



# A Multi-City Comparison of Poverty Reduction Strategies What Can Tucson Learn from Other Cities?

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Making Action Possible in Southern Arizona  
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Prepared by  
Brian Mayer, Ph.D.  
Associate Professor, School of Sociology  
University of Arizona College of Social and Behavior Sciences

Julia Grace Smith, M.S.  
Doctoral Candidate, School of Sociology  
University of Arizona College of Social and Behavior Sciences

## Executive Summary

Increasingly, city and county leaders are developing regionally specific strategies and programs for alleviating poverty. As federal and state funding for antipoverty efforts continue to diminish, local stakeholders representing a broad set of municipal sectors are looking for ways to work together to identify alternative sources of funding and innovative approaches to address persistent and disproportionately high urban rates of poverty. Many cities across the United States are taking these bold and inspiring steps to develop collaborative models for priority setting, policymaking, and interventions.

The Making Action Possible Dashboard project was created to measurably improve Southern Arizona through data driven collective civic action and education. This white paper, “A Multi-city Comparison of Poverty Reduction Strategies,” provides potential models for collaborative action based on the activities of five cities across the United States: Norfolk, VA, Nashville, TN, Springfield, MO, Kalamazoo, MI, and Rochester, NY. This white paper builds on the research collected for Tucson Mayor Jonathan Rothschild’s Poverty Commission (2012-2014) which profiled city and households trends in poverty in combination with a review of several other cities. Together, these reports provide a comprehensive review of the most prominent and potentially successful cases of city-specific initiatives to alleviate poverty and provide economic security to low income households within the past decade.

Our multi-city comparison found remarkable similarities across the five cities included here. In particular, we found that the cities adopted a collaborative model that included both municipal representatives, the local nonprofit community, and to a slightly lesser degree the for-profit private sector. This diversity in representation of interests, resources, and strategies was universally seen as essential for determining what regionally-specific antipoverty strategies should be developed and prioritized. The inclusion of the private sector, both for its potential in financially supporting key programs as well as influencing the development of strategies – particularly workforce development strategies – was also seen as essential to the long-term success of these antipoverty initiatives. The legitimacy of the proposed actions was also largely dependent on the representativeness of the programs, with backing and participation from both elected city officials and municipal agency directors.

Reducing poverty and providing economic security for low income families is an essential function for any city and its public and private sectors. Collaborative partnerships appear to be the ideal strategy for bringing key stakeholders to the table to determine priority areas that reflect regional concerns and potential resources for addressing them. In each of the five cities reviewed here, collaborative coalitions of city, nonprofit, and private sector stakeholders committed substantial time, energy, and resources to developing regionally specific antipoverty strategies. Each city’s coalition reported significant benefits gained through the collaborative process, from building trust to developing innovative partnerships and engaging solutions to the persistent problem of poverty.

## Introduction

As federal funding for discretionary domestic programs that provide aid to the poor continues to decline, many city and county leaders are working to develop regionally-specific antipoverty programs on their own. Although national poverty rates are starting to show signs of stabilization and perhaps even slight decline, regional poverty rates – especially in metropolitan areas – continue to remain disproportionately high. These persistent poverty rates have led many policy professionals to conclude that regional contributing factors and antipoverty strategies are fundamental for addressing local needs. Competing demands and limited resources at the municipal level have driven cities to be innovative in these approaches, creating an opportune time to compare and reflect on the successful strategies cities across the country are pursuing.

In June 2012 the University of Arizona and the School of Social and Behavioral Sciences partnered with Mayor Rothschild's Poverty Commission to answer five questions about local poverty in Tucson: how does Tucson's poverty rate compare to that of other large cities?<sup>1</sup> Who are the poor in Tucson, and where are they located? What are their lives really like? What services are currently provided in Tucson? What promising antipoverty strategies have other cities pursued? The report from 2014 that provided these answers described the antipoverty strategies Savannah, GA, Portland, OR, New York City, Providence, RI, Richmond, VA, and Philadelphia, PA. The common theme to emerge from the comparison of this first set of cities was collaboration and coordination of service delivery led to either improved service delivery through some form of public-private partnerships or created the setting for partners to work together further.

In 2015, the Making Action Possible for Southern Arizona Dashboard project invited white papers investigating social and economic factors affecting the overall wellbeing of the region. This white paper seeks to address regional concerns with Tucson and Pima County's comparatively high poverty rates by building on the findings of the previous multi-city comparison with the profiles of five antipoverty programs in Norfolk, VA, Kalamazoo, MI, Rochester, NY, Nashville, TN, and Springfield, MO. To the casual observer, these cities would appear to have little in common. Yet, facing common challenges due to some of the highest levels of poverty in the United States, these cities have remarkable similarities in how they are approaching their fight against poverty. These cities were selected to provide suitable comparisons to the city of Tucson based on key characteristics described in the next section.

### Selecting Cities for Comparison

As more and more cities today turn towards municipal or regional policies to develop poverty alleviation strategies, the diversity of approaches is also increasing – providing an opportunity to compare Tucson's antipoverty strategies to others. In the development of this report, we identified roughly forty potential cases where news media and internet searches identified some type of city or county antipoverty initiative. That list was then narrowed down to sixteen potential candidates based on the availability of sufficient reporting, news coverage, or other materials that would allow us to development a full case profile. From those sixteen cases, we identified five cities/counties that were similar to Tucson in terms of population, official poverty rate, racial/ethnic diversity, government structure, and economic makeup (unemployment rate and primary industrial sectors). Table 1 presents each of these characteristics in comparison to the city of Tucson.

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<sup>1</sup> Smith, Julia and Lane Kenworthy. 2014. "Poverty in Tucson: What Do We Know? How Can We Do Better?" Report to Members of the City of Tucson Mayor's Commission on Poverty.

**Table 1. Comparison of Case Study Cities**

Case	Population (City)	Poverty Rate (City)	Poverty Rate (MSA)	% Non-White	% Hispanic or Latino	Government Structure	Unemployment Rate (Civilian Labor Force)	Top 2 Industries
Tucson, AZ	526,141	25.3%	19.5%	27.8%	42.3%	Council-Manager	12.2%	Service, Tourism
Norfolk, VA	246,139	22.4%	13.0%	51.5%	7.3%	Council-Manager	9.8%	Service, Retail
Kalamazoo, MI	75,542	33.6%	17.8%	35.7%	9.8%	Commission-Manager	13.2%	Service, Tourism
Rochester, NY	210,345	35.4%	14.7%	54.6%	18.0%	Mayor-Council	13.9%	Service, Administrative
Nashville, TN	634,465	18.2%	13.7%	38.2%	10.2%	Mayor-Council	7.1%	Service, Administrative
Springfield, MO	164,133	29.7%	18.7%	12.3%	4.6%	Council-Manager	8.6%	Service, Retail

Based on 2014 data from the U.S. Census Bureau, the official poverty rate for the United States was 14.8 percent.<sup>2</sup> Each of the cities above has a level above the national average, ranging from slightly over (Nashville) and significantly higher (Kalamazoo and Rochester). MSA rates tend to be lower due to the inclusion of suburban and outlying areas. The 2014 data from the Current Population Survey show no significant changes from 2013. The American Community Survey, which provides municipal and MSA level data follow the same pattern, with the 25 largest MSAs showing virtually no changes over the last year. The five city comparisons also have other similarities to Tucson, such as a fairly large non-white population, governmental structure involving a mayor or manager and city council, and a significant dependence on the service sector economy.

## City Comparisons

In this section we describe the efforts that the five comparison cities have taken to address poverty in their municipality. Each case study presents a timeline of events, the precipitating events leading up to the formation of the new antipoverty initiative, who participated, and what strategies they pursued. As several of these efforts are fairly recent in time, we do not present data on objective poverty reductions. Given the normal one to three year data delay of publically available data, measuring outcomes from the recent efforts is not possible.

<sup>2</sup> DeHavas-Walt, Carmen and Bernadette D. Proctor. 2015. "Income and Poverty in the United States: 2014." *Current Population Reports*. U.S. Department of Commerce, Economics and Statistics Administration. P60-252.

## Norfolk, VA<sup>3</sup>



### Timeline

- February 2013: Resolution to appoint 31 individuals to the Mayor's Commission on Poverty Reduction approved.<sup>4</sup>
- July 2013: Mayor Paul Fraim and City Council formally establishes the Mayor's Commission on Poverty Reduction
- June 2014: Commission publishes findings and recommendations<sup>5</sup>
- July 2014: City Council approves \$500,000 seed money in fiscal year 2015 to help with plan implementation.

### The Norfolk Poverty Commission

In early 2013, as the local economy continued to recover and improve following the recent national recession, statistics seemed to suggest that the recovery was not necessarily trickling down to those at the lower end of the income distribution as poverty, out-of-wedlock births, and single-parent households remained high. These statistics "helped to persuade the City Council to appoint a high-level task force to examine the nature of poverty."<sup>6</sup> Several months later, the Mayor convened the Mayor's Commission on Poverty Reduction. The Commission was co-chaired by two representatives of the public sector from the City of Norfolk Vice Mayor, Angelia Williams, and Councilman Andy Protogyrou. The mayor's goal was to bring together "private sector employers, job training facilities, educational institutions, service organizations, and faith based communities" to work together to identify the causes of poverty in Norfolk and develop recommendations to address said causes.<sup>7</sup>

Although both co-chairs represented the public sector, the Commissioners as a whole represented all sectors including the for-profit, not-for-profit, and public sectors. Furthermore, within each sector there was also a relatively diverse set of representatives. For example, within the public sector the mayor's office, the city manager's office, the city council, the sheriff's office, the chief of police, the state, and the school system, both the K-12 and higher education systems, were all represented. Within the not-for-profit sector, service organizations, including faith-based organizations, advocacy groups, and foundations were all represented. However, notably absent from the Commission were representatives of major employers in the area either directly or via the Chamber of Commerce.

