Building Sustainable Communities

Moving from Quality of Life Planning to Implementation

Quality of Life plans don't revitalize neighborhoods. Implementing the elements within them do. This review examines the successful Building Sustainable Communities experience in Indianapolis to understand and explain the elements and practices that caused its success.

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Purpose of this review

Quality of Life plans have been created in BSC target neighborhoods at LISC sites across the country. While much has been achieved throughout the network, there are cases where programs and projects contained in Q of L plans have not been implemented. This review seeks to understand when and why implementation occurs and find methods to employ that will create more productivity from the existing infrastructure of organizations and Q of L plans.

The Indianapolis Building Sustainable Communities effort has realized formidable achievements. Its success is the product of smart thinking, strong capacity, hard work, and a deep network of relationships. And, like all LISC BSC sites, Indianapolis faced its share of challenges. This review seeks to examine the work in Indianapolis to learn from its practice.

Method

Interviews and focus groups were conducted with Indianapolis LISC staff, its Local Advisory Board, local actors from the Great Indy Neighborhoods Initiatives (GINI – the brand name of the Indianapolis LISC BSC work), funders, and Indianapolis civic leaders.

Findings

Elements for a successful BSC Initiative

The overall success of a BSC program in a targeted neighborhood is contingent upon a set of elements that must be developed. It is the responsibility of LISC and its local partners to cultivate them. You will see through the following stories, which are drawn from Indianapolis interviews that such cultivation has led to successful, and in some cases remarkable outcomes. And, where these elements are absent it can be extremely hard to achieve even modest accomplishments.

A Tale of Two Neighborhoods

Consider these two Great Indy Neighborhoods Initiatives (GINI) neighborhood examples:

1. Site: Near Eastside Neighborhood of Indianapolis

LISC recognized the potential of the Near Eastside neighborhood from before the inception of GINI. Pre-GINI, LISC and the City of Indianapolis co-convened the Indianapolis Community Development Summit in 2004. Through the Summit, LISC and its partner (the City) gave local communities the chance to demonstrate their belief in the initiative, an appreciation for its potential, and a sincere desire to work hard to receive its benefits. From the very beginning Near Eastside residents and organizations participated in every session and communicated just how important they felt the newly forming BSC Initiative that came to be known as GINI was to their community.

Once the Near Eastside was selected as a GINI site, LISC staff and neighborhood leaders became a tightly unified team, strenuously working to advance through the launch and then see project after project through to fruition. Once this happened, LISC executive leadership could generate belief among metro Indianapolis civic leaders in the positive neighborhood transformation east of the expressway.

Home of the Near Eastside Community Organization (founded in 1970). this neighborhood possesses a set of agencies and constituencies that were organized and ready for the arrival of GINI in 2006.

Among these agencies were the following:

- John H. Boner Community Service Center (the "convening organization" for GINI),
- The East 10th Street Civic Association – dedicated to the revitalization of the east 10th Street commercial corridor

The Near Eastside is also the site of a former CDC, East Side Community Investments (ECI), a high profile, highly productive community development corporation that suffered financial collapse in 1997. Near Eastside leaders knew of the benefits that could be produced by a capable local CDC, and they had learned about the importance of proper management from ECI's demise. New community real estate development capability was nurtured, and a new CDC was created named:

- Near East Area Renewal (NEAR)

The Near Eastside organizations were not just ready for GINI, they were hungry for it. They had the backbone of infrastructure and capacity in place. GINI offered an opportunity to enhance it and to create the common vision that would guide them toward producing a strong collective impact. They truly believed in the potential of this work.

This quote is taken from the from the Near East Area Renewal (NEAR) website at www.nearindy.org:

> *"Our work is guided by the Near East Quality of Life Plan, developed by the Near Eastside Collaborative Taskforce. During the Plan's creation, the taskforce interviewed more than 100 Near East residents, and held a community-wide visioning event with more than 400 attendees. The plan represents the values and priorities of Near East residents, and continues to grow and change with our community."*

Partnering & coalition building is rooted in the culture of the Near Eastside. This culture existed before the establishment of GINI and was greatly enhanced by the opportunities that GINI presented. These partnerships and coalition efforts are responsible for youth programming, commercial revitalization, the production of affordable housing, community service provision, eliminating a food desert, generating economic opportunity and more. Stemming from a common vision, these achievements enabled and added value to each other, putting the Near Eastside on a path toward revitalization and demonstrating the leveraging power of working comprehensively. Here are a few examples:

- Physical development of the new, block long, Boner Community Service Center which improved the built environment as it removed and replaced commercial blight with a beautiful, modern facility.
- NSP resources deployed in a targeted Near Eastside residential neighborhood created more confidence for the revitalization of the adjacent 10th Street Commercial Retail Corridor.
- Collaterally, the revitalization of the 10th Street commercial corridor caused

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WHAT IS COMPREHENSIVE COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT?

INFOGRAPHIC PROVIDED BY THE INDIANA ASSOCIATION FOR COMMUNITY & ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT (IACED)
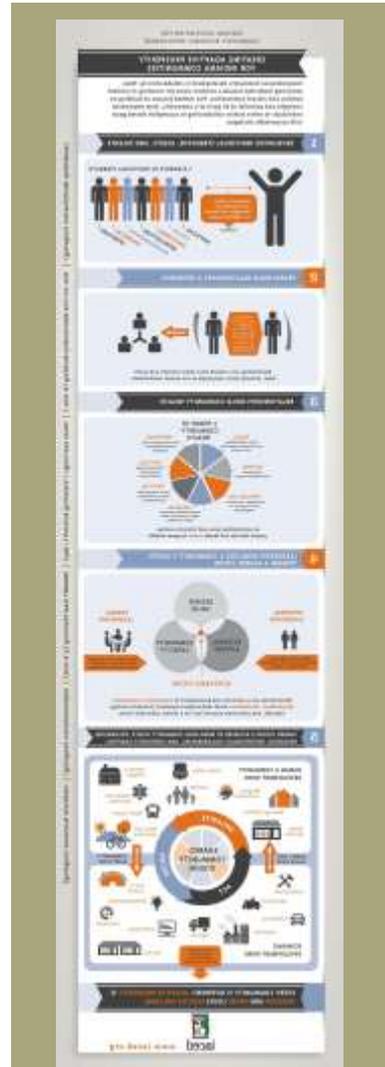
*Developed by IACED

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increased confidence among potential homebuyers of the previously vacant newly rehabilitated homes.

Attracting support from the surrounding city/region

Near Eastside achievements created the "critical mass" necessary for Indianapolis LISC to advocate for the siting of the Super Bowl Legacy Project in that community.

Near Eastside leaders who created their vision circa 2006/2007 couldn't have known that a Super Bowl Legacy Project might be a future possibility. The power of that collective vision catalyzed several different successful projects and programs. And then these local achievements, in aggregate, attracted the Super Bowl Legacy Project. The Super Bowl Legacy Project was the result of comprehensive community development and not the initial cause. Once announced and then completed, the Legacy Project itself gave cause to an escalation in investment interest and revitalization activity.

Providing Incentives

Indianapolis LISC provided numerous incentives to support the Near Eastside work. The LISC program officer was present at all Q of L planning meetings offering advice, encouragement, and technical assistance to support the development of the vision. LISC provided a series of challenge grants to support and seed projects that aligned with the plan and continued momentum in the neighborhood. LISC leadership connected the neighborhood to new partners, which led to additional resources in the neighborhood.

2. Site Two.

Site two is a suburban area, and LISC has little experience in working in a suburban context. Because of the lack of local will to engage and inability of organizations to partner, LISC was hindered in deploying its normal resources and advocacy.

This neighborhood is home to several organizations with considerable capacity including:

ABC News, the Indy Channel
Click here to see the TV news story
2012 Super Bowl Legacy Project Transforms Near-east Side

Chris Proffitt
May 19, 2014

INDIANAPOLIS - As the Indianapolis host committee prepares to bid for the 2018 Super Bowl, part of the city's bid will rest on its proposed legacy project.

While city officials are mum about the next legacy project with the 2018 bid, the project from 2012 is still making a big impact.

The project was designed to make long-lasting changes in the city. Indianapolis landed the 2012 Super Bowl partly on the strength of its plan to revitalize the near-east side.

The Super Bowl Legacy Project is still making a big impact on the near-east side -- from a multi-million dollar fitness and education center to new businesses, the area has changed.

The Chase Near Eastside Legacy Center is just one piece of the redevelopment that began seven years ago by a group of homeowners.

"The host committee picked bits and pieces of the quality of life plan that neighborhood residents had already created and they helped us implement that and move it along. It was work that would have happened anyway, just at a slower pace," said Ben Jones with the legacy center.

Today there are revitalized neighborhoods like St. Claire Place. Along with new businesses and apartments, nearly everyone acknowledges that the NFL's involvement was critical to the rebound of the near-east side.

"It took some city investment with Rebuild Indy dollars, but a lot of private investment came and we think we got close to $150 million in investment in that area, which is remarkable," said Indianapolis Mayor Greg Ballard.

- A Community Development Corporation
- A Neighborhood Center
- A major hospital
- An Elder Friendly Communities Program
- A Park Family Center

Capacity, though necessary, is not sufficient. Trust and the will to will to work together is also important. The neighborhood suffered from a lack of trust among and across local leaders and partners. The following are interview quotes referring to the neighborhood's GINI experience:

- "The convener didn't convene."
- "There were few partners because potential partners wouldn't partner."
- "Local leadership 'talked the talk' but didn't 'walk the walk.'"

