

# **Towards an Environmental Justice Collaborative Model**

Case Studies of Six Partnerships Used  
to Address Environmental Justice Issues in  
Communities

## **Case Studies**

January 2003

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Economics, and Innovation





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## Acknowledgements

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*Towards an Environmental Justice Collaborative Model: Case Studies of Six Partnerships Used to Address Environmental Justice Issues in Communities*

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U.S. Environmental Protection Agency. Office of Policy, Economics, and Innovation. Washington, D.C. A team based in EPA's Office of Policy, Economics, and Innovation performed this evaluation. Eric Marsh was the project manager for this effort.

This report is a companion report to *Towards an Environmental Justice Collaborative Model: An Evaluation of the Use of Partnerships to Address Environmental Justice Issues in Communities* (EPA/100-R-03-001). View both of these on-line at: <http://www.epa.gov/evaluate/ej.htm>.



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## ***Executive Summary***

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In June 1999, the federal Interagency Working Group on Environmental Justice (IWG) began to develop the concept of an Integrated Federal Interagency Environmental Justice Action Agenda (Agenda) as a way of incorporating environmental justice in all policies, programs, and activities of federal agencies. Finalized in May 2000, the IWG's Agenda seeks to build dynamic and proactive partnerships that access the initiatives and resources of federal agencies to improve the quality of life of minority and low-income communities that suffer disproportionate environmental impacts.

To help implement the Agenda, the IWG selected fifteen IWG national demonstration projects in June 2000. To make the selections, the IWG considered several criteria which included the extent to which the projects: were community-based; had strong community interest; represented areas that were predominantly minority or low-income populations; had sufficient resources to carry out activities; had previously taken steps to address or consider environmental justice issues; had the commitment of at least two federal agencies to participate; and were committed to using multi-stakeholder collaborative problem-solving as a tool for addressing environmental justice issues. Goals of the projects were varied, but included, among others: asthma rate reduction, comprehensive lead abatement, and contaminated site cleanup.

A critical component of these projects for the IWG were parties' commitments to collaborate with each other to address environmental justice issues of concern and federal agencies' commitments to coordinate with each other to help support the projects. After witnessing many years of environmental justice disputes end with less-than-ideal solutions and long-lasting negative relations between stakeholders, the IWG came to recognize the importance of encouraging a cooperative, problem-solving spirit across stakeholders. Once these issues are raised to the federal government, the IWG explains that, they typically "(1) cut across agency jurisdictions or areas of expertise; (2) involve many stakeholders holding mutually inconsistent perspectives about the nature of the issues confronting them; and (3) involve parties having longstanding, adversarial relationships."<sup>1</sup> In response, the IWG argues that use of a multi-stakeholder collaborative effort can be an effective way to achieve sustainable, quality-of-life improvements for communities in which issues have taken "the form of intractable, multifaceted, and multi-layered disputes." Furthermore, the IWG explains that championing collaboration at local levels, with federal agencies serving as partners, is a realistic and necessary response to the on-going environmental justice issues facing affected communities.

Following the designation of the projects, the IWG continued to champion collaboration as an important tool for addressing environmental justice issues. Furthermore, the IWG began identifying elements of success based upon the current projects and past efforts that used multi-collaborative problem-solving around environmental justice issues in order to outline an "environmental justice (EJ) collaborative model." Committed to learn from the demonstration projects and inform the development of the emerging EJ Collaborative Model, starting in November 2000, the IWG began working with the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) to develop an evaluation strategy. The plan eventually included the development of six case studies for six demonstration projects, and a cross-case study analysis. Data used to develop the case studies was generated primarily through interviews of partnership members conducted between September 2001 and April 2002, and document review. Interview data was collected through use of a semi-structured, open-ended interview guide. The case studies include:

- A multi-stakeholder partnership based primarily in an inner city community near downtown San Diego that is addressing health concerns brought about by incompatible land uses.
- A multi-stakeholder partnership focused on Southeast and Southwest Washington D.C. championed by the Washington Navy Yard that is seeking to ensure that local redevelopment efforts benefit local residents.
- A collaboration between a tribal community in Alaska and several federal agencies that is working to ensure cleanup of over 80 contaminated sites on the community's home island.
- A partnership between federal agencies and several organizations based in East St. Louis and surrounding communities that is taking a comprehensive approach to reducing local threats from lead-poisoning.
- A partnership between three rural communities, federal agencies, and other organizations in southern Missouri that is taking a structured approach to addressing local asthma, lead, and water quality issues.
- A partnership consisting of numerous groups and agencies and driven by a grassroots group in Spartanburg, South Carolina that is seeking to cleanup contaminated and abandoned sites and revitalize the nearby neighborhoods.