To supplement the volunteer hours of the Commission members, the city also hired a consulting firm, Communitas Consulting, to facilitate the Commission's work and creation of the final report

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<sup>3</sup> The Mayor's Commission on Poverty Reduction. Retrieved July 25, 2015. (<http://www.norfolk.gov/index.aspx?NID=3280>).

<sup>4</sup> A Resolution Appointing 31 Persons to the Mayor's Commission on Poverty Reduction. February 26, 2013. Retrieved July 25, 2015. (<http://www.norfolk.gov/documentcenter/view/3926>)

<sup>5</sup> Communitas Consulting. June 2014. *Norfolk Plan to Reduce Poverty*. The Mayor's Commission on Poverty Reduction. Retrieved July 25, 2015 (<http://www.norfolk.gov/documentcenter/view/16632>).

<sup>6</sup> AltDaily. 2014. "Mayor Fraim's State of the City 2014." February 24. [www.altdaily.com](http://www.altdaily.com). Retrieved September 29, 2015. (<http://www.altdaily.com/features/news/119-politics34/6564-full-text-video-mayor-fraim-s-state-of-the-city-2014>).

<sup>7</sup> Mayor Fraim's Website. Retrieved August 23, 2015. (<http://mayorfraim.com/community-service/>)

submitted to the mayor and city council.<sup>8</sup> The Commission met monthly beginning in July 2014 through its completion nearly one year later in June 2015 when the final report was presented to the mayor and Norfolk city council.

### Commission Recommendations

The Commission identified four key areas to target to help reduce poverty in Norfolk: 1) early childhood development, 2) education and career pathways, 3) workforce development, 4) and neighborhood revitalization. The final report includes a broad goal for each target area and then includes several specific strategies to pursue in order to achieve said goal.<sup>9</sup>

In addition to the specific goal for each of the key target areas, the Commission also identified two other goals that were relevant to all four of the target areas: “*increase awareness* and use of available resources... and *coordinate the implementation* of the plan to reduce poverty.”<sup>10</sup> The report summarizes its own contribution in the following way: “this plan is intended to reduce poverty in Norfolk. Like its inception, its future will depend on bringing people together from across sectors and neighborhoods, with a blend of public, nonprofit, private, and charitable resources to implement.”<sup>11</sup>

<p style="text-align: center;"><b>Norfolk Mayor’s Poverty Commission Recommendations</b></p> <p><b>1) Early Childhood Development</b></p> <p><b>2) Education and Careers</b></p> <p><b>3) Workforce Development</b></p> <p><b>4) Neighborhood Revitalization</b></p>
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The goals of increasing awareness of services and resources and better coordinate their delivery also featured more specific strategies for implementation. For example, to improve awareness the report recommends two strategies: first, to “develop and implement a public awareness campaign to promote knowledge and use of effective programs” and second, to “improve consumer access to available resources.” To achieve the second goal of improving coordination, the report also recommends two specific strategies: 1) to “establish a coordinating structure to facilitate, advocate for, 2) and identify ongoing support for plan recommendation” and to “collect and share data on progress.”<sup>12</sup>

Similar to Poverty Commissions in other cities that were charged with making recommendations regarding the future organizational structure, choosing between housing in the city government, potentially directly within the mayor’s office, or a separate entity consisting of representatives from all sectors but independently operated and staffed. The Commission concluded that the coalition model would be preferential in terms of potential scope of actions, continuing productive momentum, and likely minimize cost. The Commission itself was deemed a successful cross-sector collaboration. The Norfolk City Manager was later quoted as saying “the collaboration of

<sup>8 8</sup> Communitas Consulting. June 2014. *Norfolk Plan to Reduce Poverty*. The Mayor’s Commission on Poverty Reduction. Retrieved July 25, 2015 (<http://www.norfolk.gov/documentcenter/view/16632>).

<sup>9</sup> Ibid, p.3-4.

<sup>10</sup> Ibid, p.4. Italics added.

<sup>11</sup> Ibid, p.5.

<sup>12</sup> Ibid, p.43.

public/private partners led to the creation of a brand new image. We are committed to continue our work.”<sup>13</sup>

The Commission’s report emphasizes the need for “commitment to long-term involvement, involvement of key stakeholders across sectors, use of shared data to set the agenda and improve over time, and engagement of community members as substantive partners.”<sup>14</sup> The report concludes with an action plan that includes specific steps, outcomes and timeline, which organization/sector should take the lead, which organizations/sectors should be included in the discussion, and a proposed budget for future fiscal years. With regards to organizational structure, the report recommends establishing an intermediary office that is supported financially by all three sectors that jointly participated in the Commission; the intermediary office can either transition into a permanent entity or instead serve only as a facilitator to ensure that the implementation phase moves forward continuing the collaborative efforts of the Commission; the report does not specifically recommend one structure over the other.<sup>15</sup>

### Post-Commission

Norfolk’s mayor presented the following timeline for the poverty reduction plan: Identification (2014), Initial (2015), Continued (2016), and Visionary (2016 and beyond). The mayor requested, and received from city council, \$500,000 of initial funding to address the four priority areas identified by the Commission during fiscal year 2015. According to the City of Norfolk’s website, specific strategies and programs have been implemented in each of the four critical needs areas.<sup>16</sup> According to the Fiscal Year 2016 Financial Plan “of the 36 action steps outlined in the report, 27 are completed, in progress, or in the planning stage for implementation.”<sup>17</sup> The following information is posted on the Norfolk City Council website:

- 1) Early Childhood Development
  - Newborn Screening and Referral—Provides hospital screening and medical referrals to newborns and their families
  - Quality Training and Development—Enhance the quality of child care programs through training, mentoring and participation in a licensing program
  - Virginia Star Quality Rating System—Provides mentoring and technical support, rating and quality improvement items for Norfolk’s center-based child care programs
  - Faith-based child care grant program— Grants awarded to faith-based organizations to support childcare program development
- 2) Youth Education and Pathways
  - United for Children Summer Enrichment Program—Supports Norfolk children living in poverty over the summer with enrichment opportunities and wrap around services.

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<sup>13</sup> (<http://altdaily.com/features/news/8150-city-of-norfolk-to-spend-surplus-funds-on-poverty-mitigation-police-body-cameras-and-more>)

<sup>14</sup>Jolin, Michele, Paul Schmitz, and Willa Seldon. February 2012. “Needle-Moving Collaborative: A Promising Approach to Addressing America’s Biggest Challenges,” The Bridgespan Group. Retrieved August 28, 2015. (<http://www.bridgespan.org/getattachment/efdc40ca-aa41-4fb5-8960-34eb504eaf9a/Needle-Moving-Community-Collaborative-s-A-Promisin.aspx>)

<sup>15</sup> Communitas Consulting. June 2014. *Norfolk Plan to Reduce Poverty*. The Mayor’s Commission on Poverty Reduction. Retrieved July 25, 2015 (<http://www.norfolk.gov/documentcenter/view/16632>). P. 44-46.

<sup>16</sup> City of Norfolk, Virginia. Office of the City Council. Commission on Poverty Reduction. Retrieved August 28, 2015. (<http://www.norfolk.gov/index.aspx?NID=3280>).

<sup>17</sup> Retrieved September 25, 2015. (<https://va-norfolk.civicplus.com/DocumentCenter/View/20983>)

- Open Campus High School—A program that provides a virtual and/or personalized curriculum to re-engage students who have dropped out or are at risk of dropping out
- 3) Adult Workforce Development
- Educational and Employment resource guide—A resource to connect residents with educational and employment opportunities
  - Libraries as Workforce preparation access points—Provides workforce resources and workshops in Norfolk’s public libraries
- 4) Neighborhood Revitalization and Support
- Strengthen community corridors connected to distressed neighborhood—grants to businesses for renovations/ purchases in order to lease vacant property (while creating or retaining jobs).<sup>18</sup>
  - Establish a Housing Trust Fund – the 2016 fiscal year budget includes \$1 million from the General Fund to establish the fund, a fund that will support the new construction or preservation of affordable units for low-income residents of Norfolk in mixed-income developments.<sup>19</sup>

Absent from the city’s website is any update on the status of implementation for the two “cross-cutting” strategies of increasing awareness of, knowledge about, and utilization of existing services and establishing a coalition-model to facilitate the coordination of plan implementation. According to an article in the local newspaper dated November 5, 2014, part of the \$500,000 seed money allocated to the poverty reduction plan was supposed to “go towards developing a comprehensive guide to employment and educational opportunities.”<sup>20</sup> To date no such guide can be found. It is unclear at this time whether any steps have been taken towards implementation of the second “cross-cutting” strategy of establishing a new organizational structure to oversee the implementation phase of the larger process. The mayor’s repeated requests for funds and the city council’s repeated approval of requested disbursements coupled with the council’s tracking of actions pursued to date, suggest that the city has taken the lead in the implementation phase.