The key actors in the neighborhood lacked the will to engage.

The lack of trust inhibited the genuine participation of capable partners and implementers. This coupled with the lack of urgency and mission led to the creation of a weak and uninspiring plan.

The neighborhood is less distressed than other GINI neighborhoods. Local organizations had little past experience with community organizing and coalition building. Lack of trust and genuine engagement suppressed meaningful partnership creation and coalition building.

Attracting support from the surrounding city/region
Because of the weak performance of this site, LISC did not have the opportunity to "market" the neighborhood to potential supporters within the Indianapolis region.

Providing Incentives
The technical assistance that the neighborhood received from the LISC program officer was not embraced as an asset. LISC offered challenge grants for Q of L projects, but they did not leverage much investment because partnerships were not built over time that encouraged others to invest.

The stark contrast between these "best" and "worst" case examples of the GINI experience demonstrates that there are elements which must be developed for BSC to succeed. When they are in place, significant results can be achieved. When not in place, even small achievements are a struggle. Other GINI neighborhoods we examined demonstrated similar dependence on the presence of these elements. Where these elements were developed and in place, such as Southeast Indianapolis, BSC implementation exhibited similar success. Neighborhoods where they were developed to a lesser degree, such as the Near Westside, experienced more modest results.

Elements for successfully implementing the projects and programs contained in Quality of Life Plans.

From the two neighborhood examples above and several neighborhood examples which will follow we have derived that there are eight elements that need to be developed by LISC and its partners in BSC target neighborhoods to successfully implement the programs and projects that are contained within a quality of life plan. Here is the list of those eight elements:

Elements for a successfully BSC project/program implementation.

1. **LISC leadership:**
   Committing to a trusted executive director and activist program officers
2. **Neighborhood capacity:**
   Amassing community development capability for maximum impact
3. **Engagement:**
   Generating the collective will of conveners and partners
4. **Future vision:**
   Developing a unified, inspiring vision
5. **Neighborhood partnerships:**
   Engaging partners and building coalitions
6. **Incentives for action:**
   Providing tools and resources to produce results

Once there is evidence of quality local capacity, and firm local commitment through the establishment of elements 1 – 5, the investments in element 6 become strategic, element 7 becomes feasible and element 8 becomes important.

7. **External partnerships:**
   Connecting with regional civic leadership
8. **Carrying on the work:**
   Institutionalizing the commitment

Inspiration + Perspiration = Success.
These learnings are already influencing Indianapolis BSC neighborhoods as they continue their work in the "post-GINI" era. When organizations on the Near Westside of Indianapolis came together to update their Quality of Life Plan in 2013, they employed a lesson they learned from their neighbors. The Near Westside's original plan was a modest list of doable projects -- housing rehab, weatherization projects, a program for Families in Transition -- and they achieved 80% of their goals in three years. Yet, while the Near Westside partners toiled at small projects, enthusiasm waned and results, while real, were meager.

As the Hawthorne Center (Near Westside's convening agency) and its partners in Haughville and surrounding neighborhoods looked at the Near Eastside and the Southeast GINI programs, they realized they had made a mistake. Those neighborhoods had worked on many small projects, but they had been inspired by a bigger vision: Southeast Neighborhood Development (SEND) by the "Town Center" Fountain Square Redevelopment and Cultural District, and Near Eastside by the Super Bowl Legacy Project

SEND renovated storefronts, organized cleanup campaigns, planted urban gardens, completed a youth center, established a

THINK BIG, TAKE RISKS, INPIRE PEOPLE

The lesson for the current Westside CDC Executive Director and his neighbors is that perspiration is not enough: "We have to think bigger and take some risks. And we have to inspire people."

Center for Working Families, created an Arts District, rebuilt the historic Fountain Square fountain, and leveraged millions of dollars into its quality of life goals.

Near Eastside organizations, led by its convening agency, the John H. Boner Community Center, worked on issues of housing, economic development, education, safety, and more, achieving dozens of small scale victories, nurturing hope and progress – while they used the Super Bowl to leverage over $150 million into their community, including the Chase Near Eastside Legacy Center, a multi-million dollar fitness and education facility that serves 100,000 people a year.

The lesson for the current Westside CDC Executive Director and his neighbors is that perspiration is not enough: "We have to think bigger and take some risks. And we have to inspire people."

It turns out that Daniel Burnham was right. "Make no little plans; they have no magic to stir men's blood and probably themselves will not be realized. Make big plans; aim high in hope and work."

Examining the elements

We offer the above examples to illustrate the importance of the "elements." When they are present strong outcomes can be achieved. When they are not, even minimal gains can be a struggle.

Next we will examine each element in more detail. For each we will explain how the element is normally satisfied during the BSC organizing and launch phase. For tips on how to encourage these elements after Q of L planning has been completed, see the

Element 1: LISC leadership: Committing to a trusted executive director and activist program officers

LISC Executive Director – a Smart, Trusted Leader

No ingredient is more important to successful comprehensive community development than a smart, trusted leader at the helm of the LISC office. What makes a good LISC Executive Director?
In discussions with dozens of City leaders, convening agency officials, residents, businesses, and funders, the profile of an ideal executive director emerged:

- A skilled manager with the capacity to hire and lead a smart, talented, and motivated staff and blend them into an effective team.
- A "connector" who understands neighborhoods, business, government, and philanthropy, and who can build bridges between the leaders of those sectors.
- A person with strong relational skills with the capacity to inspire trust.
- A servant leader – who is not always seeking to receive credit.
- A deal-maker -- someone with the ability and innate talent to broker relationships that will leverage investment in communities.
- A communicator who can clearly articulate the value and importance of comprehensive community development and its components to all those with a stake in creating and maintaining healthy neighborhoods.
- An entrepreneur who is a multi-dimensional thinker and problem-solver, with profound curiosity and the courage to explore, learn, and innovate.
- An advocate for communities with the wisdom to choose a strategic path that will galvanize people to act and produce tangible community development outcomes.

No single individual excels in all of these areas. Nor are individuals with these traits easy to find. In Indianapolis, though, Bill Taft is widely recognized for embodying many of them.

Commented several Indy leaders, "*Bill has tremendous trust . . . he understands neighborhoods . . . he has built a great team . . . Bill has inspired us and kept us informed and involved . . . Bill used the plan to leverage more resources from government and the private sector.*"

These leaders have invested extensive time, energy, and resources into creating GINI and making it successful. Their commitment is supported and encouraged by the presence of a smart, trusted LISC Executive Director.

Activist LISC Program Officers

In the pre-Building Sustainable Communities days, most LISC program officers were underwriters and development professionals. Frequently, they added other responsibilities overseeing program initiatives, but their primary responsibilities revolved around the critically important tasks of loan packaging, processing, monitoring, and marketing.

With BSC, the role has evolved. Today's program officer ("PO") is charged with engaging, guiding, advising, and supporting planning and implementation in target neighborhoods – often in addition to overseeing program initiatives and lending. A challenging role has become even more complex.

In Indianapolis, GINI neighborhood leaders emphasize that the contributions of "activist" program officers were critical to their ability to produce shovels in the ground and programs that make a tangible impact.

What is the role of the successful activist program officer?

- An adviser who provides technical assistance and support at every stage of the BSC process, from engagement to planning to implementation.
- An advocate who is always ready to help. The PO sees himself/herself as part of the neighborhood team, consistently promoting the community's vision and seeking opportunities to support it. The neighborhood's accomplishments are theirs.
- A liaison linking community leaders and their plans with resources and partners inside and outside of the community that can help them implement their strategies and complete their projects – introducing leaders to others who can help, finding resources to support the plan, and communicating opportunities to potential partners and supporters.
- An integrator, constantly thinking about possibilities for neighborhoods to tap into city-wide opportunities and actively encouraging community-based organizations to pursue them if they seem relevant to community priorities, challenges and opportunities.
- A servant of the neighborhood. He/she adapts the rules and processes to community needs, rather than using a cookie-cutter approach – trying always to solve problems and eliminate barriers to accomplishing the community's vision.
- A dealmaker, brokering relationships and resources to support neighborhoods and their plans. The activist program officer identifies projects that have potential, constantly looks for partners, funders, and public support, and connects them with agency leaders; then following up to see what can be done to make a deal. Tenacity, persistence, and follow-through are the hallmarks of the successful dealmaker – always respecting community plans and visions, politely urging, prodding, and cajoling all sides for the benefit of the community.
- A connector and marketer, keeping the LISC Executive Director consistently informed of key neighborhood projects and relationships so that these can be lifted up in broader, regional circles to attract partnerships and investments.

GINI leaders welcomed and embraced program officers with these traits. They noted that "[LISC program officers] did more than provide funding. They helped us herd the cats. They provided technical assistance. They provided us with a lot of information and kept us focused."

As one agency official noted, "Sometimes I talk to our program officer five times a day. That level of involvement is great. We're on the same team."

