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City Scan Evaluation

2002-2003

Submitted to the Connecticut Policy and Economic Council

By

Robert Shumer, Ph.D

With Assistance from Randi DeLeo, Juliana Piedrahita, and Nneka Lundy

October 31, 2003

City of Hartford
October 31, 2003
Robert Shumer

City Scan: Hartford 2002-2003
Robert Shumer, Ph.D.

Introduction

City Scan is an initiative designed to engage residents, primarily youth, in the collection of information about the physical environment of Hartford and to utilize that information to improve the quality of life in the community. This work by youth, and the resulting actions by City staff and local citizens, are expected to engage more citizen participation in the solution of community problems. Funded primarily by the U.S. Department of Commerce, this Technology Opportunities Program grant is designed to help cities engage in the creative use of technology to help residents and businesses improve the quality of life for their inhabitants. The project also received financial support from the Alfred P. Sloan Foundation and other funders.

This report covers the period between September 2002 and October 2003. The cycle involves work done in the fall of 2002 and spring of 2003 (in follow up to the summer scanning activities of youth in July and August, 2002) through the summer activities and follow-up to the youth scanning actions of July and August 2003. The report includes data and comments on the evaluation questions developed in February 2003. Major questions included:

- a) As an initiative designed to engage members of neighborhoods and the city at large in local government and community activities, how do the components of City Scan produce involved citizens?
- b) As an initiative designed to utilize electronic technology in documenting physical problems in neighborhoods, how do the pictures and databases assembled contribute to the solution of neighborhood concerns and allow local citizens and government officials to monitor and solve local problems?
- c) As an initiative designed to engage youth in the use of technological tools to create a knowledge base of neighborhood issues, what and how do youth learn about the technology that contributes to the betterment of local communities

day each Friday dealing with educational curriculum related to work and career development. Much of the curriculum came from the Capital Region Workforce Development Board, the primary source of student workers for the summer.

Program Outcomes

Student surveys and focus groups revealed that the educational components of the initiative were well met. Youth learned a lot about getting along on the job, how to work with others, and how to accomplish workplace tasks. Because a majority of youth were 15 and 16 years old, City Scan functioned as their first job experience. While some youth had problems getting along in the early stages of the program, for the most part, students were fairly well behaved and stayed connected to the program. Retention rate for the summer was more than 90%.

Participants did their scanning in groups of 6, with a supervisor assigned to each group. 10 supervisors worked with the youth to master the technology and scanning skills, as well as to provide guidance for the field and classroom activities.

Survey data revealed that all but one item, "learning how to work with a desktop computer," were significantly improved ($p > .01$). This included such things as: improving computer and digital camera skills, and knowing how to report graffiti, abandoned vehicles, abandoned buildings, and unsafe/unsightly lots. Youth also revealed that they not only learned about reporting problematic conditions, they actually made such reports in their own communities. This was one of the important outcomes of the initiative.

Conclusions

There is little doubt that City Scan is improving as a program and increasing its effectiveness in delivering important information to the City and people of Hartford. The amount and quality of data are increasing from year to year and the receptiveness of citizen and municipal groups to use the information is also growing.

Communication between City Scan staff, the City of Hartford, and the NRZs is improving. Contact is becoming more frequent and more regular, and trust between people and organizations is growing.

The quality of City Scan staff is acknowledged to be excellent. Their knowledge of technology, youth, and city issues is recognized as a strong asset.

As the program continues to improve, it must face the issues of increasing community awareness and engagement of the local citizenry to use its database to co-develop the local plans that connect neighbors with their government. Fixing the problems associated with operating a summer youth program still need to be addressed.

City Scan started with a bold vision of engaging youth and citizens, through technology, to improve the quality of life in Hartford and other Connecticut communities. There is nothing in this report that suggests that vision needs to be changed. The program is simply going through a growth process that accompanies any large scale, multifaceted initiative that is implemented over a period of years. As City Scan becomes more seasoned, more mature, and more practiced, the impact on the City of Hartford should be everything that was originally expected. The vision holds; the practice simply needs to catch up with the theory.

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August, 2002, through the summer activities and follow up to the youth scanning actions of July and August 2003. The report includes data and comments on the evaluation questions developed in February 2003. The primary questions for the evaluation of City Scan are:

- a) As an initiative designed to engage members of neighborhoods and the city at large in local government and community activities, how do the components of City Scan produce involved citizens?
- b) As an initiative designed to utilize electronic technology in documenting physical problems in neighborhoods, how do the pictures and databases assembled contribute to the solution of neighborhood concerns and allow local citizens and government officials to monitor and solve local problems?
- c) As an initiative designed to engage youth in the use of technological tools to create a knowledge base of neighborhood issues, what and how do youth learn about the technology that contributes to the betterment of local communities
- d) As an initiative designed to be sustained over time, what components/processes of City Scan assure that the program will be functional in the future

Secondary questions related to the goals of the project include:

- 1) How does City Scan promote economic and/or community development?
- 2) How does City Scan increase the capacity of citizens' groups?
- 3) How does City Scan improve the quality of communication between citizens and city officials?
- 4) How does City Scan improve the effectiveness of public services?

