



# **Creating Safe Neighborhoods for Active Living: A Case Study of Cross-Sectoral Collaboration**

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Active Living Research Annual Conference  
Feb. 28, 2013

# Background

- Cross-sectoral collaboration is a key lever for creating safe, activity-friendly neighborhoods
- Current scholarship in sustainability science<sup>1</sup> suggests that cross-sectoral collaboration can span boundaries between knowledge and action by balancing:
  1. **Legitimacy** (e.g., ensuring a fair, participatory process)
  2. **Salience** (enhancing relevance to decision-makers at different levels)
  3. **Credibility** (developing data-driven methods and evidence to support action)

<sup>1</sup>Cash D, Clark WC, Alcock F, et al. Knowledge systems for sustainable development. Proc. Natl. Acad. Sci (PNAS), 2003;100(14): 8086–91.

# Background

- Few studies have critically examined the perceived benefits, drawbacks, and tensions of collaboration among different stakeholders in dynamic community contexts.

# Creating Safe Neighborhoods for Active Living: A Case Study of Policy Change

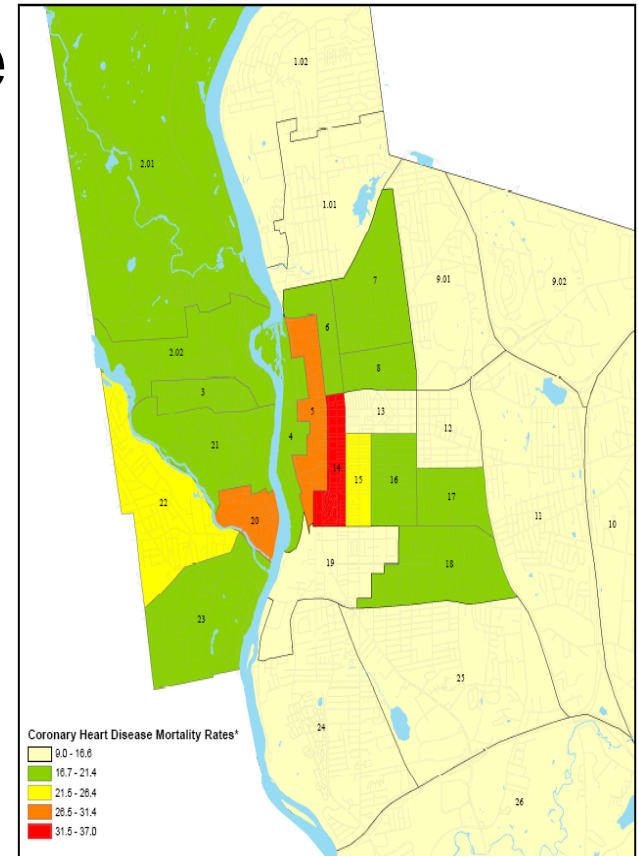
## Objectives:

- To examine the institutional policy process in Manchester which originated from a Weed and Seed (W&S) Initiative in 2001
- To examine the perceived benefits, challenges, and lessons learned from the W&S cross-sectoral collaboration
- To examine the implementation of W&S policies within two low-income, ethnically diverse neighborhoods



# Manchester, NH

- Largest city in New Hampshire
  - Population 109,830
- Refugee Resettlement Area
- “East Side” and “West Side”



**Age-Adjusted Coronary Heart Disease**

**Mortality by Census Tract**

**(1995-2005)**

**Rates per 10,000 population**

# Innovative Elements of Manchester's Approach

- Integrated a public health prevention perspective with evidence-based criminal justice initiatives to simultaneously leverage **violence prevention** and **chronic disease** policies
- Created healthy social and physical environments by bridging issues of **safety, violence prevention, neighborhood revitalization, sustainable food systems, and active living**



\*For more information: Prevention Institute report “Addressing the Intersection”:  
<http://www.preventioninstitute.org/press/highlights/404-addressing-the-intersection.html>)

# Institutional Policy Changes

- Crime Prevention Through Environmental Design (CPTED)
- Community Policing
- Neighborhood Revitalization Projects
- Safe Routes to School
- “Safe Havens”
  - Multi-service centers that coordinate youth and adult services in a highly visible, secure and accessible facilities