Other comments about LISC Program Officers from our interviews: *"It is a great LISC staff here. It really is. They are always ready to help. That should be celebrated." . . . "The success of LISC is driven almost exclusively by the quality of its staff. They all are outstanding people. Their relationships are outstanding." . . . "[GINI neighborhood] has a great liaison -- a servant of the neighborhood."*

It is not clear how much success in Indianapolis communities is due to the active, aggressive engagement of LISC program officers. It is clear, however, that program officers in GINI neighborhoods see themselves as proponents of their communities, rather than merely as loan officers or grants managers. Successful GINI neighborhoods welcome smart, talented LISC staff members that position themselves as community advocates and fellow strategists. And, they emphasize, that their activist program officers are critical to their success.

An example of strong and creative LISC leadership can be seen in the allocation process for the Neighborhood Stabilization Program in Indianapolis. Indianapolis was allocated $29 million to support stabilization of vacant and abandoned properties. LISC advocated with the City of Indianapolis for this allocation process to be based on a community discussion. The Indianapolis LISC Executive Director participated on the blue ribbon committee. His ongoing advocacy persuaded City leadership to include items such as neighborhood capacity, partner leverage, and existence of a quality of life plan in the decision-making along with the existence of vacant and abandoned properties. In the end, the selection formula favored GINI neighborhoods and all of the NSP dollars were invested there, providing additional leverage to the already existing investments by LISC and other community partners.

Having Problems with Strong and Creative LISC Leadership - click here to go to [Troubleshooting](#)

Element 2: Neighborhood capacity: Amassing community development capability for maximum impact

It would be a mistake to believe that comprehensive community development can work equally well in every neighborhood. We know that successful implementation requires a significant level of capacity across many disciplines. This capacity comes from actors that either are located within the community or are willing to work within the community.

The primary determinant of selecting a BSC site should be the ability to amass collective community development capacity that will lead to the implementation of an array of programs and projects and result in a strong Collective Impact[1].

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1 Collective Impact is the commitment of a group of actors from different sectors to a common agenda for solving a specific social problem(s), using a structured form of collaboration. The concept of collective impact was first articulated in the 2011 *Stanford Social Innovation Review* article "Collective Impact," written by John Kania, Managing Director at FSG, and Mark Kramer, Kennedy School at Harvard and Co-founder FSG. Collective impact has been recognized by the White House Council for Community Solutions as an important framework for progress on social issues. The concept of collective impact hinges on the idea that in order for organizations to create lasting solutions to social problems on a large-scale, they need to coordinate their efforts and work together around a clearly defined goal. The approach of collective impact is placed in contrast to "isolated impact," where organizations primarily work alone to solve social problems. Collective impact moves away from this, arguing that organizations should form cross-sector coalitions in order to make meaningful and sustainable progress on social issues.

This means generating commitments from a broad array of local actors exhibiting strong skills across many disciplines to work in this "selected" place.

Across the LISC network the best success is in the neighborhoods where this happened.

Yet site selection is often determined by governmental/political decisions concerning geo-location, or philanthropic priorities.

What is capacity? How do you determine and grow capacity?

Capacity, very simply, is the ability or power to get something done. No convening agency can transform a neighborhood by itself. To accomplish the programs & projects in its Q of L plan, it must mobilize others with the ability to get the programs & projects done. Participation in Q of L planning is a good indicator of the willingness of partners to participate. Their capacity can be gauged by their:

- Past history of completing programs and/or projects
- Ability to manage staff and finances in a responsible manner (Is the organization solvent or in financial trouble? Have previous projects been completed on time and on budget?)
- Commitment and follow-through as a partner (i.e., did they work cooperatively, perform the tasks that they promised to complete, did they support other partners in their efforts?)

Often, a partner may have some capacity, but it may be asked to do more than it has done in the past. On the Near Eastside, community leaders determined that they needed a high-functioning community development corporation as a partner. Indy-East Asset Development (now rebranded as Near East Area Renewal, NEAR) had emerged in 2001 in response to the closing of Eastside Community Investments, Inc. The launch of GINI and the creation of the Q of L plan developed by Near Eastside stakeholders provided direction and impetus for the new organization.

In its role as convening agency, the John H. Boner Center leveraged its funding relationships with Chase, Pulliam Charitable Trust, and others to support the growth of I-AD. I-AD staff initially were on the Boner Center payroll, enabling I-AD to concentrate on producing program results, rather than focusing on administrative matters. The Boner Center assisted I-AD in drafting a business plan to guide its growth. Through this thoughtful process, I-AD was able to emerge as a leader in the community's development process, guiding the large-scale redevelopment of the St. Clair Place neighborhood, launching green infrastructure practices, and remediating a vacant brownfield.

The John H. Boner Center nurtured, supported, and helped grow the capacity of I-AD, so that it became an effective partner in implementing the projects and programs in the Q of L plan.

Comprehensiveness

LISC's community development work will be comprehensive in nature because it will encompass all of the LISC BSC priorities:

     I.   Investing in housing and other real estate development activity,
    II.   Increasing family income & wealth,
   III.   Creating healthy environments,
   IV.   Generating economic growth,
    V.   Improving access to quality education.

For this to happen, selected sites must have actors from within the neighborhood and the region who are both willing to serve the neighborhood and capable in each of these priority areas.

Simply put, if selected BSC sites are places where LISC will seek to accomplish progress within these five priority program areas, then the presence of skilled actors who are committed to perform this work in these sites, is critically important.

An example of neighborhood and partner capacity in Indianapolis can be seen in the success of the West Indianapolis Community Fund. The Fund raises dollars from within the community – businesses and individuals – and then grants it to community projects. The idea for the Fund came out of the Q of L process, but could not have succeeded without the capacity and dedication of multiple neighborhood organizations. The West Indy Development Corporation staffed a community committee which consisted of representation from the Eli Lilly Technology Center, National Starch, and other businesses within the community, as well as nonprofit partners such as the Mary Rigg Community Center and the local food pantry. Together they worked to raise funds to invest in more than 50 community projects since 2009.

Having Problems with Neighborhood convener Partner Capacity - click here to go to [Troubleshooting](#)

Element 3: Engagement: Generating the collective will of conveners and partners

Engagement – what it is, and why it is important, is widely misunderstood. Often referred to as "resident engagement", the common notion is that we are undertaking an exercise in "democracy" so that the people who live in a BSC neighborhood can proclaim its future.

If only it were so easy.

Neighborhoods are revitalized through hard work, by committed skilled workers, sustained over a long period, on a strategic set of goals.

Engagement happens when parties commit to come together. Engagement is how we attract those skilled workers.

One key method of generating "engagement" as used in Indianapolis (and elsewhere in LISC BSC sites) calls for conducting a large volume of one-to-one listening sessions. These relational meetings with leaders are designed to learn what matters most to them, as well as to build new relationships, strengthen existing relationships, cross barriers, and heal the wounds of the past.

Consider this story from the successful Near Eastside GINI neighborhood – a neighborhood which suffered the 1997 failure of East Side Community Investments, Inc., a local, once highly productive CDC that had previously risen to a profile of national prominence:

> "People were mad when ECI collapsed. We had lost the ability as a neighborhood to work with each other. It took a while to recover. The community had started re-organizing itself in 2004 – at the time we had the highest volume of foreclosures in the county. Out of that, the Near East Task Force was formed. We engaged 300-400 people using one-to-one relational skills. GINI gave that energy a forward-looking focus — re-focusing from issues to vision. Our Visioning session had 430 people engaged in an open source process where we broke into 29 groups. We got stuck in a moment in time. We were hamstrung because of our past. There were community brothers or sisters who realized that the family needed healing. At our GINI planning event we went through a forgiveness exercise."

> -- Near East Side Convening Agency Executive Director

We engage leaders before we begin to create the strategies that will guide our work in a selected neighborhood. The purpose of relational meetings and even, to some extent, the visioning session is to engage those leaders.

There are two types of leaders we seek to engage:

1. Leaders from agencies, organizations, & institutions who are or could be working in the selected community.

It is this type of leader, and the agencies that they lead, which brings implementation capacity to our BSC work. These leaders come from CDCs, charter schools, public schools, day care centers, work force training programs, financial literacy programs, housing counseling centers, youth programs, health care providers, and many more.

It is these agencies, organizations, and institutions that will comprise our BSC implementation work force. **IF WE DON'T ENGAGE THESE ACTORS, LARGE SCALE IMPLEMENTATION WILL NOT OCCUR.**

If site selection was done well there will be an abundant supply of agencies, organizations & institutions because they are already present and working in the site or interested in serving it.

There is a reason to engage these actors "up front" before any planning has begun and before program or project ideas are set down on paper. We want them to bring their ideas, their work, and their priorities into the planning conversation. Their "body of work" represents a potential set of opportunities for specific programs or projects in the selected BSC community.

We want them to express what is important to them. They will only "commit" if what they are committing to is important to them.   They will only commit if the terms of their engagement promote their priorities. Once they commit, they bring the power of their budgets, staff, and facilities as resources to implement the plan.

These one-to-one relational meetings with leaders from agencies, organizations, and institutions, when done well, serve up a menu of program/project opportunities for the neighborhood. Later, during visioning and Q of L planning we will seek to find a match between those project and program opportunities and neighborhood needs.