Secondary questions related to the stated measurable outcomes for the project include:

- I) How does City Scan reduce the number of parcels that show serious neglect?
- II) How does City Scan improve the atmosphere/streetscape by documenting and remediating the incidence of graffiti? How does the removal of other unsightly items improve local residents' satisfaction with their neighborhoods?
- III) How does City Scan meet each NRZ's need for data regarding their neighborhood infrastructure by tracking the condition and severity of neighborhood problems over time?
- IV) How does City Scan increase the capacity of citizens' groups to use data to advocate for neighborhood improvements?

Data necessary to respond to these questions came from a variety of sources through a variety of methods. Interviews, observations, focus groups, surveys, and

- Conducted a focus group meeting with CPEC staff in August 2003 on the challenges and successes of the summer program
- Conducted focus group meetings with staff supervisors and youth participants in August 2003
- Observed youth participants on a scanning project one day in August 2003
- Informally interviewed youth participants and staff one day in August 2003
- Interviewed CPEC management about the City Scan program in August 2003
- Surveyed city staff/community members who use City Scan data about the effectiveness and quality of the information produced by City Scan
- Attended a strategic planning meeting for CPEC staff about City Scan in August 2003
- Had students complete a post-program survey in August 2003
- Review of documents submitted by staff and evaluators in September and October 2003

Data from all these sources produced more than 100 pages of field notes and program documents, 8 audiotapes, and required more than 40 hours of analysis and review.

Analysis followed general practices suggested by J. Spradley in *Participant Observation* (1980), developing taxonomies and themes to capture trends in the data to explain the nature of the program/activities studied. Using key phrase analysis, data were organized to address the evaluation questions posed at the beginning of this document. The report is organized to respond to these questions.

Program Description/Evaluation Question Responses

From the time the evaluator and evaluation team started in October 2002, several major program activities involved youth participants. During fall 2002 and spring 2003, eight youth were hired to conduct a follow-up scan of several neighborhoods to determine what had been remedied from the previous summer scan. Youth took several weeks to do follow-up work and produced digital pictures and narratives of what had been done.

youth said that the areas scanned “were much worse than where I live.” Others reported that the scanning activities exposed them to areas that were equal to or better than their home environment. Most youth indicated that the scanning activities made them aware of the differing conditions throughout the city and the difficulty in solving the problems of city cleanup and sanitation. Most youth felt they were helping to improve conditions in the city, and this proved to be one of the strongest motivators for participation in the program.

Involvement in City Scan also made youth participants aware of the city systems in place to deal with city problems. Through journals and informal discussions with youth we learned that they came in contact with residents in various situations, from youth gangs and the drug culture on negative encounters, to business and local community members who were happy to see that some people and programs were trying to improve conditions in the community.

In general, there was relatively little contact with the community members during the scanning activities. Youth and supervisors went up and down the streets with few encounters with local citizens. Despite the fact the CPEC had printed cards with information about City Scan and how to report problems to the City, most supervisors said they received only a few cards and did not distribute them to residences and businesses as they conducted their scans. They were given out to people who inquired about what the youth were doing, but few cards found their way to citizen’s homes or businesses.

CPEC has promoted more citizen engagement by actively attending local NRZ meetings and presenting information and data about the program. The

recognition is not restricted to Hartford: initiatives in other cities face similar issues of low program recognition.

- a) **How do the pictures and databases assembled contribute to the solution of neighborhood concerns and allow local citizens and government officials to monitor and solve local problems?**

Data from interviews indicate that this may be City Scan's greatest area of strength. Early on in the program, there were some issues between CPEC and the City about how to report information. The City of Hartford staff suggested that they used data that involved parcel numbers, while the City Scan data referred to addresses and locales. The City staff said the data were not as useful as it might be. That was last year.

This year things are different. There is much better dialogue between City Scan staff and City of Hartford staff and the differences are being worked out together. Also, other staff, specifically in the area of graffiti removal, have praised the City Scan effort as being tremendously helpful.

The person coordinating graffiti removal responded to five questions about the value of City Scan in the following way:

1. **How frequently have you had contact with City Scan staff this summer?** I met with staff early in the summer and received a large report with photos and addresses of graffiti locations in July.
2. **How useful has the data been that they have provided? How have you used the data?** The data has been very helpful. It was sorted to eliminate

high quality, accurate, and is helping to improve the quality of graffiti removal in the city. Reports from CPEC staff indicate that graffiti removal is the most successful area of improvement of the physical environment.

