

**Progress Report to Sarasota County  
Submitted by SCOPE  
July 26, 2012**

**Community Engagement Through Community Data:**

**A. Community Indicators Development**

**1. Outline a Strategy**

Graphics titled, “Aspects of a Community Change Initiative” and “Developing a Community Data Collaborative” continue to be shared at monthly meetings and online to communicate a local strategy through which community indicators and other kinds of data can contribute to sense-making, decision-making, and the coordination of efforts to improve quality of life in Sarasota County.

The following table details the strategy with regard to the various tasks to be completed from March through September 2012. This timeline has been slightly modified over time, as agreed upon by Data Stewards and in response to the timing of contributions by Collaborative partners.

Timeline for Development of Community Data Collaborative & Related Platform

| Month        | Meetings of Data Stewards             | Data Steward 1:1 Meetings with SCOPE staff | Community - Wide Meetings re Community Data Collaborative | Community Data 2.0 Sessions  | Online Story-Gathering Process for Quality of Life Indicators Clarification | Platform Development  | Reflecting on Data for Decision-Making                    |
|--------------|---------------------------------------|--|---|--|---|---|---|
| <b>March</b> | X                                     | X<br>(School District)                     |   | North Port   | X   | Identifying data & organizing by nbhds  | w C-C neighbors & Resident Community Changemakers; other? |
| <b>April</b> | Combined with community-wide meetings | X<br>(Environmental Services)              | X   | Venice<br>(rescheduled for May 18 due to City of Venice schedule conflict) | X   | Identifying data & organizing by nbhds  | w C-C neighbors & Resident Community Changemakers; other? |
| <b>May</b>   | X                                     | X<br>(Public Housing)                      |   | Sarasota<br>(rescheduled for August due to City of Sarasota schedule)      | X   | Upload data to platform (delayed b/c sufficient data not yet submitted by partners) | w C-C neighbors & Resident Community Changemakers; other? |
| <b>June</b>  | Combined with community-wide meetings | X<br>(County GIS)                          | X   |  | X   | Upload data to platform (delayed b/c sufficient data not yet submitted by           | w C-C neighbors & Resident Community Changemakers; other? |

|               |                                       |                    |   |   |   |   |   |
|---------------|---------------------------------------|--------------------|---|---|---|---|---|
|               |                                       |                    |   |   |   | partners)   |   |
| <b>July</b>   | X                                     | X<br>(Health Dept) |   | NeighborKID focus<br>(Newtown)                        | X | Upload data to platform;<br>Evaluate SC Community Platform vs. other online platforms | w C-C neighbors & Resident Community Changemakers; other? |
| <b>August</b> | Combined with community-wide meetings |                    | X | City of Sarasota;<br>Older Adult Focus<br>(Gulf Gate) | X | Evaluate SC Community Platform vs. other online platforms                             | w C-C neighbors & Resident Community Changemakers; other? |
| <b>Sept.</b>  | X                                     |                    |   |   |   | <b>Select online platform for ongoing development</b>                                 |   |

The process for the selection of community indicators is as follows: When ideas regarding community indicators have been submitted by participants at all 3 city-specific Data 2.0 workshops, these ideas will be combined with the ideas submitted by participants at the county-wide session held in 2011. At that point, ideas not only will be categorized by domain, but also analyzed within domain. Ideas contributed through the “Life is Good in Sarasota County” video campaign (an online story-gathering process to inform the selection of community indicators) will be similarly categorized and analyzed. The range and frequency of ideas generated through these two processes then will be shared with the Community Data Collaborative to inform ongoing selection of indicators to be reported and tracked at the neighborhood scale. Decisions about community indicators to select is also informed by the expertise of local community partners, the availability of local data, and the resource allocations that various community partners are able and willing to invest in order to make available data accessible beyond their own organization / agency. These considerations are addressed through the one-to-one meetings with Data Stewards and through the monthly meetings of the Community Data Collaborative. The process for identifying community indicators is therefore an ongoing, iterative and recursive process, combining both the wisdom of residents and the expertise of professionals.

