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Civic Works, Inc.
The Environmental and PAL After School Mentoring Teams

Final Evaluation Report
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Overview

Civic Works is a youth service corps program based in Baltimore, Maryland. The program operates a number of activities in which teams of corps members perform community service work in urban neighborhoods. Several of its teams are funded by AmeriCorps. Civic Works commissioned Innovation Network, Inc. (InnoNet) to design and conduct participatory assessment activities with two of its AmeriCorps service teams: the Environmental Team and PAL After School Mentoring Team. The purposes of the evaluation were as follows:

- To gather, analyze and interpret information about selected aspects of each program's accomplishments for 1) self-assessment by staff and team members and 2) reporting purposes.
- To develop assessment processes and tools which can be incorporated into each team's regular program activities.
- To build staff and corps member knowledge and skills in participatory evaluation.

A summary of the major outputs and findings of the evaluation are presented below. The body of this report describes the evaluation activities carried out with both teams and presents the information gathered to answer the evaluation questions in more detail with options for Civic Works to incorporate the findings into the teams' programs. The assessment tools developed and site-specific data are included in the Appendices.

Environmental Team Summary

The Environmental Team (E-Team) renovates vacant lots in depressed urban neighborhoods for use as parks, gardens and other community activities. In a meeting of E-Team stakeholders at the start of the evaluation, two evaluation questions were formulated as a focus for the evaluation effort:

1. **Have the communities that the E-Team has worked with taken ownership of the renovated sites?**
2. **What are the expectations of the community (re: form, function and materials) of the sites?**

In order to address both questions, the evaluator proposed developing a series of three participatory evaluation activities which would be conducted jointly with communities over the course of implementing the renovations. The information collected would be used to design a site plan appropriate to community needs, and later, would enable residents and the team to assess the level of ownership. By conducting the assessment activities in a participatory manner, the residents would be encouraged and supported to take an active role and corps members would have the opportunity to gain further experience in the community development process.

To carry out this plan, the evaluator first met with the E-Team supervisor and the Director of the E-Team's project sponsor, the Historic East Baltimore Community Action Corporation (HEBCAC). Based on this meeting, the evaluator developed a first draft of the assessment tools which the E-Team would use with the communities. Over the next weeks, four sites were visited, one which is scheduled to be renovated in the Spring of 1997, and three which had been completed in the last two years. Based on these experiences, the evaluator revised the three assessment tools. In addition to providing an opportunity for testing the tools, the site visits provided information for assessing the E-Team's success with community ownership.

Findings on the E-Team Evaluation Questions

Information relevant to question one above was gathered in visits to three completed sites and through interviews with the team supervisor. The visits are summarized in the report which follows and full details are provided in Appendix C. The following is a list of the main findings and conclusions:

1. The completed sites were being used as intended, had low levels of trash, and showed signs of active maintenance, no serious neglect and few instances of vandalism.

2. Community members were able to identify specific benefits gained from the renovations as well as a general sense of pride in having "such a pretty place."

3. Based on the Team supervisor's three years of experience, approximately 65% of sites receive some level of care and maintenance from the community.

4. Community members attributed the success of the renovations in part to the attitude and dedication of the E-Team. One remarked that "They were as excited as we were!"

5. Another critical factor in the eyes of residents is the expertise of the landscape designs and implementations. Residents are impressed with the professional quality of the finished product and said this contributes to their pride in the site and their motivation to maintain and use it.

6. The importance of a strong and identified core of community members committed to the site is crucial. This underscores the need to use the "Take Care Team" approach

developed in this evaluation (see Appendix B).

7. In the supervisor's experience, a third of the sites have not shown measurable ownership. Such sites generally do not have designated uses but are more cosmetic "beautification" efforts. Placement and size of the sites is also a factor. However, the strongest indicator is a lack of specific individuals who take on the role of organizing residents.

8. One corps member described cleaning up a site one year after its completion. The team found large amounts of bulk trash and litter including needles dropped by intravenous drug users. The corps member pointed out that the lack of seating made the site less attractive to community use and therefore ownership.

9. For sites which show low likelihood of ownership, the supervisor uses a different design approach. Hard borders are installed (e.g., difficult to dislodge such as concrete or railroad ties) and plants are chosen which can survive with nearly no maintenance.

Conclusions

- The E-Team has certainly proven that it is capable of carrying out the urban site renovation process in ways that lead to community ownership. The site visits and experience of the supervisor attest to this.

- The skills of the supervisor in designing appropriate plans and getting quality work from the crews is thus an important contributor to success.

- When one considers the difficulties of attaining sustainable management of common property even in affluent residential areas such rates of success seem quite respectable given the difficulties facing the neighborhoods with which the E-Team works.

- Experience with the Planning Visit tool indicate that it can be used effectively to encourage ownership, screen promising sites, provide useful baseline data and give corps members useful experience in community organizing and information collection. More work with the tool is needed and no doubt the present format will be adapted.

- Based on the evaluator's observations, the corps members understood the purpose of the Group Walk tools, saw the connection between their use and their own desire to see more ownership of sites, and proved themselves capable of using them. Certainly more practice is required before the Team members can use the tools to full effect. Interviewing technique, taking notes, recording observational data and summarizing field notes are not simple skills. Some individuals showed more interest in the process than others. However, the fact that the final interview was conducted almost entirely by two of the corps members is a testament to their capacity.

- Experience with the InnoNet evaluation activity has prompted the supervisor to consider several changes in approach to try and increase the likelihood of community ownership. These include:
  a) Implementing the three-stage Group Walk activities as a means to deepen the involvement of residents,
  b) Initiating the formation of Take Care Teams (see Appendix B),
  c) Using the residents commitment to organize a Take Care Team as a screening mechanism - sites without an organized team prior to ground-breaking would be postponed or eliminated, and
  d) Greater emphasis on follow-up visits in addition to the Group Walks to motivate residents and transfer skills such as plant care, assessing low-cost or free resources (e.g., mulch), and action planning.

Environmental Team Evaluation

Description of Tasks

The evaluation activities with the E-Team were carried out in February and March. The steps carried out were as follows:

1. Initial half-day meeting with stakeholders to determine objectives and primary evaluation questions.

2. Half day meeting of Evaluator, E-Team supervisor and HEBCAC Executive director to discuss design elements of the three part-evaluation process. At this meeting the Take Care Team (TCT) concept was initially discussed. (These tools and descriptions are included in Appendix A).

3. Evaluator drafted a description of the Take Care Team and the tool to be used in the planning visit information collection.

4. Evaluator provided an orientation to the Planning Visit tool for seven team members and the supervisor. The group then used the tool to guide a meeting with residents at the Register Street site slated for renovation in March '97. Information was gathered with community members and summarized by the team.

5. Evaluator revised Planning visit tool and drafted tools for the Completion and Final Visits.

6. Three team members and the evaluator conducted a Final Visit at the Noble Notice site completed in 1996. Information was collected and summarized by the group.

7. Evaluator made further revisions to the tools.

8. Evaluator and six Corps members visited two sites (26th and Barclay community, and the Thurgood Marshall School). In addition, the evaluator interviewed the E-Team supervisor regarding her experience in implementing site renovations since 1994.

9. Evaluator analyzed information collected in order to answer the evaluation questions.

Information and Conclusions on the Evaluation Questions

Question 1: Have the communities that the E-Team has worked with taken ownership of the renovated sites?

In order to determine ownership of the sites by the communities, it was first necessary to define the characteristics of an "owned" site. Four aspects were determined to be important; 1) the status of plantings on the site, 2) the amount and type of trash on the site (i.e., litter versus bulk trash), 3) whether any residents could be identified as having cared for or maintained the site and 4) condition of structures and evidence of any maintenance.

It was further decided that "ownership" of common property such as a park would seldom be measurable in simple "yes or no" terms. Rather, the "level of ownership" could range from none at all, to the minimum necessary, to a high degree. Assessing the level of ownership would depend on looking at all of the above aspects together (for example, vandals spray painting a wall might look like low ownership. However, residents organizing to paint it over would show the opposite. Similarly, many plantings having died might be offset if some new plantings were made).

It was determined that three levels of ownership would be used:

> **Little to none:** no evidence of up-keep or use, major disrepair, lots of trash, more than half of plantings died or gone, major vandalism, no one identified as taking care.
> **Good:** Site is in decent shape. Trash is manageable, most plantings are alive, no major structural problems, minor vandalism or has been repaired. Specific individuals can be identified as care takers.
> **Very Good:** Work above basic maintenance has been done. Any new plantings, new uses made of site, new projects or clean-ups in adjacent areas. Maintenance is carried out and anything broken fixed. An identified group takes care on some regular basis.