Reports from City Scan on other areas, such as abandoned cars and abandoned buildings, are also improving the City's ability to remove such eyesores from the community. The Director of Waste and Recycling was very pleased with the work of City Scan, suggesting that he would like to have other departments, such as Solid Waste Trash Disposal, model the photographic approach to dealing with City problems.

City Scan data are also being shared with NRZs to help them target objectionable items/areas within their boundaries. This approach, according to City Scan staff, is beginning to have an impact on NRZs and their realization that they can provide direction to City Scan efforts to clean up specific areas in their neighborhoods. The CPEC/NRZ relationship is a good example of a major improvement in City Scan operations. Reports from NRZ Chairs indicate that the communication process is improving and NRZs are beginning to see how they can use City Scan for their own benefit.

Thus, City Scan is helping the City of Hartford and its affiliates to deal with problems that can be captured through cameras and digital databases. The appearance of the city is improving, and the City Scan model is being touted as an effective approach to remove objectionable items from the streets, lots, and buildings in Hartford.

the information. This seemed to be effective because the data, as reported by City Scan staff and city personnel who used it, was of high quality with few errors.

Youth reported a level of boredom with the technology instruction, claiming that after the first week they learned relatively little more about the use of the equipment. They felt frustrated by the evaluation process. Participants were continuously asked to report on what they learned about technology each week, and had to respond that they learned the same things that they had learned the week before.

These comments may help to frame recommendations for program improvement next year, where perhaps our collective learning about City Scan can combine the two functions, with youth both recording and downloading the data. This would solve some of the boredom issues for the youth, especially when they returned from the day's scanning activities, and would help them to expand their knowledge about the equipment and the whole process of developing a database for the City. Supervisors could work with them, or they could develop youth led quality teams, to ensure that the data are reported with few errors, in a format deemed useful by the City staff and other end users.

e) **What components/processes of City Scan assure that the program will be functional in the future?**

CPEC staff took steps to ensure the operation of City Scan for the foreseeable future by obtaining a \$1.125 million dollar grant from the Sloan Foundation to continue and refine the project for the next four years. This should allow for sufficient time and learning to implant the program in a variety of

Business people responded that because many local businesses were located in areas where there had been a lot of graffiti and other indicators of gang and unlawful activity, potential customers were not as likely to shop or do business in their area. However, after much of the graffiti was cleaned up, the area became more attractive to customers, and business seemed to improve. Business owners see a direct link between graffiti and other signs of unsavory neighborhoods with economic prosperity and business success. Physical appearance is important to business. Some areas have seen resurgence in graffiti in the last few months and City Scan is working with the NRZ, the Spanish-American Merchants Association, city authorities and others to quickly remove the markings.

2) How does City Scan increase the capacity of citizens' groups?

Information collected during the period of this study indicated that while City Scan has the potential to increase the capacity of citizens' groups, there is only limited data that indicates that such groups are actually increasing their involvement in civic activities. The problem is not limited to City Scan. In fact, Hartford 2000 and Neighborhood Revitalization Zones are struggling to get the message out to local citizens that organizations exist to help them deal with community problems. Meetings attended by members of the evaluation team demonstrated that some citizens are realizing that City Scan can provide them with tools and data to improve the climate in their neighborhoods. The problem is getting the word out.

3) **How does City Scan improve the quality of communication between citizens and city officials**

One of the venues that connect citizens with city officials is the City Scan Advisory Committee. Having attended one meeting and reviewed the minutes of another, it is clear that the intent of this group is to connect city officials with various members of the community, particularly the partners in the TOP grant plan. Members of this Advisory group include city officials (from deputy mayor and Department of Human Services Recreation Services), youth commissioners, members of the city library staff, staff of Hartford 2000, staff of local

organizing/evaluation agencies (CREN), and a local youth focused community initiative (*Making Connections of the Annie E. Casey Foundation*). The meetings were chaired and agendas were set by CPEC City Scan Director, Michelle Doucette Cunningham. The meetings went well in terms of CPEC updating members about current program implementation and future plans. Members were receptive to ideas presented and informed about what City Scan was doing. Thus, there was good communication between CPEC and community members about their various roles and functions related to City Scan.

One of the problems noted at the meetings was the low attendance by members. Only about half the members were there (which is a perennial problem for busy people) and there appeared to be lack of representation by local residents of communities served by City Scan. While there are few suggestions about how to involve more community members, perhaps assigning the chair responsibilities to someone other than a City Scan staff member might engage more people. The

and information with city systems and community needs. This dialogue has set up a seamless flow of information that is constantly improving the utility of City Scan as a valuable source of information for the communities served.

4) **How does City Scan improve the effectiveness of public services?**

As mentioned earlier, the director of Waste and Recycling Management for the City of Hartford found City Scan to be highly effective and wanted other members of the city staff, specifically Solid Waste Disposal, to model the program. So City Scan serves as a model to governmental agencies as to what can be done when youth, technology, and information development improve services to the public.