### **2 / 3. Implement a Process (Including Community Convenings & Online Input)**

The process implemented to date to identify community indicators that matter most in Sarasota County includes:

- In-person community convenings
- Monthly meetings of the Community Data Collaborative
- One-to-one meetings with Data Stewards
- Online story-gathering process

#### ***In-person Community Convenings:***

**Venice:** “Community Data 2.0: Venice,” a 3.5 hour session on community data, took place on May 18, 2012. This session was co-hosted by the City of Venice, Venice

Area Chamber of Commerce, Venice MainStreet, and SCOPE. The agenda is attached. This session was informed by participant feedback from earlier workshops in that the review of local community data was oriented around particular questions (in this case relating to business, given that two of the co-hosts were business networks), the orientation to analyzing mapped data was streamlined, and the interactive nature of the session was increased. Please note that although some participants at previous workshops provided feedback to indicate that they wanted SCOPE to provide an interpretation of the community data, this does not occur at the workshops because the purpose is to increase awareness of available data and processes for community members to interpret the data themselves.

Attendance: The session was attended by 70 people, all of whom were adults. (Efforts were made to involve students as well; however, this did not work out due to end-of-school year schedule conflicts.) There were 51 participants who provided information about their home and work address as well as their workplace affiliation. This information reflects geographic and sector diversity as well as engagement. Participants came from 15 self-identified neighborhoods within the Venice community. Institutional and sector affiliation included for-profit and non-profit business, healthcare, higher education, libraries, real estate, parks / recreation, social service, arts, media, and city / county government.

***Neighborkid-Oriented (Newtown, Sarasota):*** “Community Data 2.0: A Neighbor-KID Perspective,” a 3 hour session on community data focused on child and neighborhood well-being, took place on July 14, 2012. This session was co-hosted by three local networks of children/youth (the Central-Cocoanut Neighborhood Scavenger Hunters, Greatness Beyond Measure, Youth of Bethlehem Baptist Church) and SCOPE. It focused on Newtown as a “kid hotspot,” meaning that is a geography where there is a higher proportion of child residents than in most neighborhoods and communities throughout Sarasota County. The orientation around a kid hotspot was informed by prior feedback from workshop participants and partners of the Community Data Collaborative, which suggested an emphasis on the experience of children, as well as the robust contributions of children in Newtown with regard to community data over the past few years. The workshop design was modified in response to feedback from earlier workshop participants, such that the session was shorter, there was more video incorporated in order to be more engaging, and there were more interactive exercises. It was also designed to facilitate cross-generational dialogue and collaboration. The agenda is attached.

Attendance: The session was attended by 74 people, of whom 38 were children and youth between 7 months and 18 years of age and 36 were adults. Of those who were up to age 18, 4 were up to age 5 years, 9 were ages 5 to 10 years, 12 were ages 10 to 14 years, and 12 were ages 14 to 18 years. The majority of children and youth in attendance were residents of the Newtown community, although children from Sapphire Shores, Fruitville, and even Bradenton neighborhoods attended as well. Institutional and sector affiliation of participants

included faith communities, libraries, social service, recreation, and city/county government.

#### Method:

Data were generated in a variety of ways at the Data 2.0 workshops in order to clarify qualities of life that matter to people and corresponding community indicators. Participants were asked a series of questions, to which they responded by engaging in small group discussions. They also recorded their own responses on post-it notes, which were turned in at the end of the exercise. These written responses were then entered into an Excel spreadsheet, to be coded within the various domains of community well-being: Civic, social, health, learning, economic, culture/recreation, natural environment, built environment, and transportation. The analysis of findings will be conducted and shared once ideas from all 3 municipality-specific workshops (i.e. North Port, Venice, Sarasota) and the two age-specific workshops (with a focus on children and older adults) have been conducted.

