

Developing a Resident-Centric Community Data Platform

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Sarasota Community Studio & Community Data Collaborative of Sarasota County

OUR GOAL:

To create a community data platform that we can use as **residents** to initiate and lead community change efforts emerging from within our home neighborhoods.

To well-inform local community decision-making, data must be:

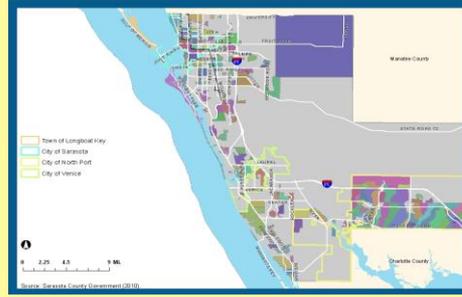
GRANULAR: Most local community indicators have been tracked at the whole-county scale, which does not clarify within-county patterns.

FREQUENT: Data points tend to be reported annually, which is not very helpful in trying to navigate local community change in real-time ways.

RELEVANT: Data are typically organized according to the boundary systems of professionals, such as:

- zip codes
- census tracts or block groups
- voting or police precincts
- service catchment areas
- school attendance zones

Data organized by NEIGHBORHOODS are more relevant to how we live and make decisions in relation to one another as fellow community members. Without neighborhood data, decisions are made for us by others.



Sarasota County, FL * 380,000 residents * 550 square miles
253 Neighborhoods

A FRAMEWORK FOR ORGANIZING COMMUNITY DATA BY NEIGHBORHOOD

Who are we? (Demographics)

What boundaries define us? (Geographies)

What is life like here? (Stories & Pictures)

How are we doing? (Indicators of W-B)

Social, Learning, Civic, Health, Economic,
Cultural/Recreational, Natural Environment, Built
Environment, Transportation

What have we got? (Assets)

What's going on? (Efforts to Promote W-B)

Neighbor-led efforts, Formal Programs/Services,
Policies, Research

What if? (Reflections & Questions)

IT TAKES A COMMUNITY

Creating resident-centric community data resources for the sake of community change involves:



The Community Data Collaborative of Sarasota County is partnering with the Urban Institute to create a resident-centric online data platform. So far, the following data layers have been contributed locally for inclusion in the online platform.

All of these data layers are at the neighborhood scale!
(POINT, BLOCK or NEIGHBORHOOD)

(Click [here](#) to see full list that was part of the actual poster presented at the 2012 Summit of the Community Indicators Consortium.)

Sarasota Community Studio

is a community change organization established by neighbors of the Central-Cocoanut neighborhood of Newtown in Sarasota, with an emphasis on following the lead of neighborkids.

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Prior to the establishment of Sarasota Community Studio, neighbors of Central-Cocoanut worked through Banyan Sprout, Inc. (a private practice of child psychology and community well-being) and SCOPE (a non-profit community engagement organization) to establish and develop the Community Data Collaborative and related Community Data Platform of Sarasota County.

Community Data Collaborative of Sarasota County

is a growing network of over 50 people from various local neighborhoods and institutions throughout Sarasota County, coming together on a regular basis to develop user-friendly processes, resources and technologies that make it possible for everyone in Sarasota County to effectively use "community data for community change."

<http://sccommunitydatacollaborative.weebly.com>

CHALLENGES:

Developing a resident-centric community data platform requires:

A SHIFT IN MINDSET TOWARD DATA:

Recognition of the **necessity** of neighborhood-scale data, in order to bring community realities into focus, must be cultivated.

PHILOSOPHIC RESONANCE:

Appreciation of the "inside-out" nature of community change -- which emphasizes **residents** as primary change agents -- is not yet the norm.

ONGOING DISCERNMENT:

An ongoing community process is necessary through which residents are continually deciding which local datasets and indicators are relevant to resident-initiated/resident-led community change efforts.

ADDRESSING POWER DYNAMICS:

Institutional willingness to elevate the power of knowledge and decision-making to residents and neighborhoods is necessary but difficult to cultivate.

UTILIZATION:

If data are generated, gathered and available but not used by residents for decision-making and action, this risks reinforcing the very power dynamics that undermine resident capacities.

RECOMMENDATIONS

- Explicitly articulate the vision and theory of change relating to resident-centric community data.
- Develop relationships and communicate regularly.
- Notice and respond when concerning motivations for data development are expressed in the community (e.g. a proprietary rather than open orientation to data).
- Acknowledge necessary competencies and invest in developing these competencies.
- Share updates at multiple scales. (neighborhood, community, city, county)
- Champion and safeguard an open process and clear community ownership.