Similarly, the director of Hartford Proud and Beautiful, a member of the Arts Council, found the work done by City Scan to be extremely helpful in the battle against graffiti in the city. He said that he simply did not have the time nor staff to do the work of City Scan. The information provided was most helpful, and in a format that was most useful, in dealing with issues of graffiti abatement.

Thus, City Scan serves as a model of technology and human resources to address public services. As the program continues to improve, it will have more impact on the effectiveness of public services in Hartford and surrounding communities.

Secondary Questions Related to Measurable Outcomes.

1) **How does City Scan reduce the number of parcels that show serious neglect?**

one NRZ Chair reported that the removal of graffiti (at a much higher rate than Asylum Hill) brought a renewed sense of pride to the neighborhood. Local businesses benefited from the improved and cleaner streetscape, and local residents felt a greater satisfaction with the condition of their neighborhood. Removal of other unsightly objects and the cleanup of overgrown lots created a renewed energy on the part of residents to clean up their own houses and lots so the initiative spread to local residents to follow the lead of the City Scan effort. Cleanliness beget cleanliness!

III) **How does City Scan meet each NRZ's need for data regarding their neighborhood infrastructure by tracking the conditions and severity of neighborhood problems over time?**

The Asylum Hill example demonstrates how City Scan staff present information from local scans to help NRZs use data to track conditions of problems over time. The scan/rescan format invites neighborhoods to examine specific problems and solutions over a period of time to see whether or not problems have been resolved. Because City Scan staff members are more involved in local NRZ meetings on a regular basis, the opportunities are now available for NRZs to identify areas of scanning that need to take place. They can then monitor what happens to the specific violations/problems identified from the scans.

Interviews with two NRZ chairs and two community coordinators indicate that the NRZs are beginning to think about how they can use City Scan data to

indicated that City Scan was just another program to allow the City and staff to meddle in local communities. They didn't think the City Scan effort would benefit their community in any significant way.

SUMMER 2003 PROGRAM

As mentioned earlier in the report, the Summer 2003 evaluation of the actual City Scan youth activities was based on multiple data sources. Surveys, formal interviews, participant observations, focus groups, and informal interviews, journals, incident journals, CPEC staff reports, and supervisor journals all contributed to the description and understanding of the summer youth employment program operated as a City Scan initiative. This segment of the report is presented according to the activities/areas/people studied.

A student intern from Trinity College served as the active evaluator, attending meetings, observing youth and staff, participating as a supervisor on actual scans, and creating and collecting written journals from youth and selected supervisors. Three supervisors, in particular, were each paid a \$50 stipend to cover added time for them to complete specific journal questions each week. Those documents served as an important source of information on the role of the supervisors in the City Scan process.

Youth Participants

As mentioned earlier, youth participants were recruited and assigned by the Capital Region Workforce Development Board. City Scan staff worked with the Board during the spring to ensure that previous City Scan youth were assigned to the project and

In the subsequent weeks, youth participants engaged in scanning activities during the afternoons, classroom activities covering work and personal development curriculum, and evaluation activities (including journal writing, critical incident journals, and group discussions). Youth scanned all the areas of Hartford (finishing the entire city before the end of the program) and spent the last two weeks scanning other nearby communities (New Britain, Windsor, and West Hartford).

In a typical week, participants would come to work Monday through Thursday at 12:30 PM and spend one-half hour doing evaluation or other written/discussion activities. They would then prepare for the afternoon scan. This involved loading on to buses by group (approximately 6 per group; two groups per bus) and go out to various scanning sites. They would spend the remainder of the day doing scanning and noting cited conditions, and then return to the school (Sports Science Academy) at around 4:00 PM. The last 20 minutes or so was spent doing evaluation/housekeeping activities. On Fridays, they would begin work at 9:00 AM and go until noon. During this time they would cover job preparation/retention curriculum, dealing with interpersonal issues and other subjects suggested by the Workforce group. From 1:30 to 4:00 P.M. they would do additional tasks, including evaluation work. They even used this time for additional scanning. Fridays were also used for field trips and for special events.

Summer Scan Data

Youth participants scanned for various conditions during the six week program. Using digital cameras and hand-held computers to record specific information (such as address, condition of severity, photo number, etc.) participants scanned **a total of 1411**

Youth Participant Learning

Youth participants were given a pre-program survey that asked a variety of questions about their knowledge of electronic equipment and the process of reporting problems to the city. They also had open-ended questions pertaining to their reasons for joining City Scan and for their expectations about the program. A copy of the survey is included in the Appendix.

The survey was re-taken at the end of the program in August and the pre and post program responses analyzed for changes. In addition, students also responded to journal questions each week about what they were doing and learning. They also had discussions periodically about how they felt about the program and what it was that they liked and disliked.

