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Conceptualization, Implementation, and Management of the New York City Mayor's Action Plan for Neighborhood Safety

REC RESEARCH REPORT

**JOHN
JAY** COLLEGE
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JUSTICE

RESEARCH AND
EVALUATION CENTER

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Disclaimer

Points of view or opinions contained within this document are those of the authors and do not represent the positions or policies of the Mayor's Office of Criminal Justice, the City University of New York, or John Jay College. All findings and conclusions in this report are derived from information collected during the early phases of MAP through 2019. New York City officials continued to implement changes and adaptations in the MAP initiative after research for this report was concluded. Thus, this report describes MAP as it was initially designed and launched and not necessarily as it operated after 2019.

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INTRODUCTION

New York City Mayor Bill de Blasio announced the Mayor's Action Plan for Neighborhood Safety (MAP) in 2014. City officials believed the MAP initiative would enhance the quality of life for residents of housing developments operated by the New York City Housing Authority (NYCHA) by reducing crime, improving residents' perception of safety, and increasing collaboration between citizens and their government.

MAP targeted the social and physical environment of housing developments in ways that support public safety. Numerous agencies partnered with NYCHA and MOCJ to implement MAP, including the New York City Police Department (NYPD), the Human Resources Administration (HRA), and an assortment of nonprofit organizations. Some partner agencies received funding to provide services and supports for residents of MAP developments, while others participated mainly by attending community meetings and contributing to MAP's collaborative planning process. The MAP initiative relied heavily on this collaborative approach. Public agencies and nonprofit partners worked together to expand resident access to services and monitor each community's physical security and overall well-being.

Extended summer hours at community centers, summer jobs for youth, support for seniors raising children, green spaces, a respected forum where residents sit down with City officials to discuss local concerns; these alone will not solve inequality in New York or any other city, but they can be essential resources and tools for those who rightfully seek a bigger piece of the pie (MOCJ 2019:38).

Established organizations were only part of the solution. The MAP strategy marshaled the talents and energies of residents to prevent crime and build healthy communities. In the view of MOCJ, the true mission of MAP was to leverage collaborative efforts among residents to improve their lives and their communities.

MOCJ implemented MAP in more than a dozen NYCHA developments spread across New York City. To ensure broad political support and equitable distribution of resources across the City, MAP communities included at least one NYCHA development in each of the five boroughs (Bronx, Brooklyn, Manhattan, Queens, and Staten Island).

MAP

Mayor's Action Plan
for Neighborhood Safety

The Mayor's Action Plan for Neighborhood Safety was a complex, place-based effort to improve public safety and enhance the well-being of residents living in housing developments operated by the New York City Housing Authority (NYCHA).

MOCJ

Mayor's Office of
Criminal Justice

The NYC Mayor's Office of Criminal Justice managed the design and implementation of MAP. In 2017, MOCJ asked the City University of New York's John Jay College of Criminal Justice to evaluate the effects of MAP.

JohnJayREC

John Jay College, Research
and Evaluation Center

The Research and Evaluation Center designed an evaluation in partnership with NORC at the University of Chicago. The study monitored a range of outcomes in each NYCHA development participating in MAP as well as a matched set of non-participating developments.

Participating developments were selected using crime statistics from the New York Police Department (NYPD). City Council members reviewed and commented on the selection of sites before MOCJ finalized the plan. In the end, MAP involved 17 NYCHA communities.¹

MEASURING OUTCOMES

Early in the planning process, city officials emphasized the importance of understanding whether or not the MAP initiative "worked." MOCJ funded an evaluation in 2017 through a contract with the City University of New York (CUNY). Researchers from CUNY's John Jay College of Criminal Justice devised a quasi-experimental evaluation to measure outcomes in NYCHA communities participating in MAP and compare them with a matched set of NYCHA communities not participating in MAP.

The evaluation team began collecting data in 2017, a year before many of MAP's core components were operational and before MOCJ leaders began referring to the fully realized initiative as "MAP 2.0."

The John Jay College team asked NORC at the University of Chicago to create a survey to measure residents' experiences, perceptions, and opinions in the 17 MAP developments and the 17 comparison

1. The MAP initiative is often described as an intervention focused on 15 housing developments, but NYCHA considers three of those developments (Red Hook, Queensbridge, and Van Dyke) as comprising two distinct communities each. Thus, MAP could be defined as an effort involving 18 sites. One of those sites, however, is exclusively for older residents (Van Dyke II) and it was excluded from the study. Thus, the evaluation conceptualizes MAP as an initiative affecting 17 NYCHA communities.

NYCHA/MAP SITES BY NYC BOROUGH**BRONX**Butler
Castle Hill
Patterson**MANHATTAN**Polo Grounds
Saint Nicholas
Wagner**BROOKLYN**Boulevard Ingersoll
Brownsville Tompkins
Bushwick Van Dyke (1)
Red Hook (East & West)**QUEENS**

Queensbridge (South & North)

STATEN ISLAND

Stapleton

The Mayor's Office of Criminal Justice (MOCJ) is a part of the City government of New York and brings together New York City agencies to coordinate criminal justice efforts. Under the guidance of Directors Elizabeth Glazer (2014-2020) and Dr. Marcos Soler (2020-2022), MOCJ developed and funded strategies to improve public safety and advised the Mayor on criminal justice matters affecting New York City. MOCJ collaborated with numerous public and non-profit agencies, including the New York City Police Department, the Department of Probation, the Department of Corrections, the City Courts, the District Attorney's office, and many more.

sites. The addition of resident surveys resulted in an evaluation with three key components:

- 1) administrative data from police and other partner agencies,
- 2) interviews and observations with MAP leaders and resident participants, and
- 3) surveys of NYCHA residents in MAP sites and matched comparison sites.

- **Administrative Data** — Researchers assembled an array of administrative and programmatic data to monitor activities and outcomes in each NYCHA development. Crime incident reports from law enforcement provided critical public safety metrics (reports of crimes and shootings).

- **Community Surveys** — Researchers surveyed a large sample of NYCHA residents in MAP and comparison sites. The survey measured resident perceptions of community safety, the availability of services and social supports for residents, and other indicators of community well-being. The first iteration of the survey launched in the winter of 2019, while the second was completed 12 months later.

- **Interviews and Observations** — Researchers conducted dozens of interviews with MAP stakeholders to understand how MAP began and evolved from 2014 to 2020. The research team also observed MAP components directly. The combination of interviews and observations provided significant insight into MAP and helped to identify obstacles and potential gaps in the strategy.

John Jay researchers relied on the full assortment of evaluation data to identify outcome differences between MAP communities and the matched set of comparison communities. Using administrative and survey data, researchers tested relationships between various efforts of MAP and key outcomes expected to result from those efforts.

Information obtained through interviews and observations provided context to understand the evolution and implementation of MAP. The investigation provided policymakers with important information about the possible effectiveness of MAP, the organizational and logistical challenges that arose during implementation, and the likelihood that the effort generated meaningful improvements in the lives of residents living in public housing communities. Study results were released in a series of preliminary [Evaluation Updates](#).

PERSISTENT CHALLENGES

New York City operates the most extensive public housing system in the United States, accounting for as much as 15 percent of all public housing units nationwide (Schwartz 2014). NYCHA is responsible for more than 300 developments, 2,000 buildings, and 170,000 apartments. At least 400,000 New Yorkers live in NYCHA developments. The estimated populations of each development vary from fewer than 100 in the smallest buildings to thousands in the largest developments. Queensbridge Houses is the largest public housing development in the country, with more than 6,000 residents. Castle Hill in the Bronx and Baruch Houses in Manhattan both claim nearly 5,000 residents.

NYCHA officials have employed many strategies to improve operations, but the agency faces constant challenges. Physical deterioration of buildings is a persistent problem with detrimental effects on the

STUDY METHODS

Between 2017 and 2019, JohnJayREC researchers conducted 44 direct observations of MAP-related programming, 51 interviews with program staff and agency stakeholders, two focus groups with MAP Engagement Coordinators (MECs), and a survey of stakeholder team members across all MAP communities. Researchers also collected administrative data describing programmatic activity from 11 partner agencies. Multiple data sources allowed the research team to contextualize and describe MAP program components and identify implementation challenges.