Norfolk’s sustained commitment to poverty reduction through the creation of a Commission, the publication of an official poverty reduction plan, and the maintained financial support through the annual budget allocation process, appears to also have secondary positive impacts on the community. In December 2014 Norfolk was named to the 100 Resilient Cities Network of the Rockefeller Foundation.<sup>21</sup> The designation grants Norfolk access to a fund that is used by member cities to coordinate disaster planning efforts. The designation also provided grant money to support the hiring of a chief resilience officer. While this designation did not itself seem to be directly related to the work of the Commission on Poverty Reduction, the designation together with the work of the Commission, led to Norfolk’s selection by the White House in August 2015 as one of 10 cities chosen to receive a resilience grant. The resilience grant provides a small grant in the amount of \$25,000 and human capital in the form of additional Americorps volunteers. The Americorps volunteers will work with the Norfolk Chief Resilience Officer Christine Morris to implement

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<sup>18</sup> City of Norfolk, Virginia. Office of the City Council. Commission on Poverty Reduction. Retrieved August 28, 2015. (<http://www.norfolk.gov/index.aspx?NID=3280>).

<sup>19</sup> Ibid.

<sup>20</sup> Livas, Nicole. 2014. “Norfolk approves \$500k to reduce poverty.” *www.wavy.com*, November 5. Retrieved July 25, 2015. (<http://wavy.com/2014/11/05/norfolk-approves-500k-to-reduce-poverty/>)

<sup>21</sup> The Rockefeller Foundation News and Media. December 2013. “The Rockefeller Foundation Announces Inaugural Members of 100 Resilient Cities Network”, December 13. Retrieved July 25, 2015. (<https://www.rockefellerfoundation.org/about-us/news-media/rockefeller-foundation-announces/>).

recommendations from the Mayor's Poverty Commission and will expand asset-mapping in vulnerable populations within the city.<sup>22</sup> Norfolk Mayor Paul Fraim said in an official statement that "The grant from the White House and the Cities of Service is an affirmation of the work Norfolk is doing to build resilience in the community."<sup>23</sup>

### Summary

The Mayor's Commission on Poverty Reduction in Norfolk, Virginia is a case of city-initiated, cross-sector collaboration to identify the causes of and recommend strategies to alleviate poverty in the city. The Commission was co-chaired by two government officials but representatives of all sectors sat on the Commission, particularly government (politicians, policymakers, educational services) and non-profits (service providers, advocacy groups, and foundations). The most notable absence from the Commission was a representative from the local Chamber of Commerce or representatives of major local employers in the for-profit sector. These stakeholders were however listed in the acknowledgements section of the final report indicating that they were at least consulted in some capacity, even if not as partners in the collaboration itself. Only one actor, Communitas Consulting, who served as the facilitator and author of the final report, was paid for their contribution to the collaboration.

The Commission's plan identified four critical areas that if addressed will improve the quality of life for a significant number of Norfolk's residents. The report explicitly states that the plan is not a comprehensive plan to eliminate poverty, but rather one that is targeted towards specific goals that will have the greatest impact on reducing poverty specifically for Norfolk. To date, at least one strategy from each goal area has been funded by the city. The two primary programs funded to date represent expansions of existing programs in Norfolk rather than new evidence-based programs imported from other communities. Unlike in the four critical areas, little to no action appears to have been taken on the two "cross-cutting" strategies, the two strategies that if pursued would reportedly impact all four of the four critical areas. In particular there is no evidence to suggest any forward movement on the organizational structure "cross-cutting" strategy recommended in the plan – the coalition model for the implementation phase. Instead, it appears as though the city, through the mayor and city council, have continued to take the lead in terms of plan implementation.

One important take-away from the Norfolk case is that the establishment of a local Commission and a Poverty Reduction Plan sends a signal to a wider set of stakeholders that the community and its leaders has chosen to prioritize quality of life issues. Since the establishment of the Commission and its published plan, the city has been awarded grants in other tangentially related fields, and in the area of community resilience in particular. While Norfolk's original designation and recognition as a resilient community was sparked by its geographical location, the latest grant by the White House explicitly recognizes the work of the Commission. In sum, a commitment by local leaders to reduce poverty can have secondary benefits in the form of making the city more competitive for additional external grants from both the public and private sectors.

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<sup>22</sup> Vascara, Virginia. 2015. "Norfolk one of 10 cities chosen for resilience grants and volunteers." *Inside Business: The Hampton Roads Business Journal*. August 28. Retrieved September 2, 2015. (<http://insidebiz.com/news/norfolk-one-10-cities-chosen-resilience-grants-and-volunteers>).

<sup>23</sup> Ibid.



### Timeline

- 2001: Living wage ballot initiative defeated.
- 2001 – 2003: Work groups formed and community meetings held about poverty
- 2003: Community Foundation gives money to establish the Kalamazoo County Poverty Reduction Initiative as a 501c3.
- 2013: Executive Director of Kalamazoo County Poverty Reduction Initiative leaves organization.
- 2013: Kalamazoo County Poverty Reduction Initiative does not receive funding from city for 2014 fiscal year.
- Early 2014: Kalamazoo County Poverty Reduction Initiative Board votes to dissolve the organization.
- April 2014: Kalamazoo City Commission creates a community collaborative to address quality of life concerns in the city, collaborative is titled Shared Prosperity Kalamazoo.

### Background

In 2001, after passage of a living wage initiative in Detroit, Michigan the Kalamazoo City Council organized a group to study a living wage ballot initiative thus sparking debate about the degree to which the city, as a whole, bears responsibility for the quality of life of lower-income residents in the city.<sup>26</sup> Although the ballot initiative ultimately failed, the defeat sparked interest from a wide range of community stakeholders who formed working groups and held community meetings that ultimately, in 2003, led to the creation of a new 501c3 organization in 2003, the Kalamazoo County Poverty Initiative. Over the next ten or so years, the Kalamazoo County Poverty Initiative operated as a community collaborative working to keep poverty on the public agenda.

The Kalamazoo County Poverty Initiative was known for two primary functions: first, Project Connect, an annual community services event free to the public which connects individuals and families to free on-site community services, and second, its poverty simulations where members of the public are given roles and must budget play money to last a month in 3-hour workshops.<sup>27</sup> The organization had a staff of one funded by seed money from the Kalamazoo Community Foundation and an annual operating budget ranging from \$50 to \$75,000 per year from a variety of sources including local Kalamazoo organizations, foundations, and the city of Kalamazoo. In 2013 the executive director of the organization left and the city elected not to provide the \$25,000 it normally provided to the organization for fiscal year 2014. As a result, in early 2014 with funds drying up the board voted to disband the organization.<sup>28</sup>

Around the same time as the funding for the Kalamazoo County Poverty Reduction Initiative began drying out, the Western Michigan University (WNU) Board of Trustees voted to approve the

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<sup>24</sup> Poverty Reduction Initiative. Retrieved July 15, 2015. (<http://www.haltpoverty.org/>).

<sup>25</sup> Shared Prosperity Kalamazoo. Retrieved July 15, 2015. (<http://www.kalamazoocity.org/sharedprosperity>).

<sup>26</sup> "The Case for a Targeted Living Wage Subsidy." June 2001. The Employment Policies Institute. Retrieved September 25, 2015. ([https://www.epionline.org/wp-content/studies/epi\\_livingwage\\_07-2001.pdf](https://www.epionline.org/wp-content/studies/epi_livingwage_07-2001.pdf)).

<sup>27</sup> Monacelli, Emily. 2014. "Kalamazoo poverty task force comes after county Poverty Reduction Initiative disbands". *www.mlive.com*. April 21. Retrieved July 20.

([http://www.mlive.com/news/kalamazoo/index.ssf/2014/04/kalamazoo\\_poverty\\_reduction\\_in.html](http://www.mlive.com/news/kalamazoo/index.ssf/2014/04/kalamazoo_poverty_reduction_in.html)).

<sup>28</sup> Ibid.

University-Community Empowerment Center (U-CEC) as a research and policy training center to be housed in the College of Health and Human Services.<sup>29</sup> According to the center’s website, the U-CEC “collaborates with individuals, groups, and organizations to empower communities to reduce poverty.”<sup>30</sup> In the spring of 2014 U-CEC partnered with the Osher Lifelong Institute at Western Michigan University (LLI at WMU)<sup>31</sup>, a volunteer organization that provides non-credit courses and programs to adults in the greater Kalamazoo area, to promote a “Call to Action” on poverty in Kalamazoo. Over the course of January through March 2014, the two organizations hosted a “Call to Action” series of events including five seminar classes about poverty (education, income security, affordable housing, mental and physical health, and legal issues and criminal justice) in Kalamazoo open and free for the general public, a free public lecture titled “Building Bridges,” and a Call to Action Planning Meeting (also known as the “Building Bridges Breakfast”) which brought together attendees of each of the previous events as well as other community-university stakeholders.