Survey analysis (t-test of paired samples) indicated that the students actually learned a lot about the program and its process. Every question that was posed about learning how to handle electronic equipment, how to report problems, and to actually reporting problems to the city saw a statistically significant change ($p > 0.01$ level) in knowledge and understanding. The questions involving growth related to the goals of City Scan for youth included:

- How familiar are you with the use of digital cameras?
- How familiar are you with the use of hand-held computers?
- Have you ever been involved in any programs that attempted to develop a database of information to help local residents?
- How proficient are you in the use of laptop computers?
- How proficient are you in the use of hand-held computers?
- How proficient are you in the use of databases for hand held devices?
- Do you know how to report abandoned cars/large objects in your neighborhood?
- Do you know how to report abandoned buildings in your neighborhood?
- Do you know how to report graffiti in your neighborhood?
- Do you know how to report unsafe/unsightly areas in your neighborhood?

in the first few weeks of the program, so their growth in understanding of technology was reduced after that time. They would have liked to have learned more.

Youth also learned how to use the maps that were produced daily to track their scanning efforts. They were able to identify locations and problematic situations from the maps. Some youth admitted at the end of the project that the map reading activities were still problematic, and that they needed more assistance in learning to locate things more effectively. So, map reading activities might be added to next year's agenda as an area to emphasize.

The map reading dilemma may have been caused by an uneven application of map reading in the field. In some of the scans observed by the evaluation teams, certain youth appeared to "take charge" of the map reading activities, while others just walked along and did scanning or identifying areas for photos. Thus, youth actually required to do the map reading varied among the units

Youth participants also reported that they learned a great deal about getting along in groups. These interpersonal skills and knowledge were part of the group process in the field and also part of the workplace curriculum in the classroom. The majority of youth, who reported this was their first job, felt the discussions both in the classroom and in the field were helpful in learning to negotiate within a group structure.

Youth also reported that they learned how to handle and hold a job. They learned the importance of promptness and of accepting responsibility for showing up and doing what was expected. Thus, workplace knowledge and skills were another primary area of learning.

Unhappiness with “school-like” activities is a constant dilemma for summer youth programs. While adults see the classroom opportunities as time for discussion and learning about work, the city, and the substance of the program, youth see the activities as a continuation of school in the summer months. The participants, especially since they were 15 and 16, viewed the summer program as a chance to relax and only partially participate in learning activities. Since they considered some of the activities boring or at least, uninteresting, the tension between summer and school-like activities is a hard one to reconcile.

The small group format seemed to work well in developing good relations among group members. They liked the supervisors (who were consistently there) and enjoyed the opportunity to get to know a few people well. However, they felt the small groups promoted a kind of “cliquishness”, with little exchange and opportunity to get to know youth from other groups. The small group format also tended to reduce contact with other supervisors. Most of the contact, according to youth interviews, was through disciplinary infractions, so the opportunity to meet on a positive, constructive basis was limited.

Supervisors

As mentioned earlier, data were collected from supervisors through journals, observations, and a focus group held near the end of the program. Supervisors had much to share about their job, the program, and the successes and challenges of the summer scan effort.

supervisors because they were trying to complete the downloading process while, at the same time, trying to supervise the youth as they ended their day.

Through journals and focus groups, supervisors discussed how the program progressed and made recommendations for improvement for next year. They identified several areas that needed to be addressed.

They all agreed that communication was the number one need for improvement for next year. Supervisors lamented the fact that they did not have enough time to share and learn from one another. Things went too quickly and there was simply too much to do during the work day. They wanted to have more planning opportunities (which was also agreed upon by the CPEC staff) and wanted more opportunity to especially plan for *what appeared to be challenging times*. *Returning early from a scan, dealing with youth on rainy days, and conducting evaluation and curriculum activities* all proved to be the greatest challenges in terms of keeping the youth engaged and motivated to do their work. These were the topics they wanted to discuss and wanted to learn more about in order to do a better job.

Supervisors were quite pleased with the CPEC staff support. They praised the quick response rate from staff when there was a problem. They paid special compliments to Arroll Borden regarding his assistance with mapping and other technology issues. To improve the program for next year, they also wanted to see more of a presence of senior staff at the summer site and wanted better communication between all CPEC members and youth supervisors.

thought the program should be reduced in size to only about 20 students. 20 engaged and interested youth, who were perhaps juniors and seniors in high school, would allow for much more effective scanning, and fewer discipline and behavioral problems. The issue for the staff was whether or not to keep the source of youth participants from the youth employment pool, or to find other funding to develop their own stream of recruits. Obviously such a move would increase the cost of the program and eliminate one of its ties to existing systems. On the other hand (and corroborated on at least two of the observations of the actual scanning) more youth appeared to be mildly engaged in the activities, with a minority actively photographing and recording details. Certainly the heat affected everyone, but less motivated participants did not appear to contribute a great deal to the effort. Their loss in future years would not alter the productivity of the summer scanning activities; in fact, it might enhance it.