Programs were selected for direct observations based on the following criteria:

- 1) some program activities were observable (e.g., workshops, community events, trainings, etc.),
- 2) program activities began no later than January 1, 2017,
- 3) activities were underway in at least half of the NYCHA developments involved in MAP,
- 4) programs were funded at least in part by MAP, and
- 5) direct observations would add to researchers' understanding of a program beyond what was available through administrative data.

Researchers conducted direct observations of nine MAP partner programs: NextSTEPS, Play Streets, Cornerstone Community Centers, Kinship Care Giver Support / Parenting a Second Time Around, Mayor's Office to End Domestic and Gender Based Violence Elder Abuse workshops, Mayor's Office to End Domestic Gender Based workshop on dating and healthy relationships, Kids in Motion, and Green City Force classes (first and second phases). All observations occurred at program sites, but the research team arranged to be as unobtrusive as possible during program activities. Researchers conducted two rounds of semi-structured interviews with various stakeholders and MAP partners. The first phase of interviews concentrated on activities from the original conception of the initiative, its roll-out in July 2014, and concluding with the establishment of the Neighborhood Stat (NStat) meetings in July 2016. The second phase focused on 2017 through 2019.

health and well-being of residents. At any given time, according to agency records, NYCHA may have 100,000 open (i.e., incomplete) work orders for maintenance and repairs to resident apartments. Residents complain of leaky ceilings, damaged and moldy walls, vermin infestations, inadequate heat, unreliable hot water, and overflowing trash bins.

Serious crime and violence had been declining citywide for years when MAP began, but crime rates remained disproportionately and unacceptably

Phase 1 interviews were conducted with individuals who met the following criteria:

- 1) employed with the initiative for at least six months,
- 2) contributed to the planning or early implementation of MAP, and
- 3) held leadership or management positions in MAP during the planning phase.

Selection criteria for the second round of interviews included:

- 1) affiliated with MAP since January 2017, and
- 2) involved in MAP leadership or key staff from partner agencies with active roles in MAP implementation.

Two important groups were unavailable for interviews. The New York Police Department denied formal requests to interview Neighborhood Coordination Officers (NCOs), and John Jay's requests to interview NYCHA property managers never received a response. As a result, researchers were unable to learn directly about NCO interaction with residents or how MAP was perceived by local NYCHA staff. The study was forced to rely on the experiences and perceptions of other agencies.

The research team also conducted two focus groups with MAP Engagement Coordinators (MECs), especially those unavailable for one-on-one interviews. Questions addressed by the groups focused on collaboration with MAP agencies, stakeholder team strategies, and specific site successes and challenges.

Finally, in addition to observations, interviews, and focus groups, the research team analyzed various administrative datasets to estimate agency activities and resident participation in program components. Analyses examined the NYC Department of Probation's "Next STEPS" program, the Department of Parks and Recreation's "Kids in Motion" program, Senior Centers operated by the NYC Department for the Aging, the Mayor's Office to End Domestic and Gender-Based Violence and its Family Justice Center / Healthy Relationship Trainings, and programs offered by the Police Athletic League (e.g., Play Streets).

higher in public housing communities. NYCHA communities represented five to seven percent of the New York City population, but they suffered more than 20 percent of gunshot wound hospitalizations. Homicides and gun violence rates were almost three times higher in NYCHA communities than in the rest of the City. During eight years preceding MAP (2006-2013), more than four of every five NYCHA developments experienced at least one shooting incident. The City responded by creating and implementing the Mayor's Action Plan.

THE ORIGINS OF MAP

New York City officials responded to adverse conditions in NYCHA developments by launching the Mayor's Action Plan for Neighborhood Safety in 2014. The initiative was designed to enhance the social and physical environment of housing developments in ways that improve public safety.

From the beginning of the planning process, the MAP initiative grew from research evidence. City leaders, MOCJ staff, and outside consultants designed MAP after reviewing previous research findings about similar community improvement efforts. First, staff members reviewed the best ideas from experts and policymakers. Second, they supported an [independent evaluation](#) to track MAP implementation and to estimate its effects on outcomes. MOCJ staff members solicited advice from relevant experts, including legal scholars from Yale University, researchers from the [University of Chicago](#), and prevention experts from [SafeGrowth/Alternation Inc.](#), a company specializing in "crime prevention through environmental design" (CPTED).

City officials wanted MAP to employ a range of strategies including, but not depending on law enforcement. Leaders from various city agencies were invited to catalog the services available to NYCHA residents and propose ways to strengthen programs in MAP developments, either by augmenting existing programs or initiating new ones. According to one official, the MAP initiative began with a series of meetings focused on "brainstorming, designing, reaching out to other agencies, figuring out how they could participate, and identifying what information and resources they could share."

The early days of MAP were complicated and time-consuming. Partner agencies had to recruit staff, secure office space, and ensure that every component launched with an approved budget and implementation plan. Yet, some staff still worried the initiative was launched too quickly. Senior staff wished they would have had more time for planning. Asked what single thing they would have changed about MAP, one senior staff member replied:



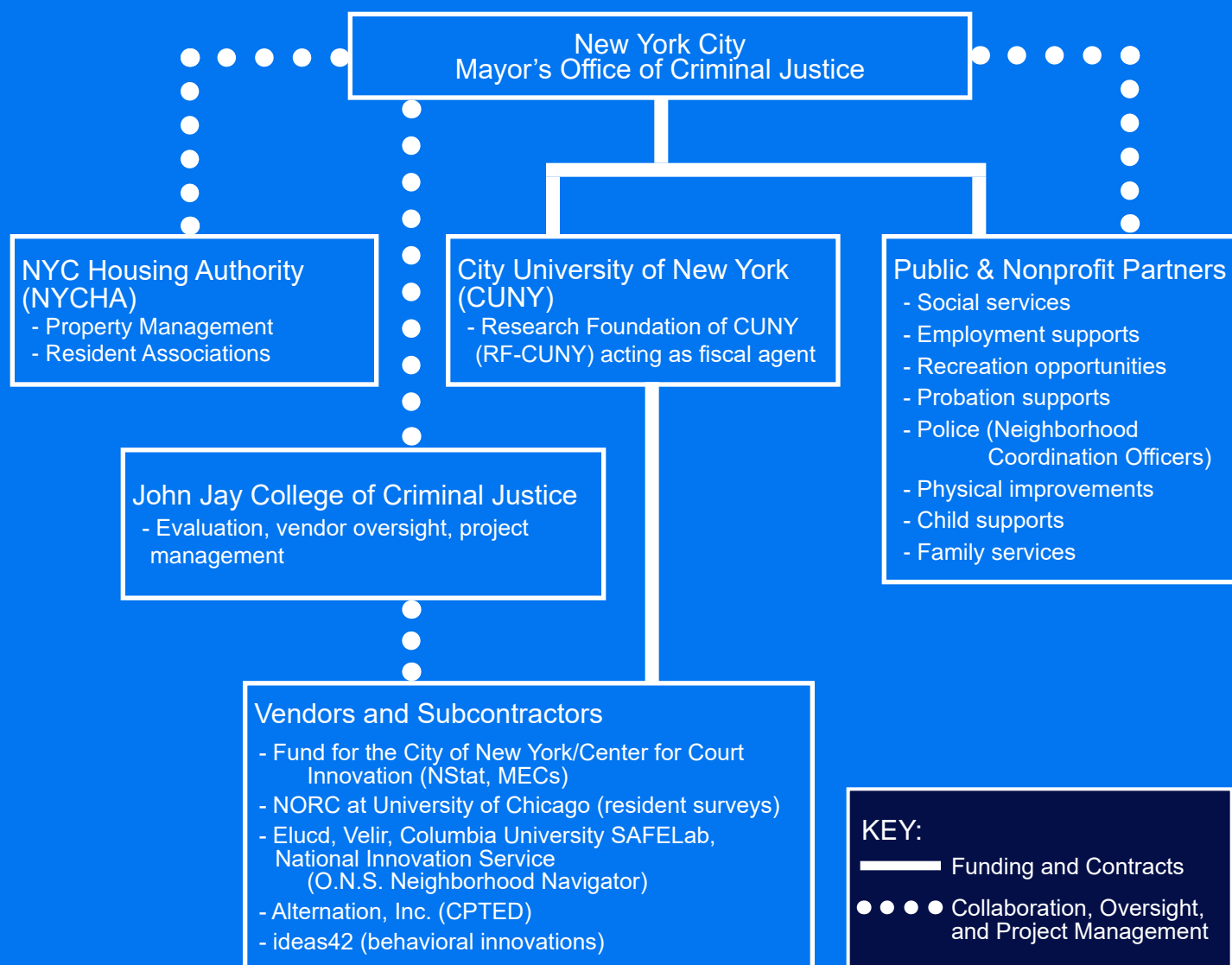
MAP would have benefitted from more intensive planning. Especially when you're doing something new, you can't anticipate every contingency. Careful planning would have helped us structure things in a better way. It would have given us more influence with the [partner] agencies if we had been able to get resources to them just as soon as they were needed to do the things they were asked to do.