Please note that when participants are asked to review indicators collected to date and respond to the question, “As someone who lives and/or works in Sarasota County, what surprises / interests / concerns / inspires you most in the patterns revealed in the data?” the purpose is to identify indicators that are most “sticky” or eye-catching or captivating to community members, for whatever reason. As such, an analysis will not be conducted with regard to which are noted as surprising vs. interesting vs. concerning vs. inspiring. If these distinctions are of particular interest to the Community Data Collaborative in the future, follow up questioning could be conducted by the Collaborative.

Please see the previous section titled, “Outline of a Strategy” for explanation of how information gathered through the Data 2.0 workshops and online story-gathering are useful in the selection of community indicators.

#### Feedback:

**Venice:** An online survey was sent out to participants during the week following the Data 2.0: Venice session. Nine people contributed the following feedback in response:

##### *What worked well?*

- It was awesome! Exciting vision for the future of our area and for communities everywhere.
- Interesting data.
- Nice mix of people.
- SCOPE moderator was enthusiastic.
- SCOPE is helping communities gather data about each community in Sarasota County to help with decision making and future planning on needs of community.
- Really like the Ignite presentation, would like to see more of that, was amazed at what I don't know about some of the area's where I live and work!

- Ambitious project, map-driven, more theory than practice.
- Data for use by members of govt. & community.
- Explained what data is being gathered and why; gave example of one way to use data (i.e., the slide show of Sawgrass).
- Everything about it worked well.
- Explanations paired with projected visuals.
- Small group sessions.
- The handouts, the Powerpoint presentation and the post-its for providing feedback. Oh, we shouldn't overlook the excellent pastries provided by the Upper Crust Cafe, excellent.
- The separation of the participants into different tables and the discussion between them.
- The slide show on the neighborhood was a nice touch.
- The speakers were terrific and kept my attention!
- Everything about it worked well.

*What could have been better?*

- Graphics were small and hard to see for some.
- Can't think of much...maybe ask a participant where they live, describe it for everyone, and then do a 1 minute map drill of that area. Sort of like the Sawgrass example we had, but on steroids...fast-paced and eye-opening.
- I didn't understand it as a visioning process and didn't feel much input was requested.
- Too long.
- Discuss what improvements our community needs and how to achieve them.
- Examples by a City Planner and a Not for Profit & member of city council on how they would utilize one particular piece of data.
- Explain how we could get the data for further analysis we may want to do.
- More audience interaction, probing questions, examples of data successes in other communities
- More time to isolate important areas for data collection

*What do you hope to see happen next?*

- A vision of positive changes for the future.
- Adjust the data categories based on the knowledge needs of the community.
- For one thing, extrapolation of all info gathered at that session for each community and observation(s) of what it means to the community; and input from those in outlying areas (unincorporated part of county near each city) by those who use city's amenities.
- Greater awareness that this data is compiled and to see the data as the Town

instead of just the legal City limits

- Not sure...still a bit confused on that.. Maybe a group that meets regularly to go over data and make a presentation to policy makers.
- Progress reports and press coverage to expand community awareness
- Workshop in one year discussing who used the data and how it proved useful to different parties.

*With regard to community data, what's the greatest contribution that YOU, YOUR NEIGHBORHOOD or YOUR ORGANIZATION could make to help bring about positive change here in Sarasota County?*

- Getting the community of Venice East aware of the program.
- Self-awareness. I don't think of where I live as a neighborhood and am unlikely to do so without prodding or incentives
- Show the neighborhood how the data could be used to their benefit.
- Sit on a task force, say for homelessness or bullying in schools (and report on it)
- To help the retired residents to feel business is needed and not the enemy
- Convene community conversations; host events; serve as community data node.
- Staying involved
- We could supply raw data on low income etc.

*With regard to community data, what's the greatest contribution that you believe the Community Data Collaborative could make to help bring about positive community change here in Sarasota County?*

- After one year, hold another workshop...have civic leaders, govt leaders and not for profits report back as to how data was used.
- Demonstrate that people are interested in neighborhood life by simply participating in project.
- Pointing out to funders and policy makers areas of need. Data and charts can help focus the discussion.
- Publicizing some of the more interesting data to entice people to get more involved.
- Show residents we need business to move here! Not all of us came here retired!