Following completion of the case studies, the cross-case study analysis was performed that examined: 1) partnership process, activities, and outcomes; 2) key factors influencing partnership success; 3) value of collaboration to address environmental justice issues; and 4) value of federal agency involvement in these efforts. Following these analyses, findings were developed based upon a review of the core analytical sections and the six case studies. Findings describe the value of using collaboration as applied in the six partnerships, value of federal involvement, and specific factors contributing to progress and success of the partnerships. Some of the core findings are described below.

***Multi-stakeholder collaboration can act as a transformative mechanism for enabling communities and associated stakeholders to constructively address complex and long-standing issues concerning environmental and public health hazards, strained or non-existent relations with government agencies and other institutions, and economic decline.***

Multi-stakeholder collaboration in the environmental justice context can be transformative in two ways. First, it can provide disadvantaged communities with an opportunity to openly discuss concerns and potential solutions to issues affecting them in a manner that genuinely suits the affected community's needs. Second, it can provide public service organizations, including government agencies and community-based organizations, with an effective forum to coordinate, leverage, and strategically use resources to meet complex public health, environmental, and other socio-economic challenges facing disadvantaged communities. The power of the collaborative approaches used in the six partnerships is reflected in the fact that nearly 80 percent of the interviewees addressing this topic (52 of 66) indicated that the issues facing the affected communities either would not have been addressed, or would not have been addressed to the same extent, if at all, without use of a collaborative approach.

***The partnerships are generating a variety of positive outcomes for the affected communities.***

The partnerships' most significant outcome has been the creation or enhancement of relationships through which numerous, diverse, and sometimes competing, stakeholders can come together and engage in constructive dialogue to overcome environmental justice concerns. Through these collaborative partnerships, community organizations and residents strengthen their capacity and confidence to work with agencies and institutions that are intended to serve the public. In addition, this collaboration helps build or reinforce critical bridges between institutions and the affected communities, which are important ingredients for local environmental protection and redevelopment. The partnerships are also obtaining strong support and/or involvement from members in the affected communities, and better ensuring the implementation and/or the *more effective* implementation of specific public health, environmental protection, and other economic development programs.

***The partnerships are also enabling the many institutions seeking to provide community assistance to work more effectively with the affected communities.***

Targeted programs designed to assist communities are made more effective and best applied when sponsoring officials can more efficiently navigate challenging stakeholder relationships and understand how their program may fit the affected community's overall needs. Working through a forum that is already strongly supported by the community and involves numerous and diverse stakeholders can reduce service providers' needs to develop separate, independent relationships within the affected community necessary to more effectively implement their programs.

***Several of these partnerships have and continue to face challenges to improve situations for the affected communities.***

Most notably, parties struggle with the maintenance and operation of their partnerships, grappling with such day-to-day issues as coordination and ensuring continued cooperation amongst the different parties. Furthermore, several partnerships are facing challenges with the implementation of specific activities, such as developing more protective zoning regulations and ensuring that all responsible parties participate in the cleanup of contaminated sites. In addition, some partnerships are still learning how best to engage the affected communities they are working in to ensure that all residents have a genuine voice in and/or sufficient knowledge of the partnership efforts and their activities. Finally, one partnership, although committed to working out differences, has struggled to bridge diverse perspectives amongst participating stakeholders.

***Federal agencies have and continue to play key roles in these partnerships.***

First, federal agencies have assisted in the creation or continued implementation in all the partnerships by generating or seizing opportunities and by providing energy and enthusiasm. Second, they have supplied the partnerships with critical resources, knowledge, and expertise. Finally, federal agencies have provided or enhanced the credibility, legitimacy, and/or trust surrounding the partnership efforts. This has been done by validating community concerns regarding issues of environmental justice, offering assurances that certain locally-based solutions to address these issues, are, in fact, appropriate, encouraging reluctant regional and local officials to consider becoming involved in these efforts, and bringing a greater overall degree of accountability to the partnerships.

***Despite the positive roles of federal agencies, cooperation and coordination in support of partnership efforts within and between federal agencies could be enhanced and made more apparent to non-federal partners.***

Some interviewees believe that coordination has improved. However, some don't see any evidence of cooperation, while others are unclear about the cooperation. Some federal representatives, however, are exhibiting signs of improved coordination. One federal agency has developed an internal team to better coordinate the many agency-led activities taking place in the partnership community. In two other partnerships, memorandums of understanding were established to improve coordination and cooperation between some participating federal agencies. Moreover, at least one federal representative at the regional level has begun meeting with representatives of different federal agencies to discuss ways in which they can coordinate on additional partnerships centered on issues of environmental justice.