The assessment tools designed and tested in this evaluation are intended to help focus attention on and build high levels of ownership as well as enable residents and the team to measure them.

Information on the level of ownership of completed sites was collected in three site visits to completed sites. The evaluator and Team members conducted the visits using the tools developed for the "Final Visit" (see Appendix C). The visits thus served the dual purpose of collecting data and testing the tools. Some additional information was collected by interviewing the team supervisor about her experience with urban site renovations with Civic Works since 1994. Findings for the three sites visited are summarized below (full information on each site is included in Appendix C).

Site Visits

The three sites visited were:

* Nobie Notice Park: a neighborhood park and vegetable garden completed in the Spring of 1996.
* 26th and Barclay: a neighborhood park completed in 1995.
* Thurgood Marshall School 171: a site beautification at the entrance to a renovated school, completed in 1996.

On each visit, the Team members interviewed a key informant who had worked closely with Civic Works in planning and carrying out the site renovation. In all cases these were women. At the two neighborhood sites they are volunteer community organizers, active in many local efforts. At the school, the principal was interviewed. On each occasion, the sites were physically observed by Team Members and the evaluator, and in two cases by the E-Team supervisor. Team members interviewed residents encountered during the neighborhood site inspections, three at Nobie Notice and one at 26th and Barclay. The design of the Group Walk activities calls for site inspections to be done by Team members and residents jointly. This was not possible in the present case since the principal organizers were physically unable at the time and because no specific group of residents had been identified as inspectors.

Physical Descriptions

All three sites were in relatively good shape. The physical structures such as fencing, signs, picnic tables, raised beds, etc. in place at the time of completion were accounted for and in good condition with minor exceptions. At least 80% of the trees, shrubs, bulbs, etc. that were planted had survived. This indicated some watering had taken place. Some of the bulbs had divided. Additional bulbs had been planted at the school.

All sites had some trash, ranging from one to three bags. Much of this was blown trash common in the city. Some was litter including discarded alcohol bottles at Nobie Notice and the school. Nobie Notice also has a small amount of wood dumped inside the fence and some bulk trash dumped in the adjacent alley. Compared to reported amounts of trash prior to the renovations, the amounts were minuscule and seem quite reasonable for public spaces in a large city. Graffiti was observed only at 26th and Barclay, and was minor, being confined to table tops and one post.

Uses of the Sites

All three were being used as intended. Nobie Notice was used as a vegetable garden in '96 and gardeners plan to continue this year. Both community parks are used as a lunch area by local workers. 26th and Barclay has enjoyed the most use, serving as a meeting place, play area and cookout spot for the neighborhood.

Both Nobie Notice and the school are being used as places to consume alcohol by some residents. There were no signs of drug use at two sites. One needle was observed at Nobie Notice. The residents at this site said that prior to the renovation, drug users and dealers used the site extensively.

Possible new uses for the school and 26th and Barclay are being considered. At the former, the principal hopes to renovate additional areas for use as outdoor class space. At the latter, the organizer hopes to have youth learn about plants at organized sessions and for senior citizens to meet with youths at the park to recount their histories. In addition, at 26th and Barclay, a garage adjacent to the site has been painted and there are plans to use it as fresh produce stand this summer.

Winners and Losers

In each case, residents cited the general community as benefiting because of the overall attractiveness and beauty of the sites. The gardeners at Nobie Notice have had the most tangible benefits in the form of food produced. Many neighbors also received some of their harvest. 26th and Barclay has provided a quiet and safe place for adults and children. This is in marked contrast to other public areas such as the basketball courts where residents say drug transactions and use take place.

Adjacent businesses have benefited to some extent, at least in having an area for employees to use. In the principal's opinion, a local foundation that owns rental units near the School has benefited from having a more attractive school adjacent to their properties.

The only people reported to have been adversely affected by the renovations are the drug dealers who formerly worked in the vacant lot at Nobie Notice.

Care and Maintenance

Each of the sites is somewhat different. Maintenance in terms of trash pick up is being done at all three. Active care of plantings other than watering is less certain. At Nobie Notice most of the care is done by the gardeners with respect to weeding, tilling etc. Some individuals were reported as having picked up trash on their own initiative. At 26th and Barclay, those who use the park were described as picking up after themselves. There has been some trash collection by individuals as well. At the school, the maintenance staff cares for the site. Maintenance of the school's plantings has been provided by the E-Team itself.

The Nobie Notice community is organizing to post the site with "No Dumping" signs and to pursue fines for violators. The school principal hopes to establish a regular team or club of students to carry out maintenance.

None of the sites have so far developed volunteer groups to maintain the sites on a regular basis. Nobie Notice is the only site where this appears a potential problem because the current organizer is elderly and increasingly restricted in her movements. Most residents are also elderly. This may mean that maintenance in future years could decrease.

The lack of organized groups is not surprising since this has not been a focus of the E-Team's efforts in the past. However, partly due to the InnoNet evaluation, the organization and training of Take Care Teams is being incorporated as a regular part of the site renovation strategy.

All three sites were described as very successful by the residents. When asked for the reasons, all cited the dedication of the E-Team members and the professional and "beautiful" end product. It was felt that the Team's work had provided a level of inspiration and that the attractiveness of the sites motivated residents to maintain them.

Interview with E-Team Supervisor

The evaluator met with the supervisor and discussed her experience in the last three years. Of the sites renovated in that time, the supervisor estimates that around 65% receive some care and maintenance from the communities and these demonstrate some level of ownership. In a full third of the sites, there has been no real attempt at upkeep and such sites often return to their pre-renovation state.

According to the supervisor, the ingredients to a successful site include both physical and human factors. Physical characteristics such as size of site, whether residences are adjacent, whether it provides good sight lines, proximity to a water source, etc. are important determinants.

More important however, is whether or not a community is ready to "wrap itself around" the site. This often depends on identifying a key individual already active in community efforts. When a core activist can be found, it becomes easier to access the other community resources which are essential for the basic logistics of site renovation (source of water, electricity, restroom facilities) and often lead to more substantial contributions of money, materials and volunteer labor.

Until now there were no tools to provide standard measures of ownership and the approaches to trying to ensure commitment and participation in the planning stages were fairly informal. As a result of the InnoNet evaluation, the E-Team has a basic structure to use in giving a greater focus to building towards ownership in the future.

Ultimately, however, the tools developed will simply provide a starting point. The supervisor indicated that, ideally, the renovation of a small part of the urban landscape should be a means to an end. While there is the possibility of intrinsic value in terms of pride of place, possible improvements for business climate, safe places to play, reduction of venues for drug marketing, the real value of the experience is hopefully in giving residents skills and experience in problem solving, action planning, accessing resources and exerting pressure for change.

Question 2: What are the expectations of the community (re. form, function and materials of the sites)?

This is not specifically an evaluation question. It is essential information in planning a site which is likely to be "owned" by the community and eventually will provide the basis for assessment after the renovation work. It was decided to address the need for more specific information from communities in the site renovation planning process under the InnoNet evaluation because:

1. it was an important need identified by the initial meeting of stakeholders,
2. doing so would give the evaluation activities more integration into the whole renovation effort,
3. involving residents in information collection at the outset would increase the chances that post completion assessments could be jointly carried out, and
4. collecting information about the sites prior to renovation would enable more accurate assessments later.

The steps to be followed in carrying out an initial visit and the tools for information collection were developed along with the tools for later assessment in order to help gather comparable information. The tools for this "Planning Visit" were tested at one of the sites scheduled to be renovated Spring 1997. Three community residents and the HEBCAC organizer participated. At the first meeting the following steps took place:

1. In an initial discussion, residents responded to a set of questions and described the history of the site and its present conditions and use.
2. Residents were informed about some of the limitations the E-Team and HEBCAC face in terms of site development (i.e., budget limits, concerns about liability).
3. Possible types of sites were explained by the supervisor and residents were given a sample book of previously constructed sites.
4. Residents were informed about the role and duties of a Take Care Team and told that without such a group, work on the site would not proceed.
5. Residents and the team together conducted a Group Walk to observe and record information about the sites and the surrounding block.

6. A follow-up meeting was scheduled for one week later to give the residents time to discuss their expectations with other neighbors.

At the subsequent meeting, several of the initial participants were present as well as some additional individuals. They requested that the larger of the two lots be designed as a play area for children and the smaller one across the street serve as a garden for adults. One resident volunteered to distribute flyers to all residents announcing the date of ground breaking, a task which frequently falls to Team members. The group also indicated their willingness to identify a Take Care Team, although specific individuals had not yet been named.