In April 2014, shortly after the U-CEC and LLI at WMU Call to Action event series concluded, the Kalamazoo City Commission announced the creation of the Kalamazoo Poverty Task Force. The Kalamazoo Poverty Task Force would be led by Mayor Bobby J. Hopewell. The Task Force ultimately led to the creation of the Office for Shared Prosperity (also known as Shared Prosperity Kalamazoo), housed in the city government with a steering committee comprised of government officials, academics, and private citizens. According to the Shared Prosperity Kalamazoo website, the goal is “to promote increased access to well-paying jobs, strong and economically secure families, and healthy growth, development and learning for all our kids.”<sup>32</sup> Over the past year and a half the office has operated with the following timeline: first listen to research on causes and best practices (complete)<sup>33</sup>, second host strategic planning workshop to discuss ideas (complete, May 2015)<sup>34</sup>, third, host second strategic planning workshop to develop specific action steps (complete, August 28, 2015)<sup>35</sup>, and finally, develop, advocate for, and act on a formal five-strategy plan to reduce poverty in Kalamazoo (to be completed, estimated date unknown).

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<sup>29</sup> “Call to Action Report: Addressing poverty and its correlates in Kalamazoo County”. Spring 2014. Published by the University-Community Empowerment Center (U-CEC) and Osher Lifelong Learning Institute at Western Michigan University. Retrieved July 19, 2015. (<http://wmich.edu/offcampus/documents/June2014-CallToActionReport.pdf>).

<sup>30</sup> University-Community Empowerment Center at Western Michigan University. Retrieved July 20, 2015. (<http://wmich.edu/empowerment>).

<sup>31</sup> The Osher Lifelong Learning Institute at Western Michigan University. Retrieved July 20, 2015. (<http://wmich.edu/olli>).

<sup>32</sup> Shared Prosperity Kalamazoo. Retrieved July 15, 2015. (<http://www.kalamazoocity.org/sharedprosperity>).

<sup>33</sup> Kalamazoo Shared Prosperity Initiative Plan. Retrieved July 15, 2015.

(<http://www.kalamazoocity.org/documentlibrary/city-commission/shared-prosperity/4652-shared-prosperity-plan/file>).

<sup>34</sup> “Presentation slides for May 15, 2015 Strategic Workshop.” Shared Prosperity Kalamazoo. Retrieved August 13, 2015. (<http://www.kalamazoocity.org/sharedprosperity>).

<sup>35</sup> “Presentation slides for August 28, 2015 Strategic Workshop.” Shared Prosperity Kalamazoo. Retrieved September 4, 2015. (<http://www.kalamazoocity.org/docman/city-commission/shared-prosperity/5011-2015-08-28-spk-presentation/file>).

The Shared Prosperity Initiative identifies three programmatic objectives: 1) jobs, 2) families, and 3) youth. The first objective concerns creating an increase in employment opportunities and access to well-paying jobs in particular. The last is also straightforward – work with out-of-school youth to connect them to pathways to opportunities, either via connections to the labor market or alternative forms of schooling. The second is less obvious. The programmatic objective is titled families, but the specific description is about the challenges facing low-income families in Kalamazoo and improving coordination of services.

**Shared Prosperity  
Kalamazoo Objectives**

- 1) Jobs**
- 2) Families**
- 3) Youth**

**Membership**

Together the three aforementioned initiatives (Kalamazoo County Poverty Reduction Initiative, Call to Action Series: Addressing Poverty and its correlates in Kalamazoo County, and Shared Prosperity Kalamazoo) taken collectively represent the range of multi-sectoral interests in poverty reduction as a substantive issue of importance in the community. The first started as a community advocacy group and morphed into a 501c3, a nonprofit organization, the second was spearheaded by research institutes housed at the university, and the third was spearheaded by the city government.

Each of the three initiatives discussed above have some form of board or steering/planning committee. The board for the Kalamazoo County Poverty Reduction Initiative was by far the most diverse in terms of its representation. According to organization records<sup>36</sup>, the board in 2011-2012, had representatives from city and county government, higher education, the for-profit sector, non-profit service providers, and private citizens. By contrast, the planning committee for the Call to Action series had only representatives from the higher education system and the steering committee for Shared Prosperity Kalamazoo has representatives from government, one from the academy, and three private citizens.

**Goal/Strategies**

The purposes of the three initiatives (Table 2) do appear to be slightly different from those that preceded them. The first was both a call to coordinated action and an attempt to facilitate that coordination. The second was a renewed call to action, one that appeared to be more event-driven than project specific. The third is an attempt to develop a strategic action plan that is developed through input from representatives from all sectors of the economy.

**Table 2. Evolution of Antipoverty Initiatives in Kalamazoo**

<b>Initiative</b>	<b>Sector/Industry</b>	<b>Purpose<sup>37</sup></b>
Kalamazoo County Poverty Reduction Initiative	Non-profit	"focuses the efforts of neighborhood organizations, stakeholders, and private enterprises into programs that build towards long-term reductions in the poverty rate"

<sup>36</sup> PRI Board of Directors. Retrieved July 10, 2015. (<http://www.haltpoverty.org/board.html>)

<sup>37</sup> The purpose of each initiative was obtained from the respective websites. Retrieved August 14, 2015. (<http://www.haltpoverty.org/mission.html>). (<http://wmich.edu/offcampus/documents/June2014-CallToActionReport.pdf>). (<http://www.kalamazoo-city.org/sharedprosperity>).

Call to Action	Higher Education	"the critical step of calling the community to action and the act of urging individuals and stakeholders to work together to 'build bridges' within the community "
Shared Prosperity Kalamazoo	Public Administration	"to promote increased access to well-paying jobs, strong and economically secure families, and healthy growth, development and learning for all our kids"

### Summary

Two individuals in particular have been present at the table throughout the various initiatives: Don Cooney a City Commissioner for Kalamazoo and Associate Professor in the School of Social Work at WMU and Timothy Ready an Associate Professor of Sociology at WMU and Director of the Lewis Walker Institute. Cooney was particularly critical in the most recent development in Kalamazoo's fight against poverty as he was one of the Commissioners who specifically requested that decreasing poverty be counted as one of the Commissions top priorities starting in 2014. According to Mr. Cooney [quoted in the local paper], "when the Poverty Reduction Initiative started, a whole bunch of people started from the different institutions in the city and said, 'We think this is great.' Then they went home. Now the initiative is going to be lodged in the city and there's going to be follow-up and accountability. The legitimacy and prestige in the city will allow things to be done that couldn't be done with a satellite operation."<sup>38</sup>

Cooney was again quoted in the local paper as saying, "they've [the Kalamazoo County Poverty Reduction Initiative] done really excellent work with the resources they have. But they don't have the resources that they need and they don't have the legitimacy. If they call a meeting, people might show up, but if the city calls a meeting people will show up." Donald Roberts, a former chairman of the Board of Directors for the Kalamazoo County Poverty Reduction Initiative, seemed to suggest that the disbanding of the organization was not so much a failure as a success stating, "one of the goals of the Poverty Reduction Initiative had always been to get government involvement. The point, or the focus of the initiative was nonprofits, government and business working together to address the issues of poverty, including employment, training, education."<sup>39</sup>

The goal here was to keep the issue of poverty in public view and on the list of priorities among government leaders and the creation of the Office of Shared Prosperity Kalamazoo within the city government was seen as a step in the right direction. These slightly different takes on the disbanding of the Kalamazoo County Poverty Reduction Initiative, one attributing it to a lack of legitimacy and one acknowledging that it could be seen as a sign of progress, does not take away from the ultimate lesson learned by Kalamazoo: the coalition-model of collaboration as an organizational structure may not survive as a non-service-providing poverty reduction collaborative without the institutionalized support of local government.

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<sup>38</sup> Monacelli, Emily. 2014. "Kalamazoo poverty task force comes after county Poverty Reduction Initiative disbands". *www.mlive.com*. April 21. Retrieved July 20. ([http://www.mlive.com/news/kalamazoo/index.ssf/2014/04/kalamazoo\\_poverty\\_reduction\\_in.html](http://www.mlive.com/news/kalamazoo/index.ssf/2014/04/kalamazoo_poverty_reduction_in.html)).

<sup>39</sup> Ibid.

## Rochester, NY<sup>40</sup>



### Timeline

- September 2014: Office of Innovation and Strategic Initiatives is formed.
- November 2014: Cross-sector collaboration to address poverty initiated by Mayor Warren, State Assembly representative and Majority Leader Joseph D. Morelle, and the United Way of Greater Rochester.
- December 2014: Rochester is awarded three-year \$1.9 million grant by Bloomberg Philanthropies as part of the Bloomberg Innovation Teams program.
- January 2015: Governor Cuomo announces grant of \$500,000 to local Rochester-Monroe Anti Poverty Initiative. He also announces his own Rochester Anti-Poverty Task Force that will work alongside the local Initiative.
- March 2015: Governor Cuomo's Rochester Anti-Poverty Task Force holds first meeting.
- March 2015: Mayor Warren hires first director of Office of Innovation and Strategic Initiatives.
- May 2015: Leonard Brock announced as the director of the Rochester-Monroe Anti-Poverty Initiative; 103 individuals assigned to work groups.<sup>41</sup>
- Coming September 2015: Preliminary report from Rochester-Monroe Anti-Poverty.