Others saw these challenges as normal. One person involved in the planning process told researchers:

Sure [the planning for MAP] was rushed, but it's the way government works. When you have an opportunity to do watershed stuff, you just do it and try to fix it later.

For the most experienced staff, constraints of time, budgets, and bureaucracy were inevitable. The only choice was to do as much as possible with whatever resources were available in whatever time was allowed.

INTER-ORGANIZATIONAL STRUCTURE OF THE MAP INITIATIVE



THEORETICAL FOUNDATIONS

The MAP initiative addressed an array of physical, social, and economic challenges affecting public housing residents, and it did so while relying on a continually evolving, problem-solving approach. Residents, NYCHA staff, law enforcement, and other agencies collaborated to expand social supports, strengthen the community's physical security and health, and support positive perceptions and attitudes among residents.

MAP's focus on resident perceptions was rooted in social science knowledge about crime and its effects on communities. When people believe their neighborhoods are unsafe, they are less likely to

make social ties or participate in community activities (Stafford, Chandola, and Marmot 2007).

Resident engagement was critical. Communities are more cohesive if residents identify neighborhood problems and select the best strategies to solve those problems. As one program leader described it, MAP used a "mirroring infrastructure."

Somebody had to be facilitating and organizing in the community, and somebody had to be facilitating and organizing in government. Someone had to be problem-solving in the community, and someone had to be problem-solving in government. We tried to make it as circular as possible.



East Harlem with Wagner Houses. Photo by Ajay Suresh.

The conceptual framework behind MAP reflected these core concepts. Implementation was rarely straightforward and never simple, but MAP was founded on several foundational insights from research.

Neighborhood Space

Public safety is improved when the physical characteristics of the environment encourage residents to feel a sense of ownership and collective guardianship, or defensible space. Crime prevention through environmental design (CPTED) deters crime by promoting active, defensible space that, in turn, improves the social consequences of shared space. Social consequences include the way people react to public space (feelings of safety) and how shared space discourages criminal activity.

MAP's strategy for improving public space was designed using evidence from research on CPTED. City officials recognized that public safety would be enhanced by the physical features and social benefits of active space. Communities can better create defensible space when the physical characteristics of an environment help residents feel a sense of ownership, which encourages broad participation in collective guardianship (Cozens and Love 2015; Mihinjac and Saville 2019).

Crime and the Fear of Crime

Crime affects victims and those who fear victimization (Farrall, Jackson, and Gray 2009; Lorenc et al. 2012). Fear of crime can lead to widespread psychological, emotional, and social deficits, which in turn can harm a resident's sense of community and weaken informal social controls (resident willingness to scrutinize unwanted public behavior) (Stafford, Chandola, and Marmot 2007). When residents feel a strong connection with their neighbors and the larger community, they are more resilient and have a greater capacity to overcome the fear of crime (Gibson et al. 2002).

Collective Efficacy

Collective efficacy is strengthened when residents assist or lead efforts to resolve problems affecting the entire community (Browning, Feinberg, and Dietz 2004; Sampson, Raudenbush, and Earls 1997). Researchers find that higher levels of trust between neighbors lead to more effective uses of informal social control. Distrust and fear of crime erode community safety and suppress collective efficacy (Markowitz et al. 2001).

Government Legitimacy, Trust & Confidence

Legitimacy originates from reciprocal relationships of governments and citizens with mutual accountability (Duck 2017; Raphael and Karpowitz 2013; Levi, Sacks, and Tyler 2009). If government leaders work to benefit the public with demonstrated fairness, and citizens develop confidence and trust in authority, a government gains legitimacy. Perceived legitimacy is essential as it shapes people's willingness to comply with legal authority, aid in crime detection, and contribute to public safety (Schulhofer, Tyler, and Hug 2011; Tyler and Fagan 2008).

Trust in government responds to social, political, and sociodemographic forces. People are often disinclined to trust government officials, but trust grows as people experience less unemployment and reduced financial stress. Shared economic benefits signal a government's ability and willingness to help (Weinschenk and Helpap 2015; Wilkes 2015).

Government actors earn community trust as they support and engage citizens effectively, aligning their own goals and interests with those they serve (Meyer and Rowan 1977; DiMaggio and Powell 1983; Eesley and Lenox 2006). To be perceived as legitimate and trustworthy, governments must be transparent, openly communicate with the public, and demonstrate sound decision-making (Raphael and Karpowitz 2013).

ORGANIZING THE WORK

Turning theoretical concepts into concrete action was challenging. The initiative involved an abundance of interventions and a dozen agency partners, which introduced the possibility of disorder and disorganization. City leaders tried to guide the efforts with a simple framework. Over time, MAP involved more than one such framework.

The conceptual guide underlying MAP evolved as strategies were modified to accommodate input from NYCHA residents as new challenges emerged and community needs changed. Between 2015 and 2018, the City employed three different conceptual frameworks to describe the key components of MAP and its intended action targets. The frameworks were:

- 1) People, Places, and Networks,
- 2) Trust and Collective Efficacy, Employment, Social Supports, Health, and Physical Space, and
- 3) Design, Opportunity, and Trust.

People, Places, Networks

The original framework organized MAP efforts in three categories: people, places, and networks. MAP invested in people through various economic and social supports and by addressing public safety without solely relying on law enforcement. It invested in places with strategies intended to promote vibrant and well-maintained neighborhoods. Finally, it invested in community networks by bringing together service providers, residents, and government agencies in shared problem-solving activities designed to increase trust and collaboration.

City officials believed it was important for MAP to be a "bottom up" initiative, one guided by or even led by residents. In 2014, MOCJ began "listening tours" in which organizers met with residents to hear their opinions and suggestions. Staff attended open houses and participated in informal surveys of residents. MOCJ officials needed to hear about issues directly from residents. Feedback from NYCHA residents helped MOCJ scrutinize and revisit key components in the MAP framework and identify missing pieces and areas in need of expansion.

Trust and Collective Efficacy, Employment, Social Supports, Health, Physical Space

In late 2017, MOCJ began to use a new conceptual framework to align MAP efforts more closely with the initiative's evolving goals and strategies. The three conceptual categories in the original framework were replaced with five "pillars" that MOCJ hoped would reflect more accurately the concerns expressed by NYCHA residents: trust and collective efficacy, employment, social supports, health, and physical space.

MOCJ leaders sought guidance from prominent academics to operationalize the new framework and to provide a more rigorous theoretical framework for MAP. The five pillars were considered for several months before MOCJ began to rely on them during the collaborative planning meetings known as NeighborhoodStat (NStat). Eventually, however, MOCJ staff replaced the five pillars with a new, even simpler conceptual framework.

Design, Opportunity, and Trust

MOCJ staff revised the MAP framework once more in 2018. The five pillars were useful for understanding MAP's key program components, but not for framing

residents' concerns and the wide range of issues they hoped the City would address.

The third MAP framework focused on community needs rather than programming and service categories. It identified problems as they were framed by residents rather than by people in positions of authority. MAP leaders elaborated upon each pillar using a subset of goals and action areas.

- **Design:** stewardship, infrastructure, activation, and maintenance.
- **Opportunity:** employment, play, youth development, health, and well-being.
- **Trust:** connections, community voice, government responsiveness, and justice.

By late 2019, the academic framing of MAP had evolved. Staff involved in the initiative had gained significant knowledge about the lives and experiences of NYCHA residents. The work of MAP began to focus more directly on resident engagement and resident-defined goals while paying less attention to CPTED and academic theories.

KEY STRATEGIES

An early MAP intervention involved the installation of portable light structures in NYCHA developments. The University of Chicago's Crime Lab conducted an experiment to test the effects of increasing ambient lighting in NYCHA developments with temporary light towers, often mounted on mobile trailers the size of small trash dumpsters and powered by noisy gasoline engines.