Conclusions for the E-Team Assessment Activities

In conversations with the evaluator, the supervisor said she thought the job was feasible and could even assist her with issues such as how to find useful tasks for people in bad weather, fully employing corps members not able to carry out heavier construction tasks .

Police Athletic League (PAL) Mentoring Team Summary

The Mentoring Team runs an after school program for 80-100 students at the Goodnow PAL Center. The students are enrolled in local elementary, middle and high schools. Students apply to participate and once accepted, meet every day after school in semester increments and follow a structured program of tutoring and homework. Participants are assigned a mentor. The program places primary focus on homework and academic work but also includes group activities such as sports, arts and crafts, etc. In a meeting with the team's stakeholders at the start of the evaluation, priority issues for evaluation were identified including assessment of academic performance, improvement in mental well-being, parental involvement and liaison with the schools. Because funding limits required that the issues be prioritized, in discussion with the Civic Works director, it was decided to focus on one evaluation question:

1. Are we helping to improve children's grades?

The team supervisor reported that information is kept on a regular basis on academic performance. It seemed clear in the initial meeting that the mentors are intimately familiar with the progress of their individual students. However, the program did not require that the information be totaled up across all students to gain insight into the over-all progress of students.

Thus, it was agreed by InnoNet and Civic Works that the evaluator and the supervisor select several of the important measures of grades, retrieve the information on these measures from the program's database and then facilitate an analysis of the data by the mentoring team. The result would be an assessment of the program's outcome which could have several uses:

1. Team members would gain an over-all perspective on the program which would help with team motivation and enhance fine-tuning of their activities with the students.

2. Funders, parents, schools and other stakeholders would receive reports in an appropriate format to help stimulate their participation and support for the program.

3. Similar assessments could be carried out on a regular basis in order to continue program learning and prepare regular reports.

Between the very busy schedule of the team supervisor and the unpredictable routine at the center (visitors, field trips, etc.), it proved difficult to schedule the evaluation activities. On the day scheduled for group analysis, although the data was not available, a meeting was held with members of the team (including the supervisor of several new centers initiating this mentoring program) to discuss the usefulness of this type of data analysis. Several days later, the supervisor was able to print out information from the data base on the academic performance measures which had been identified.

Based on this data, it was possible to produce some findings, draw conclusions and make recommendations. The conclusions are presented below in this section. The findings on which they are based are presented in the next section.

Note on limitations of the data: Interpreting and drawing conclusions from the data on students needs to be done cautiously, particularly in making conclusions about the influence of the program on grades. The following points should be kept in mind:

- To arrive at the clearest picture of how students' grades changed, it was decided to focus only on those beginning the PAL program in September, 1996 and for whom there was data through February, 1997.

- The number of these students is 34. When using small samples, averages can be greatly affected by only a few scores.

- The students looked at are only about a third of all students in the program. While the team feels that results have been similar across the board, the results from this group do not necessarily reflect the performance of all students in the program.

- Many factors influence academic performance positively and negatively. The PAL Mentoring program is only one of these factors.

Due to these limitations, the conclusions below have been worded carefully so as not to go beyond the data available at this time.

Evaluation Findings

This portion of the report discusses the work carried out with the teams and the resulting findings. For the PAL team, the following sections are presented:

1. A description of the tasks completed during the evaluation process.

2. Presentation of information collected and conclusions reached for each evaluation question.

3. Some additional comments from the evaluator.

Pal Mentoring Team Evaluation

Description of Tasks

The evaluation activities with the PAL Mentoring Team were carried out in March and April. The steps carried out were as follows.

- Initial half-day meeting with stakeholders to determine objectives and primary evaluation questions.

- A meeting with the team supervisor and Civic Works Director to identify important indicators of academic performance from the existing data.

- A meeting with some of the team members where the usefulness of analyzing data on academic performance was discussed (planned group analysis of data did not take place since the data was not available).

- The supervisor generated the data and assigned group leaders.

- The evaluator analyzed the data and wrote the report.

Question 1

1. Are we helping to improve children's grades?

To answer this question, it was decided to look only at the grades of students who began the program in September 1996 since there was complete information about their grades near the start of their time in the program. Including the other, more numerous students who entered at different times since November '95 would tend to mask the changes in performance which may be due to the program.

For this reason, the evaluator only used data from those children who started in September and continued at least through February 1997. The total was 34 students from elementary through high school. Table 1 presents information from the program database on students' quiz and test grades from the periods September - October 1996 and January - February 1997. The data on which the table information is based is presented in Table 1.

Table 1 - Quiz and Test Grades for Students Beginning the PAL Mentoring program in September 1996

MEASURE	LANGUAGE ARTS		MATH	
	Sept.-Oct. '96	Jan.-Feb., '97	Sept.-Oct. '96	Jan.-Feb., '97
All Students				
Group Average	70.1	72.6	64.6	71.4
Average increase		2.5		7.0
No. Students with higher average		22 (64%)		27 (79%)
No. students with no change		7 (20%)		6 (18%)
No. Students with lower average		5 (15%)		1 (3%)
No. students increasing at least 5 points		11 (32%)		23 (67%)
Students with failing grades (less than 65) in Sept. - Oct.				
Total No.	3	0	12	1
Group Average	59.0	69.3	55.6	68.9
Average increase		10.3		13.8

Information in Table 1 gives convincing evidence that this group of students has improved performance in these two subjects. Overall averages rose for both subjects. The number of students with higher grades is substantial even when looking at the number increasing at least 5 points. Perhaps most important, the students with failing grades improved dramatically as a group, with only one out of 13 still failing by February.

Math grades improved more than language arts on all measures except for group averages. Eleven of the students improved math grades by more than 10 points, two improved by more than 20. The differences between changes in math and language arts performance is probably in part due to the fact that they started at a lower level (64 group average as compared to 70 and with 12 students below 65 as compared to three). Thus, the math grades had more room to increase. However, the consistency of improved performance may indicate that math grades are more susceptible to improvement through a focus on homework.
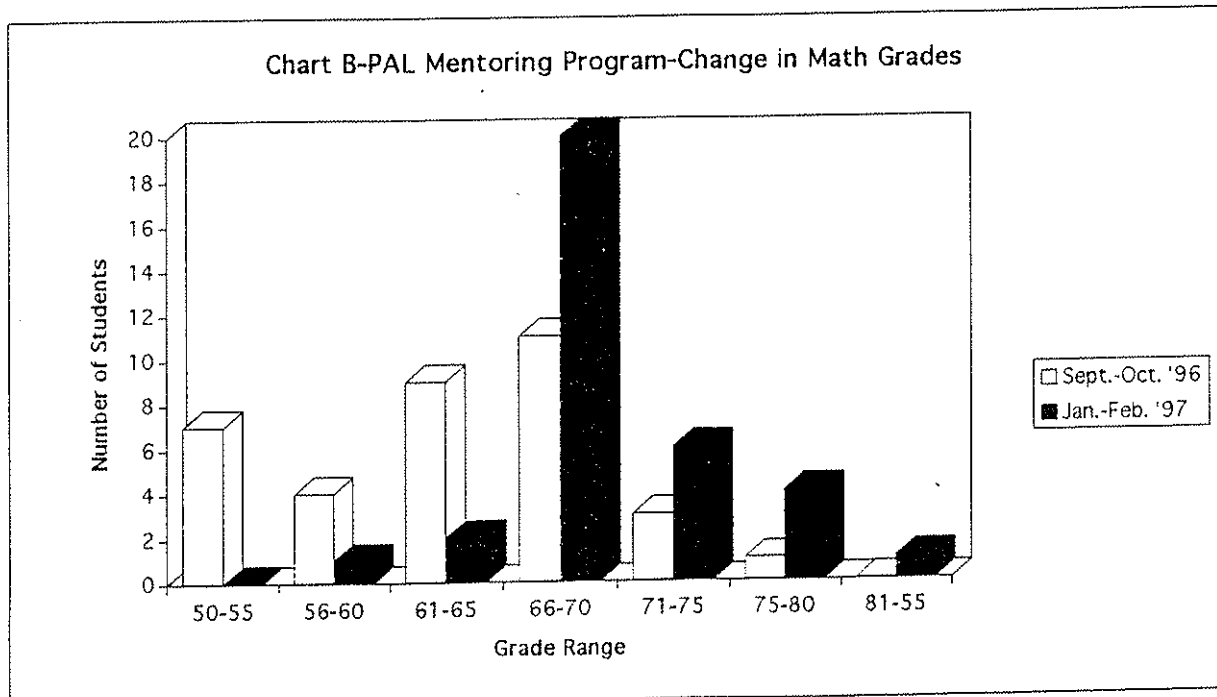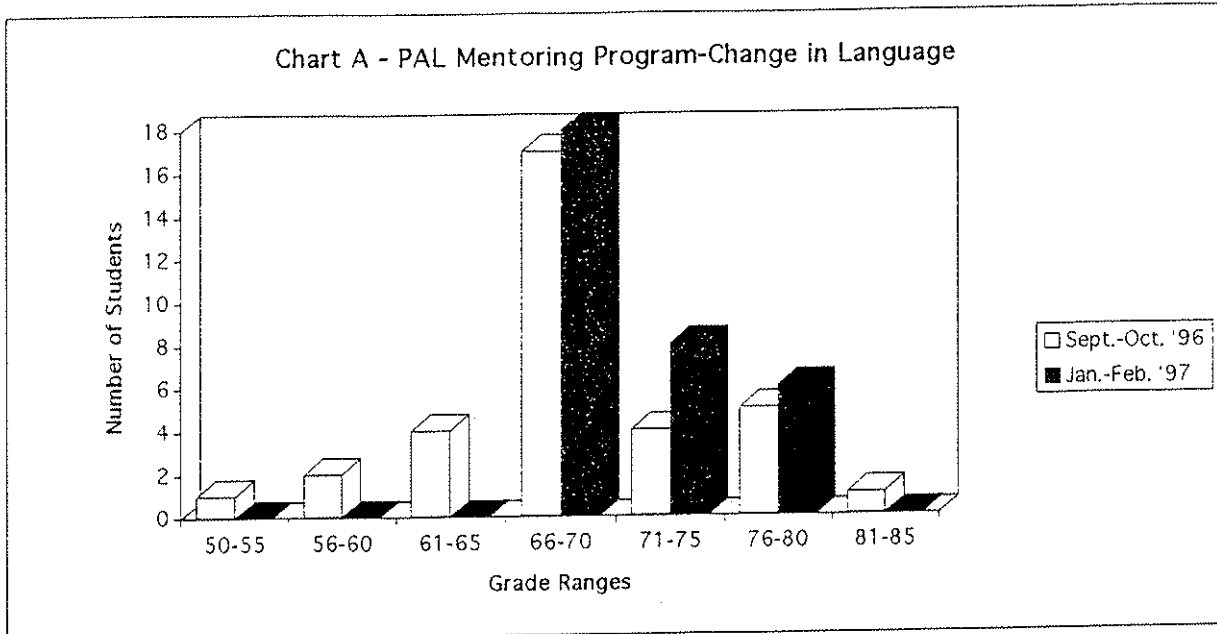
Charts A and B give further evidence of improvement.