2. **Local resident leaders**

The common notion that engagement is about residents creating a "wish list" of neighborhood improvements is false. This naïve misunderstanding masks the practical reasons why it is important to engage resident leaders which are:

1. We want them to accept this initiative and co-own it (note: not own it) with the agencies, organizations, and institutions that will work with them to implement it.
2. We want them to learn and grow as they work alongside of the implementing partners, acquiring the knowledge of what realistic community development solutions might be, and how they would be best achieved.
3. We need them to support implementation and desire its success. We need them to express that support through:
   a. Generating volunteers to supplement the BSC workforce. Volunteers are a critical component of many community improvement strategies such as a Community Safety Initiative or a Parents as Mentors program, among others.
   b. Generating the "market" that will be necessary to the success of efforts such as a cooperative grocery, or a Financial Opportunities Center.

       c.   Organizing to create the "power" necessary to make this neighborhood initiative a priority within the local political context.

    4.   We do not want them to reject this initiative and organize against it.

An example of neighborhoods and partners willing to engage is visible in the Southeast Education Taskforce. This coalition of active residents and neighborhood education leaders continues the conversation begun as part of the Southeast Quality of Life Plan. They meet monthly to discuss neighborhood priorities, host community forums, and share local and national education best practices. Over the last several years, they have continued to engage new stakeholders, including citywide education specialists. They have raised their voices to halt the siting of a charter school in a less than ideal location, taken a site visit to Chicago to learn about local school councils, connected charter and public schools together in partnership, and engaged other citywide partners in the life of education in their neighborhood. Their work has been successful because of the combined voices and continued engagement of stakeholders.

Having Problems with Neighborhood convener Partners Willing to Engage - click here to go to [Troubleshooting](#)

Element 4: Future vision: Developing a unified, inspiring vision

The engagement work allows us to learn what is important to various constituencies. The "State of the Neighborhood" as seen through the eyes of local leaders is disclosed. Common interests among various actors and groups become apparent. As local leaders come together to create a future vision for the neighborhood they engage with each other. The beginning of a nascent "collective" forms. When fully developed it will be capable of delivering "Collective Impact."

Visioning

Stopping negative things is not the same as producing positive things. "Righting wrongs" and "fulfilling needs" is guaranteed to fall short. There will always be more needs than we can fulfill, more wrongs than we are able to "right."

Visioning is different. When a community creates a common future vision it will act as a powerful force that inspires the local collective to work together to achieve it. That vision will focus priorities on the work areas that are essential to its accomplishment. The vision helps us focus on the programs and projects that are strategic – those that will create the greatest impact. It also gives us justification for de-selecting work that will not meaningfully contribute toward achievement of the vision.

When it works well it creates a unified collective that knows what it wants to accomplish, and will work together to obtain it. The vision is jointly "owned" by those who create it. It is jointly owned by both kinds of leaders.

Crafting the vision together also creates an additional benefit. Leaders from agencies, organizations and institutions bring their capacities and priorities into the visioning exercise. They become critical neighborhood revitalization partners and earn a respected position from resident leaders. To put it another way, when the work of agencies, organizations, and institutions is recognized as the "means" to accomplish elements of the neighborhood vision, these organizations become acknowledged as critically important strategists and implementers.

Indianapolis LISC and GINI sites recognize that the vision is not a static set of concepts. It changes and evolves over time. And as achievements mount and new relationships are created new opportunities appear that could not have been imagined at the time the original vision was created. Such is the case of the Super Bowl Legacy Project.

An example of inspiring vision that has come together more recently is the Mid-North health plan. Health was not a large component of the original Q of L plan developed in 2010, but residents and institutions have continued to meet and make progress toward the existing goals. As part of the LISC Community Health Advocate pilot, Indianapolis LISC was selected to help Mid-North to dig more deeply into its vision for neighborhood health. With the help of a consultant, LISC has supported the neighborhood with health data, stakeholder outreach, meeting facilitation, and strategy development. Local and citywide institutional partners were sought out from the beginning to make sure that health experts worked together with passionate residents. Their exciting plans include establishing intergenerational playgrounds at neighborhood parks, the development of a community recreational center at a local church, and community advocacy in partnership with the local health clinic and nearby hospital.

Having Problems with an Inspiring Future Vision - click here to go to

Capacity for GINI Success:

"A super smart convening agency and staff, who understood the power of discounting self for the benefit of the collective."

"GINI gets people to dream collectively and prepared to seize opportunities when they come up."

Quotes from Indianapolis

What leads to neighborhood transformation?

"Buildings come and go but infrastructure is what gives a community the opportunity to change."

"It doesn't take a Super Bowl to create a legacy project; it takes the broader commitment of the larger community to get on board."

"There are **C**dcs or c**D**cs -those that emphasize/are skilled at COMMUNITY and those skilled at DEVELOPMENT."

Quotes from Indianapolis

Element 5: Neighborhood partnerships: Engaging partners and building coalitions

Most people do not realize that element 5, "neighborhood partnership creation and coalition building" is exactly what Quality of Life Planning is supposed to produce. The critical product is not a "plan". The critical product is an infrastructure of partnerships and coalition efforts specifically created to implement the elements that are found within the Q of L Plan.

The product of Q of L planning is not simply a plan. When done well Q of L planning conducts deliberation and discernment among interested partners to:

a.   Identify the strategies, programs and projects necessary to achieve the collective common vision
b.   Determine who the best "implementers" are to undertake each strategy, program or project that is identified
c.   Recruit the implementers to commit to perform the work.

Perhaps Quality of Life Planning is misnamed. A more appropriate title may be **Collective Impact Partnership Creation** as it more adequately describes the function. The outcome is not really a plan; it is a set of agreements, between interested and committed parties about what work needs to be performed and who should perform it. Instead of merely producing quality of life plans, we need to create **Collective Impact Partnership Agreements.**

Collective Impact means that a critical mass of different actors who possess different sets of skills, relationships, and resources are committed to work together to achieve an array of results

Common notions about quality of life planning mask its worth. Local sites often respond to this phase with remarks such as: *"We shouldn't do this. These neighborhoods have been planned to death and nothing ever happens" or "We'll just take the plans that have already been created and use them."*

Such statements and the actions they portend undermine the ability to reach agreement, ultimately undermining implementation. Again, what is needed is not simply planning – it is partnership creation. It establishes agreements to implement neighborhood programs and projects. It collects the commitments needed to fulfill those agreements.

When disparate local projects and programs are connected it creates synergy and causes them to add value to each other. We explain how this happened for the Near Eastside at the beginning of this report on pages 1 and 2.

LITTLE WILL BE IMPLEMENTED UNLESS THERE ARE PARTIES THAT AGREE TO BE RESPONSIBLE FOR ITS IMPLEMENTATION.

NO PROJECTS SHOULD STAY IN THE PLAN UNLESS PARTNERS HAVE COMMITTED TO LEAD AND ACHIEVE THEM.

An example of neighborhood partnership and coalition building is seen with the workforce development efforts in the Southeast neighborhood. Goal #7 in the Southeast Neighborhood Quality of Life Plan is workforce development. Partnerships abound as neighbors, agencies, and private sector members work together on various initiatives. Southeast Indy tracks Q of L implementation progress on the website: www.southeastneighborhood.org, where it illustrates that the level of Workforce Development progress is significant and growing. In particular, one partnership that illustrates this success is the Southeast Indianapolis Green Jobs – a partnership between convening agency Southeast Neighborhood CDC (SEND) and Southeast Community Service Center (SECS), which hosts the neighborhood's Financial Opportunity Center. The neighborhood received a $300,000 grant from the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency to support a brownfields job training program with the goals of training 45 students and placing 33 graduates in environmental jobs. This work is being done in partnership with Employ Indy and Keramida Inc.

Having Problems with Neighborhood Partnerships & Coalition building - click here to go to Troubleshooting

Element 6: Incentives for action: Providing tools and resources to produce results

LISC excels at providing incentives for action and planning. LISC sites typically use several kinds of incentives, such as:

- Grant funding for staff BSC staff positions
- Grant funding for convening agency and partner administrative expenses
- Grant funding for Quality of Life Plan creation
- Providing technical assistance
- Early action project grant funding
- Predevelopment financing
- Co-investment (with LISC advocacy) of other funders in projects/programs
- An array of permanent financing instruments for project/program implementation.

LISC also is adept at generating new programs and resources that incentivize local action. Financial Opportunity Centers, the Community Safety Initiative, and the Educational Facilities Financing Center are three examples where innovative programs and financing encourage and support Q of L project implementation.

One of the most prevalent challenges is that BSC communities rely on LISC for support. To be successful, they need to attract resources from a wide variety of public, private, and philanthropic sources. Implementation plans are stronger if they include a resource development strategy. During

implementation, Indianapolis LISC required all of its GINI sites to provide a minimum match for the total LISC investment which was detailed in a memorandum of understanding. Convening agencies were also asked to submit a fundraising plan and report back on that plan quarterly to maintain accountability around diversifying their resources for plan implementation.

Communities are more likely to attract incentives for action and planning if they undertake the following actions:

1. Identify potential partners and funders for every project and priority in the Q of L plan. Ensure strong community support.
2. Develop a "case" for each priority project for use in garnering support. The case should clearly explain the need for the project, the community support, the value that it will bring, the anticipated timetable, and the measurable outcomes expected.
3. Demonstrate the project is economically feasible. A schedule and campaign should be designed and conducted to market the project and secure support. This should include a series of meetings with key partners, investors, and funders to build enthusiasm and attract resources. This relationship development needs to be ongoing.
4. Inspire hope and optimism. Market the projects (and the hope and optimism) aggressively.
5. Pursue the most fundable projects. If funds are not forthcoming, those that are not currently feasible should be deferred or dropped until resources are available.
6. Deliver projects on time, on budget, as promised.