Study results suggested that increased lighting levels were associated with a lower incidence of night-time felonies and index crimes (Chalfin et al. 2019). Although the light towers created a harsh and nearly penal environment in NYCHA communities, officials were encouraged to see that relatively simple but targeted interventions could affect crime levels. MAP leaders continued their search for other innovative strategies that could be used to improve safety.

Services and Opportunities

Many efforts to improve public safety rely on social services. Soon after MAP launched, officials introduced enhanced services and social supports in participating NYCHA developments. Community centers extended summer hours. Partner agencies

Partner agencies participated in the MAP planning process by informing MOCJ of available agency resources and services and their potential for developing new programs that would support the goals of the MAP initiative. While partner agencies did not always have decision-making authority in MAP operations, their expertise and experience were always considered and they often had influence over the variety of components that were ultimately implemented as part of MAP.

expanded access to recreation programs. Other programs offered more family services.

To assess community needs, staff from MOCJ participated in a series of meetings with NYCHA residents and groups of residents organized open houses in their developments. Inspired by these efforts, as well as results from surveys of NYCHA residents, MOCJ staff increased MAP's focus on resident organizing. By 2018, the MAP initiative had evolved to include many of the traditional tactics of community organizers.

Officials hoped that increasing opportunities for residents and agencies to work together in addressing community issues would lead residents to appreciate the government's positive intentions. The entire community would be more willing to work with MAP to improve neighborhood conditions and public safety.

The potential effectiveness of the strategy was apparent in the earliest NStat meetings when residents seemed eager to understand MAP and came to the meetings prepared to talk about sensitive matters. MOCJ hoped MAP would sustain the safety of communities by facilitating stronger community connections and building on the efforts of residents themselves.

City agencies and nonprofit organizations worked as partners to enhance service levels in two categories:

- 1) new services created specifically for MAP; and
- 2) existing services accessible to all eligible NYC residents but with special outreach and promotion for MAP.



Saint Nicholas Houses. Photo by Richard Espinobarros.

Resident access to services and supports was facilitated by MAP Engagement Coordinators (or MECs), special staff provided for each development through a subcontract from John Jay College to the [Center for Court Innovation \(CCI\)](#).

MAP leaders asked other partner agencies to place staff members at participating NYCHA developments, which did not exist prior to MAP. The Mayor's [Office to End Domestic and Gender-Based Violence \(ENDGBV\)](#), New York City's [Department for the Aging \(DFTA\)](#), and the City's [Human Resources Administration \(HRA\)](#) all placed community-based workers in participating developments with new positions funded by MAP.

Agency staff members engaged with residents to connect them with needed services and opportunities. As an official from one partner agency described the effort to researchers, one of the "essential components" of MAP was the "presence of all the agencies in each development ... being able to work with the residents and community members and providing resources and services."

Residents told researchers they believed this integration was an important part of the MAP initiative, as it improved overall community relationships. Staff from DFTA, for instance, often

received high praise when researchers asked residents and stakeholders how the MAP initiative was helping to improve their lives and their communities.

The NYC [Department of Probation's \(DOP\)](#) NextSTEPS program (group-mentoring for youth ages 14 to 24) was designed to steer "disconnected" youth in MAP communities away from crime and violence. Initially, the program was not available in all MAP developments, but new program sites were soon established, with each serving multiple MAP developments. By 2018, DOP established a separate NextSTEPS program for each MAP site. The program evolved to include an employment component implemented by the nonprofit agency, [CEO Works](#). NextSTEPS was sometimes controversial. Residents told researchers the DOP program was not culturally compatible with all neighborhoods. In most MAP communities, however, the program appeared to be well received.

Some agencies which had always provided services to NYCHA developments increased their efforts in MAP communities after the launch of the initiative, including the [Department of Parks and Recreation \(DPR\)](#), the [Department of Youth and Community Development \(DYCD\)](#), and the [Police Athletic League](#).

Parks and Recreation, for instance, organized its "Kids in Motion" programs to ensure that all MAP developments were no more than four or five city blocks away from a site, and tried to offer "Shape Up" exercise classes at every development. When this proved unsuccessful, the agency situated available programs to be as close as possible to all NYCHA developments involved in MAP.

DYCD extended the operating hours of its "Cornerstone Community Centers" into the early evening during summers to give youth residents greater access to pro-social opportunities and to introduce special events in MAP communities, such as "Teen Battle Chef" and "Sneaker Art Therapy." DYCD also worked with community-based partners to open community centers for MAP-related activities, such as HRA's outreach efforts or MAP stakeholder team meetings. These efforts, however, were not always successful. MECs sometimes expressed frustration with residents' lack of access.

There were disagreements initially between MOCJ and some agency partners related to roles and responsibilities, but MOCJ's willingness to modify the initiative helped resistant partners to feel more included and more aligned with the goals and strategies of MAP. The initiative's focus on community connections and interagency collaboration was a natural fit for most partners.

As MAP matured, the constellation of agency partners remained relatively consistent, but the services they rendered evolved and varied between sites. The goal of this differentiation was to curate services and resources to the specific needs of each community—something one official described as MOCJ's "deep and broad" strategy.

For example, DFTA offered a specialized service through MAP to support kinship caregiver support, but only in areas where there was a perceived need for the service. In areas without a pronounced need, DFTA employed more of a "light touch," such as organizing community events for residents.

MAP also expanded services by incorporating non-funded partners more heavily into the array of available services based on the needs of individual developments. During NStat meetings, for example, residents often raised sanitation issues, homelessness, and overall health and mental health. Recognizing the need for services, MOCJ added

the Departments of Health and Mental Hygiene, Sanitation, and Homeless Services to the partner network.

Becoming an official MAP partner allowed each agency to take an active role in providing customized solutions for issues raised by residents. The inclusion of non-funded agencies was an indication of MOCJ's continued efforts to increase MAP's reach and effectiveness.

Stakeholder Groups

In each MAP development, a team of 25 stakeholders met regularly to plan new activities and address problems as they emerged. Stakeholder teams included members whose active engagement was important for MAP's success. At least 15 NYCHA residents of varying ages and ten members from various city agencies and nonprofit partners participated in each team.

Team members developed CPTED projects, participated in NStat meetings, and analyzed various policies and procedures that affected residents. Two subcommittees were part of most stakeholder teams: one CPTED planning subcommittee and another for residents only.

To assess resident reactions to the coverage and focus of service and supports provided through MAP, researchers surveyed the members of each development's stakeholder team. Participants in stakeholder meetings answered questions on paper survey instruments using procedures that protected their confidentiality. Of 225 surveys distributed at stakeholder team meetings in 2018, 133 (59%) were returned. While respondents were not representative of all NYCHA residents, the findings represent the views of those residents who were most involved in MAP efforts.

Survey respondents appeared to believe many of the programs offered by partner agencies were valuable for their communities, as indicated by the degree to which positive responses in the survey outweighed negative responses. On the other hand, for three programs—Kids in Motion, Parenting a Second Time Around, and Domestic Violence Response Team—at least a quarter of respondents answered "don't know" when asked if the programs had value for residents. Respondents may have lacked knowledge of these programs, or the programs may have been underutilized in some developments.

STAKEHOLDERS RANKED SUMMER YOUTH EMPLOYMENT AS MOST VALUABLE

	Percent Agree or Strongly Agree
Summer Youth Employment Program (SYEP)	82%
Neighborhood Coordination Officers (NCOs)	64%
Works Progress Program	62%
NextSTEPS	59%
Cornerstone	56%
Domestic Violence Response Team	55%
ShapeUp	54%
Green City Force: Love Where You Live	53%
Benefits Access Assistance (HRA)	53%
Police Athletic League (PAL): Play Streets	48%
Police Athletic League (PAL): Sports Leagues	45%
Kids in Motion	38%
Parenting A Second Time Around (PASTA)	38%

Note: Survey item: "These programs are valuable to people in my development." Possible answers included strongly disagree, disagree, neutral, agree, strongly agree, or don't know.

Designed Space

Officials wanted to do more than provide services. The MAP initiative promoted community cohesion and supported resident efforts to create vibrant and safe public spaces. MOCJ and its partner agencies worked to increase security and cultivate a positive sense of ownership among residents. Two core MAP strategies focused explicitly on public space.