# Methods

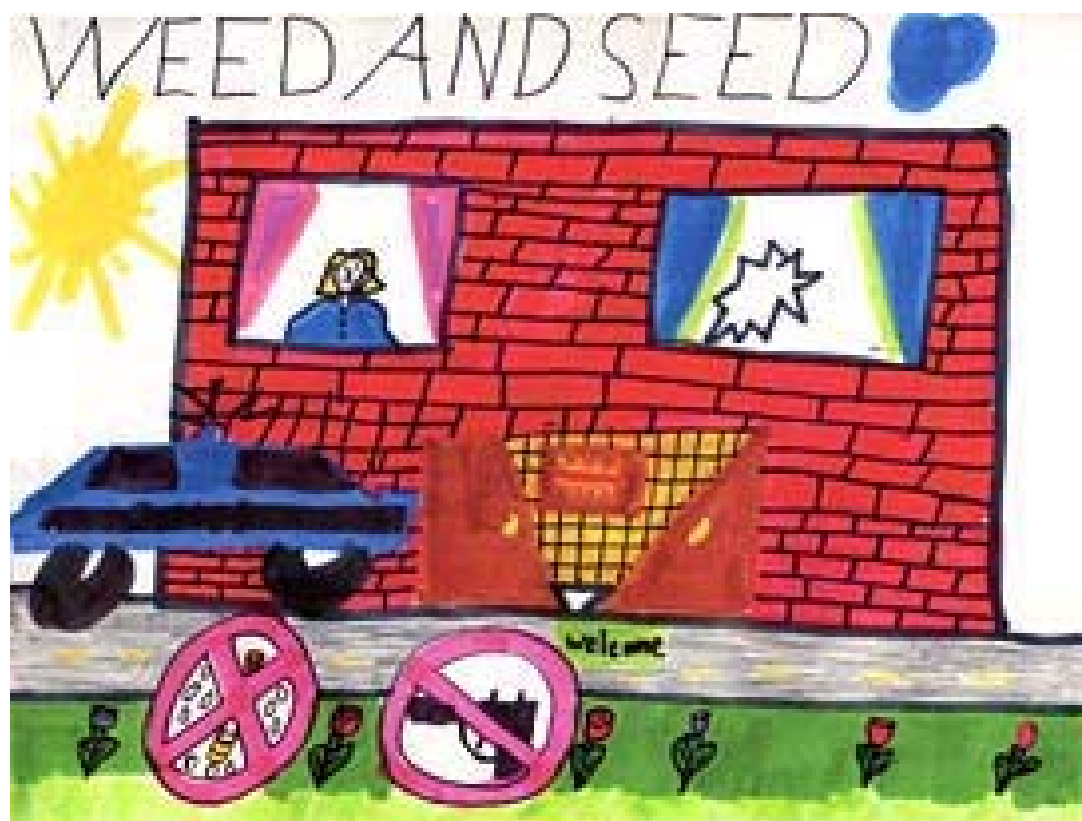
Mixed Methods included:

- Qualitative analysis of over 45 historical documents/reports
- 12 key informant interviews with stakeholders (e.g. community leaders and department directors)
- Survey of secondary stakeholders (e.g., agency staff and service providers representing 15 different sectors (n=96))
- 2 Photovoice projects with low-income/refugee youth



# Results

- Manchester's W&S initiative successfully created a cross-sectoral, city-wide **vision** for preventing violence and promoting active living, using a social determinants of health lens



*The City of Manchester is our community which has clean, safe and crime-free neighborhoods for all by encouraging mutual respect and consideration for others, promoting educational attainment, and fostering opportunities for community engagement.*

**~Residents' W&S Vision Statement**

# Results

Factors that were critical to the adoption of the collaborative vision include:

1. The original W&S mandate from the Department of Justice;
2. Key community leaders who served as champions of the vision and acted as effective “boundary spanners”;
3. Institutional placement of W&S personnel across sectors (e.g., the Health and Police Departments);
4. Utilization of neighborhood-level structures and strategies to support communication and collaboration (e.g., neighborhood watch groups, community policing, and Crime Prevention Through Environmental Design).