### Background

In response to a 2013 report titled "Poverty and the Concentration of Poverty in the Nine-County Greater Rochester Area"<sup>42</sup> and in hopes of securing a Bloomberg Philanthropies grant<sup>43</sup>, in September 2014 Mayor Warren established the Office of Innovation and Strategic Initiatives inside the city government. The stated purpose of the office is to "research and develop bold new solutions to Rochester's most pressing social and economic challenges."<sup>44</sup> Mayor Warren indicated that the first challenge to be addressed by the office would be poverty. Several months later, Mayor Warren together with State Assembly representative and Majority Leader Joseph D. Morelle, Monroe County Executive Maggie Brooks, and Peter Carpino of the United Way of Greater Rochester, jointly convened a public-private partnership, the Rochester-Monroe Anti-Poverty Initiative, to begin discussions on how to address poverty in the community; these individuals became the steering committee for the Initiative. An initial poverty meeting was convened and the event was well attended with 24 individuals representing 15 different organizations and all major sectors represented including the public, private and not-for-profit. In May 2015, the steering committee of

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<sup>40</sup> Rochester Anti-Poverty Initiative. Retrieved July 10, 2015. (<https://www.uwrochester.org/RochesterAnti-PovertyInitiative.aspx>)

<sup>41</sup> Riley, David. May 2015. "Anti-poverty initiative leader named." *Democrat & Chronicle*, May 28. Retrieved September 28, 2015. (<http://www.democratandchronicle.com/story/news/2015/05/26/leonard-brock-anti-poverty-initiative-rochester-members-leadership/27957545/>).

<sup>42</sup> Doherty, Edward. December 2013. "Special Report: Poverty and the Concentration of Poverty in the Nine-County Greater Rochester Area." Rochester Area Community Foundation. Retrieved September 25, 2015. (<http://roc.democratandchronicle.com/assets/pdf/A22162251210.PDF>).

<sup>43</sup> Sharp, Brian. September 2014. "City seeks radial approaches." *Democrat & Chronicle*. September 28, 2014. Retrieved September 28, 2015. (<http://www.democratandchronicle.com/story/news/2014/09/28/zhi-tang-delsonize-smith-henry-fitts-rochester-innovation/16294201/>).

<sup>44</sup> City of Rochester, Office of Innovation and Strategic Initiatives. Retrieved August 25, 2015. (<http://www.cityofrochester.gov/innovation/>).

the Rochester-Monroe Anti-Poverty Initiative, hired a director, Leonard Brook, for the Initiative, as well as naming over 150 individuals to the six work groups.<sup>45</sup>

The local collaboration was well aligned with activity occurring at the state level, whereby New York Governor Cuomo identified fighting poverty and better targeting state aid to local needs as two of his administration's priorities.<sup>46</sup> By December, the actions taken by the city began to receive recognition both in the foundation world and in state government. In December 2014, Rochester was awarded a \$1.9 million grant from Bloomberg Philanthropies as part of the Bloomberg Innovation Teams program. The grant will be used to hire up to seven additional employees and a director for the Office of Innovation and Strategic Initiatives.<sup>47</sup> In January 2015, as part Governor Andrew Cuomo's Opportunity Agenda to combat poverty and inequality, it was announced that a \$500,000 grant would be given to the local initiative. In addition the Governor created an anti-poverty task force for Rochester to be called the Rochester Anti-Poverty Task Force to act as a partner to the Rochester-Monroe Anti-Poverty Initiative.<sup>48</sup> However, unlike the local Anti-Poverty initiative, which featured representation from all three major sectors, Governor Cuomo's Rochester Anti-Poverty Task Force is comprised primarily of various representatives of the state and cabinet members.<sup>49</sup> The intention of the state-level task force is to reportedly work alongside the local anti-poverty initiative and increase access to critical services including childcare, health care, job training, and youth mentoring as well as promoting quality education, anti-hunger, and anti-homelessness efforts.<sup>50</sup>

The collaboration started with the intention to have five workgroups, one for each of the identified five critical areas (jobs, health and nutrition, education and workforce training, housing, and safe neighborhoods). As of August 2015 the Steering Committee had been formed and workgroups established. By March 2015 two additional work groups were suggested (policy and systems redesign). By the time the Steering Committee and work groups were formally established, the Rochester-Monroe Anti-Poverty Initiative had seven working groups, one for each critical area (the five original key areas plus transportation) and one for systems design.<sup>51</sup> Both the steering committee and the work groups are diverse in their cross-sector representation with representatives from the public sector (city, county, state, K-12 and higher education systems), the private not-for-profit sector (service providers, faith-based organizations, and foundations), and the private for-profit sector (local businesses and employers). Private citizens are also included in the work groups.

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<sup>45</sup> Riley, David. May 2015. "Anti-poverty initiative leader named." *Democrat & Chronicle*, May 28. Retrieved September 28, 2015. (<http://www.democratandchronicle.com/story/news/2015/05/26/leonard-brock-anti-poverty-initiative-rochester-members-leadership/27957545/>).

<sup>46</sup> Rochester-Monroe County Anti-Poverty Initiative Proposal. November 26, 2014. Retrieved July 18, 2015. (<http://www.uwrochester.org/pdf/NYSPOVERTYPROPOSAL.pdf>).

<sup>47</sup> Riley, David. 2014. "\$1.9 million innovation grant to help city tackle poverty." *Democrat & Chronicle*. September 14. Retrieved July 18.

(<http://www.democratandchronicle.com/story/news/2014/12/15/rochester-grant-bloomberg-philanthropies-poverty-innovation-lovely-warren/20435127/>)

<sup>48</sup> Singer, Patti. January 2015. "Task force to address Rochester poverty." *Democrat & Chronicle*. January 18. Retrieved September 28. (<http://www.democratandchronicle.com/story/news/2015/01/18/task-force-address-rochester-poverty/21981175/>).

<sup>49</sup> "Governor Cuomo Announces Rochester Anti-Poverty Task Force Holds First Meeting

<sup>50</sup> Ibid.

<sup>51</sup> List of Steering Committee and Work Group Members for Rochester-Monroe Anti-Poverty Initiative. Retrieved August 20, 2015. (<http://www.uwrochester.org/RochesterAnti-PovertyInitiative.aspx>).

## Summary

Rochester's anti-poverty strategy is unique in two ways. First, Rochester has had multiple task forces at various levels of geography occurring simultaneously. Further, these different groups are reportedly working alongside one another as just more example of the magnitude of the attempt at cross-sector and cross-geography collaboration. Second, the city demonstrated a commitment to replicating and implementing best practices from other communities in Rochester on a scale unlike other cases. First, the mayor established the city-led office to pursue poverty alleviation prior to any strategic action plan that called for it. In other words, the city adopted a system that had been proven effective in other cities prior to adopting the action plan that that agency would later be charged with helping to implement. The strength of this approach appears to be that the city soon thereafter received a grant to expand the one-person office into an office of seven including a director that reports directly to the mayor. The city's investment in this instance appears to have paid off over five-fold, albeit only for the period of the grant. The approach then that the city has taken is one of looking to other cities to identify best practices to address Rochester's regional poverty.

## Nashville, TN<sup>52</sup>

### Timeline

- 2002: Nashville Chamber of Commerce conducts a study on the cohesion of the support network for youth in Nashville.
- 2003: Alignment Nashville is formed as a 501c3 nonprofit organization to work as intermediary, collective impact organization with the goal of working towards systemic change.
- September 2009: Mayor Karl Dean establishes Nashville as one of the original ten Cities of Service, a commitment by the mayors to find new ways to promote volunteerism in their respective cities.
- 2008-2009: Metropolitan Action Commission and the Nashville Chamber Public Benefit Foundation oversee collaborative effort to develop a Poverty Reduction Initiative Plan.
- February 2010: The Poverty Reduction Initiative is released and Mayor Karl Dean asks the Metropolitan Action Commission to coordinate the implementation of the plan.
- 2010: Metropolitan Social Services creates the Nashville Poverty Council, a public-private partnership responsible for implementation of the recommendations.
- 2011: Mayor appoints Kristine LaLonde to Chair the Nashville Poverty Council.
- January 2013: Nashville is selected by Bloomberg Philanthropies and the Cities Financial Empowerment Fund as a replication site for one of New York City's successful anti-poverty programs, the Financial Empowerment Center.
- March 2013: Nashville's Financial Empowerment Center opens.



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<sup>52</sup> Alignment Nashville (<http://portal.alignmentnashville.org/about-an>), Nashville Poverty Reduction Initiative (<http://www.nashville.gov/Social-Services/Planning-And-Coordination/Poverty-Reduction.aspx>), and Nashville Poverty Council (<http://www.nashville.gov/Social-Services/Planning-And-Coordination/Poverty-Reduction.aspx>).

- April 2013: Mayor establishes the Mayor's Office of Innovation and hires two co-directors: Kristine LaLonde (Chair of the Nashville Poverty Council) and Yiaway Yeh, former mayor of Palo Alto, California.<sup>53</sup>
- May 2013: Mayor creates Housing Trust Fund

### **Alignment Nashville**

Unlike other cases, in Nashville the first contemporary initiative to address poverty in Nashville originated in the private sector. A study completed by the Nashville Chamber of Commerce in 2002 highlighted the fragmented nature of the support network for youth in Nashville. The study reported that while the community has resources available, there is little communication between organizations that provide said resources/services. This finding sparked conversations among community organizations across sectors as well as residents of the city. Alignment Nashville was born out of these conversations.