**Neighborkid-Oriented (Newtown, Sarasota):** At the conclusion of the July 14 workshop, participants provided the following verbal feedback (rather than being asked to provide online feedback, given the limited success of online surveys following past workshops):

- More from kids! More videos from kids! More data from kids!
- Kids can be shy in from of a room.
- More interaction with kids!
- We could have kids go outside, get together and talk with each other to share

ideas.

- We could benefit from places more kids feel free to be open with each other.
- Kids love arts and crafts, are open with each other and talk in Girl Scouts – we could translate this model.
- Talking with kids one-to-one, rather than putting a microphone in their mouth, can be a good way to find out what kids think.
- As parents, if we learn to communicate better with kids they will communicate better with us.
- I want to know where a kid spends his day, where and what do they do.
- We need to meet kids where they are at
- What would community convenings look like if they were truly intergenerational?
- This is a true defining moment for all neighborhoods.
- All are welcome at my home.
- This is a reminder that it's all for one and one for all.

This feedback is being used to inform modifications of future Data 2.0 sessions, and the ongoing development of the Community Data Collaborative.

***Monthly Meetings of the Community Data Collaborative:***

Additional meetings where citizens can become involved in the identification and selection of community indicators include the monthly, open meetings of the Community Data Collaborative. These occurred on April 9 at the Sarasota County School District offices, May 21 at Twin Lakes Park, and June 25 at McCown Tower of the Sarasota Housing Authority. The next meeting is scheduled for July 30. Agendas (within corresponding PowerPoint presentations) for the meetings are attached. These meetings have provided opportunities to further develop the conceptual framework that undergirds local community data efforts, to review latest efforts to identify and upload local community data, and to update participants on reflection and data-based decision-making occurring throughout the county.

A template for the establishment of a preliminary partnership agreement with all members of the Community Data Collaborative was shared at the March meeting of the Data Stewards. This form was not completed and submitted by any of the local partners; however, one-to-one meetings with a variety of data stewards (see below) indicated that there is ongoing interest and commitment among a number of partners. In August, an updated partnership agreement form will be shared with all partners, and a discussion will be facilitated regarding the anticipated benefits of formal written agreements about membership in the Community Data Collaborative.

***One-to-one meetings with Data Stewards*** were initiated in February, 2012. To date, meetings have occurred with:

- Allen Parsons and Ann Sheller of Sarasota County Comprehensive Planning
- Leona Collesano and Roy Pinchin of Sarasota County School District
- Esther Eugene of Sarasota Housing Authority
- John Ryan and Sherry Phillips of Storm Water Management / Water Atlas
- Aubrey Phillips and Lee Hayes Byron regarding Sarasota County Green Map
- Anthony Vallone of Sarasota County Area Transit

- Antoine Henry of Sarasota County Supervisor of Elections
- Chuck Henry and Michael Drennon of Sarasota County Health Department
- Jim Shirley of Arts and Cultural Alliance of Sarasota County
- Kathy Solie, Trevor Meldaris and Jason Winoker of Sarasota County GIS

A composite neighborhood shapefile has been created through SCOPE to assist Data Stewards in converting their address data into neighborhood data prior to sending along to the Urban Institute to be incorporated into the online community data platform.

***Online Story-Gathering Process:***

Another way to gather information about qualities of life and corresponding community indicators that matter most to people in Sarasota County is through an online story-gathering process. Individuals are asked to contribute videotaped stories in response to the following prompt: “Tell us a story about a moment you experienced here in Sarasota County when you thought to yourself, “Wow! Life is GOOD here in Sarasota County!” These stories are a way for community members to articulate what qualities of life that matter most look like in everyday life. As such, they become responses to the second core question in the Results-Based Accountability framework – the framework upon which these efforts to clarify community indicators are based. On the basis of these responses, it becomes more possible to identify corresponding community indicators.