These graphs show the differences in distribution of students' grades in the two subjects. There were many more math grades below the 66-70 range, seven of these in the low 50's. The graphs show that there were decreases in all categories below 70 and increases in each category above 70 (except for the highest one for language arts).

Based on the data it is quite clear that the students in the PAL program improved their grades in both subjects. It certainly seems likely that the program was responsible for much of this improvement. One fact that supports this conclusion is that the students in different grade ranges are quite mixed: elementary, middle and high school. This would make it unlikely that the increases were the result of particular teachers or the ages of the children. So the answer to the question "Have we helped the children to improve their grades?" is "Yes, probably." Certainly grades did improve and it is most likely that the program was the main contributing factor.

Confidence in the conclusion that the program is leading to the improvements would be greatly strengthened by additional data. The first is simply a longer track record involving a larger number of students. If new students coming to the program are tracked over time and show the same kinds of increases, then the program can confidently take credit. Another more complicated possibility would be to compare the group at the PAL program with some comparison groups such as school-wide averages at different grade levels or grades at other after-school programs which do not have so rigorous an academic program. However, this second option would be quite complicated to design correctly. Another alternative is to identify other similar programs and compare experiences with measuring performance.

Chart A – PAL Mentoring Program-Change in Language

Number of Students vs. Grade Ranges (50-55, 56-60, 61-65, 66-70, 71-75, 76-80, 81-85)

Legend: □ Sept.-Oct. '96 ■ Jan.-Feb. '97

Chart B-PAL Mentoring Program-Change in Math Grades

Number of Students vs. Grade Range (50-55, 56-60, 61-65, 66-70, 71-75, 75-80, 81-55)

Legend: □ Sept.-Oct. '96 ■ Jan.-Feb. '97

DATA ON STUDENTS' GRADES

- Table 1 -   • Language Grades

• Student ID	Sept.-Oct.	Nov.-Dec.	• change	Jan-Feb. '97	• change
• s76	• 57	• 65	• 8	• 70	• 13
• p2	• 60	• 60	• 0	• 70	• 10
• p13	• 60	• 65	• 5	• 68	• 8
• p15	• 65	• 68	• 3	• 70	• 5
• m49	• 65	• 68	• 3	• 70	• 5
• e14	• 65	• 70	• 5	• 68	• 3
• e1	• 65	• 70	• 5	• 75	• 10
• e9	• 67	• 65	• -2	• 70	• 3
• s87	• 68	• 65	• -3	• 70	• 2
• m57	• 68	• 70	• 2	• 70	• 2
• m52	• 68	• 65	• -3	• 70	• 2
• e38	• 68	• 69	• 1	• 65	• -3
• e17	• 68	• 69	• 1	• 70	• 2
• s83	• 69	• 70	• 1	• 70	• 1
• m55	• 69	• 70	• 1	• 70	• 1
• m43	• 69	• 75	• 6	• 75	• 6
• s88	• 70	• 75	• 5	• 75	• 5
• s74	• 70	• 70	• 0	• 75	• 5
• p3	• 70	• 70	• 0	• 73	• 3
• p16	• 70	• 70	• 0	• 70	• 0
• p1	• 70	• 70	• 0	• 70	• 0
• e6	• 70	• 70	• 0	• 75	• 5
• e5	• 70	• 70	• 0	• 80	• 10
• e26	• 70	• 70	• 0	• 76	• 6
• m42	• 74	• 70	• -4	• 70	• -4
• m46	• 75	• 75	• 0	• 75	• 0
• e32	• 75	• 75	• 0	• 75	• 0
• e20	• 75	• 75	• 0	• 75	• 0
• s80	• 76	• 70	• -6	• 70	• -6
• s78	• 76	• 70	• -6	• 70	• -6
• s85	• 78	• 85	• 7	• 80	• 2
• s89	• 80	• 80	• 0	• 80	• 0
• m64	• 80	• 80	• 0	• 80	• 0
• m71	• 84	• 80	• -4	• 80	• -4
• Averages	• 70.1	• 70.9	• 0.7	• 72.6	• 2.5

Table 2 • Math

Student ID	SeptOct.	NovDec.	change	Jan-Feb.	change
e1	50	70	20	78	28
e38	50	65	15	65	15
s87	50	65	15	75	25
m43	55	70	15	65	10
m55	55	59	4	70	15
s76	55	70	15	65	10
s89	55	70	15	70	15
m52	58	60	2	69	11
s74	58	70	12	70	12
m57	60	65	5	70	10
p13	60	65	5	60	0
s83	62	70	8	70	8
e14	65	69	4	70	5
e17	65	75	10	70	5
m42	65	70	5	70	5
m46	65	70	5	75	10
m49	65	69	4	70	5
p15	65	70	5	70	5
p2	65	65	0	70	5
s80	65	70	5	72	7
s78	68	79	11	70	2
p16	69	70	1	70	1
e20	70	70	0	79	9
e26	70	72	2	70	0
e32	70	70	0	68	-2
e5	70	70	0	74	4
e9	70	75	5	70	0
•	•	•	•	•	•
p11	70	70	0	70	0
p3	70	70	0	75	5
s88	70	70	0	70	0
e6	75	74	-1	75	0
m64	75	80	5	80	5
m71	75	75	0	78	3
s85	80	80	0	85	5
Averages	64.6	70.1	5.5	71.4	7.0

Conclusions

1. The group of students who entered into the PAL Mentoring program in September 1996 improved their grades in language arts and math. For both subjects, the over-all averages went up, the number of students failing these subjects decreased (from 38% to one individual) and the number of students with grades higher than 70 increased (from 10 to 14 in language arts and 4 to 9 in math).
    The gains in math grades were more dramatic than in language arts with the average increase per student at 7 points for math as compared to 2.5 for language arts. Seventy-nine percent of students improved their math grades, as compared to sixty-four percent of the students in language arts. This is in part due to the fact that the September math grades averaged 5 points lower. It may also be due to the fact that intensive homework mentoring has greater effects in the math area.