CPEC staff members were much happier that there were more youth supervisory staff this year. Even though there was a larger staff, the pay was a bit of a problem in attracting and keeping experienced supervisors. The loss of supervisors through the early part of the program was problematic and disruptive. It required more CPEC staff to assume temporary supervisory roles...which meant they couldn't attend to their regular jobs.

Staff felt the youth participants learned a lot. First, they learned a work ethic, understanding the necessities of getting to jobs on time, participating as members of a group, and sharing responsibilities with others. For many, this was their first job, so they had the opportunity to work as an "employee" for the first time. Second, participants learned to "look at Hartford with new eyes." Staff felt the scanning experience exposed

Supervisors and youth participants exercised great caution and good judgment in order to avoid problems. One of the observational reports followed a group of youth into what was considered a dangerous area of town. Youth were actually surrounded by locals on bikes, who suspected the City Scan participants might be police informants or police representatives. Supervisors and youth quickly diffused the tension by explaining the program and then combining the two units into one and scanning in a large group for the rest of the time in that area. The action seemed to diffuse the potential problems and provided a sense of security for the City Scan youth.

There were no major incidents in the community. While there was a fight or two between City Scan youth participants, the program unfolded without any major mishaps. Thus, the safety goal of the management team was also effectively met.

City Residents

Information from city residents came from a preliminary survey administered prior to the City Scan summer program. A resident survey was developed and piloted with a few residents, and then put into final form as both an English and Spanish document. Surveys were distributed through the public libraries in 3 communities: Asylum Hill, Parkville, and Clay Arsenal. While there were some problems with getting the libraries to put the surveys in accessible places, 84 resident surveys were returned. Some did not come from the libraries – approximately 15 were solicited from local residents at a local health fair.

The good news in all this data is that residents have, while they aren't satisfied with the cleanliness of Hartford and more than half don't know how to report problems, a strong desire to learn how to get involved in solving problems in their city. There is a base of about 12% who say they have gotten involved and reported various nuisances. Perhaps this group can be recruited to work with others to begin an educational process to engage citizens in solving community problems.

RECOMMENDATIONS

While there is admittedly much more to say about the program, the importance of this data and information is that it helps us plan more effectively for next year. The goal of evaluation is program understanding and program improvement. Since the data presented has helped us to understand the major activities and perceptions of various participants and staff about what happened this year, the important points to make are what we should do next year to make the program better. It should be acknowledged that despite the challenges and shortcomings noted, City Scan is moving along normally from an idea and concept to a full-fledged operating program. It is suffering the growing pains, misunderstandings, and challenges of most programs that include summer youth employment designs in projects organized to produce accurate community information that can be used by city staff and city residents to improve conditions of life in local neighborhoods. Nothing mentioned in the earlier text indicates otherwise. However, for improvement, the following recommendations are made:

- 6) Cut back on some of the evaluation activities and make the non-field experiences less like school and more like club activities found in youth serving agencies. Check with the Boys and Girl's Clubs, as well as the American Red Cross, 4-H/Youth Extension and the Boys/Girl Scouts for ideas and examples.
- 7) Engage local colleges and universities in the mentoring and evaluation processes to provide more human resources to get the job done.
- 8) Continue to work with City of Hartford staff to ensure that the data compiled by City Scan is compatible and useful for city purposes, as well as for city residents.
- 9) Continue the original plans to embed computers in local libraries and other community facilities to train city residents to use City Scan information to improve the quality of life in their neighborhoods.
- 10) Continue to expand the use of technology to include other devices, such as GPS systems and speed-measuring devices, to deal with mapping/location of problems and solutions to speeding and unsafe streets.
- 11) Continue to work with Hartford 2000, Citizen Research and Education Network (CREN), and local NRZs to spread the work about City Scan and to get more local input about how it can be useful to local neighborhood organizing groups.
- 12) Work with the City and Hartford 2000 staff to create an advisory group composed of local residents and city staff to review work of City Scan and to develop agendas to improve the involvement of local residents in the process of improving their neighborhoods. This is perhaps the weakest area of City Scan to date....and presents the greatest challenge to meeting all of its four primary goals in the future.

other agencies and organizations will have to work together to accomplish the goals of improved youth summer employment programming and citizen engagement.

City Scan started with a bold vision of engaging youth and citizens, through technology, to improve the quality of life in Hartford and other Connecticut communities. There is nothing in this report that suggests that vision needs to be changed. The program is simply going through the growing pains that accompany any large scale, multifaceted initiative that is implemented over a period of years. As City Scan becomes more seasoned, more mature, and more practiced, the impact on the City of Hartford should be everything that was originally expected. The vision holds; the practice simply needs to catch up with the theory.

3. Have you ever reported any of the following problems about your neighborhood to the City of Hartford?

	Never reported this problem	I have discussed this problem with friends	I am planning to report this problem	I have reported this problem	I have reported this problem on more than one occasion
a) abandoned vehicle/large objects*	1	1	1	1	1
b) abandoned buildings	1	1	1	1	1
c) graffiti	1	1	1	1	1
d) unsafe/unsightly areas**	1	1	1	1	1

*Large objects, such as fallen trees, old sofas, other large furniture, etc.