This process has evolved such that individuals who contribute stories now also contribute demographic and geographic information about themselves, and code their own stories with regard to the various domains of well-being. To date, “Life is Good” stories have been contributed by 66 individuals (children, teens, adults, and older adults) from the following areas throughout Sarasota County:

- Sarasota (22)
- Venice (20)
- North Port (6)
- Laurel (4)
- Nokomis (2)
- Osprey (1)
- Elsewhere throughout Sarasota County (11)

Stories will be coded according to the various domains of community well-being: Civic, social, health, learning, economic, culture/recreation, natural environment, built environment, and transportation, and then coded within domain to identify associated community indicators. Contributions to date suggest that “Life is Good” story-gathering is a promising approach to engaging citizens of Sarasota County in identifying qualities of life that matter most in this community.

Partners of the Community Data Collaborative have been encouraged to contribute and gather Life is Good stories through their organizations/agencies/networks as well, as a means of contributing to the ongoing efforts of the Collaborative. This has not yet happened; continued encouragement will be provided.



## **B. Community Data Collaborative and Platform Development**

### **1 / 2. *The Community Data Collaborative* now includes:**

Neighbors of:

- Amaryllis Park
- Central-Cocoanut\*
- Chamberlain
- Country Club Ridge - North Port
- Cranberry- North Port
- Fruitville – South\*
- Gulf Gate
- Indian Beach/Sapphire Shores\*
- Isles of Palmer Ranch
- Lake Sarasota\*
- Manatee County
- McClellan Park
- Ringling College Vicinity
- North Sarasota
- Sarasota Springs
- Sawgrass\*
- Siesta Key
- South Field/Bee Ridge
- South Gate
- South Gate/Philippi Creek
- South Venice\*
- Tahiti Park
- The Landings
- Twin Lakes
- University Park

Employees / Volunteers of:

- 211 Sarasota Manatee
- Bethlehem Baptist Church
- Banyan Sprout
- City of North Port – IT & GIS
- City of Sarasota - GIS
- Coalition to End Homelessness
- Community Health Improvement Partnership (CHIP)
- Continuing the Conversation (about Aging)
- Economic Development Corporation of Sarasota County
- Elder Law
- Florida House

Friends of Sarasota County Parks  
Ringling College - Environmental Studies  
Sarasota County - Water Atlas  
Sarasota County -- GIS  
Sarasota County Government - Sustainability Department  
Sarasota County -- Health & Human Services  
Sarasota County Libraries  
Sarasota County -- Planning  
Sarasota County School District – Information Technology  
Sarasota County Sheriff's Department  
Sarasota Herald Tribune  
Sarasota Housing Authority  
SCOPE  
UF/IFAS Sarasota County Extension  
Venice City Council

\* While there are individuals who live in a variety of neighborhoods throughout Sarasota County who are attending the Community Data Collaborative meetings, those neighborhoods with an asterisk are the ones with neighbors who are actively utilizing community data resources generated through the Collaborative for the sake of resident-led community change efforts.

SCOPE will continue to facilitate monthly meetings of the Community Data Collaborative through September, 2012.

### **3. *Online Platform Development***

The Community Data Collaborative has agreed to partner with the Urban Institute in the development of a preliminary online community data platform, based upon the “Community Platform” developed by the Urban Institute that is already in use in a variety of communities across the U.S. The online platform for Sarasota County will be resident-centric, with block-scale Census data included and community indicators data organized by neighborhood. Local boundary systems, assets, resident-generated stories/videos/photos, and data relating to various intentional change efforts (both services / programs and informal efforts) will be included as well.

Please see the PowerPoint for the June, 2012 Data Collaborative Meeting for details regarding community data contributed to date.

Although local community partners across sectors have expressed recognition of the value of creating a community data platform that is resident-centric and populated with neighborhood-scale data, questions and concerns were expressed by County staff through the written response to the contract update submitted by SCOPE to Sarasota County in April. A discussion was facilitated at the May meeting of the Community Data Collaborative to address these concerns. A helpful resource to review for further

clarification about the importance of a resident-centric orientation is “Finding Place in Making Connections Communities: Applying GIS to Residents’ Perceptions of their Neighborhoods,” authored by C.J. Coulton, T. Chan, and K. Mikelbank, published by the Urban Institute and sponsored by the Annie E. Casey Foundation in 2010. As this paper states:

“A ‘neighborhood’ provides not only a tangible, manageable target for intervention, but also a meaningful entry point and frame for engaging residents who share common aspirations and needs with others they define as ‘neighbors.’ For policymakers, practitioners, and funders committed to developing [efforts] in partnership with residents, the identification of a locally meaningful ‘neighborhood’ is a fundamental issue. But efforts to identify such a unit are often stymied by the lack of pertinent data and credible methods.” (p. V).