2. The program had particular success with the lowest performers. The group of students with failing grades (below 65) in either math or language arts achieved the highest gains. The average increases for these students were 10 points for language and 13 points for math, far more than the group as a whole. One third of the students (13) were failing one or both subjects in October. By February only one had a grade less than 65.

3. The program has a solid foundation for an effective information system. There is a great deal of willingness on the part of the PAL team to record and input data. This evaluation activity has shown that group level analysis can be useful to various stakeholder groups. The database is rich in information not only on academic performance but on behavior data and other measures.

    At present the information system appears to be underutilized. A good deal of effort goes into recording information on each student and on maintaining the database, however, use and reporting of this information appears to be limited at present.

4. The PAL Team has perceived the usefulness of analyzing academic performance data at the group level in addition to their previous use at the level of individual students. In the team meeting, supervisors and mentors identified several groups of stakeholders who could be influenced by such information:

    *   **Funders** can be encouraged to continue their support by receiving information showing improved grades across all students and most particularly, if data shows that students most at-risk of failing are improving their grades to passing levels.

    *   **New Parents**, who are considering enrolling their children, could be greatly influenced if the program can show solid information on results.

    *   **Students in the Program** may be encouraged and motivated by information on academic performance if it can be creatively displayed to them.

    *   **Parents in the Program** may gain greater appreciation for the benefits and could increase their motivation to actively support the program.

    *   **Other PAL centers** where the program is expanding can better understand the purpose of the program and the possible benefits in academic performance. This may increase their motivation to fully commit to implementing the program.

Recommendations

The following recommendations are based on the findings and conclusions of this evaluation activity. The recommendations address the gathering and use of information to improve the program outcomes and support for the program.

1. While there is every reason to believe that the PAL Mentoring program has a positive effect on students' grades, more work is required to make this conclusion with greater confidence. The program should:

    a) Set up the database so that data on all students' grades when they start the program and then subsequent grades are tracked. This will create a growing body of evidence to support the program's impact

    b) Share the current data and conclusions with the students' teachers and other after-school programs. Knowing the experiences of others will help in interpreting the program's information.

2. Based on the results of this evaluation and the fact that the program is being expanded to new centers, now is an opportune time to critique the information system. The mentoring team should ask itself what information is needed to track and understand the program and how will this information be used? It may be that not all of the current data being collected is essential and some alterations in how data is entered may make analysis and reporting easier.

    •   The Team should try and address the information issue at its earliest opportunity. It will take time to work through the conceptual and practical issues of what information to collect, how to do so efficiently and how best to use it. It seems preferable to do this in a concentrated amount of time than draw it out over a number of weeks.

    •   Based on the evaluation work, the PAL team has clarified the goals for improving academic performance of students and is determining the best ways to measure these goals.

    •   Once these are clear, it will be possible to pinpoint exactly the data which must be collected. The current forms could then be reviewed and revised as appropriate. Finally the database can also be revised as necessary to capture the required measurements.

3. Three ways to use the information are:

    a) Information for "outsiders" such as funders, other programs, etc. could be produced as regular reports on a set number of indicators (see Table 1 for some possibilities).

    b) Analysis and interpretation of group level data is important for the team members. A spreadsheet of the relevant data which the team can use to make a number of different comparisons and calculations is more useful (they are not so much in need of a table of information).

    c) Several ideas were suggested as creative ways to display information about students' performance at the center to stimulate healthy competition, motivate toward the achievement of specific objectives and provide feedback to parents. This could take the form of wall charts using bar graphs, pie charts, "thermometers," etc.

4.   The program can benefit from greater team involvement in the information system. Up to now, the supervisor has been responsible for all tasks of data inputting, reporting, analysis, etc., and the burden of this on an already over-full schedule is obvious. Steps are currently being considered to involve team members more. This has the potential to reduce the work-load, have more of the information be used more regularly and enable team members to gain very useful skills in management and analysis of data.

While basic descriptive statistics may well be all that is required to meet the program's basic needs, there is the potential to do much more in-depth statistical analysis. With the number of team members enrolled in education degree programs it would seem useful for all concerned to encourage greater and more sophisticated analysis.

APPENDIX A

Civic Works Environmental Team
Participatory Planning and Evaluation System

Planning Visit Tool
Completion Visit Tool
Final Visit Tool

CIVIC WORKS ENVIRONMENTAL TEAM
PARTICIPATORY PLANNING AND EVALUATION SYSTEM

With assistance from Innovation Network, the Evaluation Team (E-Team) has developed a set of procedures for working with neighborhood residents to plan, implement and assess the renovation of vacant lots into Neighborhood Green Spaces. The objectives of this system are as follows:

1. Increase the likelihood of community ownership and maintenance of the sites through the use of participatory information gathering and analysis and introduction of the Take Care Team concept.
2. Provide the E-Team with information on community needs and desires for use in designing the renovations.
3. Enable both the community and the E-Team to assess the level of ownership of the sites.
4. Provide a framework and tools for corps members to improve their skills in community analysis and development.

OVERVIEW

The basic concept behind the evaluation system is to collect information jointly with neighborhood residents three times during the planning and implementation of the renovation. The method used is a group interview and a walking tour/observation of the site and surrounding area with a few resident stakeholders. The activities take place at three critical stages:

First, prior to the site design
Second, immediately upon completion of the renovation
Third, 8-12 months after completion

In each instance the E-Team and residents gather information on four aspects of the site and its management; the physical description, how the site is used, who helped or harmed by the site as it is used, and the care or maintenance of the site. Depending on the activity, these issues are considered in terms of the past, the present or the future.

Some Important Ideas

What is Ownership? When a neighborhood "owns" the site, they use it in ways that are beneficial to the community, feel some responsibility to take care of it, and take actions so that it can continue to be used. When there is no ownership, no one feels responsibility. Everyone used the site for their own interest without thinking of others, which usually means as a trash dump, a place to sell drugs or other things.

Ownership like we are talking about is a hard thing. Common or public spaces usually are not owned by communities. That is, even in downtown areas and rich suburbs, people often treat parks as though it was someone else's business to take care of. Usually, people are paid to clean up and maintain parks. When we see people not owning the sites renovated by the E-Team, we are seeing what happens most of the time everywhere. When a neighborhood does get a sense of responsibility and takes actions to keep up an E-Team site, we are seeing something special.

For this reason, the tools attached talk about three levels of ownership:

1. **Little to none:** no evidence of up-keep or use, major disrepair, lots of trash, more than half of plantings died or gone, major vandalism, no one identified as taking care.

2. **Good:** Site is in decent shape. Trash is manageable, most plantings are alive, no major structural problems, no vandalism or has been repaired. Specific individuals

can be identified as taking care.

3. **Very Good:** Work above basic maintenance has been done. Any new plantings, new uses made of site, new projects or clean-ups in adjacent areas. Maintenance has been carried out and anything broken fixed. An identified group takes care on some regular basis.

It is important for Team members and neighborhood residents both to understand that number one is what we expect to happen the most often. If a site gets a "2," then the community has done better than average. If they get a three, they are really at the top.

Collecting information this way is new for community members.
Usually, people are not asked to gather information about themselves. Usually, we get asked questions by someone, or fill in a questionnaire and never hear back what happened. The tools presented here are meant to be used jointly by the team and residents. The main idea is to have community members think together about their site; what they want, what they have received, and how well they have kept it up. The role of the team is just to help them along. This will require some care and diplomacy. If it seems that they are being judged (How come there's trash on the site?!) they may get defensive and the usefulness of the activity may be lost.

Conducting the Group Walks takes more skill than it appears.
It may seem that this way of collecting information, since it is more informal, is very easy. However, it requires practice and preparation for having a good session with the community. Be sure to have everything you need before going to the site. Arriving without a map or the list of questions is like showing up at the site without a shovel.

Assign roles for who will do what part before you get there. This avoids duplicating each other's work or missing something altogether.

Remember to take notes! It is easy to think that you will remember what someone said. But when you get home and try to remember which person said what about which question, it is not so easy. Taking good notes and then going back over them and writing down the parts you left out is very important. Remember, your team will probably not be conducting the final visits to the sites. The team that follows yours will do this the next year. Without a clear record of what people saw and said, assessing the site will be very hard.

Description of the three Group Walks

1. Planning Visit(s)

One or two planning visits are scheduled a month or more before work on the site is scheduled. Participants should include the neighborhood organizer and several other interested residents, hopefully one who will serve as the team's host during the work.