** Unsafe/unsightly areas, such as paper/glass debris in parks, torn/broken fencing, piles of trash by side of the street or in public places, etc.

4. Would you like to learn **how to report problems** in your neighborhood?

Not at all	I'm somewhat interested	I am interested	I am very interested	I have already done this
1	1	1	1	1

5. Would you like to learn **how to get involved in solving problems** in your neighborhood?

Not at all	I'm somewhat interested	I am interested	I am very interested	I have already done this
1	1	1	1	1

6. Do you think the City of Hartford does a good job of taking care of problems in your neighborhood dealing with:

	No	Rarely	Sometimes	Most of the Time	All the Time
a) abandoned vehicle/large objects	1	1	1	1	1
b) abandoned buildings	1	1	1	1	1
c) graffiti	1	1	1	1	1
d) unsafe/unsightly areas	1	1	1	1	1

Evaluation Form

City Scan Youth Participants

The purpose of this survey is to determine what you know prior to your participation in the City Scan project. Please answer the questions as completely and as honestly as you can. Thank you for your contribution to the City Scan program.

First letter of your first name: _____ First letter of your last name: _____ Your age: _____

Your school: _____ Your grade in school: _____

Have you participated in City Scan before? Yes No. If Yes, when? _____

Please check ONLY ONE answer in each row.

1) How familiar are you with the use of digital cameras?

Never used before	Used once or twice	Used a few times	Familiar with most aspects	Very familiar with all aspects
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

2) How familiar are you with the use of hand held computers?

Never used before	Used once or twice	Used a few times	Familiar with most aspects	Very familiar with all aspects
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

3) Have you ever been involved in any programs that attempts to develop a database of information to help local residents resolve neighborhood problems?

Never been involved before	Talked about doing something like this	I have done something like this once	I have done something like this twice before	Been involved in something like this more than twice
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

4) How proficient are you in the use of computer programs and computer devices (respond to questions below)?

	Never used before	Used once or twice	Used a few times	Familiar with most aspects	Very familiar with all aspects
a) Desktop Computers	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
b) Laptop Computers	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

7) Have you ever done volunteer service before?

Yes	No	I Don't Know
↑	↑	↑

8) If Yes, please describe your volunteer work.

9) Why are you participating in City Scan this year? Please describe one or two of your primary reasons.

10) What do you hope to do during the City Scan project?

11) What do you hope to learn during the City Scan project?

12) What are your immediate plans for the future?

Complete High School	Attend a two year college	Attend a trade school	Attend a four year college	Get a full time job	Serve in the military	Get married	Other (Please explain)
↑	↑	↑	↑	↑	↑	↑	

13) What does the term **civic participation** mean to you?

Analysis of Hartford Resident Focus Groups
prepared by
Citizens' Research Education Network
Greg Vickers

INTRODUCTION

At the Connecticut Policy and Economic Council's (CPEC) request, Citizens' Research Education Network (CREN) conducted two focus groups with Hartford residents to explore the interests and priorities of Hartford residents not currently involved in local politics. Residents from several Hartford communities were asked to voice their concerns on significant matters relating to quality of life issues in the city of Hartford such as the impact of city development projects, education, youth, and employment. This report delineates the outcomes of both focus groups and outlines the results of a short supplemental survey that was administered to each participant after the focus group.

SUMMARY OF FINDINGS

Education was a common concern for both groups and was listed among the most important issues facing the city. Both groups of respondents also indicated that the city needed to focus on the issues of housing and rats. The participants of the first focus group were vocal about the lack of job opportunities for residents with limited skills, public transportation, and education. Although this group discussed youth, it was not the galvanizing theme of their conversations. The participants from the second focus group were troubled by the status of youth in Hartford and shared potential solutions. They believed that the City needed to take action to rescue more children and youth from a future comprised of crime, poor education, limited job opportunities, and teen pregnancy.

METHODOLOGY

In December 2002, CREN held two focus groups in Hartford with Hartford residents. The goal of the groups was to seek out and discern the interests and priorities of residents who are not actively involved in Hartford politics or neighborhood organizations. Screening of potential participants ensured that only individuals who lacked a significant history of extensive involvement in Hartford community organizations were included in the focus groups. In order to ensure the diversity of the participants, one focus group was conducted in a primarily Hispanic community and participants for the other were recruited from predominately African American communities.

Group 1 took place at the Family Center at M.D. Fox Elementary School located on 470 Maple Avenue on Monday, December 16, 2002 at 9:30 A.M. Theresa Rosaria, Director

Group 2 Demographics

There were 8 adults and 1 youth in Group 2: 7 females (including the one 12 year old youth participant) and 2 males. The adults ranged in age from 19 to 61. Five of them were between the ages of 19 and 30, 2 were in their forties, and 1 was 61. All of the respondents in Group 2 were African American and spoke English as their first language.