As an example of incentives for action and planning, consider the fantastic outcome of a partnership that emanated from the Near Eastside plan that led to the creation of a cooperative grocery store. The Near Eastside had no modern, competitive vendors of groceries and nutrition forcing local consumers to travel outside of the community or shop at sub-standard vendors with less than nutritious offerings. The East 10th Street Commercial Corridor, after declining for over three decades is beginning to experience revitalization, as local organizations such as the East 10th Street Civic Association, NEAR, and the Boner Center have generated new development supported by Indianapolis LISC. LISC provided staff support to the Civic Association for the past decade to build capacity and seed development. The Boner Center received LISC façade grants to complete its new building and staff support for community building efforts. NEAR received a planning grant from LISC to support its targeted revitalization project in the same area. This investment set the stage for the success of the grocery development.

Building on the growing capacity of the neighborhood organizations and its residents, LISC provided façade grants, technical assistance grants, hours of staff time with the neighborhood development team, and advocacy efforts to amplify the need for co-investment for this project. In the end, the Pogue's Run Grocery was established in the heart of the neighborhood, eradicating a food desert, providing a revitalization anchor in a troubled commercial corridor, creating 6 permanent jobs, and achieving positive net operating income by its third year of operation.

The following chart details the attributes that made this project a reality:

Neighborhood attributes	LISC attributes	City/Regional actors
Pre-existing neighborhood leaders with capacity and connections	Grants	City of Indianapolis - CDBG
Good idea - realistic	Technical Assistance	State of Indiana - IHCDA
Good story - demonstrating strong need	Business Plan	Chase Foundation
Good timing	Advocacy	State Farm
Local investment coop, loans	Voice	CIFI
Voice into neighborhood	Financing	(timing - food - city project)
Convening organization providing good facilitation	Lifted up neighborhood	
A very strong community builder *** (staff)	Amplifier	LISC Advocacy
Conflict resolution – keeps partners together	Quality control	
	Sounding board	
	Data	
	Clarity -Trusted Partner	

If you look at the neighborhood column you see that there was, and is, a strong capability among a diverse set of neighborhood partners to imagine, plan, and implement this project. The core talent did not exist within the convening agency, but was present in a group of partners that embraced GINI as a way to accomplish its vision.

Because of the strong neighborhood capacity LISC was able to:

1. Provide the technical assistance necessary to craft a business plan for the implementation of the project.
2. Provide project financing.
3. Encourage the City of Indianapolis, Chase Bank Foundation, State Farm and others to provide support for the project.
4. "Amplify" the existence of the co-op grocery store to the wider market of supporters that are listed in the third column.

LISC and the convening organization set the stage for this and several other community development projects to emerge. In aggregate this constellation of successfully implemented community development projects has created the impression that the Near Eastside of Indianapolis is being reborn.

Having Problems with Incentives for Action and planning - click here to go to Troubleshooting

What differentiates neighborhoods?

"GINI neighborhoods were better positioned, better than anyone else, to take advantage of stimulus $$."

"It is all about leadership in neighborhoods. We have to have confidence in management, the people driving the work."

Quotes from Indianapolis

Element 7: External partnerships: Connecting with regional civic leadership

When the previous six elements are place, it is much easier to increase the outreach efforts to recruit broader support from the metropolitan area.

Indianapolis LISC excels at this. It is evident throughout GINI's successes. Below are examples of projects in which LISC attracted and brokered financial resources and technical assistance from metro Indianapolis initiatives to GINI neighborhoods:

- NSP investment in strategic GINI target zones
- Pogue's Run Cooperative grocery
- Reconnecting to our Waterways (ROW)
- West Indy Goes to College
- FOCUS (Fostering Urban Commercial Strategies) targeted commercial corridor revitalization projects throughout GINI sites
- The Super Bowl Legacy Initiative
- Industrial Corridor revitalization

These are just a few examples. These outcomes are directly related to the attributes of a strong LISC Executive Director and activist LISC Program Officers listed in Element #1 who build relationships with external partners, identify mutual interests, and attract resources that lead to successful implementation.

Scalability

Neighborhood revitalization cannot reach scalability and create major impact unless it can attract significant outside resources. In Indianapolis, LISC uses its relationships, those of its Local Advisory Committee as well as those of its supporters, incorporating them into its listening strategy during outreach, and inviting them to the visioning event.

When the Q of L plan, with its incumbent commitments from those who will implement them are in place, it is time once again to communicate the neighborhood's vision and commitments to those who could (should) support it. This neighborhood is now distinct and separate from others. Sure, it may still have a high level of "needs" as many others do. What separates it is that it has a common vision that enjoys collective consent and support. It has specific, practical strategies to produce the programs and projects that in aggregate will achieve that vision. It has an array of capable actors who have committed to perform the implementation of those programs and projects. This is an impressive moment. It is a moment that calls for an audience which consists of those who have the ability to commit

resources to support this local effort. It needs a "rollout" event.

Such roll-out events have met with great success in sites throughout the LISC network. To name a few:

- "Great Indy Neighborhood Initiative" rollout, Indianapolis, Indiana
- "Connecting the Dots" event in Duluth, Minnesota
- "Our Neighborhoods" roll-out in Providence, Rhode Island
- "Neighborhoods First" unveiling in San Diego, California
- "Go Neighborhoods" roll out in Houston, Texas
- "Eastern North Neighborhood Q of L Plan" roll out in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania
- "Epic Neighborhoods" roll out in Jacksonville Florida
- "Madisonville Q of L Plan" roll out in Cincinnati, Ohio
- "Resilient Communities \ Resilient Families" roll out in Boston, Massachusetts
- Several "Neighbor Power" conferences in Indianapolis, Indiana

In each of these instances LISC had a specific strategic role in orchestrating the event. LISC deployed its relationships, those of its Local Advisory Committee as well as those of its supporters to generate the turnout from among the local "who's who." They were invited to the rollout event in order to maximize the engagement of these important citywide leaders in support of the Quality of Life plan elements.

The goal of these rollout event was to generate support, financial, political, and otherwise.

Agreements with committed implementation partners must already be in place for this to work. To stage a rollout without such commitments in place would be disingenuous. It would generate supporters without having neighborhood initiatives that are ready to receive support. Without projects ready to move forward, interest from resource providers would wane. An "opportunity cost" would be extracted as those who attended come to believe what they witnessed was nothing more than a grand exercise in wishful thinking.

Beyond the rollout, LISC and its neighborhoods need to continue to engage citywide stakeholders. Indianapolis LISC has devised a way to continue to generate the type of "positive thrust" that you receive from this type of event long after the GINI launch through its annual "Neighbor Power" events, quarterly GINI Q of L Advisory Council convenings, and local reporting mechanisms.

Less formally, LISC staff is continually seeking opportunities to link its neighborhoods to citywide initiatives that would bring new resources to Q of L plan goal implementation. This requires LISC staff to be engaged in early stages of such initiatives and strategically shaping them to fit neighborhood opportunities.

An example of strategically brokered partnerships with regional civic leadership is the work of Indianapolis LISC with the local Reconnecting to our Waterways (ROW) initiative. ROW was initially convened by Eli Lilly and its Company Director of Global Branding and Volunteer Strategy, in partnership with Keep Indianapolis Beautiful, the Central Indiana Community Foundation, LISC, and many others. The goal of the initiative is to reconnect people to the city's major waterways and in turn catalyze and bundle neighborhood quality-of-life initiatives, neighborhoods assets, and opportunity for residents living in disadvantaged neighborhoods. The original action plan was to go through a community selection process and form committees in each selected area. LISC undertook a series of meetings with the partners to explain the value of existing quality of life plans as a platform for taking advantage of new opportunities. With LISC's growing leadership within the initiative and its ongoing engagement of partners, ROW decided to adopt the GINI neighborhoods as its target areas and use the existing neighborhood infrastructure instead of forming new, disconnected committees

in each place. ROW was recently awarded a $1.7 million investment by the Kresge Foundation which will enable these neighborhoods to undertake creative placemaking projects that beautify the neighborhoods and highlight the waterways.

Element 8: Carrying on the work: Institutionalizing the commitment

Among all of the merits of GINI perhaps the most unique has been the ability of Indianapolis LISC and its partners to institutionalize GINI within its neighborhoods. For neighborhoods supported by GINI in the first round, the work continues even after the GINI program itself has ended. These neighborhoods possess a neighborhood network and infrastructure that is founded upon the core values of engagement, partnership, hard work, accountability, and evaluation. They have become deft at managing their partnerships and implementation work. And they have become nimble at recognizing new opportunities – including opportunities that that they themselves have generated through their growing list of achievements. For these BSC sites:

- Q of L plans are treated as living documents, evolving and changing overtime, influenced by successes, new opportunities, and challenges.
- Many neighborhoods meet quarterly in a neighborhood congress or town hall approach to assess progress on plan elements.
- Each community regularly examines new opportunities, and assesses challenges.
- Each community decides new actions and course corrections.
- Achievements are celebrated and champions are honored.
- Failures are recognized and learnings are lifted up.

