

**Monthly Meeting of the Sarasota County
Community Data Collaborative
MINUTES**

Session: Monthly Meeting of the Data Stewards/Sarasota County Community Data Collaborative

Date: Wednesday, August 29, 2012

Location: Selby Library, Sarasota

In Attendance:

First Name	Last Name	Organizational Affiliation	Neighborhood
Jim	Bennett	Venice City Council	Sawgrass
Doug	Griffin	Citizen/SCOPE Data Team	Siesta Key
Rachel	Herman	Sarasota County Government	Bayou Oaks
Gil	Lee	United Way 2-1-1 Manasota	Park East
John	McCarthy	SCOPE	Beneva/Proctor
Trevor	Melderis	Sarasota County Government - GIS	South Gate
Jason	Winoker	Sarasota County Government- GIS	Twin Lakes
Stan	Zimmerman	Sarasota News Leader	Alta Vista
Allison	Pinto	Central-Cocoanut Neighborhood, Banyan Sprout, SCOPE	Central-Cocoanut
Tim	Dutton	SCOPE, Central Cocoanut Neighborhood	Tahiti Park/Central Cocoanut
Colleen	McGue	SCOPE	Indian Beach

Several members of the SCOPE Board also attended this meeting: Kathy Baylis, Roxanne Joffe, and Rob Lane.

Agenda:

- I. Introductions
- II. ONLINE PLATFORM
 - i. Status update on platform being developed with Urban Institute
 - ii. Review of online platforms from other communities
 - iii. Clarification of timeline for community decision-making re: platform development
- III. DATASETS
 - i. Review of data contributed so far & data in cue for conversion / contribution
- IV. CLARIFYING QUALITY OF LIFE INDICATORS
 - i. Update on Community Data 2.0 sessions
 - ii. Life is Good video story-gathering
- V. REFLECTION
 - i. Neighborhood Expo
- VI. Announcements – Next Meeting, Other Info?

What follows are notes on the presentations and conversation associated with each session.

I. **Introductions**

- Everyone introduced themselves by name, neighborhood, and institutional/associational group affiliation (as a way of reinforcing our neighborhood-based and cross-scale/cross-sector orientation).

II. **Online Platform (available at <http://nccsweb.urban.org/communityplatform/sarasota>)**

The group went online to check out the current draft of the online community data platform that is being developed in partnership with the Urban Institute. There are additional layers of data that still need to be uploaded by UI, and there is a lot of local data that still needs to be submitted by local data stewards. Nonetheless, the website gives us a sense of how it is shaping up. It is important for everyone to check out this online platform, in light of the upcoming decisions that the Community Data Collaborative will be making.

On September 17th, we will decide as a group whether it makes most sense for our community to:

- Invest further in a partnership with the Urban Institute to develop an online data platform;
- Contract with another national partner (instead of the Urban Institute) to continue developing an online data platform;
- Create a locally grown online data platform without a national partner;
- Defer decision-making to allow for enough time to see how the preliminary online data platform developed in partnership with the Urban Institute “comes to life” and gets used by people throughout Sarasota County; OR
- Cease efforts altogether with regard to the development of the Community Data Collaborative and corresponding online data platform.

We then asked ourselves: What needs to happen so that more neighborhood-relevant local data are contributed?

- The Sheriff’s Department continues to contribute data, however the Excel macro now needs to be updated and the Excel expert who was volunteering for these efforts is no longer available to do so.
- Indicators from the Sarasota Housing Authority and the Sarasota County School District have been identified but are not yet available.
- The Health Department epidemiologist has expressed concerns about demo-geo comparability of local neighborhoods to Census block groups – this deserves further conversation and deliberation.
- Residents are unlikely to use the community platform if it does not include relevant data corresponding with the boundaries of home neighborhoods.

Next we addressed a dilemma that the Collaborative is facing. SCOPE committed to providing facilitation of the Community Data Collaborative through September 2012, and the staff members who are trained and experienced in facilitation and the development of community indicators have resigned from SCOPE and will be leaving the organization at the end of September. Although less intensive facilitation of the Collaborative is likely needed in the upcoming phase as the network becomes more self-organized (if the Collaborative decides at the September meeting that it wants to continue in its efforts), it seems like it would be beneficial for there to be a designated facilitator / coordinator. However, it is crucial that the facilitator / coordinator have the relevant expertise, capacity / availability, and perhaps most importantly a philosophy and theory of community change that are consistent with the philosophy / TOC out of which the Community Data Collaborative and online platform have been created. At this time, no local group / organization has been identified that meets these criteria. This is a dilemma that the Collaborative will need to address at the upcoming meeting.