1) **Capital investments, maintenance, and repairs:**

Along with investments from the City, the [Manhattan District Attorney's Office](#) pledged more than \$100 million for physical renovations to improve public safety in MAP developments, including repairs and installations of lights (first temporary, then permanent), closed-circuit television cameras, and layered access doors. In addition, NYCHA promised to expedite maintenance requests and repairs to the physical environment.

2) CPTED training and projects: Stakeholders from each MAP development were trained in the theory and methods of [Crime Prevention Through Environmental Design](#) (CPTED) to improve public spaces and increase resident ownership of shared space. The focus on public space expanded as MAP evolved, but the traditional CPTED framework was modified to be more varied and resident-driven with a participatory budgeting process that helped residents identify community priorities (Shah 2007).

In the early phases of MAP, a well-known CPTED provider, Alternation Inc., was engaged to train MECs and stakeholders in the company's [SafeGrowth](#) model. Training sessions were designed to help participants understand how physical space can affect one's sense of community and enhance the shared ownership that generates public safety. Alternation Inc. was contracted to teach participants to plan, implement, and scale-up projects. The training focused on two CPTED iterations—one designed to affect physical space and a second that addressed social and community dynamics. Resident teams were asked to draw upon the training to propose projects that would be submitted for approval by an inter-agency review board.

The work of the resident teams soon varied from the original concepts set out by MAP planners. Residents may have misunderstood basic CPTED concepts, causing them to use SafeGrowth tools in unexpected ways. For example, researchers learned that some resident teams proposed projects before collecting any data about the physical or social environment. Rather than letting such an analysis lead to a project idea, residents devised a project and then looked for reasons to support it. Participants told researchers the proposal process was too complicated, and this reduced resident support for the CPTED component.

On the other hand, even if residents' ideas were not always consistent with CPTED, they may have had beneficial effects. For example, the Patterson stakeholder team planned to build a community garden supported in part by donations from Citibank and a Home Depot franchise in the neighborhood. The stakeholder team in the Wagner development organized an effort to clear and renovate an area that residents once avoided because it was considered

dangerous. With the support of MAP, Wagner residents began to host events like "movie night" in the once-neglected space. Other stakeholder teams proposed the creation of murals, shared open spaces, and playgrounds. According to MOCJ, such proposals were still appropriate, as stakeholder teams worked together in the interest of the wider community.

In the end, MAP largely abandoned the principles of CPTED and created its own approach to physical space. MOCJ staff told researchers they tried to compensate by adding technical consultants such as landscape architects and designers. The effects of any CPTED projects undertaken as part of MAP, however, were largely unknown as the duration and nature of projects were highly varied, complicating the measurement of effects.

NeighborhoodStat

The NStat process provided another way to improve community space by facilitating communication between NYCHA and residents, giving residents the power to hold NYCHA accountable. Issues discussed in NStat meetings included scaffolding structures that marred public space, building repairs the affected resident access to public space, and the chronic lack of dog waste disposal stations. Not all issues were successfully resolved during NStat, particularly issues requiring funding from NYCHA, but residents and agency partners alike appreciated the opportunities for public discussion.

MOCJ staff tried to integrate NStat with CPTED to broaden the initiative's community projects. Efforts related to "designed space" changed from a small group of residents that proposed specialized projects to one involving the collection of ideas from large numbers of residents and then asking the community to vote on the final selection. Ballots were distributed in high-traffic areas across MAP developments two weeks in advance of each decision.

The process relieved MAP stakeholder teams from the burden of generating project ideas, making the effort a shared, community task. MAP leaders stopped referring to projects as CPTED, calling them "NStat projects" instead. The initiative effectively stopped following the research-informed principles of CPTED to create its own approach based on the concept of participatory budgeting, which MOCJ staff members described as more appropriate.

We now know how to allocate money using a community-oriented process that is democratic. Before it was just like 'here's some money, go do what you want.' Participatory budgeting works really well throughout the city so it makes sense to champion a similar approach by saying we want as many voices in the room as we can get, we want to get consensus, and then we want to implement what [residents] are asking for... That's like a night and day improvement.

NStat became a centerpiece of MAP. Residents engaged in discussions about neighborhood safety with City officials and partner agencies. Before NStat, there were few opportunities for residents to engage in productive dialogue with City officials.

Central NStat meetings, formerly known as Borough-wide NStat, started in 2016 and involved bi-annual meetings with MOCJ, NYPD, NYCHA, various agency partners, and residents. Participants discussed varying issues, including crime, living conditions, and government responsiveness. Officials from NYPD presented development-level crime statistics and the efforts of NCOs. NYCHA property managers reviewed the status of work orders and general maintenance updates across developments. Resident Association leaders (RAs) represented the interests of NYCHA residents and provided feedback and updates about ongoing efforts. Once they were added to MAP in 2018, the resident/agency stakeholder teams and MECs participated as well.

NYPD CompStat meetings inspired the early version of NStat. Discussions during NStat meetings relied heavily on the presentation of crime data, and meetings were held at NYPD headquarters. Residents soon began to object to this arrangement, telling researchers their concerns were not always addressed and problems remained unresolved. The meetings focused on crime, but residents had other concerns related to building maintenance, incomplete work orders, broken elevators, rodent infestations, and inadequate garbage collection. MOCJ staff members were equally frustrated. When Central NStat meetings were held in police headquarters, and officials from MOCJ, NYPD, and NYCHA sat on a dais in front of the audience (a technique adopted from CompStat), it implied that residents were less important. The meeting structure discouraged open dialogue and reinforced status differentials. Participants told researchers these meetings appeared to be "performance theater."



Castle Hill Houses. Photo by Green City Force.

A new executive director assumed leadership of MAP in 2018 and began gathering ideas about ways to improve the NStat process. Central NStat meetings were moved from One Police Plaza to a large conference room at Baruch College, a change of venue that allowed residents, city agency partners, and NYPD to be on more equal footing. MOCJ prepared detailed agenda and policy briefs before meetings, drawing on input from stakeholder teams to identify discussion topics and promote accountability.

Senior staff in MOCJ emphasized that residents should be empowered to take the lead.

If you had asked the team a year ago what we did, we would have had different responses. Now, we are closer to understanding what our goals are. That has taken time. It has taken a lot of iteration to figure out what we are really trying to do. I can say it now: we are trying to build agency and autonomy at the resident level so residents feel like they are empowered to connect with government and that government is responsive to those requests and desires of the community.

Local NStat

As MAP evolved and strategies for community empowerment took shape, the NStat process was strengthened with Local NStat meetings that focused on fewer developments at a time. The Center for Court Innovation (CCI) added the MAP Engagement Coordinators (MECs) to work with residents of each NYCHA development. In addition, the research team at John Jay College hired MOCJ Community Research Fellows to assist with the evaluation and to work alongside MOCJ staff in their efforts to coordinate MAP activities at each development.

Resident teams from each development prepared for Local NStat meetings by formulating lists of their concerns. MOCJ expected residents to take a more active role in managing discussions, but challenges remained. The meetings sometimes lacked focus, and agency partners did not always participate actively. Researchers observed that NStat meetings could become gripe sessions about NYCHA management failures. For their part, residents sometimes described the structure of NStat meetings as overly "rigid," which limited their participation.

CCI and MOCJ continued to refine the process to provide a more "relaxed environment" for meetings. As MOCJ staff learned about resident issues ahead of each session, they could organize NStat by issue category rather than by geographic area as was once the custom. This strategy ensured the presence of appropriate partners and agencies in each meeting and allowed MOCJ to leverage the participation of the most appropriate partners. Discussions began to focus on the issues most important to residents. Issues identified at Local NStat meetings were often raised at Central NStat meetings, where all partners worked toward effective resolutions.

Other components were added to NStat. Resource fairs were sometimes held before each meeting to provide information about available services and supports and to connect residents with local agencies. Resources included after-school programs, substance abuse counseling, healthy relationships workshops, home ownership services, and physical fitness programs. Other events, including child-friendly activities, entertainment with DJs, and food-focused events, took place outdoors or in community centers. Residents interacted freely during resource fairs, encountering various "activity stations" facilitated by agency partners and MOCJ staff. At one activity station, residents were asked to write down their ideas for improving community safety. Each idea was placed on a large banner depicting the range of concerns. At another station, residents wrote their ages onto maps of buildings on the NYCHA campus. As the maps were completed, they provided not only a demographic profile of residents but evidence of resident attendance at local NStat events as well. Before Local NStat events, MECs and stakeholder teams encouraged resident participation by handing out blank "idea cards" in the hallways of NYCHA buildings. Residents could submit ideas for community projects without the stress of speaking in a large, public meeting.