From LISC's perspective, the ongoing management of the BSC Initiative is also a work in progress. Over time, it is easy to lose touch with community partners, identify new programmatic priorities, or otherwise grow tired of the work. Indianapolis LISC maintains a staff liaison for each neighborhood, but still finds it difficult to continue the level of enthusiasm across all the neighborhoods. The LISC staff is currently undertaking internal discussions to strategize around continued neighborhood engagement and sees this as an important element of its upcoming strategic planning.

An example of this enduring neighborhood governance structure is illustrated by the Southeast Congress. LISC provided funding and technical assistance to Southeast to establish a "neighborhood congress" infrastructure, under the leadership of the LISC-funded community builder. The neighborhood congress is a proven, time honored, community organizing instrument that serves to continue momentum after the initial visioning and Q of L planning is done and keeps the vision and implementation goals evolving, fluid, and changing over time. It provides the neighborhood with the ability to nimbly respond to new challenges and opportunities, while maintaining neighborhood accountability. The following excerpt is currently on the www.southeastneighborhood.org website:

About the Congress
Southeast Neighborhood Congress is a gathering of Southeast residents and stakeholders to monitor quality of life in Southeast neighborhoods. Attendees work together to identify the issues facing Southeast's neighborhoods and implement action plans to address them, thereby updating the Southeast Quality-of-Life Plan.

Having Problems with Enduring Governance & Management of the BSC Initiative - click here to go to

Getting Things Done: Project Implementation

Even with all of these elements in place or in progress, the neighborhood must utilize effective project implementation techniques to deliver successful results. Partnerships cannot be sustained unless partners deliver on their components of the work. Project assessment, program, and project implementation are core competencies across the entire LISC network and we will not elaborate on them here, but we have included an itemization of the components to successful program and project implementation in an Appendix to this report. Click here to see the Components for Successful Implementation.

Moving from Quality of Life Planning to Implementation

Building Sustainable Communities and comprehensive community development holds great promise, and in Indianapolis we have seen powerful examples of its ability to transform neighborhoods.

In Indianapolis, LISC has created a new delivery system for neighborhood transformation. Its neighborhoods have created an integrated network of partners who continually interact, plan, and implement strategies and projects. The City, the foundation community, and private investors have discovered that these networks are an effective vehicle for their own investment.

Implementation Prowess:

"LISC brings a market reality to our projects. They understand transactions."

"LISC as the resource helps drive community development. LISC is the go-to group, they are the spokespersons for neighborhoods, and they tell our neighborhood stories."

"West Indianapolis Community Fund . . .
A little idea that led to such big benefits!
A community's commitment to have its own fund. . . The community got around it and got excited because they would benefit. LISC encouraged it, sanctioned it, and encouraged others to commit to it."

Quotes from Indianapolis

- Investing in LISC and the Near Eastside produced more than a Super Bowl; it produced a Legacy Project and $150 million of neighborhood improvements.
- Investing in LISC and the Westside resulted in the West Indianapolis Community Fund and completion of more than 50 community projects.
- Investing in LISC and the Southeast neighborhood triggered the "Town Center" Fountain Square Redevelopment and Cultural District, renovation of the historic Fountain Square fountain, and leveraged millions of dollars into the community.

These examples have shown neighbors, businesses, and civic leaders that Building Sustainable Communities has value – to each of them. BSC is a path to community improvement that produces results. At a time when public funds are diminishing and foundation resources are stretched thin, Indianapolis LISC has created an effective system not only to distribute resources but to produce concrete, measurable outcomes.

As important, in the process, LISC has changed the way that public, private, and philanthropic partners view neighborhoods. Now, they are seen as partners in a process that delivers results.

But it is not easy. Success depends upon strong LISC leadership, neighborhood capacity, an inspiring future vision, and talented and willing partners. Success also depends upon a culture where leaders, organizations, funders, LISC, and even the government believe in the potential of this work and are willing to contribute the best they have to offer to something larger than themselves – the neighborhood.

Appendix A:
Infographic

GINI's creation resulted from the convening of the Indianapolis Community Development Summit in 2004. The Summit and GINI were co-sponsored by LISC and the City of Indianapolis. The City's representative on the GINI leadership team was Andy Frazier, former Indianapolis Community Development Director. Andy is now the Executive Director of the Indiana Association for Community Economic Development (IACED). He, through IACED, is bringing the comprehensive community development techniques that he helped to craft and the lessons he learned to communities throughout the State of Indiana. To aid in this work Andy and IACED have created the following *Infographic which explains the process.
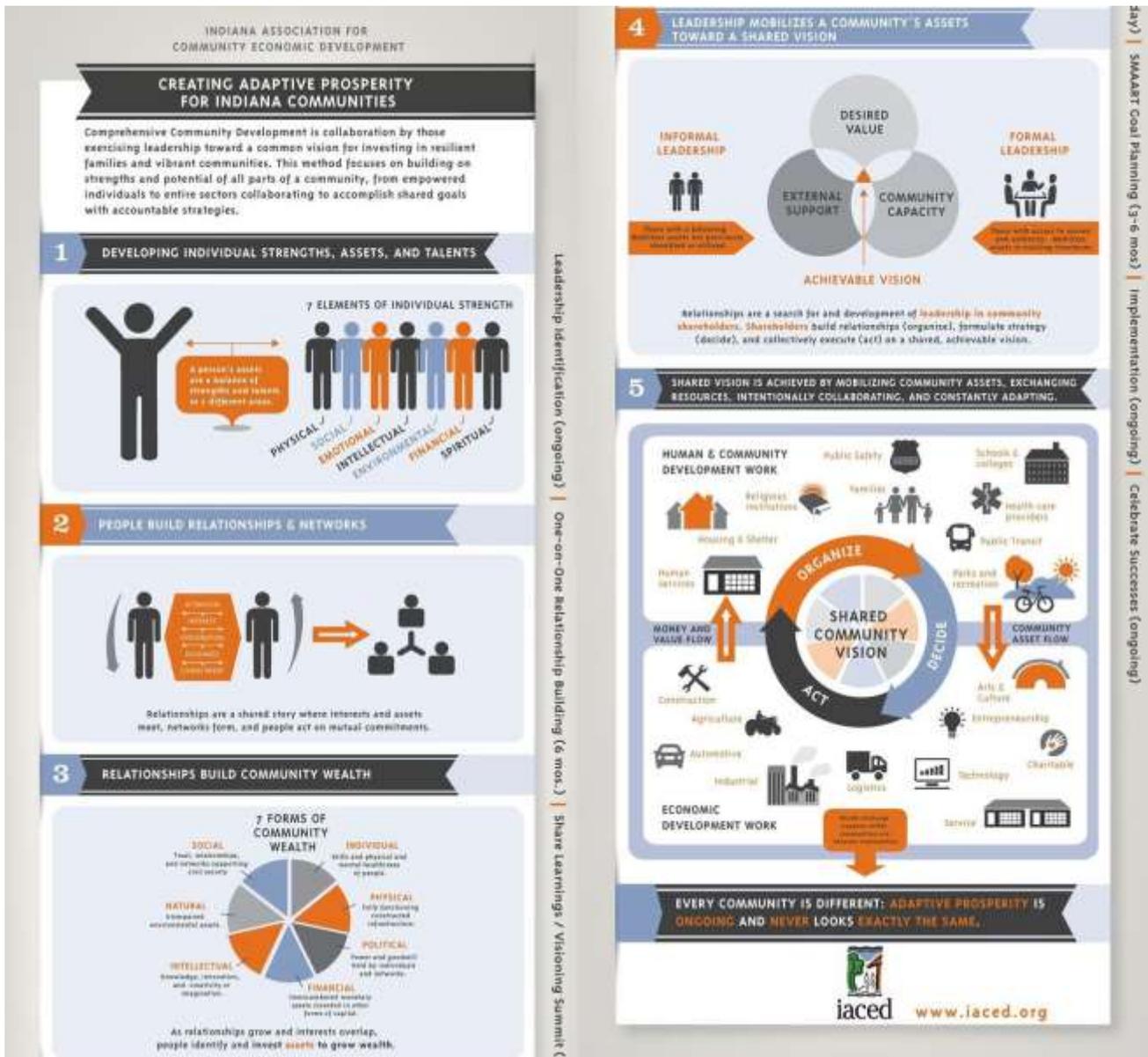
*used with permission

Appendix B:

Troubleshooting: Solving for missing or inadequate BSC "Elements:

There is no such thing as the ideal BSC neighborhood. Each presents its own unique set of challenges. But challenges and inadequacies can be overcome. And, often, overcoming these barriers unleashes a windfall of great outcomes. In this section we examine the neighborhood conditions and present real past cases where problems were solved and great results were produced.

Element 1: LISC leadership: Committing to a trusted executive and activist program officers

Case:
Problem: One of the original eleven LISC BSC pilot sites was having trouble achieving progress in one of its two BSC sites and modest achievements it second site.

Remedial Activity:
The LISC Executive Director and Program Vice President "rebuilt" the local LISC staff replacing some of its personnel. One of the new staff had training and experience in community organizing.

This and other LISC offices have utilized:

- Peer to peer mentoring with other LISC staff in successful BSC sites
- Institute for Comprehensive Community Development training
- Site visits for LISC staff (and community partners) to successful LISC BSC sites

Result:
This LISC site has become a model BSC site – and the formerly stagnant BSC neighborhood has become a model LISC Community Safety Initiative – Byrne Criminal Justice Initiative site.

Element 2: Neighborhood capacity:
Amassing community development capability for maximum impact

Problem:
Some BSC sites have selected a weak convening organization incapable of simultaneously acting as a broker, trusted partner, and implementer.