The group walk is meant to help in planning the site by getting the residents input, start to build a good relationship with the team and introduce the idea of the Take Care Team. It is the longest of the three meetings and could take 2 hours. Residents are asked to describe the past and present of the site. The whole group tours the site and surrounding block, noting information on maps. The residents get to see the E-Team Sample Book and are informed about what kind of things the Team can do.

Usually, the first meeting will be followed by a second, after the residents have had the chance to talk to more of the neighbors.

2. Completion Visit

As soon as possible after work on the site is complete, members of the E-Team meet again with residents for a Group Walk. This meeting serves to "hand over" responsibility for the site to the TCT. The residents should be provided with a complete "green" map of the site which shows the location and type of each plant as well as the major landscaping and structures.

The residents and team discuss how the neighbors plan to use the park, who will take care of it etc. In addition to looking at the site, the group walks around the surrounding block as at the first meeting.

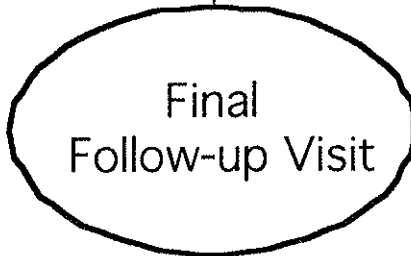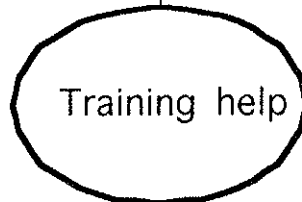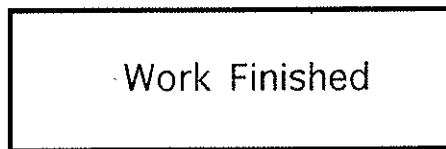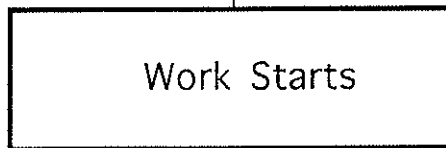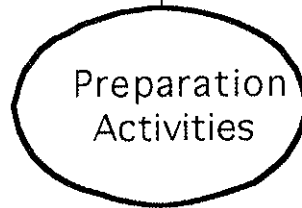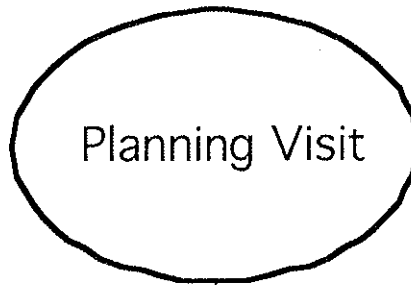Also at this meeting, the Team makes arrangements to come for follow-up training visits.

3. Final Visit

About a year after the Completion Visit and after the training visits in the Fall, Winter and Spring, the team meets with the residents a final time. As before, information about the site is gathered through discussion and observation. The main focus is on the present status, use and care of the site as compared to what was thought at the time the site was completed.

As before, discussion about the site takes place both in a meeting and by going out to look at the site itself. It is important that residents are aware of the purpose of the visit and that both the team and they will be discussing what things have worked well and what have not. It is particularly important to take good notes during this visit since you and the community will be judging the success of the site and your notes will provide the evidence of your decision.

It is also important not to make the residents feel defensive about the visit. Even in the best of projects, the reality often falls short of the dream. It is important to emphasize successes as well as any short comings in results of the site. If problems are observed, the discussion should focus on understanding why they occurred and if there is anything that can be done. Both the Team and residents need to remind themselves that taking care of public spaces is hard work no matter where you live.

E-Team Site Renovations - Activity Process

Group Walk

Planning Visit

Preparation Activities

Work Starts

Group Walk

Work Finished

Training help

Group Walk

Final Follow-up Visit

Introductions:
Agenda for the planning visits
Civic Works and the E-Team
Understand the site
Discuss the site
Look at the site
Discuss what E-Team can do
What residents want
Take Care Teams
Action Steps

Planning visit Steps

1. Explain about the E-team's work in renovating sites. Pride of Place, catalyst for neighborhood, good starting point. Discuss CW's experience with the importance of community ownership to maintenance of sites. Key ingredients:
   Residents involved
   Site meets their needs
   Training provided
   Take Care Team

1. Explain that we will have three times to get together with HEBCAC, residents and Team to discuss and look at the site. Make sure are together in ideas, get information needed for each step, do planning. Give out the handout on the activity process and explain.
2. Explain that will now discuss the site in order to make a plan for how to renovate it. Introduce the map. Tape on news print. Ask residents to use markers to identify landmarks around the site to identify where we are.

   Use the question guide to get residents to discuss the past history of the site and what is happening at present. One team member should guide the questions. Others should take full notes of everything said.
3. Now we will go out and take a look around. We want to take the maps we have here and record some of what we see. Use the INFORMATION TO COLLECT form to make sure everything is covered.
   a) All information about the site itself should be recorded on a map of the site
   b) All information about the surrounding block should be recorded on the Block Map
   c) Any other information should be recorded on the Data Sheet.

5. Now explain that we want to think about how the site will be used in the future. Hand out the Sample Book. Explain some of the possibilities and limitations of what the E-Team can do. Discuss the kinds of uses the residents would like to see. Discuss who the winners and losers will be if such changes are made.

   At this point, it may be necessary to plan another meeting to discuss these issues in detail. The residents should have time to talk with other neighbors and get their input.
6. Move on to action steps for the time between now and the start of work. Use the Chart attached and add any new items. Discuss each step and agree on who is responsible and by when

Summary and Report Steps

1. Gather your notes and read them over. Review the maps you drew.
2. Go through the questions in the Guide and write down all of the responses from everyone's notes in one place. Note who said what. Did people agree?
3. Summarize your findings on the PRESENT/FUTURE sheet.
4. Make copies of the Summary for the Civic Works files and send a copy to the community organizer.

1.   Past uses

1.1.   How long has the site been there? Did it always look as it does now?

1.2.   How did people used to use the site back then? What did they used to do there?

1.3.   Who used it? (kids, adults, etc.)

1.4.   Why did they use it in these ways? Why were they here instead of somewhere else?

1.5.   Where did they come from? Were they just from the neighborhood or did they come from elsewhere?

2.   Past Winners and Losers

2.1.   Who benefited from the site as it was?

2.2.   How did they benefit?

2.3. Who didn't get to benefit or lost something because of how the sire was used?

3.   Past Care
3.1. Did anyone care for this site in the past?

3.2. What did they do? How often was that?

3.3. Who was it?

4.   Present Uses
4.1.   How do people use the site now?

4.2.   Who uses it?

4.3.   Why do they use it in these ways?

4.4.   Where do they come from?

5.   Present Winners and Losers
5.1.   Who benefits from how the site is used now?

5.2.   How did they benefit?

5.3.   Who loses out because of how the site is used now?

6. Future Use
6.1.   How would you like the site to be used?

6.2. Who would you like to use it in these ways?

6.3. Where would they come from?

7. Future Care

7.1. Who would you like to care for this site in the future?

7.2. How should they care for it?

7.3. How often?

TASK LIST AT END OF PRE-VISIT

TASK	BY WHO	BY WHEN	COMPLETE
Before Ground Breaking			
TCT identified and agrees to responsibilities			
Draft Site Plan Developed			
Draft Site Plan reviewed and comments/changes suggested			
Visit to a completed site and TCT			
Post flyers about the ground-breaking			
By Site Completion			
Plan for providing water developed and agreed to by water supplier			
Basic supplies and materials obtained			

	PAST (residents' description)	PRESENT (residents' description and Team observations)	FUTURE (residents expectations)
Physical Description area & shape Location & description of structures Volume & type of trash			
Use of Site Describe all uses Who uses			
Winners & Losers Who benefits from site Who is harmed by site			
Care of Site Who cleans/maintains What care steps			

INFORMATION TO COLLECT ON WALK ABOUT

SITE

Physical Description:

Area Measurements.

Volume and type of trash for removal

Size, description and location of any structures or features that could be used or can't be removed (concrete, pipes, rocks, etc.)

Plants to be kept

Location of nearest water source

Present Use

Observations of use (paths, dumping, graffiti, drug use, etc.)

Identify who in community uses

Winners and Losers - What can you observe about:

Who benefits from site now? How?

Who is harmed by the site now?

Who will lose out if the site is changed?

Who will benefit if the site is changed?

