place to live with children clustered on blocks that are different from the rest of the neighborhood in some way?" IMPACT Services, for instance, found that residents who most strongly recommend their neighborhood for families with children are clustered near public schools (shown as blue triangles in Figure 6). In addition, some of the residents who most strongly recommend the neighborhood for kids are located in darker purple areas, which signal higher rates of high school completion.

Unanticipated Benefits

While the foundation entered into the relationships with TRF and Success Measures to enhance its evaluation program, numerous unanticipated and significant positive benefits have emerged that have advanced revitalization efforts.

Enhanced resident engagement. Grantees par-

ticipating in neighborhood surveys reported significantly heightened engagement by residents in neighborhood meetings and activities (Figure 7). The survey process has become a key organizing strategy for neighborhood planning efforts and securing of volunteers, serving as a means to disseminate information about initiatives and expanding the reach beyond traditional "friends" to a more representative group of residents.

Identification of unknown issues and opportunities. Grantees stated that the broadened reach of engagement required by the disciplined, random sample for outreach has expanded their understanding of constituents' needs. For example:

- Level of dissatisfaction with public education: While a grantee knew the local school system was not strong, the magnitude of dissatisfaction (more than 95 percent of respondents stated they were dissatisfied/strongly dissatisfied) was not anticipated. As a result, the organization placed additional emphasis on tutoring and mentoring programs and became more involved in the local school system.
- Need for local branding: A grantee discovered that the public, including its own clients, was largely unaware that it was providing services to the community. As a result, it created and implemented a branding program to raise its profile and publicize its services.

Greater utilization of new programs. Multiple grantees have commented on the power of resident engagement in creating well-attended programs. One grantee has found the participatory process so valuable in developing successful programs that it intends to administer the survey voluntarily on an annual basis to inform program delivery and refinement.

Strengthened resident unity. Some neighborhoods have experienced a heightened understanding among their diverse populations as a result of the survey process. In one neighborhood, different ethnic populations tend to reside in specific sub-neighborhoods and housing types (single family and multifamily). Resident volunteer survey administrators were introduced to parts of their

neighborhood they had never visited and learned that those neighbors had similar issues and aspirations. An outgrowth of this is a group that has emerged to further common understanding among neighbors.

Pooling of knowledge among grantees. Shared knowledge has fostered continuing relationships among regional peers who face comparable issues, enabling them to learn from one others' successes and struggles. Grantees have also taken the initiative to visit other grantee neighborhoods to learn about programs or to provide technical assistance.

Coordination among public and private stakeholders. Inclusion of neighborhood stakeholders in planning and evaluation has enhanced communication among neighborhood actors, resulting in the vetting of ideas based on data rather than emotion. Good data are both powerful and expensive but has often been available only to public entities. In many places, sharing primary and secondary data with all participants has fostered relationships among residents, nonprofits, and public officials.

Intensified sustainable impact for residents. By developing and sequencing revitalization strategies that leverage market momentum and knowledge, grantees are better positioned to create sustainable, positive change for residents. For example, after reviewing data through MVA, one grantee relocated a housing project to build on the relative market strength of a contiguous neighborhood. The grantee stated that it had been so focused on its internal market that it had overlooked the relative value right next door. The completed project has moved the neighborhood closer to a mixed-income integration goal.

Identification of emerging trends and hidden opportunities. Community stakeholders may hold opinions and ideas based on historical perceptions or data that are out of date. Providing stakeholders with current data enables them to see the neighborhood in a more objective light, a shift that can yield new opportunities. One neighborhood, which had been the strong, stable "neighborhood of choice," was neither aware of nor looking for early hidden signs of impending foreclosures. However, alerted by the secondary data and consultation provided by TRF and others, the grantee organization and city government refined their approach to the neighborhood, creating a multipronged approach to stem the destabilizing effects of foreclosure. This included door-to-door canvassing to educate those at risk of foreclosure and a stabilization strategy to purchase key foreclosed properties in the neighborhood.

> *Providing stakeholders with current data enables them to see the neighborhood in a more objective light, a shift that can yield new opportunities.*

Key Criteria for Success

The development of this data-driven evaluation framework has taken five years to bring to life and it continues to evolve each year. Numerous factors have been cornerstones of its success.

- *High level of engagement and commitment of the Wachovia Regional Foundation.* Since its creation in 1998, the foundation's board has made evaluation for learning a priority. Building on a relationship-management strategy borrowed from the financial industry, foundation staff maintain an especially active and communicative relationship with grantees based on a culture of trust and respect.
- *Innovative culture.* The Wachovia Regional Foundation, The Reinvestment Fund, and Success Measures have met consistently to discuss