Remedial Activity:
For BSC neighborhoods where insufficient capacity exists for successful implementation there are Corrective Action options:

1. Where circumstances require it and resources allow, provide intensive training, mentoring, and technical support to the convening agency, with clear, measurable objectives and benchmarks to indicate progress as well as future areas for improvement.
2. Create an inventory of agencies, organizations, and institutions that have the demonstrated capacity to perform and enlist them to act as the replacement convening organization or in a primary role as program/project partners. Once these organizations have committed,

dismiss the original convening agency. This technique has successfully rejuvenated stalled BSC program efforts in several LISC sites including Milwaukee, Chicago, and Kansas City.

3. Deselect the BSC community in order to divert the resources to a more capable and more promising location.

Case:

Problem: BSC convening agency continually demonstrated its inability to perform. The longer this continued, rising levels of animosity were generated among other neighborhood agencies and constituencies.

Remedial Activity:

a. LISC made several attempt to assist the convening agency in growing its capacity to no avail.
b. LISC de-selected the convening agency.
c. LISC selected a new convening agency that was trusted, capable, and deeply respected because of its long and productive tenure of community service.

Result:

This neighborhood has become an extremely effective BSC site and has a long list of accomplishments in the areas of:

- Arts & Culture
- Education
- Health & Wellness
- Housing
- Jobs & Business
- Parks & Recreation
- Safety

The BSC neighborhood is now held up as a "model" success, as tours of that city regularly feature the BSC accomplishments.

Element 3: Engagement: Generating the collective will of conveners and partners

Problem:
Lack of engagement of potential partners and/or residential leaders:
Symptoms to look for when there is a lack of engagement: Are important actors exhibiting indifference, disinterest, dissent, antagonism, or belligerence? If so, it is safe to assume that they are disengaged or worse.

Remedial Activity:

For BSC neighborhoods where genuine engagement of critical partners has not occurred, here is a course of action.

1. Create an inventory of capable agencies, organization and institutions that might be recruited to become "implementers" in the BSC targeted community.
2. Perform a round of relational meetings with those identified seeking to understand their priorities and challenges.
3. Look to find "match" opportunities between elements in the Q of L plan and the priorities identified with actors during the relational meetings.
4. Create incentives for the individual organizations to enroll in the "Lead Partner" implementation role.

Case:

Problem: In a LISC site, planning was completed in multiple neighborhoods. In each neighborhood the process was conducted by urban planners and attended by 20+ residents from each neighborhood. At the end of the planning process, nice looking plans were created but partners were not committed to do the implementation work, and most of the community didn't know about the plans.

Remedial activity:

The LISC site

a. Held a series of 10 focus groups in each neighborhood with 10 participants in each focus group. Also held a series of relational meetings with regional civic leaders from banking, philanthropy, government and the private sector.
b. Recruited implementation partners for key elements of the plan.
c. After implementers were recruited a city-wide public assembly was convened to announce the plans with neighborhood leaders pledging to civic officials to work to improve their communities.

Results:

- Civic/municipal Support
- Foundation & corporate support – State Farm presented a check on the stage at the public assembly
- Neighborhood leaders & implementing agencies rallied together in a strong coalition. Productivity increased with major accomplishments in housing, education, financial literacy and asset building, jobs and economic activity, and health

Element 4: Future vision: Developing a unified, inspiring vision

Problem: Lack of an Inspiring Vision
For BSC neighborhoods where visioning did not occur, or where key local actors were absent when visioning did occur, here is a course of action:

- Conduct the visioning session again after a new round of engagement work assures that all critical parties are present. It is better to err on the side of "too much engagement" then perform too little. The vision that is created will only be useful if the key actors own it.

Case:
Problem: After looking at the "Chicago model" local funders ordained that the Chicago New Communities Program (NCP) approach should be replicated. Funders provided resources to LISC to hire an urban planning firm and planning work commenced in six neighborhoods that the funders thought to be important. After the planning firm completed its work dissent arose in many of the targeted neighborhoods, and anger in some, over the fact that outsiders were planning for them without consulting them. Local constituencies and agencies felt no ownership of the Q of L plans and no commitment to them.

Remedial Activity:

a. All six neighborhoods undertook a three month relational organizing campaign.

b. From the relational organizing campaign, agency and resident leaders were recruited to sit on a BSC steering committee in each neighborhood.
c. In month four, when the relational organizing had been completed a day-long (Saturday) session was held which was attended by scores of people from each of the six neighborhoods. At this session they:
    i. Reviewed the analysis and findings from the relational meetings
    ii. Created a future vision for their neighborhood
    iii. Reviewed an executive summary of the plan which had been done by the urban planning firm comparing it to the vision they had just created
    iv. Revised the plan to reconcile with the vision and identified implementers to be recruited
d. Implementing partners that were already committed after the Saturday day-long session began work.
e. Neighborhood leaders set out to recruit additional implementing partners.

Result:

Within five months of starting the corrective action the BSC initiative was finally "on track" and productivity increased. Ultimately these six BSC neighborhoods have significant accomplishment in:

1. Investments in housing and real estate development through:
    a. Building affordable housing
    b. Vacant property stabilization
    c. Downtown artist live-work space
2. Improving financial stability for urban residents through:
    a. Re-entry employment
    b. "Greenworks" summer internships
3. Generating economic activity
    a. Commercial corridor revitalization
    b. Downtown ambassador initiative
4. Improving access to quality education
    a. Academic Camp
    b. Children's programming
5. Enhancing the Quality of Life for BSC neighborhood residents
    a. Community gardens
    b. Environmental design for crime prevention
    c. Capitalizing on diversity

Element 5: Neighborhood partnerships: Engaging partners and building coalitions

Problem: The convening agency is trying to do it all themselves; or, the potential partners don't trust the convening agency and aren't cooperating in implementation.

Possible responses:

1. Meet with the leader of the convening agency and organize a strategy to meet with partner agency leaders to build trust and secure their participation.
2. Make sure that partner agencies take responsibility for different projects in the Q of L plan; then, establish quarterly meetings to report progress and keep each other accountable.
3. Identify a project that multiple partners would like accomplished. Promise a small grant (or LISC support in fund raising) if the convening agency and partners devise and implement a strategy that unites the partners.
4. Target a specific project that one of the "less committed" partners wants to accomplish. Work with the convening agency and other partners to help the less committed partner achieve its goals.

Case 1:

The convening agency in a BSC neighborhood is one of 8 important organizations. The other seven resent that the convening agency has been selected to lead the effort and are reluctant to cooperate and share their expertise and political strength to implement projects.

Strategic activity:

a. Encouraged the convening agency to keep a low profile, listen to others, meet individually with partner representatives; and, provide opportunities for the other organizations to lead meetings, get recognition, and feel respected.
b. Convening agency placed other organizations' projects higher on the priority list for funding, essentially "stepping back" from funding for the first year in order to build the coalition.
c. After other agencies received recognition, organizational support, and respect, they committed to support the convening agency in subsequent years.

Results:

- 7 partners received grants prior to the convening agency.
- The new 8-partner coalition applied and received a major grant for a new community health initiative.
- 4 partners became "lead" or "convening" agencies for projects in the plan, while the BSC convening agency continues to coordinate overall Q of L implementation.

Case 2:

An organization of "naysayers" comes to every implementation meeting and raises the same complaints. These residents are angry about how they were treated in an urban renewal program 40 years ago that destroyed portions of their neighborhood. They are a distraction and threaten to fracture the coalition formed to implement the Q of L plan.

Strategic activity:

a. The LISC program officer and director of the convening agency met with the leaders of the naysayers. They listened respectfully and try to ascertain why they were angry; what was good about their community before it was destroyed; what would make them happy.
b. The convening agency formed a subcommittee led by the naysayers to identify steps that could be taken to recognize the injustice that was perpetrated upon them and find ways to improve their current community elements – essentially, moving that discussion away from the regular community meetings into a special session of those concerned about their issue.
c. At the recommendation of the subcommittee, the community supported the creation of a new park recognizing those who stayed in the face of urban renewal and decline.

Results:

- Naysayers were given a productive activity to keep them engaged.
- The disruptive activity was moved out of the regular community meetings.
- A new park was built recognizing the community stalwarts who stayed and fought.
- A memorial was created to these community heroes.
- The naysayers became supporters of the Q of L plan and participated in implementation of other organizations' projects.

Element 6: Incentives for action: Providing tools and resources to produce results

Problem: A community relies on LISC grants and loans for implementation of its Q of L Plan, not seeking other funding. Leaders complain that funding is hard to come by, government and foundation support is being cut back, and they don't have the ability to raise more resources.

Possible responses:

1. Meet with convening agency staff to identify projects that can be completed with little or no funding. Encourage volunteer-led efforts that will show visible success and be "marketable" to other funders.
2. Inventory projects from the Q of L implementation work plan to determine those that are most fundable. Help the convening agency and/or partners to think through and prepare an informational presentation to market the potential investment opportunity to funders and/or lenders.
3. Identify LISC advisory board members, funders, public officials, and others who might be willing to listen to a community presentation, offer their constructive criticism, and suggest possible sources for funding.
4. Strengthen and demonstrate the internal capacity of the convening agency and its partners to produce results, so that potential investors will have confidence in them.
5. Advise the agency as it sets up meetings and presents its proposals to possible funders.
6. Support their activities (as well as their positive behavior and organizational growth) with encouragement, recognition, and loans and grants.