Six of the 8 adults were employed. Three of the participants had children under 18 in the home and 3 of the adults were married.

Seven of these participants were from the Clay Arsenal neighborhood, and 2 were from the South End. Confusion over neighborhood boundaries and neighborhood names arose when asked to share which neighborhood they lived in.

FOCUS GROUP RESULTS

Group 1 Results

After introductions, the group was asked what they thought were the most important issues facing Hartford and what they believed should be the priorities of Hartford city government. Participation was strongly encouraged and these individuals engaged freely in the discussions.

Participants had a lively and impassioned discussion about education, transportation, daycare, learning English, and finding employment. Their concerns reflected the fact that the majority was unemployed, all had young children attending grammar school, and Spanish was their first language.

Group 1 Survey Results

After the focus group, the participants were asked to answer a short survey that included two lists of issues. Twelve of the participants completed the survey and 2 did not.(N=12)

Eight respondents stated that they were not aware of any community groups that worked in the community. The remainder of the participants had some familiarity with "Building Parents Power."

Two sections of the survey included lists of city-related issues. The lists were designed to ascertain the participants' perceptions of issues and problems in Hartford and to measure the interests of participants on issues that might not have come up in the focus group. Each participant was asked to choose the 3 most important and 5 least important issues from each list. Education (12), the development of rental assistance programs (10), housing (10), and rats (7) were perceived as the main problems requiring focus in Hartford.

The group was asked if they were familiar with Adrian's Landing and exactly what they knew about it. Only 3 of the 8 participants were aware of this city project. Once Adrian's Landing was explained, the group was asked for their opinions. There was concern about the future affordability of housing and the creation of the kinds of jobs for which they would be qualified. The participants were worried that the Adrien's Landing project would not result in the hiring of Hartford residents.

Although this group thought that additional neighborhood businesses and tourism were "nice", they did not see this kind of economic development benefiting the city, youth, or residents. The respondents did not see a direct connection between neighborhood development and job opportunities.

When asked about city plans for streetscaping, the respondents thought that would be "nice," but that it was not needed. One respondent stated that the money should be redirected to schools and that the youth needed more education to compete for better jobs. Another participant said that Hartford was the capital city and that education here should be as good as that offered in any other town or city in Connecticut.

Group 2 Survey Results

The survey was designed to ascertain the participants' perceptions of issues and problems in Hartford and to measure the interests of participants on issues that might not have come up in the focus group. (N=8)

When asked, 5 people said that they had awareness of organizations that work to solve community problems in Hartford. ONE/CHANE and CRT were specifically named and 1 respondent indicated involvement with one of these organizations.

Each participant was asked to choose the 3 most important and 5 least important issues from two lists of city-related issues. The lists were designed to ascertain the participants' perceptions of issues and problems in Hartford and to measure the interests of participants on issues that might not have come up in the focus group. Again, this group viewed education (9) as the most important issue the city is facing followed by rats (7), homelessness (7), homeownership programs (6), abandoned buildings (5), employment (4), and housing (4). The issues they viewed as least important were dominated by graffiti (6), downtown development (5), increase business (5), transportation/bus scheduling (5), street cleaning (5), and social services (5).

When asked what they thought about the effect of city developments such as the Civic Center and Adrien's Landing, respondents were not upbeat. Four responded that they would be not affected, 4 stated that the effect would be positive, and 2 said that the effect would be negative. When asked to comment on their responses, 4 said that the jobs that would be created by these projects most likely would not be filled Hartford residents.

The participants were also asked if there were any other issues/concerns that might require the involvement of residents in working with the City to improve the neighborhoods. Responses included money, jobs, concerts or festivals for fundraising,

- 1) Block by block units?
 - 2) Specific sections of the neighborhood?
 - 3) Whole neighborhood meetings?
- 3) What kind of things would you like to see improved in your neighborhood?
- a) Personal/social things (safe communities, reduced drugs/street crime, better health care opportunities, etc.)
 - b) Physical things (abandoned cars removed, pot holes repaired, boarded up buildings secured, etc.
 - b) Other things:
- 4) City Scan plans to use the public library as a place to house computers so local residents can view the neighborhood data on the website and also to enter new data about neighborhood concerns.
- 1) What do you think of this idea?
 - 2) Where else in the neighborhood might people go to get information about neighborhood issues and whether or not things are being fixed?
- 5) How long have you lived in the neighborhood?
- 1) What changes/improvements have you seen in the past year or two? Are things better than 5 or 10 years ago? How?
 - 2) What agencies in the City have you worked with to bring about these changes? Are some agencies better than others?
- 6) Are there any other issues/concerns we should know about in developing a plan to involve residents in working with the City to improve the neighborhood?