Staff from MOCJ told researchers these strategies were all part of their effort to transition the method of Local NStat from "top-down" to "bottom-up." As MOCJ shifted Local NStat meetings to a more participatory and interactive approach, resident attendance seemed to increase, creating more information for City officials to understand service gaps and improve MAP functions.

The Center for Court Innovation was deeply involved in NStat and hired most of the MAP Engagement Coordinators. MECs needed previous experience with community organizing, outreach, and group facilitation, as well as project management skills, data collection knowledge, and a personal connection to the NYCHA developments in which they worked. MECs were recruited with input from NYCHA's Resident Association leaders and MOCJ, but CCI made final hiring decisions.

CCI began the project with strong working relationships in 10 of the 15 MAP sites. In the remaining five sites, the agency initially asked other neighborhood organizations to recruit, hire, and supervise MECs. By 2019, CCI had developed sufficiently strong connections in three of those developments to identify and hire MECs directly, thus providing stronger and more consistent support for the MECs in those developments.

MAP Engagement Coordinators

MAP Engagement Coordinators (MECs) became a critical component of MAP. Most often employed by CCI through a subcontract with John Jay College, MECs worked with residents to build stakeholder teams, increase access to services, and manage relationships between NYCHA residents and MAP partner agencies.

Expectations for the MECs were high. As highly visible representatives of MAP, they had to create strong personal ties with residents. This required staff members with unique skills and abilities. One MOCJ leader equated finding a good MEC to seeing a unicorn. It took nearly a year to find at least one MEC for every development, including those hired by other partner agencies.

The Center for Court Innovation (CCI) was engaged to implement the NStat portion of MAP and hire and supervise the MAP Engagement Coordinators. Key qualifications for MECs included community organization skills, outreach and facilitation experience, project management background, effective communication, interpersonal skills, data collection knowledge, and strong personal connections to one or more MAP developments.



Boulevard Houses. Photo by Richard Espinobarros.

MEC efforts were hindered by significant challenges. Property managers employed by NYCHA and members of previously established Resident Associations (RAs) may have perceived MECs as outsiders. Some MECs found it challenging to build relationships with RA leaders, especially those with NYCHA for decades. At first, MOCJ staff assumed the RAs would welcome the work of MECs, but RA members did not always understand the role of MECs and some feared they were being replaced by outsiders with little knowledge of the community.

MECs told researchers they were frustrated by their lack of authority, inadequate training, and poor job security. They also reported occasional resistance from NYCHA property managers. In MAP's early days, MOCJ staff hoped the NYCHA property managers would facilitate MAP's relationships with residents, but conflicts remained and MECs were expected to overcome these difficulties to address the needs and concerns of residents. As one MEC told researchers:

For me [this process] is sort of flawed because we're looking every week at people who in some cases are living in Third World conditions, and we are asking them to forget about that. Forget you don't have running water. Forget you have

mold. Forget all these things. But, come to this meeting and try and find something to do for NYCHA. But...we can't answer how to change the conditions of NYCHA.

MECs reported they were not allowed to act on the most urgent complaints of residents, including the frequent loss of heat and hot water in apartments. MECs believed that MOCJ expected them to stay neutral on the most difficult issues facing NYCHA residents and maintain their focus on public safety and community empowerment. This was frustrating to some MECs. They wanted to help residents in all aspects of their lives, but their official duties focused on a limited range of issues.

MECs also struggled to make connections with city agencies. They suspected agency staff knew their role was temporary. When MAP funding ended, MECs would no longer be involved in NYCHA developments. According to the MECs, this affected their ability to work productively with agency partners and residents. In fact, members of NYCHA Resident Associations told researchers the impermanence of the MEC role was at least one reason they avoided building strong relationships.



Boulevard Houses. Photo by Hester Street.

In conversations with researchers, staff from CCI and MOCJ acknowledged that MAP's success depended partly on the efforts of MECs. As the eyes and ears of MAP, MECs were crucial actors in efforts to address emerging issues and serve communities. As Local NStat became more interactive and more effort was placed on resident participation and resident input, the MEC role shifted to focus even more on resident involvement.

Residents were sometimes apprehensive about joining teams or becoming involved in community improvement efforts. They were often skeptical about the likelihood of success, due to historic patterns of government divestment in poor communities. With the engagement and coaching of MECs, however, residents became a very important part of MAP. When asked how they kept residents actively involved in MAP, one MEC responded:

I came in telling them I am not going to change the mold issue and issues inside the development. I can't even put up a flyer in your building. I am letting you know that from the door. I do not have the Mayor's phone number and I cannot get the Mayor on the phone... I was clear with them about my own limitations...

City agencies worried that residents would be unprepared to continue the work of MAP once dedicated funding had ended. As residents worked collaboratively with MECs, however, they improved their organizing skills and their focus on community improvement. One resident was even elevated to an MEC role due to the dedication they demonstrated working with other stakeholders.

A senior member of the MOCJ staff described the potential of stakeholder meetings when the right combination of residents and agency partners assembled to focus on problem-solving. The first task is to ensure the right people are in the room.

Do you have the right city agencies present...? If you put in the room two parties who neither have total agency over decision making or the ability to move things forward, they will not move things forward. I think a part of the problem [we solved] last year ... is that we lacked MOCJ presence on the ground. We recognized the communities felt disengaged, disenfranchised, and under-resourced, that we needed to be a heavy presence to empower them to be part of a process they may have felt apathetic about... So, we are there as a cheerleader... Now we have representatives on the ground that can hopefully manufacture some of the changes needed.



Red Hook Houses. Photo by Red Hook Farms.

NCOs

Collaboration between law enforcement and MAP depended on the efforts of Neighborhood Coordination Officers (NCOs), NYPD officers focused on improving public safety by building relationships between communities and police. NCOs were part of MAP as early as 2015. Most MAP communities had two to four NCOs working full-time during much of the day, while regular NYPD officers patrolled the development when NCOs were not on duty. MAP provided funding for the officers' continuous presence and to encourage NYPD's support of the larger initiative.

NCOs served dual purposes—discouraging criminal activities while establishing positive relationships with residents. Unlike regular police officers, NCOs refrained from issuing summonses and arrests whenever possible. They scheduled regular "walk throughs" of each development to encounter residents and respond to their concerns. NCOs tried to become a part of their assigned communities.

MOCJ asked the NCOs to participate in NStat meetings and meetings of stakeholders, allowing them to connect with residents and to improve

community-police relationships. During these meetings, NCOs often spoke passionately about their efforts to establish trust and respect with residents. The officers were creative in reaching out to young residents by engaging in sports, mentoring, and connecting youth to program opportunities. For seniors, NCOs offered other assistance, such as escorting them to appointments and transportation.

Of course, MAP was implemented after a long history of police-community tensions. Despite MAP's sincere efforts, residents still complained about mistreatment by regular NYPD officers. During NStat meetings, researchers heard residents citing concerns such as officers driving vans at high speed near children's playgrounds. In most instances, however, NCOs worked hard to establish reputations of courtesy and respect with the residents. Residents even expressed disappointment when NYPD reassigned a particular NCO, removing them from the NYCHA development. Partner agencies also vouched for the positive effect NCOs could have on neighborhoods. CCI staff reported that NCOs who participated consistently in stakeholder team activities helped forge positive connections between residents and police.

IMPLEMENTATION CHALLENGES

The MAP initiative presented many challenges as a comprehensive, inter-organizational partnership focused on changing basic social conditions in some of New York City's most distressed neighborhoods. The varied components of MAP addressed the wide-ranging needs of residents in public housing developments, and they did not fit neatly into a single program model or intervention strategy.

Scope

MAP was a large and complex initiative designed to improve the safety and well-being of public housing residents in more than a dozen neighborhoods across New York City. Despite this ambitious mission, City officials did not expect the initiative to end long-term socio-structural issues affecting the lives of MAP residents.

In MAP-related meetings, residents also commented with obvious skepticism that one initiative could not address the underlying problems affecting NYCHA communities, such as structural racism, decaying infrastructure, barriers to employment, and poor living conditions. Program leaders agreed and admitted to researchers that such concerns probably inhibited resident engagement in its early days.