We then discussed the process of comparing our online Community Data Platform to others, in order to inform the decision about future investments that will be made at the September meeting. We went online and looked at ShareNM.org, which is another site that the Urban Institute is creating with and for the State of New Mexico. It is important to note that this site differs from the one we are creating in some dramatic ways: it is oriented around services, non-profits, and issues rather than around neighborhoods. However, the “look” of the site, in terms of its visual appeal, can give us a sense of the possibilities for our site. Also, this site is set up with a separate page for each county within the state, and this could be translated into pages for each neighborhood within the county of Sarasota.

The group then used the summary that was emailed on August 8th as a reference to look at several other communities’ sites: Providence, Boston and Baltimore.

Questions & Comments by people at the meeting:

For the purposes of the online platform, we probably need to come up with a threshold for what “qualifies” as a neighborhood: certain minimum geographic area and minimum number of residents.

Not many other communities are organizing and visualizing their data at the neighborhood scale.

Will the platform be open source? Example of Sarasota Indie Media: only wanted to use open source, Unix software so that the software itself would be so open-sourced that anyone could use and access it.

- The Platform created with the Urban Institute is somewhere in between. The Platform is open and accessible to the general population.

In relation to philosophy and theory of community change: How is it that we believe transformative community change occurs?

- This platform has been developed with residents at the center: we are trying to make sure all of us as residents are well equipped to take action. In terms of finding a partner

that will be a good fit, we want to make sure whoever is coordinating the development of the platform identifies with that theory.

What about site administrators?

- In addition to an overall local site administrator, this platform may need a cadre of Neighborhood administrators – an individual from each neighborhood who gets notifications and manages assets being added to the site that exist within the neighborhood. Also, anyone adding an asset would need to provide their home address, not just their email address.
- Every local data steward will also make professionally informed decisions about the availability of their data—and the decisions might change over time.

What about neighborhoods that have their own websites (listing board, etc)?

- Neighbors could link to their website at the top of their neighborhood page on the platform.

It would be cool if we could see the neighborhood compared to the other neighborhoods, cities, county, state, country for that indicator.

- This is in keeping with the original “design plans” shared with the Urban Institute, which proposed including mechanisms to compare any given neighborhood to the neighborhoods around it, the city, and the county.

How long have we had a relationship with the Urban Institute?

- For about one year.
- This is a true partnership with the Urban Institute: for a greatly reduced rate of \$6,000. New Mexico will have spent much more when it is all said and done. Also, there was an in-kind contribution there from the local community in terms of graphic design.

Is there anybody in Florida who is investing in a community platform?

- Hillsborough County
- Another county in South Florida is partnering with the Urban Institute, but a non-profit-centric platform

What are the main concerns about working with the Urban Institute?

- There are no major concerns about working with the Urban Institute – there is the question of using a GoogleMap vs. an ESRI base. There is a concern that we ensure the graphic design is high quality in order to make it engaging and user-friendly. The folks at the Urban Institute have been very easy to work with.

I like the simplicity [of the Platform created by the Urban Institute]. It's very clear, not busy. Most people are familiar with a Google platform so that's good. There needs to be some work done on the symbology.

- This is where the wisdom of the local community comes in: take a look at it, play around with it, jot down some notes and share that with the Community Data Collaborative.

III. Clarifying Quality of Life Indicators

- **Community Data 2.0** -- There were two recent Community Data 2.0 workshops: One focused on the City of Sarasota community on August 16 at the Robert L Taylor and

Community Data 2.0: An Older Adults' Perspective on August 24 at Sarasota County Technical Institute

- **Life is Good** in Sarasota County Community Video Campaign – It would be great to have stories continuously contributed. <http://scopexcel.org/lifeisgood.html>

IV. **Reflections on Community Data:**

- Neighborhood Expo on Thursday, September 13 from 6-8:30pm at Crocker Memorial Church (Historical Society of Sarasota County), 1260 12th Street, Sarasota
 - This will be a chance to see how a small cadre of individuals has been using community data resources for the sake of resident-led change.
 - There will be a panel of commentators as well.

V. **Announcements:**

- The Community Data Steward Agreement for Data Stewards to fill out was handed out again.
- **Next meeting of the Community Data Collaborative will take place on Monday, September 17th from 3-5pm at the Gulf Gate Library, 7112 Curtiss Ave. Sarasota, FL 34231.**

A. Additional Comments/Questions:

- Staff from 211 expressed concern about sharing their dataset. They have data, but are concerned that it might skew things because those who use their Information & Referral services tend to have lower than average income. This dataset might require continued collaboration before it can be used for the Community Platform.