More specifically, when data is available according to a geography that is not actually how people live in relation to one another (e.g. zip code, census tract or block group, school attendance zone or service catchment area), this is not of sufficient granularity or adequately synchronized with real-world socio-geospatial boundaries to meaningfully inform the everyday decisions and actions that residents make and take to change our community for the better. For further elaboration, please see the attached “Letter to Ms. Ricci,” which describes the rationale for a neighborhood-centric community data platform in more detail.

The “Finding Place” paper goes on to say: “The adoption of externally imposed or arbitrary neighborhood boundaries may be problematic for community [efforts]. The lack of fit with place as experienced by residents is apt to be a barrier to authentic resident engagement. If successful community work requires collective action, then arbitrary neighborhood units are unlikely to bring together residents who share the common purpose that comes from identification with a place and a sense of its possibilities.” (p. VII).

In Sarasota County, a preliminary set of neighborhood boundaries have been established through neighborhood associations and through residents groups that have self-identified and contacted their local city or county government to register their existence. (Note: In North Port the process was different, but even still there is a preliminary set of recognizable neighborhood boundaries that are acknowledged by that city.) These neighborhood boundaries are sufficient to “launch” the online community data platform, and then can be modified over time as residents provide input and feedback to adjust the boundaries so that they optimally fit with lived experience. The online platform will also be developed to include a feature that makes it possible for users to define their own neighborhood boundaries when they prefer to do so. A spreadsheet summarizing over 30 community data platforms developed by communities across the country has been prepared by SCOPE for review by the Community Data Collaborative once the local platform developed in partnership with the Urban Institute is live and being “inhabited” by some local neighborhood groups. This will be shared at the July or August monthly meeting of the Collaborative and will inform

decision-making in September regarding future community investment in the development of the local community data platform.

In addition to communicating about the Community Data Collaborative through e-newsletters, blogging, Facebook and twitter, efforts were made to increase community awareness and engagement through print media. Please see the attached document titled, “Publications re Community Data and Resident-Led Community Change” for examples.

### **Building Community:**

The four individuals participating in the Resident Community Changemakers (RCC) fellowship have continued to build community in their home neighborhoods by:

- Walking their neighborhoods and interfacing with neighbors for at least 10 hours per week
- Recording daily reflections on their experiences and interactions in their neighborhoods
- Generating maps of their neighborhood, in terms of demographics, indicators of well-being and assets
- Updating profiles of their home neighborhoods
- Reading and providing written commentary on chapters and articles on community change
- Participating in bi-weekly group reflective consultation with the RCC fellowship group
- Participating in bi-weekly individual reflective consultation with the RCC fellowship director
- Creating video blogs to communicate their reflections on their involvement in the fellowship
- Creating neighborhood newsletters
- Co-facilitating monthly meetings of the Community of Practice, to exchange experiences and ideas with others in Sarasota County who are interested in resident community changemaking

The Resident Community Changemakers will host a “Community Open House” for neighbor-groups to share the profiles and efforts of their neighborhoods at the end of the fellowship. The Open House will take place on Thursday, September 13, from 6:00 – 8:00 p.m. at the Crocker Memorial Church of the Historical Society of Sarasota County. At the conclusion of the fellowship, the changemakers will be supported in identifying ways to remain connected with one another and any other community resources that they believe will optimize their ability to continue working together with fellow neighbors in their home neighborhoods.

Please see the article titled, “Getting to Know Your Neighbors” in the “Publications” attachment for further details about the Resident Community Changemakers fellowship.