the program and possible areas for improvement. Ideas have been vetted with grantees and tested, with successful ones institutionalized.
- *Long-term relationship among trusted partners.* The relationship among the Wachovia Regional Foundation, TRF, Success Measures, and grantees represents a paradigm shift. Rather than adhering to a traditional funder/grantee model augmented by an external consultant, this model is founded on a more fluid relationship of convener/implementer/advisor, each with a clear understanding of responsibilities. The long-term engagement of all parties has fostered a deeper understanding of one another's goals and a mutual self-interest in continuous learning and program improvement. Additionally, the sustained allocation of funding (a combined total of about $250,000 a year, supporting an average of 30 active implementation grants and four active planning grants, with average annual grant disbursements of $4.5 million) and the engaged interactive partnerships have given TRF and Success Measures the ability to experiment and refine their products to more effectively serve community-based organizations.
- *Grantee involvement in the design of the local initiatives and evaluation plan, and in the evolution of the foundation's evaluation framework.* Each grantee designs its own evaluation plan tailored to its community's specific needs and interests. The foundation's own evaluation framework has been designed and refined with input from its grantee advisory board, a group of previous grantees who provide advice on policy and technical assistance needs.
- *One common instrument that can foster aggregation of data across grantees and region.* The consistency and comparability that a common evaluation framework and data collection tools create are crucial to the foundation's ability to learn and identify broader trends and needs across its portfolio. These include the neighborhood survey administered in each target neighborhood, as well as the individual grant evaluation template and associated performance metrics.
- *Ease of data collection and technical assistance to use and track data.* The foundation learned

early on that while grantees understand the value of good data, they typically lack the capacity to access, use, track, and analyze the data on their own. Given the day-to-day demands of grantees' programmatic lives, tools must be intuitive, readily accessible, and provide relevant data. Coaching is also critical to ensuring that data are effectively used to inform and assess initiatives.

- *Adequate resources for data collection.* Data collection, use, and retention are expensive for grantees to fund on their own. Foundation grantees are provided a fully funded subscription to both PolicyMap.com and SMDS, leading to a dramatic increase in use of data. In addition, grantees are informed during the application process of the foundation's evaluation requirements, and are required to budget specific funds for the administration of the neighborhood survey. This requirement has ensured funds to implement unique and creative survey administration methods.
- *Peer advice.* Perhaps the most effective catalyst for a grantee to enthusiastically participate in the evaluation framework has been peer advice. To this end, the foundation has:

  - provided in-person testimonial from a grantee during orientation workshops for new organizations,
  - developed a peer resource manual for survey administration and volunteer training,
  - compiled peer "best practices" for resident engagement, and
  - published annually the list of accomplishments and lessons learned from graduate grantees.

Vision for the Future

As its partnership with TRF and Success Measures continues to evolve, the foundation seeks to incorporate lessons learned and expand the field's knowledge through regional networking and data sharing, assessment of longer-term impacts, and expanding data analysis and use.

The foundation is contemplating developing regional forums to share aggregated regional survey data and other secondary data with the public and private stakeholders and funders. Because the foundation funds place-based initiatives, the comprehensive set of data gathered is typically not unique to specific projects, but rather to the target neighborhood. Thus, the data can be used to inform or assess a broad set of programs. These forums could be used to educate regional stakeholders on the importance of community-building work and to inform them of locally developed strategies, in hopes of garnishing additional investment and political support in target investment neighborhoods.

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Over time, the foundation envisions joining with TRF, Success Measures, and its grantees to assess the long-term changes in the neighborhoods in which it has invested, by analyzing the change in the primary and secondary data sets. This will be possible once the initial round of grantees funded in 2006 completes their multiyear projects and repeats neighborhood surveys on resident satisfaction and other measures. Comparisons can then be made against the baseline surveys and secondary data indicators selected for each community.

As the foundation and its grantees gain more experience in working with data, many questions are emerging. Some of these can be answered, in part, by a more in-depth analysis of the data already collected and some will require that grantees select additional indicators and data collection tools to measure results of other program areas. In all cases, these initial years have shown the value of technical assistance in the data

analysis phase, which has enabled grantees and the foundation to focus on learning from the data, rather than becoming immersed in the mechanics of the technical aspects of data analysis. In addition, there is untapped potential in the further integration and analysis of primary and secondary data, especially in using mapping to communicate results to broader audiences.

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Conclusion

The Wachovia Regional Foundation's data-driven revitalization efforts have shifted traditional paradigms and evolved into a vibrant learning laboratory for its board and staff, its evaluation partners, and its grantees. Through the investment of time and resources to support grantees' participatory planning and evaluation efforts, as well as to address challenges, the foundation is expanding its understanding of how to stimulate sustainable neighborhood revitalization in its region. The deeper knowledge gained through the use of evaluation data has not only fortified the foundation's relationships with its grantees but guided its future grantmaking. In the larger scheme of community development, it has also focused the attention of other private and public investors on the significance and substance of community-building work with enhanced resident participation. Simultaneously, the foundation's grantees are developing capacities to access, collect, analyze, and share data that can be used for planning, advocacy, marketing, and fundraising. As a result,

these organizations are gaining both growing credibility for their work and a sense of being part of something larger than themselves – a regional movement to explore how data can more effectively help them serve their communities through the development of comprehensive revitalization strategies.

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