MAP invested millions of dollars in social services interventions and capital improvements designed to enhance the health and safety of NYCHA developments. In 2016 alone, MAP invested \$1.2 million in summer jobs for youth and \$500,000 in the Green City Force program that addressed employment issues among young adult residents. Even that level of investment was not sufficient to address the long-standing concerns of residents.

Research indicates that summer jobs alone do not reliably lead to greater future earnings for youth participants (Gelber, Isen, and Kessler 2016). On the other hand, some studies suggest that summer job programs could reduce violent-crime arrests for participants (Davis and Heller 2020). The programs may be more appropriately considered as public safety initiatives rather than employment support programs, but this would not be an interpretation welcomed by NYCHA residents.



NeighborhoodStat. Photo by Southside United HDfC.

MAP always included an explicit focus on public safety, but residents often prioritized building maintenance, trash disposal, and access to employment. Diversifying investment across such a wide array of concerns meant that MAP needed to make choices. The initiative could not fix every problem, in all places and at all times, but staff tried to improve resident quality of life and perceptions of public safety using the means available. While perhaps not always successful, important steps were made towards achieving this goal.

Core Concepts

Tensions over the "designed space" component affected the early phases of MAP, especially in the needed collaboration between Alternation Inc. and CCI. Staff members from CCI told researchers they were frustrated that CCI was not asked to deliver the CPTED training. Researchers heard more than one CCI staff member criticize the inclusion of CPTED as a core strategy of MAP, perhaps because they believed staff from Alternation Inc. did not know enough about public housing in New York City.

Initially, City officials stressed to researchers that CPTED was an essential part of MAP, and they valued the expertise of Alternation Inc. and its SafeGrowth model. Ongoing tensions, however, were evident during CPTED training, with CCI staff making frequent requests for changes to the curriculum and the schedule and openly disagreeing with core principles of the CPTED approach. Resentment may have abated over time, but these early dynamics undoubtedly affected the implementation of CPTED.

Long after the work of Alternation, Inc. had been completed, one MOCJ staff member acknowledged to researchers that the agency, in fact, "didn't really care" about the SafeGrowth model. "We were just trying to get consistent training across the sites. We weren't buying into their trademark." Not surprisingly, the SafeGrowth model was never fully implemented as part of MAP, despite being named initially as a key component in the underlying framework. At best, the "designed space" projects pursued by stakeholder teams could be described as "CPTED inspired."

Collaboration

MOCJ enlisted the help of other organizations to design and implement MAP. Formal contractual agreements with nonprofit partners allowed MOCJ to provide explicit guidance for some activities, but other goals were never documented in written form. Partnerships may have been established in general terms, leaving implementation details to informal agreements. At times, this meant MOCJ did not have sufficient control over allocations of money and staff for MAP programs or how data about performance and outcomes were generated.

According to the MAP team, the lack of formal contracts outlining the broad goals and intentions of MAP was problematic at times. Maintaining a complicated network of collaborative relationships between organizations is difficult. Three issues were especially challenging: 1) implementation, 2) partner management, and 3) navigating bureaucracy.

Critical concerns centered on how MAP elements should fit together and which roles each participating entity was suited to play. CPTED efforts were divided between CCI and Alternation Inc., and the two organizations had different understandings and expectations. In its training on the SafeGrowth model, staff from Alternation Inc. focused on CPTED as a core intervention for community improvement. Other MAP partners, including CCI, viewed CPTED as one of many possible approaches to organizing community engagement.

Working within NYCHA rules and regulations was also challenging for MAP stakeholder teams and partner agencies. MOCJ distributed a resource

guide, called the "playbook," to help members of stakeholder teams understand NYCHA protocols as they worked to design and implement projects. The MECs held meetings to teach residents how to utilize the playbook, but it was often met with criticism. Residents told researchers the guide was overly complicated and burdened by academic language. They believed it failed to grasp the bureaucratic intricacies residents encountered when dealing with NYCHA. Ultimately, the playbook was discarded. MECs were expected to rely on their own experiences with NYCHA to teach residents how to navigate the bureaucracy.

MOCJ and other MAP leaders always believed young people would be a key part of the initiative's sustainability. Through CCI's NStat Youth Council, three young people from each development were recruited to participate in MAP planning and coordination. CCI facilitated workshops and retreats for the youth council to help participants develop organizing skills, meet professionals who could help them explore career opportunities, and connect with community-based organizations (CBOs) to promote the council's ideas. CCI and MOCJ attempted to implement the youth council across all MAP sites, but participation was sporadic. The youth council struggled to succeed in most NYCHA developments.

NStat

The NStat process improved significantly during the implementation of MAP. The goals of City officials did not always align with the priorities of stakeholder teams and residents, and NStat allowed these issues to emerge.

Residents often wanted to focus on everyday quality of life issues—e.g., pests and mold in their apartments and the frequent interruptions in heating and clean water supply. These issues were higher priorities for residents than MAP's efforts to improve outdoor space and expand access to social services.

MOCJ staff members ended up investing a lot of time and energy in the structure and coherence of NStat meetings, hoping that residents would grow to appreciate the contributions of partner agencies and City officials. The role of the MECs, for example, proved to be more difficult than expected.

In the view of MOCJ leaders, the role of an MEC was to coordinate the efforts of partners and residents to facilitate their collaboration. On the other hand, CCI staff wanted MECs to function primarily as advocates and representatives of residents. Differences over these concepts affected the NStat process from the beginning of MAP, but CCI and MOCJ continued to work on the issue. Eventually, Local NStat appeared to be well organized and more responsive to a wide array of community needs.

Partner Management

Inter-organizational relationships were not always managed closely, and there were occasional differences over expected roles. Some MECs reported to researchers that they tried to get city agencies to attend stakeholder meetings consistently and be more active in working with residents, but this rarely happened. MECs sometimes turned to neighborhood groups for resources and services because they believed local organizations would be more responsive than large partner agencies coming from other areas of the city.

Resolving conflicts was difficult due to the inter-organizational nature of MAP. Partner agency staff wanted to operate independently, while MOCJ leaders stressed consistency. For example, some influential agency staff believed that MAP should focus equally on community well-being and public safety. Others placed a much higher value on community services, seeing public safety as a secondary benefit. For some partners, a public safety focus posed a risk that NYCHA residents would associate MAP with law enforcement.

Indeed, one of MAP's core goals was to improve public safety and reduce criminal incidents in and around NYCHA developments. The police department maintained a visible presence in NYCHA developments, and MOCJ officials hoped NYPD officers would establish trust with communities. Department policies, however, prevented officers from exercising the independence and autonomy required to participate in MAP efforts. MOCJ officials likely underestimated the complications that would ensue when MAP strategies needed NYPD's active cooperation and leadership.

MOCJ staff reported similar difficulties collaborating with NYCHA due to various bureaucratic restrictions. According to MOCJ officials, NYCHA's collaboration was inconsistent even when strategizing around the safety of residents. One staff person told researchers about a NYCHA meeting where everyone seemed only to take turns talking about why something could *not* be done rather than discuss how to do it. "Things would just go in a circle until somebody intervened." It sometimes appeared as if everyone's main goal was to avoid taking any chances.

For their part, NYCHA managers reported that MOCJ staff had unrealistic expectations of the amount of time housing employees could dedicate to MAP. For example, MOCJ officials wanted all MAP property managers to participate in CPTED training and to attend all meetings of the stakeholder teams. A housing staff member told researchers "we are already under-staffed and these folks are being taken away from their normal day-to-day responsibilities of maintaining properties."

Planning Sustainability

When researchers asked MOCJ staff how they planned to sustain the work of MAP, one experienced organizer replied, "residents *are* the sustainability plan."

[T]hat has always been the framework. We never know how funding will go. We never know what's going to happen. ... Mayoral initiatives shift all the time— ALL the time. MAP isn't written into the City Charter. We are constantly operating on one year of funds— asset forfeiture funds. We don't have funding from OMB [the City's Office of Management and Budget] to operate on a 3-year or 5-year cycle. Every May and June, we apply for funding for the upcoming year. So, there is no sustainability model for MAP in that way. The goal is that residents will take ownership of the work and make it their own when we are all gone.

New York City hoped MAP would provide public housing residents with essential tools and structures to improve public safety and ensure a better quality of life even beyond the period of direct funding. MOCJ and CCI used three core strategies to help the MAP stakeholder teams become effective and sustainable: skill training, partner networking, and youth-centric organizing.