# Results

- Institutional structures, policies, and procedures changed over time to sustain cross-sectoral collaboration.
- Over 75% of stakeholders reported:
  - Increased staff time to attend meetings in other departments/organizations
  - Enhanced efforts to reach out to different stakeholders
  - Increased cross-training of staff to work collaboratively with different departments or organizations.

# Results:

## Perceived Benefits

- The shared vision and institutional policies/practices were perceived as beneficial by a substantial percentage of stakeholders.
  - The majority survey respondents reported that W&S made it “much easier” or “somewhat easier” to:
    - “Get invited to the table” for processes involving multiple organizations around the themes of active living, healthy eating, and violence prevention **(80%)**
    - Have a better understanding of their organization’s role to promote safety, active living and neighborhood health **(76%)**
    - Maintain quality relationships with other organizations **(73%)**
    - Build capacity to effect change and leverage desired outcomes **(70%)**



# Results:

## Perceived Benefits (2)

Most stakeholders reported that Manchester was doing “somewhat better” or “much better” with respect to creating opportunities for :

- Healthy eating **(78%)**
- Adopting strategies to enhance safety in areas where people could be physically active **(70%)**
- Fostering trust between residents and law enforcement **(71%)**
- Improving the physical appearance of neighborhoods **(71%)**
- Establishing neighborhood watch groups **(67%)**

# Results:

## Perceived Challenges

- Only one-third of stakeholders reported that Manchester was doing “somewhat better” or “much better” with respect to:
  - Limiting tobacco advertising in areas where youth play
  - Including the perspectives of diverse groups, senior citizens, and youth in planning efforts

What do low-income,  
immigrant/refugee youth see when  
they go outside to play?



# Youth Photovoice Project





***“This is a picture of an alleyway ... We need to work together to fix this. ”***

**-W.P., 15**

(Manchester police reviewed this photo and described this scene as an arson hazard).

# Results:

## Perceived Challenges

- Stakeholders also identified several key challenges to fully implementing and sustaining the collaborative vision
  - 1) Reconciling a broad, holistic vision with the need to prioritize specific strategies to effect change, particularly in the context of limited funding;
  - 2) Clearly defining roles and responsibilities in a manner that supports monitoring and accountability;
  - 3) Maintaining sufficient levels of participation and engagement across sectors;
  - 4) Communicating impacts to policymakers and residents; and
  - 5) Envisioning how structures and processes may be redefined as the collaboration evolves

# Next Steps: Policy, Environment, and Systems Change

- Findings from this study are currently being used to inform policy processes at various levels, and to support the city's commitment to neighborhood safety, active living, and quality of life for all residents.

## Examples:

- Manchester was Invited to participate in the Sustainable Communities Initiative and is conducting an HIA of the Second Street Corridor Improvement Project

## *Environmental Changes:*

- Upgraded lighting at a neighborhood park to improve safety
- Imprinted Crosswalks



# Next Steps: Capacity Building

*“Connect, Collaborate, Create”*

- Manchester was awarded a RWJF Roadmaps to Health grant
- Community School Model
  - Uses public schools as safe havens; joint use policies
  - Community schools bring together many partners to offer a range of supports, services, and opportunities to children, youth, families, and communities.
- Provides local capacity for data collection and analysis using the Promise Scorecard software as a decision-making tool for results-based collaboration

# Conclusions

- W&S established the legitimacy of a cross-sectoral vision to address the intersection of violence prevention and active living
  - Developed a collaborative process that was viewed as transparent and inclusive by key stakeholders.
- Stakeholders recognize that certain challenges (e.g., accountability, delineation of roles and responsibilities, and participation) warrant ongoing attention
- W&S contributed to the development of new institutional policies, practices, and norms to promote safety and active living.



“I love this picture because I think it is beautiful. It shows the beauty of the West side of Manchester. It shows that some people’s thoughts about the West side are wrong. If you are looking for the good in something, you will find it. But if you are focused on the bad, you will only see the negative”.

T.L., girl, 15, West Side





# Support / Funding

We are grateful to the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation's Active Living Research Program for supporting this research (Grant ID#68495).

We thank the City of Manchester for their commitment to this work.

# Questions?

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