In 2003, Alignment Nashville was formed as a 501c3 nonprofit organization to work as intermediary, collective impact organization. The organization has a formalized structure including a professional staff of 11 and a diverse board of directors with representatives from the public, non-profit, and for-profit private sectors all well represented, and the for-profit business sector in particular. The widespread participation of the business sector in Nashville's collective impact coalition-model collaborative distinguishes Nashville from other cases where representation of this sector tends to be minimal, if at all. To be sure, the organization's focus is on improving outcomes for youth and as such is not a comprehensive anti-poverty initiative. According to the 2014 Annual Report, both the Nashville Alignment Advisory Board and the Nashville Alignment Operating Board continue to feature representatives of all three sectors: public, private for-profit, and private not for profit.<sup>54</sup> An external evaluation of successful collaboratives published by The Bridgespan Group attributed Alignment Nashville's success to its' formalized structure. The inclusion of professional staff, meaningful work committees with rotating positions, an operating board separate from the board of directors, and continued community alignment was fostered through regular requests for participation issued to the public.<sup>55</sup>

### **Nashville Poverty Reduction Initiative & The Nashville Poverty Council**

In September 2008, Nashville Mayor Karl Dean created the Nashville Poverty Reduction Initiative. The Initiative kicked off with a call to action event. The event drew a crowd of approximately 500 people. Following the public kickoff event, the city hosted a one-day action group kickoff event convened by the National League of Cities; this event was also well attended with approximately 200 individuals being assigned to one of seven substantive work groups: child care, economic opportunity, food, healthcare, housing, neighborhood development, and workforce development. There were also two supervisory committees: the planning committee and the action committee. According to the final Nashville Poverty Reduction Plan, the 200 individuals that participated in the

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<sup>53</sup> McGee, Jaime. 2013. "Dean creates Office of Innovation, hires former Palo Alto mayor." *Nashville Business Journal*. April 26. Retrieved July 26, 2015. (<http://www.bizjournals.com/nashville/news/2013/04/26/dean-creates-office-of-innovation-to.html>).

<sup>54</sup> "Alignment Nashville Annual Report." 2014. Alignment Nashville for successful, healthy children. Retrieved July 20, 2015. (<http://portal.alignmentnashville.org/documents/10179/311608/2014+Alignment+Nashville+Annual+Report/657a4aa9-6d49-4723-bf96-ad9ec51356e3>).

<sup>55</sup> Seldon, Willa Michele Jolin and Paul Schmitz. 2012. "Needle-Moving Collaboratives: A Promising Approach to Assessing America's Biggest Challenges." The Bridgespan Group. February 6. Retrieved July 20, 2015. ([http://www.bridgespan.org/Publications-and-Tools/Revitalizing-Communities/Community-Collaboratives/Needle-Moving-Community-Collaborative-s-A-Promisin.aspx#.Ve50\\_mRVikq](http://www.bridgespan.org/Publications-and-Tools/Revitalizing-Communities/Community-Collaboratives/Needle-Moving-Community-Collaborative-s-A-Promisin.aspx#.Ve50_mRVikq)).

plan's development included representatives of businesses, foundations, and government agencies as well as private citizens.<sup>56</sup> The report makes three to five action recommendations (referred to as strategies) in each of the seven target areas and for each action recommendation the report includes the following information: an explanation as to how the action item will reduce poverty; the timeframe for the action; the organizational structure that the action item will require as well as specific organizations to fill those roles; and how the action is related to existing local efforts.

### **Nashville Poverty Reduction Initiative Plan**

- 1) Child Care**
- 2) Economic Opportunity**
- 3) Food**
- 4) Health Care**
- 5) Housing**
- 6) Neighborhood Development**
- 7) Workforce Development**

In 2010, the mayor asked the Metropolitan Social Services Office to coordinate the Initiative's implementation. In response to that request, the Metropolitan Social Services Office created the Nashville Poverty Council, a public-private partnership, to serve in that coordinator and facilitator role. This shift suggests that the Council's role was ultimately subsumed by a city-led effort.

#### ***The Mayor's Office of Innovation***

The Nashville Office of Innovation was created in April 2013 by Mayor Karl Dean. At the time, the purpose of the office was to "create jobs and advance economic development as well as examine the city's social services."<sup>57</sup> Unlike other city-led collaborative efforts like the New York City CEO model, the Nashville city-led model is just a two-person team and the staff are responsible for a wide range of initiatives of which the Poverty Reduction Initiative is just one component. Yiaway Yeh, the former mayor of Palo Alto, will "be responsible for IT, data and entrepreneurship" and Kristine LaLonde, the Chair of the Nashville Poverty Council, will be responsible for "social services, poverty and vulnerable populations."<sup>58</sup> According to an interview with the two co-chairs, the co-chairs "share the mayor's sense that 'government should be a collaborative partner with the nonprofit sector, with business, with citizens. It's a platform for engagement and change. It's not just a service delivery system."<sup>59</sup> The Mayor's Office of Innovation then is an example of a city-led collaboration model on a much smaller scale than some of the others that are evident in other cases such as Rochester or the commonly referenced and replicated New York City Center for Economic Opportunity (CEO) model.

#### **Summary**

Although there are three distinct initiatives in place in Nashville, each has its own specific focus area and as such the efforts of the initiatives do not appear to be redundant. In fact, there appears to be some overlap in the collaborative partners of each initiative. Nashville is a unique case for three reasons: first, Nashville was the only case where an initiative originated in the for-profit private

<sup>56</sup> Nashville Poverty Reduction Initiative Plan. February 2010. City of Nashville. Retrieved July 22, 2015. (<http://www.healthynashville.org/javascript/htmleditor/uploads/NashvillesPovertyReductionPlan.pdf>).

<sup>57</sup> "Mayor's State of Metro Calls on Nashville to be Known as City With 'Opportunity for Everyone'." 2013. *www.Nashville.gov*. May 20. Retrieved July 26, 2015. (<http://www.nashville.gov/News-Media/News-Article/ID/1595/Mayors-State-of-Metro-Calls-on-Nashville-to-be-Known-as-a-City-With-Opportunity-for-Everyone>)

<sup>58</sup> Haruch, Steve. 2014. "A talk with Kristine LaLonde and Yiaway Yeh, co-chiefs of the mayor's new Office of Innovation: Daring Duo". *Nashville Scene*. January 13. Retrieved July 20, 2015. (<http://www.nashvillescene.com/nashville/a-talk-with-kristine-lalonde-and-yiaway-yeh-co-chiefs-of-the-mayors-new-office-of-innovation/Content?oid=3502944>)

<sup>59</sup> Ibid.

sector. In fact, Alignment Nashville's success has been recognized nationally and at least seven other cities/regions across the U.S. have since replicated the Alignment collective impact model.<sup>60</sup> Second, Nashville has adopted both types of collaborative models identified in the literature: the coalition-model (via Alignment Nashville) and the city-led collaborative model (via the Office of Innovation). Finally, the city-led model implemented by Nashville differs from other city-led models that tend to have larger staffs and more formalized structures for collaborative partners.

## Springfield, MO<sup>61</sup>



### Timeline

- March 2014: Springfield Impacting Poverty Commission is formed by the Community Partnership of the Ozarks
- March 2014 – May 2015: monthly meetings of the Commission
- May 2015: City officials host series of community meetings called “Community Listen”<sup>62</sup>
- September 2015: Mayor announces preliminary recommendations from the Community Listen Zone Blitz Action Plan; will be presented on September 29, 2015 to City Council for approval.<sup>63</sup>
- October 2015 (planned): if approved, the Community Listen Zone Blitz Action Plan will be presented at the Junior League of Springfield’s Community Summit: Focus on Poverty event along with the Impacting Poverty Commission Report.<sup>64</sup>

### The Commission

Representatives from multiple divisions and levels of government sit on the Springfield Impacting Poverty Commission alongside business owners, representatives of faith-based organizations and service providing organizations as well as representatives of higher education, foundations, and finally private citizens including a high school student.<sup>65</sup> The Commission also receives staff support from the Community Partnership of the Ozarks and United Way of the Ozarks; in other words, there is no devoted staff but these two organizations act as facilitators of the Commission’s work. The Commission is co-chaired by Greg Burris, Springfield’s City Manager and Gail Smart of Center City Christian Outreach.

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<sup>60</sup> “Alignment Nashville Annual Report.” 2014. Alignment Nashville for successful, healthy children. Retrieved July 20, 2015.

(<http://portal.alignmentnashville.org/documents/10179/311608/2014+Alignment+Nashville+Annual+Report/657a4aa9-6d49-4723-bf96-ad9ec51356e3>). p. 56.

<sup>61</sup> Springfield Impacting Poverty Commission. Retrieved June 28, 2015. (<http://www.impactingpoverty.org/>).

<sup>62</sup> Herzog, Stephen. 2015. “City to listen to northwest Springfield residents.” *Springfield News-Leader*. April 23. Retrieved September 28, 2015. (<http://www.news-leader.com/story/news/local/ozarks/2015/04/23/city-listen-northwest-springfield-residents/26261729/>)

<sup>63</sup> Herzog, Stephen. 2015. “Groups outline plans to deal with poverty in northwest SGF.” *Springfield News-Leader*. *Springfield News-Leader*. September 23. Retrieved September 28, 2015. (<http://www.news-leader.com/story/news/local/ozarks/2015/09/23/groups-outline-plans-deal-poverty-northwest-sgf/72710002/>).