SURROUNDING BLOCK

Resources and Services

Water

Shops

Schools

Agencies/organizations

Community leaders

Problem Areas

Trash

Drug markets

Vacant buildings

<u>Completion Visit Steps</u>

Agenda for the visit

Document the Completed Site

Document Planned Uses

Confirm Take Care Team

Training on Plant Care

Planning for Next Visit

1. Explain the purpose of this visit as above.

2. Hand out the green map. With the map in hand, go over all the aspects of the renovation, confirm that they are there and discuss any maintenance issues. Explain that in 8 months to a year, the team will return and compare the Green Map to the site as it is then.

   Be sure to discuss how the site can be expected to change in the next year. Discuss any things that might happen. Ask residents to think realistically about how much up keep they will be able to do. Write responses on the Data Sheet.

3. Discuss Uses and Winners and Losers. Following the Question Guide, go over how the residents think the site will be used. Take notes on the Data Sheet.

4. Take a Block Map. Note the observations about the surrounding area on the map. Remind residents that we will be able to compare the surrounding block in the final visit to see what if any changes have occurred.

5. Follow the question guide to get residents to describe the Take Care Team. Find out what the residents expect the team to do and how often. guide the questions. One should take full notes of everything said. The others should make notes on the Data Sheet.

6. Make a list of Action Steps between now and the Next visit. Set a date for the next visit.

1. Future Use

1.1.   How do you expect the site to be used now? By who?

1.2.   Where will they come from?

2.   Winners and Losers

2.1.   Who do you expect to benefit from the site? Just the users? Others? How?

2.2.   Will anyone lose out because of the site and how it is to be used? How?

3.   Future Care

3.1.   Who are the members of the Take Care Team?

3.2.   How will they care for the site?

3.3.   How often?

INFORMATION TO COLLECT AT THE SITE

● **SITE**

Physical Description:

Green Map

Intended Use

How is the site designed/expected to be used

Identify who in community uses

Winners and Losers

Who is expected to benefit from site now? How?

Who will lose out from the changes made?

● **SURROUNDING BLOCK**

Resources and Services

Water

Shops

Schools

Agencies/organizations

Community leaders

Other

Problem Areas

Trash

● Drug markets

Vacant buildings

Completion Visit Data Sheet   Location:_____   Date:_____

	PRESENT (This box only)	FUTURE

Physical Description
What structures are there,
     where (map)
Volume & type of trash
Location & description of
     plantings
What else can be seen
	(Attach Map)	

Use of Site Describe all uses Who uses		
Winners & Losers Who benefits from site Who is harmed by site		
Care of Site Who are TCT members What care steps		

Final Group Walk Steps

Agenda for the visit

Describe the site and surrounding block to compare with the completion visit
    (discussion, observation, photographs)

Document current uses and compare to intended uses

Document Take Care Team members and activities

Discuss the success of the site

Discuss residents future plans

1. Meet with the host and residents. Explain the purpose of this visit: as above

   Remember: The purpose here is to get an honest view of what has happened. Its important to discuss what went well and what did not. The group should consider things that went according to plan and things that were unexpected – whether positive or negative..

2. Using the Discussion Guide, discuss the use and care of the site, winners and losers at present and in the future. Ask whether residents feel the site has been a success. Find out why. Have one team member direct the questions, and the others take notes on their copies of the guide.

3. When you have discussed each question, have the group go out to look at the site itself. Ask the community to bring their "Green Map." Compare what you see to what was on the map. Also compare it to what people said. What new things can you and they learn? Record your observations on a clean map or on the back of the question guide.

4. Walk around the block (you should be following the same path taken at the previous Group Walks). Write your observations on a Block Map. Make comparisons to the map done at completion time. What is the same and what is different? Why?.

5. Speak to some residents who you meet on the walk. Ask them the questions listed on the "Information To Collect At the Site" page.

6. When you have finished, bring the group together to discuss the conclusions. Talk about what the residents and the Team feel about the success of the site. What does the group feel is responsible for the success? Write down the ideas.

7. Thank the hosts and say they will get a copy of the report.

Summary and Report Steps

1. Gather your notes and read them over. Review the maps you drew.

2. Go through the questions in the Guide and write down all of the responses from everyone's notes in one place. Note who said what. Did people agree?

3. Summarize your findings on the PRESENT/FUTURE sheet.

4. Fill out the SUMMARY SHEET. Fill in the Measurements Table. What are your conclusions about the site. Was it a success? Does the community "own" the site? What concerns do you have?

5. Make copies of the summary for Civic Works files and send a copy to the community organizer.

1. __Present Uses__

1.1. How do people use the site now?

1.2. Who uses it?

1.3. How does this compare to the intended uses? Are there some which did not happen? Other uses not foreseen?

2. __Present Care__

2.1. Who is caring for the site now. Are these the people you expected?

2.2. How do they care for it? What do they do and how often?

3. __Present Winners and Losers__

3.1. Who benefits from how the site is used now?

3.2. How do they benefit? Is this different from what you expected? How?

3.3. Who loses out because of how the site is used now? Is this different from what you expected? How?

4. Future Use

4.1.   Do you plan to change how the site is used in the future?

4.2.   Who would you like to use it in these ways?

4.3.   Where would they come from?

5.   Future Care

5.1.   Who would you like to care for this site in the future?

5.2.   How should they care for it?

5.3.   How often?

6.   Other changes in the Neighborhood

6.1.   Has anything else changed in your neighborhood that you think is related to the site renovation? What? Why do you think it is related?

6.2.   Do you feel the site has been a success? What do you feel has made the site a success (or not a success)?

INFORMATION TO COLLECT AT THE SITE

Physical Description:

Compare Green Map to actual observations and record differences.

Use

What types of use can be observed? How much?

Identify who in community uses

Winners and Losers

Who do you observe who may be benefiting from site now? How?

Who can you observe who may be losing out from the changes made?

SURROUNDING BLOCK

Resources and Services

Water

Shops

Schools

Agencies/organizations

Community leaders

Other

Problem Areas

Trash

Drug markets

Vacant buildings

Questions for residents met during the walk:

1. Have you seen anyone using the site? If so, how do they use it?

2. Have you seen anyone taking care of the site? What do they do?

3. Do you feel the site was a success? Why?

4. Who would you say the site belongs to?

Final Visit Data Sheet

Location:_____

Date:_____

	PRESENT (What can you see?)
Physical Description What structures are there, where (map) Volume & type of trash Location & description of plantings What else can be seen	
Use of Site Describe all uses Who uses	
Winners & Losers Who benefits from site Who is harmed by site	
Care of Site Who are TCT members What care steps	

Final Visit Data Sheet Location:_____ Date:_____

SUMMARY SHEET
People Interviewed: People on Group Walk:
----------------------------   ----------------------------
----------------------------   ----------------------------
----------------------------   ----------------------------
----------------------------   ----------------------------

Signs of Ownership	Response	Comment
1. plantings alive (percent)		
2. new plantings		
3. trash on site (No. bags)		
4. trash adjacent (No. bags)		
5. being used as planned		
6. new uses		
7. TCT active (how many)		
8. Maintenance performed		

Your Conclusions

Any Concerns

SUMMARY SHEET
People Interviewed: People on Group Walk:
---------------------------   -----------------------------
---------------------------   -----------------------------
---------------------------   -----------------------------
---------------------------   -----------------------------

| Signs of Ownership | Level of ownership | | | Comments |
	none	good	v good	
1. plantings alive (percent)				
2. new plantings				
3. trash on site (No. bags)				
4. trash adjacent (No. bags)				
5. being used as planned				
6. new uses				
7. TCT active (how many)				
8. Maintenance performed				

Your Conclusions

Any Concerns

APPENDIX B

DESCRIPTION OF TAKE CARE TEAMS

TAKE CARE TEAM

The Take Care Team (TCT) is a group of neighborhood residents who agree to take responsibility for maintenance of the site renovated with the Civic Works Environmental Team (E-Team). The TCT is identified before work on the site begins. The members will receive some training from the E-team to enable them to do their jobs. The E-Team commits to provide this training as well as follow-up visits after the site is complete. The following pages describe how the Take Care System is expected to operate.

Make Up of the Take Care Team:

It is suggested that the team should have at least three members. This is to make sure no one has to take on all the jobs alone, but that there are not too many people which makes organizing difficult.

The TCT members should be responsible adults who have some time to keep up with the regular maintenance tasks. Members should try to make a commitment for one year.

At least one TCT member should be a representative of an organization in the community, such as the school, church, (other suggestions) so that the resources from the organization can be used to help with caring for the site and making it a center for the community's self-help efforts.

DESCRIPTION OF TAKE CARE TEAM TASKS

Before Ground Breaking at the Site (Total time 4 days)

Meet with the HEBCAC Organizer and E-team to discuss community expectations for the site.

Review tasks and make a commitment to work for one year on the team.