***Much of the success of these efforts can be attributed to individuals, either at the community, regional, NGO, or government level, who took it upon themselves, at real risk of failure, to pull diverse groups together.***

Pulling partnerships together, especially when the goal is to address challenging environmental problems and social relationships, and/or help a community revitalize, can be a difficult endeavor. This challenge is magnified when organizations are not accustomed to working in a coordinated manner, and when resources for maintaining the partnerships are not always readily available. Such an effort requires not only leadership skills, patience, and the ability for creative thinking, but also strong interpersonal skills that naturally lend themselves to stakeholder bridge building. In many instances, such a combination of skills in one individual may not be available; nevertheless it confirms the need for communities and other institutions desiring to use collaborative partnerships to look for these qualities in persons to lead or co-lead these efforts.

## **Conclusion and Recommendations**

This evaluation examined the value of using collaborative partnerships to address environmental justice issues in predominantly low-income or minority communities. The evaluation was built upon six case studies that were primarily written between December and July 2002. Through this effort, the evaluation team and the IWG sought to set a high standard for evaluating environmental justice (EJ) collaborative partnerships. The evaluation team strived to accurately convey the spirit of what partnership stakeholders believed to be the main successes and challenges of their collaborative efforts, as well as what they expressed to be the overall value of using collaboration to address complex local issues. In addition, the evaluation team sought to provide a broad and insightful understanding of EJ collaborative partnerships in terms of what they are achieving, factors contributing to their progress and success, specific organizational barriers that may be limiting collaboration, and the role of federal involvement in these efforts.

Evaluation findings indicate that the partnerships are producing a variety of important results. In regards to overall value of collaboration, most interviewees indicated that the issues facing the affected communities either wouldn't have been addressed or wouldn't have been addressed to the same extent, if at all, without use of a collaborative approach. Interviewees also saw federal involvement in these efforts as critical. In addition to the many positive points voiced, interviewees also noted the partnerships are facing some challenges, including difficulties associated with partnership maintenance and operational support. Despite these and other challenges expressed, most interviewees voiced very favorable impressions of the

partnerships to which they were associated. Much additional work will be needed in the future to more fully understand the strength of multi-stakeholder collaboration for resolving local environmental justice issues. However, evidence from this evaluation suggests that use of these approaches, as demonstrated within these partnerships, can be an effective means for addressing environmental justice issues in communities.

To advance the use of multi-stakeholder collaborative partnerships as a means for addressing environmental justice issues in communities, the evaluation team recommends the following:

*For institutions at all levels responding to environmental, public health, and socio-economic challenges associated with community revitalization...*

**Expand use of multi-stakeholder collaboration as a tool for addressing environmental justice issues in distressed communities. Government at all levels, community organizations, faith groups, other NGOs, philanthropic foundations, and the business community should review opportunities to initiate, support, and participate in multi-stakeholder collaborative partnerships.**

Use of collaborative approaches can effectively enable disadvantaged communities and associated stakeholders to constructively address complex and long-standing issues concerning environmental and public health hazards, strained or non-existent relations with government agencies and other institutions, and economic decline. Participation in these efforts not only better ensures that the nation's least advantaged populations' concerns are heard and addressed; it can also better ensure the effective delivery of community development services. Assistance in these efforts need not only take the form of financial resources and expertise, it can take the form of personal interaction with the affected community as partners, improved coordination across organizations, and enhanced coordination within organizations.

*For those organizations and institutions actively participating in, supporting, or overseeing EJ collaborative partnerships...*

**Identify long-term opportunities with organizations and institutions to build the administrative and coordination capacity of the collaborative partnerships.**

Partnerships reviewed for this study have creatively found ways to remain functioning and ensure continued coordination. However, energy continually devoted to the performance of administrative functions by partnership leaders is energy lost to further meet, discuss ideas, develop strategies, and/or oversee the implementation of partnership actions. Furthermore, strong assurances of long-term administrative and coordination support can go far in terms of reducing overall anxiety of partners and especially partnership leaders. Finally, a well-established administrative and coordination function can potentially assure potential partners that the partnership is a solid operation worthy of additional support.

**Promote community-based leadership and organizational development at the local level for communities using multi-stakeholder collaboration to address EJ issues.**

It is much easier for partnerships using multi-stakeholder collaboration to implement actions that support the affected community if the community has a strong voice in partnership affairs. The community's voice is best heard if the partnership includes representatives of community groups that have broad local support. In order to obtain greater community involvement in partnerships lacking a strong voice from the community, efforts should be made,

to encourage community organizations and their leaders to emerge from within the affected community and work with the partnership as partner members. This could be done through: (1) strategic use of grants to either build or enhance the capacity of existing community-based organizations to participate; (2) sharing of lessons learned from local leaders representing EJ collaborative partnerships about how to better ensure local leadership; and (3) informal and formal requests from partner members asking local community-based organizations for their direct involvement.