<sup>64</sup> Herzog, Stephen. 2015. “‘Zone blitz’ plan to address concerns shared in May’s listening meetings.” *Springfield News-Leader*. September 24. Retrieved September 29, 2015. (<http://www.news-leader.com/story/news/local/ozarks/2015/09/24/zone-blitz-plan-address-concerns-shared-mays-listening-meetings/72765636/>).

<sup>65</sup> Springfield Impacting Poverty Commission, Commission Members. Retrieved June 28, 2015. (<http://www.impactingpoverty.org/commission-members/>).

According to the Commission’s website, the Commission was charged with taking an inventory of what was currently available in the community, learning about the local root causes of poverty as well as the symptoms of poverty locally, identifying best practices from other communities to address poverty, developing a strategic action plan with measurable goals. The Commission was asked to develop a plan that had specific action items for each broad goal including recommending the role and organization that would play the role for each action item as well as the projected budget. The Commission was also asked to identify legislative priorities, increase public awareness of poverty in the community, and recommend an organizational structure, if needed, in order to monitor the implementation phase as well as future efforts.<sup>66</sup> According to an online interview, one Commission member “described Springfield as a ‘program-rich, but system-poor ‘city’.”<sup>67</sup> The Commission is just one of two key organizations in the local fight to alleviate poverty. The second organization, the Impacting Poverty Collaborative, is the organization that is responsible for alignment of services, empowerment, and community economic development. Both organizations are working together to develop the Poverty Reduction Plan.

Around this time, community leaders discovered through a spatial analysis of poverty trends, and its correlates, that poverty was particularly concentrated in the northwest zone of the city<sup>68</sup>, thus the decision to focus efforts on this particular geographic region with regards to poverty mitigation efforts. City officials, together with leaders of 40 various organizations from across the community, then launched a series of meetings throughout May 2015 with residents in order to get feedback from the community about the causes and consequences of poverty as well as barriers to social mobility; these meetings were titled “Community Listens.” After the conclusion of the Community Listens events, Mr. Burris, city manager, solicited partnerships with representatives from all three sectors to form 11 work groups, one for each problem area identified through the Community Listens events: 1) chronic nuisance properties, 2) civic engagement, 3) communication, 4) digital divide, 5) food access, 6) health care, 7) housing, 8) infrastructure and transportation, 9) jobs and economic development, 10) public safety, and 11) wellness.<sup>69</sup>

By the conclusion in September 2015, 167 individuals representing 95 organizations were represented in the work groups; representatives included a wide range of individuals from CEOs to representatives of faith-based organizations to representatives of the health care sector. Of these, residents of the community voted to prioritize 1) chronic nuisance properties, 2) sidewalk and other roadway issues, and 3) crime and safety concerns.<sup>70</sup> Preliminary recommendations for each target area were announced September 23, 2015 but the formal plan will not be released until October 8, 2015.

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<sup>66</sup> Springfield Impacting Poverty Commission, About Us. Retrieved June 28, 2015. (<http://www.impactingpoverty.org/commission-members/>).

<sup>67</sup> “The Impacting Poverty Commission: Understanding Poverty in Springfield, MO”. *The Intersector Project*. Retrieved July 22, 2015. (<http://intersector.com/impacting-poverty-commission-understanding-poverty-springfield-mo/>).

<sup>68</sup> City of Springfield Community Listen Events. Retrieved September 29, 2015. ([springfieldmo.gov/2794/Community-Listen-Events](http://springfieldmo.gov/2794/Community-Listen-Events)).

<sup>69</sup> Herzog, Stephen. 2015. “‘Zone blitz’ plan to address concerns shared in May’s listening meetings.” *Springfield News-Leader*. September 24. Retrieved September 29, 2015. (<http://www.news-leader.com/story/news/local/ozarks/2015/09/24/zone-blitz-plan-address-concerns-shared-mays-listening-meetings/72765636/>).

<sup>70</sup> City of Springfield Community Listen Events. Retrieved September 29, 2015. ([springfieldmo.gov/2794/Community-Listen-Events](http://springfieldmo.gov/2794/Community-Listen-Events)).

The majority of the preliminary recommendations revolve around increasing access to information/resources and coordination of services; for example, the communications work group recommended “the development of ‘hubs’ for information sharing”; the digital divide work group recommended “educational programs to promote low-cost internet access options”; the food access work group recommended “developing a community food resource center”; the health care work group recommended “a plan to ensure coordination of health care services”; the housing work group recommended “the possibility of creating an ‘area resource manager’; and, the public safety work group recommended “enhancing coordination among safety agencies.”<sup>71</sup> According to the City of Springfield’s website, the final Action Plan will be developed based on results from a variety of ongoing efforts including the aforementioned 11 Community Listen Zone Blitz Teams and the Impacting Poverty Commission Report & Call to Action.<sup>72</sup>

- Springfield Impacting  
Poverty Commission  
Voted Priorities**
- 1. Chronic Nuisance Properties**
  - 2. Sidewalk and Roadway Issues**
  - 3. Crime and Safety Concerns**

### Summary

Springfield is a unique case among its counterparts in that the Springfield Commission members represent one of the more diverse groups in terms of sectoral interest representation. Representatives from multiple divisions and levels of government sit on the Commission alongside business owners, representatives of faith-based organizations and service providing organizations as well as representatives of higher education, foundations, and finally private citizens including a high school student.<sup>73</sup> The notable absence however is the mayor or another politician. While one of the co-chairs is a policymaker (the city manager), this is distinct from the role of the politicians who regularly shape policy agendas. This notable absence is, according to one member of the Commission, problematic because for the Commission to have any real power to effect change it will require resources and buy-in from the government and that includes local politicians.<sup>74</sup> The argument for Norfolk to pursue a coalition-model applies here as well: the sooner you bring funders to the table, the better. In other words, if you can turn funders into co-planners as well, then the overall collaborative is more likely to be successful.

Unlike other cases, the Springfield Impacting Poverty Commission distinguishes between symptoms and causes of poverty. The Commission argues that most of the efforts locally are targeted towards addressing the symptoms rather than the causes and as a result the efforts appear fruitless at the more macro level. To be sure, other cases do make the distinction between short and long term recommendations and one could equate these with symptom and cause recommendations, respectively.

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<sup>71</sup> Herzog, Stephen. 2015. “Groups outline plans to deal with poverty in northwest SGF.” *Springfield News-Leader*. *Springfield News-Leader*. September 23. Retrieved September 28, 2015. (<http://www.news-leader.com/story/news/local/ozarks/2015/09/23/groups-outline-plans-deal-poverty-northwest-sgf/72710002/>).

<sup>72</sup> “Community Listen Zone Blitz.” 2015. City of Springfield. Retrieved September 29, 2015. ([www.springfieldmo.gov/documentcenter/view/19952](http://www.springfieldmo.gov/documentcenter/view/19952).)

<sup>73</sup> Springfield Impacting Poverty Commission, Commission Members. Retrieved June 28, 2015. (<http://www.impactingpoverty.org/commission-members/>).

<sup>74</sup> “Don’t Turn Away: Taking a long, hard look at Springfield’s Poverty.” January 2015. *417 Magazine*. Retrieved July 19, 2015. (<http://www.417mag.com/417-Magazine/January-2015/Dont-Turn-Away-Taking-a-long-hard-look-at-Springfields-Poverty-Problem/>).

## Comparison of Cases

The previous section presented the five cases in detail. This section compares the cases based on three key categories: membership and organizational structure, areas of focus for antipoverty strategies, and lessons learned (Table 3). Each of these cities searched for innovative solution to the shared problem of poverty, either generated from regional strategies or modeled around other successful initiatives, as was the case particularly in Rochester. What is common across all the cases is a commitment to collaboration in the pursuit of innovation. With the recognition that regional causes of poverty require regional solutions leading to the formation of these city-driven approaches, their commonalities in proposed strategies is suggestive that other cities can learn from the experiences of the cities leading the way today.

### Membership and Organizational Structure

The full spectrum of collaboration-initiating sectors is represented across the five cases. Norfolk and Rochester's projects were initiated by city governments, Kalamazoo's projects were largely community-driven, and Nashville's initial antipoverty program was started within the private sector. Interestingly, Kalamazoo's initial project from within the nonprofit sector eventually came to a halt, but was then invigorated by interest in collaborative research and action from a local university. Although there is a diversity of originating organizational sectors, each city emphasized collaboration and the inclusion of representations from each of the three possible sectors (city, nonprofit, and private).

However, several cities reflected on the importance of an active role of the city government. For example, in Kalamazoo's university-driven Call to Action program, several participants commented that lacking active representation from the City of Kalamazoo government, other sectors potentially felt less inclined to participant. Thus the question of legitimacy seems especially important here. The more apparently successful cases, for example Norfolk and Rochester, drew on backing from outside stakeholders – such as the state government in the case of Rochester and federal support in the case of Norfolk – for legitimacy in building new collaboratives. Other cities like Nashville and Springfield followed a more traditional model of the city governments initiating and convening a collaboration commission or coalition of public and private actors.

While no one initiating actor was common across all the cases, the common theme to emerge from these five cities, as well as the previous five reviewed for the Tucson Mayor's Commission on Poverty, is the importance of collaboration within and representation from the city, nonprofit, and private sectors. Though the city and nonprofit sectors are represented in each case, the inclusion and active involvement from the private sector also seems particularly important. Beyond inclusion for financial reasons, the private sector brings much to the table in terms of developing strategies related to workforce development, the most commonly identified strategies across the five cities.