Case:

After some tough years, a convening agency has new, young staff with enthusiasm but little fundraising experience. Their organization is effective but it has not been prominent in recent years. The community has grand plans for a transit-oriented development, mixed use housing, and a large sculpture park as a community gateway.

Strategic activity:

a. Encouraged the convening agency to begin relationship building for the TOD project and the sculpture park. Suggested an expanded marketing campaign to celebrate the "quiet victories" of the past few years.
b. Secured volunteer architects and engineers to draft concept plans (working with committee members) for the TOD and the sculpture park – pretty drawings that can inspire the community and encourage potential funder interest. Obtained rough cost estimates to use in preliminary budgets.
c. Assisted the convening agency in holding free summer concerts by ethnic musicians, dancers, and theater troupes on the future site of the sculpture park, to build excitement and share the community's vision.
d. Secured commitments from two local universities to provide sculptures to the sculpture park, designed by their teachers and students.
e. Conducted community summer trolley tours to showcase the community to residents, businesses, public officials, and funders, and to market the TOD and sculpture park sites.

Results:

- Annual Summer Concert Series established.
- Five sculptures installed
- Park District commitment to lease the land to the community for $1 per year
- $100,000 raised for construction of the sculpture park

- State transportation official commits $150,000 for a TOD feasibility study after viewing site on the Community Showcase Tour

Element 7: External partnerships: Connecting with regional civic leadership

Problem: It is a challenge to communicate the powerful neighborhood transformation capability of a well-developed BSC site to those that have the ability to support it.

1. This is the primary function of the "rollout". It marks the transition from organizing and planning to implementation by generating resources to support the implementation. There are several examples where LISC sites have created "splash" communications events to highlight the capability of BSC sites and the transformative power of their work. Here are a few such offerings:
   a. Indianapolis LISC's "Neighbor Power" conferences.
   b. Duluth LISC's "Connecting the Dots" conferences.
   c. Milwaukee LISC's "Milwaukee Awards for Neighborhood Development Innovation" (MANDI)
   d. Detroit LISC's "Community Champion" Awards
   e. Chicago LISC's "Chicago Neighborhood Development Awards" (CNDA)
   f. Mid-South Delta LISC's Annual Rural Development Conference

Such events serve to strategically "spotlight" BSC work bringing it to the attention of potential supporters.

Case:

Problem: A LISC site has two BSC neighborhoods with two very strong convening agencies. The engagement, visioning, planning, and partner recruitment work is proceeding extremely well. The LISC staff is worried about how it will generate sufficient resources to fuel implementation.

Response:
Opportunities come from relationships – conducting relational meetings with potential supporters can be very promising. Just as relational meetings among potential neighborhood partners generates new opportunities, so do relational meetings with potential supporters. While the two BSC neighborhoods were working through the launch of their program, LISC decided to conduct a series of meetings with government and philanthropic entities with whom they had no existing relationship. LISC staff and leadership created an inventory of candidates and assigned staff to conduct these meetings. These were essentially "cold call" listening sessions.

Results:
New resources became available to the two BSC neighborhoods and their implementation efforts. In one instance a new relationship was formed with the State Department of Health. Within one year after the initial relational meeting between LISC and State Health Officials, the Department received significant funding from the U.S. American Recovery and Reinvestment Act and needed assistance in distributing these resources in ways that would generate positive health outcomes. In its new relationship, LISC and its two BSC communities became "shovel ready" partners.

Element 8: Carrying on the work: Institutionalizing the commitment

Problem: In more than one site the BSC activity loses momentum over time – the more distant the launch, engagement, visioning, and partnership creation become the harder it is to hold the collaborative and partnership culture together.

Remedial Activity:
Indianapolis LISC and their GINI partners have been particularly good at instituting and enduring governance and management structure for the GINI neighborhoods. This consists of utilizing the time honored community organizing device known as the "community congress". The community congress is the platform by which:

1. A community Q of L plan website is managed marking the state of achievements from the Q of L Plan – and communicating new opportunities for possible inclusion through revision of the Q of L plan.
2. Holding quarterly community congress meetings where the Q of L plan progress is reported on and optional plan revisions are discussed.
3. Partners are held accountable to each other and to the community at large.
4. Donors, the city, and other providers are continually reassured of the viability of a genuine local community support for the plan's elements and desire to achieve them.

Problem:
In some sites the convening agency commitment to the local collective has waned after the Q of L Plan has been created. This happens when the convening agency comes to realize that not all of the resources garnered for implementation will come to their organization.

Remedial Activity:
Replace the convening organization with one that more genuinely supports a culture of partnership and collaboration.

When things don't go as planned

"A key question: Why is there good leadership in some places and not in others?"

"CDCs are a constant problem because of lack of capacity that . . . [intermediaries and foundations] have to deal with. I guess you get what you pay for."

"We have to show ROI re: neighborhoods to foundations; we see it for housing, but we don't demonstrate the value of our neighborhoods and corridors compared to downtown."

Quotes from Indianapolis

Troubleshooting: Stalled Programs/Projects

It's not a perfect world. Sometimes, even with the best intentions, our work stalls and we are beleaguered by expectations that have been raised and a lack of results. How do we create the energy and interest to break past the barriers and move programs and projects forward?

Projects stall when components are missing. To restart stalled work we need to re-create the components necessary for success. Here's a process to get things going.

1.   Go back to the Q of L plan and select a small number of program/project priorities. When selecting these priorities keep in mind the list of 12 components to project success. (Appendix C) Try to select projects that have the fewest missing components.
2.   Now examine the components to identify which are lacking and need to be addressed:
a.   Implementing partner – Do you have a strong implementing partner who possess skill to accomplish this program/project, stable enough to see the project through? If not you must find an implementer and replace the existing one. Make a list of "candidate" organizations; then meet with each of them to understand their current body of work and priorities, and find the best match. Determine how to entice the best candidate to agree to implement.
b.   Responsible staff – for this deficiency a candid conversation with the implementing partner is in order that should result in either changing the staff performance, behavior, or changing the actual staff person assigned.
c.   Compelling story – for this deficiency you can employ the services of a communications professional to create the story and media to communicate it, a journalism class under the tutelage of a skilled teacher, or marketing professionals from partner institutions (such as banks, universities, and hospitals).
d.   A clear deliverable – was the original outcome too ambitious or too complicated? Is there a way to modify the deliverable to something more "doable"? Or, is the original deliverable ill-defined? If so can it be redefined in a way that is specific, understandable, doable, and measurable?
e.   A site – site problems are notorious for delaying progress. Can a different less problematic site be found?
f.   A schedule – poor scheduling can be the source of delay. Map out application deadlines. Planning work to occur when contractors/workers are available is extremely important.
g.   Project components – is there a clear strategy to compete for and receive TIF financing, a tax credit allocation, Title XX Day Care slots, Enterprise Zone expansion, site assemblage via eminent domain, receipt of brownfield resources, etc.?
h.   Itemized budget – does the budget have integrity? Do we have a true understanding of the real cost?

       i.   Committed financial resources – are they still committed? If not, can they be recaptured?

      j.   Financial Gap – How will it be filled?

      k.   Political Will – Does it exist? Can it be generated?

Working through this check list will allow LISC and convening agency staff to identify missing program/project components, create a strategy to secure them, and manage through the pre-development and development process to successful completion.

Appendix C:

Components for successful program and project implementation

Implementation of the program/projects found in Q of L Plans

Program and project implementation and project assessment are core competencies across the entire LISC network. Most LISC readers will find what follows redundant and will add little knowledge. Still, we feel it is important to articulate it because it may be useful to some as it offers a methodical approach to assess and implement programs and projects.

LISC staff and convening agencies work with implementing partners to refine a business plan for each program or project. Here are the "components" for successful implementation.

1. **A responsible implementation partner, i.e., an agency, organization, or institution that has the prime responsibility to "quarterback" the project. This organization must possess the talent to succeed and the organizational stability to live to see the project through.**
2. **Specific person(s) responsible for implementation.**
3. **A compelling story, stating both need and disclosing beneficiaries, which communicates the justification for this project.**
4. **A clear deliverable, such as the development of a grocery store, affordable housing, a health clinic, a Financial, Opportunity Center, etc.**
5. **A site, a place where the project will be constructed or the program will take place.**
6. **A schedule, which identifies project development milestones and project completion.**
7. **The components that in aggregate are necessary for a successful project. Components such as: site acquisition, governmental districts (TIF district, Enterprise Zone, etc.), zoning, soil, application for/receipt of project or program financial support, etc.**
8. **Specific supporters that will be necessary for success. This not only includes identifying agencies, corporations, government entities, or foundations; it also includes identifying specific point persons within those bodies.**
9. **A fully itemized budget, including an itemized listing of sources and uses of funds.**
10. **An identification of financial resources that are already allocated/committed to this project/program.**
11. **An identification of financial resources that are "yet to be raised" (the gap).**
12. **Some estimate of the political/civic will that is present in support of the project/program.**

This checklist isn't only relevant to comprehensive community development. All community development projects have a similar set of components. LISC staff and convening agencies can use this checklist to assure that Q of L plans, programs, and projects are implementable, and they can measure progress on checklist items as they manage projects toward successful implementation.