LIMITS OF THE STUDY

The MAP evaluation relied on a quasi-experimental, matched comparison design. This approach is less rigorous than a true experimental design or randomized controlled trial (RCT), but it is often the strongest design available for comprehensive community improvement efforts. New York City designed the MAP initiative with insights from a wide array of social science and public policy research. Core concepts came from several knowledge areas, but there was no single theory of change. The initiative drew on principles from the social and behavioral sciences. It incorporated strategies inspired by research in economics, public policy, social welfare, urban planning, architectural design, healthcare, and criminal justice. These features made MAP a robust intervention, but they also led to ongoing adjustments and innovations.

The variety of strategies involved in MAP presented a challenge for the evaluation team. Researchers can never measure everything about an initiative. Choices must be made. Measurements are informed not only by social science theory and previous research findings but also by the priorities of individuals and organizations involved in an initiative. These priorities evolve. By the third or fourth year of an extended evaluation, the priorities articulated by officials in the first or second year may no longer be viewed as core components. An evaluation designed at the beginning of an initiative may end up measuring the wrong things. This risk is offset by including administrative data generated before, during, and after the initiative, but the variables created from administrative data are never perfect. Often, they are merely proxies for the more precise outcomes targeted by an intervention.

Establishing rigorous evidence requires careful measurement of resources and inputs, activities, short-term outputs, and long-term outcomes (Patton, 1982; Rossi, Lipsey, and Freeman, 2004). Much of this information must be collected by observing interventions in action and interviewing key participants. To measure the impact of public safety supports, researchers often need to collect data about community context, the perceptions and attitudes of individuals, and mediating effects on families and the social networks of individuals. Relying exclusively on official data could provide incomplete and biased information about participants and their response to policies and programs.

Because the MAP evaluation relied on a matched comparison design, it was unable to describe MAP as an "evidence-based" approach. The term evidence-based is typically reserved for interventions and policies tested with rigorous evaluation designs—often multiple random-assignment studies. Few community-level interventions are evaluated with randomized studies. This is an unavoidable reality due to the inherent limits of large-scale interventions, such as small sample sizes, challenges to program fidelity, and time demands.

The MAP evaluation could not measure all possible mechanisms underlying MAP's impact on communities. It estimated their collective effect by comparing MAP communities with similar communities not involved in MAP. While the strength of this evidence is limited, it allowed City officials to assess the value of MAP and to deem it successful.

CCI's work with residents and stakeholder teams was a key piece of MOCJ's sustainability plan. CCI worked directly with the stakeholder teams to build their capacity for organizing around issues and implementing various improvement projects within their developments. The MECs facilitated training and support for stakeholders in key areas, including community organizing, fundraising, project management, and communications. MOCJ believed these tools would help stakeholders develop the skills and networks needed to ensure each team's longevity.

MECs focused on preparing stakeholder teams for the time when MECs would no longer be funded. They intentionally provided stakeholders with opportunities to demonstrate leadership

skills and encouraged them to take the initiative in formulating action plans. For example, MECs reported to researchers that they occasionally arrived at stakeholder team meetings 30 minutes late just to evaluate how the team handled their absence.

CCI engaged a consultant firm to develop techniques for residents to use in implementing and evaluating community projects. The goal was to provide residents with skills to advocate for new funding after MAP ended. MECs helped residents connect with city agencies, community partners, and CBOs to create broad networks of support. By helping stakeholders to form networks, CCI and MOCJ hoped residents would develop relationships with partner organizations and continue to collaborate after MAP funding concluded.

By the end of 2019, MOCJ leadership had seen considerable success, but efforts to sustain the initiative in all MAP developments beyond current funding remained critical. MOCJ was able to secure at least one additional year of funding for CCI to continue supporting the NStat process and to implement space-improvement projects in MAP communities. MECs gained another year to work on their sustainability plans. MAP partners emphasized to researchers that their agencies were committed to MAP and that even the end of MOCJ oversight would not affect their dedication. Agency staff pledged to remain connected to the communities and to continue their support of residents. MOCJ also "baselined" some funding for many partner agencies into its overall operating budget, which allowed the agencies to continue working in the developments past the end of targeted MAP funding.

LESSONS LEARNED

Researchers asked MAP leaders, stakeholders, and staff from agency partners if they would implement the initiative differently if given another chance. Many respondents would have preferred to establish the Local NStat process and the onboarding of MECs earlier. Delays in the presence of MECs and the visibility of NStat, according to those interviewed, limited the support and involvement of residents. Introducing those two components earlier could have identified community needs more accurately and provided better guidance for implementation. More careful selection and recruitment of agency partners, stronger resident participation, and the mobilization of diverse community networks were among other factors mentioned to researchers as features that could have benefitted MAP.

Participants suggested to researchers that City officials under-estimated the challenges they would face in establishing good faith with residents and organizing them into stakeholder groups ready to pursue positive community change. Involving the existing leaders of NYCHA resident associations was an obvious strategy for securing the trust and participation of residents, but it came with risks.

According to participants, NYCHA residents see resident associations, especially RA leaders, as insular. Involving them early as promoters of MAP could have had a deterrent effect on resident engagement. On the other hand, if the leaders of NYCHA resident

associations had not been involved at the start of MAP, it could have weakened the official standing of MAP and its goals. Providing an opportunity for resident associations to participate in planning was critical for clarifying the roles of residents and encouraging strong partnerships among residents, City leaders, and partner agencies.

Some participants told researchers that resident engagement would have been stronger if MAP had taken advantage of existing partnerships between community groups, partner agencies, and local politicians, and if MOCJ had been more diligent in promoting MAP. When a new initiative appears to overlap with ongoing efforts in the neighborhood, it is more difficult to elicit resident support. Of course, building on existing relationships brings new complications as well.

Key partners in MAP included the educational sector, employment supports, job training programs, mental health, legal services, and law enforcement. Participants expressed concern about the risks as well as the benefits of collaborating with police. Some respondents argued that reducing police involvement could have broadened the appeal of MAP. Police may be strong allies in efforts to improve community safety, but asking them to work in partnership with neighborhood residents is complicated due to the long history of contentious relationships between police and communities.

Participants observed that City officials and partner agencies should have invested more in branding and visibility. An initiative like MAP depends on its visibility to engage residents. With more consistent messaging and branding, residents would have seen connections between the wide array of projects related to MAP.

Finally, staff from MOCJ admitted that MAP should have made more use of contracts and MOUs to focus the efforts of partner agencies rather than relying on verbal agreements. Core activities in a complex initiative like MAP must be tied to organizational incentives and detailed in written agreements. Community agencies are pulled in many directions simultaneously. MAP partners would have benefited from clearly written agreements that designated the goals and purposes of their efforts while insulating them from the turmoil created by the constantly changing expectations of funders and clients.

CONCLUSION

By 2020, MOCJ leadership was confident of MAP's impact, seeing the strategies they developed as applying to other neighborhoods as well. One program leader told researchers that MAP was not an inherently NYCHA-specific initiative.

There are other communities that would benefit from having local representatives and executive-level city agencies and community-based partners working hand-in-hand in the community to make sure that residents are empowered and that they are participating.

MAP leaders listened to their partners and implemented three critical recommendations.

- 1) Public safety is not simply a crime issue. Strategies to improve community well-being must involve resources and partners from multiple service sectors, residents, and neighborhood groups.
- 2) In such efforts, the entire initiative should be supported with a data dashboard accessible by the public as well as by officials.
- 3) Community meetings should be held in neutral, community locations and not in buildings controlled by City government.

MOCJ encountered and overcame numerous obstacles in designing and implementing the MAP initiative. Agency leaders and staff continued experimenting with innovative approaches to facilitating community empowerment and improving public safety. MOCJ and its partners created effective strategies for community meetings and resident engagement while addressing various issues, including funding difficulties, delays in contractual authority, and interruptions in services.

Partner agencies were working with MOCJ to prepare residents to assume increased responsibility for MAP-related strategies. Residents involved in stakeholder teams expressed appreciation for skills they learned as part of MAP, which they believed would be transferrable to labor market success, including resume writing, interpersonal communications, awareness of city resources, and engaging with data and social indicators.

By helping residents develop skills and tools needed to make decisions about their own communities, MAP encouraged greater citizen participation in crafting specific solutions for shared problems. Ultimately, City officials hoped this would lead to safer neighborhoods for all New Yorkers.

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