Lastly, leadership emerges as an important characteristic of successful community collaboration. For example, participants in the Springfield project observed that although the city was represented by policymakers, no elected politicians were represented which could lead to problems with finding support for funding for both the antipoverty project itself and its proposed policies. Also, lacking authority to bring any Commission's recommendations to action was a common source of frustration from projects lacking participation from a Mayor or other elected official. Support for the Commissions was also important, with a private consulting firm (Norfolk) or staffing from the city (Kalamazoo) providing much needed administrative help.

## Target Areas

The most commonly identified area to be addressed through antipoverty strategies was jobs or workforce development. Every city put forward a strategic plan, or proposal to develop a plan, to increase employment among low income adults. This is not surprising given the central importance of employment opportunities and job training to alleviate poverty.

Several cities also chose to emphasize the importance of neighborhood development and safety. Springfield in particular identified “chronic nuisance problems,” which includes physical neighborhood blight and criminal behaviors, housing, public safety, and infrastructure and transportation as central – along with the more traditional workforce development, healthcare, and education. Rochester and Nashville also included neighborhood development as areas to be addressed.

Other areas, such as early childhood education and housing appear in some, but not all of the cases. And only in Norfolk is there a strategic aim of continuing to develop a coordinating structure as a cross-cutting strategy that addresses multiple other specific antipoverty initiatives.

## Lessons Learned

Collaboration and legitimacy emerge as the two most important lessons learned across the five cities. Although accurate data on ‘moving the needle’ for poverty is not yet available in most of the cases, the positive experiences expressed by the various project participants is quite evident. The coalition-model of collaboration with representation from the city, nonprofit, and private sectors led to important discussions of priorities and resource distribution that appear to have led to better-informed strategies of regionally-specific actions.

The importance of the legitimacy of the projects’ activities and buy-in from these diverse sectors is also emphasized across all the cases. For example, the high-profile Commission in Norfolk was seen as important not only for the actions and reports it prepared, but also for the attention it brought to the issue of regional poverty. Likewise, participants in the Nashville projects commented that the multiple Mayoral-driven initiatives signaled to the nonprofit and private sectors a long-term commitment to poverty alleviation – seeding the future with possibilities for future collaboration. Rochester also reflected this sentiment, with multiple levels of government signaling to the community of Rochester a long-term commitment to reducing regional poverty.

Some challenges were also observed with the collaboration coalition model regarding legitimacy however. Lacking political support for an antipoverty Commission beyond the initiation from a Mayor’s office appears to be problematic. Particularly in Springfield, the sole City Commission participant in the city’s antipoverty program observed that any recommendation developed over years of activity would not be beneficial to the city unless it could be politically-driven. Commitment then from elected city officials and council members seems to be a particularly important component for the success of these antipoverty commissions if the goal is to develop recommendations and proposals into real action.

## Conclusions

What lessons can Tucson learn from the antipoverty strategies of Norfolk, Kalamazoo, Rochester, Nashville, and Springfield? In 2012, Tucson Mayor Jonathan Rothschild established a commission to poverty to identify regionally specific strategies. The commission was chaired by representatives from two nonprofit organizations and included participants from the city and county governments, public nonprofit sector, and private sector. The commission partnered with the University of Arizona to better understand local patterns of poverty and potential strategies for alleviating poverty. The commission provided several recommendations to the Mayor's office and disbanded in 2014.

Tucson's timeline, then, is not dissimilar from those of antipoverty projects observed in other cities. A mayoral initiative to address what was in 2011 the 8<sup>th</sup> highest metropolitan level of poverty in the United States led to the formation of a public-private collaboration in the form a Mayor's Commission. Norfolk, Rochester, and Springfield formed similar antipoverty commissions. Only Nashville's first initiative began in the nonprofit sector. In Tucson, the Poverty Commission was then charged to collaboratively develop priority areas and provide strategic recommendation to the Mayor's office. Similarly, each of the five cities provided strategic recommendations with each including some focus on jobs and workforce development – as did the Tucson Commission, which prioritized workforce development as its highest priority.

In formation and initial direction then, Tucson's city, nonprofit, and private sectors worked together in a similar fashion as many other cities. While not all the cities' antipoverty initiatives reviewed here persisted beyond a priority-setting exercise, the cities exhibiting higher degrees of satisfaction with the collaborative process received longer-term commitments to the coalition model. In most cases, this commitment to long-term collaboration required a more formalized operating structure, often in the form of a city-supported coalition with some type of staffing (city or consultant). The most productive city in terms of reports, grants, and activities, Norfolk, greatly benefited from the support of a private consulting firm that ran meetings, prepared reports, and helped provide recommendations specifically on organizational development. Kalamazoo, on the other hand, repeatedly shifted through organizational forms (non-profit driven, university-driven, and city-driven). Participants in each of the three antipoverty initiatives to develop in Kalamazoo reflected on the challenges of not having everyone at the table at one unique time with a shared material and time investment in the future of the collaborative model. Tucson likely falls somewhere in the middle of these two cities, with some support for the Poverty Commission but not the support of a fulltime consulting firm.

Reducing poverty and providing economic security for low income families is an essential function for any city and its public and private sectors. In a time of decreased support from the federal and state systems, cities are increasingly dependent on their own resources and innovation for finding efficient means of social service delivery. Collaborative partnerships appear to be the ideal strategy for bringing key stakeholders to the table to determine priority areas that reflect regional concerns and potential resources for addressing them. In each of the five cities reviewed here, collaborative coalitions of city, nonprofit, and private sector stakeholders committed substantial time, energy, and resources to developing regionally specific antipoverty strategies. Though we must wait for official census data to determine how far the needle has been moved in terms of poverty indicators, each city's coalition reported significant benefits gained through the collaborative process, with many going on to apply for and win federal and state grant support for their antipoverty efforts. Long-term success of this collaborative model, however, requires substantial commitment from its

participants as well as strong leadership from elected officials to see the collaborative development process result in policy implementation and action.

<b>Table 3. Multi-City Comparison of Antipoverty Programs, Structures, and Lessons Learned</b>			
<b>Case</b>	<b>Organizational Structure</b>	<b>Target Areas</b>	<b>Lessons Learned</b>
Norfolk, VA	Mayoral Commission with primarily public and non-profit representation + facilitated by consulting firm	(1) Early childhood Development (2) Youth Education and Pathways (3) Adult Workforce Development (4) Neighborhood Revitalization and Support (5) Public Awareness of Services (cross-cutting strategy) (6) Coordinating Structure (cross-cutting strategy)	- Coalition-model of collaboration is recommended by consultant but no apparent movement on this recommendation despite progress on recommendations in all other target areas. Coalition-model of collaboration may only work if there is a strong leader advocating for the approach.  - High profile Commission may have positive indirect effects on the community in terms of competitiveness for other grants/awards.
Kalamazoo, MI	Three mostly distinct (temporally, membership, and goal) initiatives:  (1) Non-profit driven (Board of Directors representative of all three sectors: public, for-profit, non-profit) (2) Higher education driven (steering committee is exclusively representatives of higher education) (3) City Commission driven (primarily government but minimal representation from non-profit and higher education)	(1) Jobs (2) Families (3) Youth	- Coalition-model of collaboration may not be sustainable in the long-term for an issue like poverty reduction which requires long-term investment and commitment to the goal.

Rochester, NY	Two, mostly simultaneous and complementary initiatives:  (1) City Government + facilitated by United Way (diverse representation) (2) State Government (primarily representatives of state government)	(1) Jobs (2) Health and Nutrition (3) Education and Workforce Training (4) Housing (5) Safe Neighborhoods (6) Transportation (7) System Design	- Replication of best practices from other cities has potential to make city competitive for outside grants  - Establishing organizational structure/system redesign prior to formation of strategic action plan can have payoffs.
Nashville, TN	Three mostly distinct initiatives:  (1) For-profit driven (diverse representation from all three sectors) (2) Mayoral initiative (diverse representation from all three sectors; coalition-model lead by government) (3) Mayoral driven organizational structure change - creation of Mayor's Office of Innovation	(1) Youth education (2) Child Care (3) Economic Opportunity (4) Food (5) Healthcare (6) Housing (7) Neighborhood Development (8) Workforce Development	- Strong for-profit sector participation and commitment (beyond financing) to a coalition-model of collaboration can lead to a successful model.  - Formalized structure for coalition-model of collaboration can be successful.  - Long-term commitment of local officials to goal rather than organizational structure/system design can allow for relatively fast changes in approaches to intractable problems.
Springfield, MO	City Commission with diverse representation from all three sectors and private citizens including a high school student; politicians (as opposed to policy makers) are notably absent	(1) Chronic nuisance problems (2) Civic Engagement (3) Communication (4) Digital Divide (5) Food Access (6) Health Care (7) Housing (8) Infrastructure and Transportation (9) Jobs and Economic Development	- There is diversity within each sector (public, for-profit, non-profit) that must also be taken into consideration when selecting coalition collaboration representatives. Here the policymakers were at the table but the politicians were not; at least one Commissioner has identified that as potentially problematic.

		(10) Public Safety (11) Wellness	
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