

Neighborhood Vitality Index - Pilot Phase

Introduction

Data Driven Detroit (D3) and JFM Consulting Group (JFM) successfully launched its pilot test of the Neighborhood Vitality Index (NVI) in 2020. The NVI was collaboratively designed under the BECDD initiative, and is an analytical framework that is intended to provide actionable information to CDOs, foundations, city government, and other audiences to drive collaboration in neighborhoods and measure progress toward positive neighborhood change. It incorporates both qualitative and quantitative data, and was designed through a specific lens of equity and inclusion across race, ethnicity, geography, and income. When fully implemented, the NVI will provide actionable data that can be consistently measured over time for four main categories of indicators:

- Community Capacity: Factors that measure a neighborhood's connectedness, resources, and overall ability to facilitate positive change, including resident participation in and access to neighborhood groups and support systems, public and private investment facilitated in the neighborhood, and the presence of CDOs and community benefits agreements.
- Resident Opportunity: Indicators that measure residents' ability to access opportunity and economic mobility, such as tax foreclosures, housing cost burden, the number of business owners, and access to reliable transportation.
- Neighborhood Conditions: Indicators that measure the physical characteristics of a community, including the presence of blight, condition of vacant lots, and resident turnover.
- Quality of Life: Indicators that monitor whether residents can enjoy a high standard of living across multiple factors, including income diversity, safety and crime, school quality, and access to amenities like parks, retail, and recreational programs.

The process that JFM and D3 facilitated to develop and refine the NVI was intensely user driven, and took place over a number of years. The Success Framework Task Force that created the NVI framework included representatives from CDOs, foundations, the City of Detroit, and intermediaries, and the engagement process conducted prior to the pilot both deepened the relationships established through the original task force and expanded the group of people providing input into the NVI framework's design. This focus on deep community feedback and engagement continued when implementing the pilot.

The NVI pilot will be implemented in three phases, as described below:

- Phase 1: Development and testing of the instrument with select CDOs
- Phase 2: Pilot implementation the NVI Zones within one Council District
- Phase 3: Pilot implementation City-wide

Phase 1 of the pilot consisted of two key components. The first component focused on planning, and laid the groundwork for the testing of the NVI process and instrument. During this time D3 and JFM co-developed the necessary methodology to conduct data collection with guidance from the NVI Task Force and funders. D3 and JFM also assessed alignment with other potential partners and data-related initiatives during phase one. The second major component involved administration of the survey in partnership with a number of CDO's from the Strategic Neighborhood Fund throughout the city. D3 and JFM also created the foundation for materials and platforms that will make the NVI's data and findings actionable for users from a variety of sectors.

Planning

- JFM and D3 facilitated three planning meetings to solicit input and refine the NVI data collection tool, including a crosswalk of historical indicators and draft survey with indicator alignment.
- The data collection methods were shared with the Task Force and input was also solicited

Alignment Conversations

- Goal—to identify alignment and potential overlap with other data collection efforts in Detroit
- Organizations Included:
 - DMACS / Poverty Solutions
 - Detroit Future City / Center for Equity, Engagement & Research
 - Rocket Community Fund
 - Enterprise Community Partners / CDO Fund
 - Enterprise Community Partners / Opportunity 360
 - New Detroit
 - Reimagining the Civic Commons
 - National Opportunity Index
- Highlights and key findings
- Matrix to be included as attachment or in appendix

Pilot Implementation

- CDO partners included: [CDOs in Strategic Neighborhood Fund (SNF) neighborhoods, and other non-SNF neighborhood CDOs as well]
 - Urban Neighborhoods Initiative
 - LIVE6
 - Joy-Southfield CDC
 - Grandmont-Rosedale Development Corp
 - Genesis Hope CDC
 - Cody Rouge Community Action Alliance
 - Detroit Hispanic Development Corp
 - Congress of Communities
 - MACC Development
 - HOPEVillage
 - Eastside Community Network
- Electronic administration via CDO email blasts Nov 27 – December 17th
- 4,500+ “hits” only 224 used in data set (~120 incentives sent out)
- Bot hack (use ReCaptcha)
- Ultimately unable to track by CDO/Response by location difficult to verify

Survey Instrument and Index Creation

- Focus Group feedback
 - Respondents want to know who is funding the research
 - 5-7 questions not clear and need further refinement
 - Some responses not available or unclear
 - Survey length, accessibility, and incentive were not barriers
- Taskforce Review
 - Index language needs to be refined and clarified
 - Wireframe needs slight reorganization
 - Continued discussion on “scoring” and utilization by various audiences
- Internal Review
 - Residents reporting that they feel safe in their neighborhoods question missing

- o Some response options difficult to categorize and fold into index therefore need refinement
- o Response options for length of time in the city need reconsideration and question should reflect options for expats who have returned
- o Thresholds for responses need to be better defined for purposes of inclusion in the index
- o Income diversity needs significant thought
- o Need to better capture the respondent's neighborhood. Easier to do door-to-door than via electronic survey

Lessons learned and next steps

- Revisions to indicators and survey instrument to be made before administration of survey in Phase 2
- Planning for second pilot (one City Council District) administered via direct mail and online
- Identify resources for Phase 2, in coordination with BECDD