Identify a water source for the site and make an agreement with the owner to supply water.

Visit a completed site and discuss the maintenance work and responsibilities.

Develop a plan to obtain the tools and materials needed for the maintenance work.

During the Site Work (Total time 1-2 days)

Assist with some of the planting work.

Be available for at least two two-hour training sessions with the E-TEAM.

After Site Completion (Total time half a day per month for 6-8 months)

Water plantings once per week for the first month, during July and August.

Weed the site at least two times during the summer.

Organize a trash pick-up at the site once per month as needed.

Be available for a follow-up visit from the E-Team in the Fall; TCT will be trained in Fall care-taking and winter preparation and will carry out these tasks.

Be available for a follow-up visit from the E-Team in the Winter to discuss who will be available for Spring work and to set a date for a Spring Clean-Up.

Be available for a follow-up visit from the E-Team in the Spring. The TCT and E-Team will conduct a "Walk About" activity to look at the site and the surrounding areas. The TCT will be trained in Spring care-taking for plants.

Arrange for new mulch and any repairs to the site.

Please Note:

The times listed above are a minimum estimate. A TCT could decide to spend more time. Also not all tasks have to be performed by the TCT members. The TCT can encourage other residents to assist with weeding, clean-ups, etc. It is the team's responsibility to make sure these jobs do get done.

Two items above in the Pre-site activities are marked with a square. This indicates that Civic Works will not be able to proceed with the renovation unless these tasks are completed. Every neighborhood that receives a site renovation must have a Take Care Team and the team must have a workable plan for watering the plantings on the site.

Description of Benefits TCT members will receive:

The members will learn a number of useful skills:

how to care for plantings at different times of the year

how to read the "Green Map" of the site (a drawing that shows where plantings are located

basic safety steps for clean-up activities including HIV/AIDS awareness

how to access free or low cost supplies and services such as mulch, trash pick-up, etc.

What the Civic Works E-Team will Provide

1.   Assist the community to collect information about the site and surroundings.

2.   Transport to a previously completed site to discuss care-taking with experienced residents.

3.   A written site plan describing what the site will look like at least one week before the start of work.

4.   A revision of this plan based on community input.

5.   A list of successful strategies for making a water plan.

6.   Posting flyers in the community prior to ground breaking.

7.   Skills and labor required to renovate the site (from 3-10 days depending on the plan)

8.   Training in skills necessary for the TCT

9.   Three Follow up Visits; Fall, Winter and Spring.

10.   A list of free or low cost services or supplies needed for care and maintenance of the site.

Basic Supplies Required by the Take Care Team

1 25 ft. garden hose

1 wheel barrow

1 shovel

1 hammer

minimum of 2 25 gal water containers

2 pairs work gloves

5-10 plastic garbage bags

minimum one pair clippers or clippers

APPENDIX C

DETAILS FROM THE SITE VISITS

The site was visited on March 3, a rainy and cloudy day. The team spoke with an extremely active resident who was closely involved with the project as well as many other community activities and three individuals met during the site visit.

The site itself was in good condition with all major structures (8 ft. fencing, 4 gate doors, 3 large picnic tables, sign and tropme l'oeil paintings) in tact except one gate handle. At least 80% of the green material planted is still living. About 2-3 bags worth of tossed or blown trash was on the immediate site. This was mostly paper and plastic, though small and large wine bottles, some discarded wood and one needle (outside the fence) were also there.

The alley on one side of the park has been used for dumping of bulk trash (about one pick-up truck load observed). Otherwise the surrounding area is as it was at the time of completion.

The whole garden had been planted in vegetables, the intended use. The gardeners benefited as well as other residents who received gifts or were served vegetables at several gatherings (funerals) during the year. While the team did not speak to any gardeners, it was reported they intend to plant again this year. A garage owner adjacent to the site, as well as some wine drinkers, use the picnic tables. The community had plans to put in a bricked patio and permanent bar-b-q area which has not happened.

Everyone referred to benefits of the park going to the gardeners and also the community as a whole because the park is "pretty," "beautiful," or nice to look at. The only ones who have lost out because of the renovation are the drug dealers who used to use the lot for sales.

Care of the site is carried out mainly by the gardeners, preparing the soil, weeding etc. All informants remembered seeing at least one person cleaning up trash. One said his nephew had done so. Another, that one man had "been out there every day cleaning up." The care seems to be the responsibility of individuals and not an organized group. There are plans to put up signs prohibiting dumping, showing Drug Free Zone and "No Loitering. Also, the community organizer is sending out letters to inform people of their correct trash pick-up day and remind them of their responsibilities.

A concern regarding maintenance is that the resident the team spoke with, who appears to be the moving force behind most of the community efforts including the garden, is "worn out" and ready to "retire" (she is well past retirement age and wheelchair-bound). It is not clear whether other residents will step forward to carry on her work.

26th and Barclay   Level of Ownership - Very Good

The site was visited on March 3. The team spoke with the woman who had hosted the effort and is responsible for many community initiatives. One other resident, met during the site observation was talked to as well. The site was completed in 1994.

The site is in extremely good shape. It consists of a bricked seating area with three large picnic tables, covered with a roofed wooden structure, surrounded by planted borders and three landscaped mounds. Eighty percent of the plant material is still living. Many of the bulbs have multiplied. None of the trees have died. There was a small amount of blown trash (1 bag, mostly paper). Some graffiti was evident on the tables and on one of the structure's posts. The fencing was in good shape. The site had no gates, the host having explained that they had been stolen more than once and residents had decided to leave it open. A large sign is prominent and in good condition.

The site is used most in the warm months as a picnic and meeting area. Employees from local businesses eat lunch there. Cookouts are held in the summer. Parents take children to play. The site was describes as a safe place, unlike the basketball courts which are afflicted by the "drug scene." Adjacent to the site is a garage which was donated by a resident during the renovation. The E-Team repaired it and used it for storage. The community continues to store tools for the park and it has been recently painted. When large groups want to use the site for meetings or church activities they ask permission.

Several plans exist for future use. The organizer is hoping to organize activities for children and others to come and learn about the plants and how to take care of them, possibly in connection with some of the churches. Another idea is to have youth bring senior citizens to the park to hear stories of their youth and history. The garage will be used this summer as a produce stall.

The community at large were described as the beneficiaries. In addition, one of the businesses was mentioned as having repeatedly thanked the organizer for the effort "even though they helped as much as anyone!" Since the renovation there have been several "Face Lift" clean-up activities in the neighborhood.

Care of the site is generally done by those who use it, "People pretty much clean up after themselves." In winter months when the wind blows in trash, individuals take responsibility to pick it up. For the future, the organizer is hopeful because since her illness in the past year, other individuals have taken up more of the organizing work.

The park was described as a big success. The organizer gave much of the credit to Civic Works. First, the financial contribution was essential since the E-Team did work for $25,000 that would have cost double that from a contractor. Another factor was the expertise of the work; "Look at it! It looks so professional." It was also clear from the conversation that a strong bond was formed between the Team and the residents during the nine-month implementation.

Thurgood Marshall School   Level of Ownership - Good

The site was visited on March 3. Two team members and the evaluator interviewed the school principal.

The site is different from the Neighborhood sites visited previously. It consists of landscaping, construction of raised planting beds with stone walls, planting of 40 trees in and around a parking area and school grounds of some 100 square yards. As such it is not a neighborhood site.

The beds at the school entrance and along the building are in good condition. Nearly all of the shrubs and trees are alive. Two trees were knocked over by snow plows and numerous low branches have been broken by children. Teachers have planted additional bulbs. There was some blown and littered trash including some broken bottles. One to two bags of trash were observed over the whole area.

The principal indicated that the "use" of the site was to turn what had been the back of the school into a new front entrance and to provide an attractive and welcoming sight. This objective has been accomplished and the principal cited many comments by teachers, parents and community members on the improvement. There are future plans to extend the landscaping to include other areas and make courtyards which could be used for out door activities by teachers and their classes. There is some use of the site by adults as a place to drink alcohol and bottles and cups make up part of the trash content.

Also, trash pick up is performed as "community service" by some students as a disciplinary action. The principal intends to form a student "Improvement Team" or garden club which would take responsibility for maintaining the site and the plantings during the school year and in the summer months.

The principal feels the site has been successful. She cites the students, parents and staff as the main beneficiaries. The residents living across the street have also benefited from the beautification effort, particularly because of the use of flowering trees and shrubs. The Mott Foundation has assisted the effort and benefits as landlord for residential properties in the neighborhood. The principal feels that making the school more attractive increases the desirability of the near-by apartments.