**Focus attention on the environmental, public health, and socio-economic outcomes produced by EJ collaborative partnership activities.**

Attention given both upfront and throughout a partnership's life cycle to several items should move the partnership that much closer to generating the type of results desired by the affected community. Items to consider include: (1) the identification of short- and long-term goals; (2) the implementation of activities and leveraging of resources in pursuit of these goals; and (3) the careful linking of goals, activities, and environmental, public health, and socio-economic outcomes. To help do this, partner members should early on consider using community visioning, strategic planning, performance measurement, and evaluative tools.

*For the academic community...*

**Systematically promote rigorous academic study and intellectual discourse around the use of collaborative models to address EJ issues.**

Much additional work is needed to more fully understand the value of EJ collaborative approaches at both the national and community level. This could take the form of additional program evaluations and other research efforts. Moreover, this could involve academic symposiums and even new coursework that examine both the theory underlying EJ collaborative approaches, its current application, and potential for use on a broader scale.

*For the IWG...*

**Link those involved in EJ collaborative partnerships into a national structure that encourages cross-partnership learning and builds additional support.**

Partners operating in isolation may feel that their work is overwhelming and that they are continually charting new territory. This could be at least partly overcome if partner members are made to recognize that they are part of a process that is being used in places across the country to address complex issues in the midst of challenging stakeholder relationships. Efforts to create a national structure could include: (1) continuing the on-going effort by the IWG to promote a national dialogue on use of EJ collaborative approaches; (2) hosting annual regional and national conferences for partnership members and others interested in such approaches to discuss partnership progress and successes; and (3) distributing a national newsletter to partnership members that provides updates on partnership progress, partnership resources, and recommendations for overcoming partnership obstacles to success.

**Fully develop the EJ Collaborative Model.**

A carefully articulated model would provide a clearer understanding for parties interested in collaboration of how, and under what circumstances, collaboration can take place, and what benefits effective collaboration could produce in addressing environmental justice issues. Second, such a model would enable the IWG, and leaders of the EJ collaborative partnerships, to learn from EJ collaborative efforts in a more systematic fashion. The full development of the

EJ Collaborative Model could include: (1) identification of the Model's main components; (2) identification of basic outcomes to be achieved; (3) a discussion that clearly explains the links between collaborating and the expected outcomes of collaborating; (4) identification of indicators that can be used to determine the extent to which outcomes are being achieved; (5) identification of agreed upon questions to systematically identify key factors contributing to partnership progress and success; and (6) development of a data gathering plan that is user-friendly and minimizes the burden of data collection.

**Review opportunities to forge stronger links between established government environmental programs that are critical to the cleanup and revitalization of disadvantaged communities.**

These include federal initiatives such as DOE's Brightfields, EPA's Brownfields, DOE's Clean Cities, DOE's Rebuild America, EPA's Smart Growth Index, EPA's Superfund, and others. These programs produce results acting independently. In order to fully meet the needs of communities challenged by numerous environmental, public health, and socio-economic issues, EJ collaborative partnerships would greatly benefit if the leaders and coordinators of these programs either enhance or begin formal partnerships with each other. Formal coordination efforts could include periodic assessments of (1) how cooperation by program coordinators can be improved, (2) how related programs could be tailored to more easily complement one another, and (3) how the public regularly obtains access to and uses these programs.

**Expand internal federal support for both current and future EJ collaborative partnerships.**

The IWG has played an important leadership role in supporting, nurturing, and promoting EJ collaborative partnerships. However both current and future EJ collaborative partnerships would benefit by expanded IWG support. First, each IWG-sponsored partnership would benefit by having a designated champion within the IWG. Second, partnerships would benefit by additional technical assistance in the form of planning and evaluation, regular diffusion of lessons learned, and greater understanding of the availability and accessibility of the broad array of resources, particularly at the federal level, for both community partnership building and community revitalization initiatives. Furthermore, partnerships could benefit from tools that enable them to understand the linkages between these government programs and how they could be accessed and used collectively to better meet environmental and revitalization goals. Although it is beyond the scope of the IWG to provide this type of technical assistance to partnership communities on a regular basis, the IWG can collectively help envision, oversee, and support information diffusion systems that enable partnerships to more efficiently and effectively develop and obtain desired outcomes for the partnership communities.

# 1 Introduction

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## *Background*

In the late 1980s and early 1990s, the federal government gave increasing attention to issues of environmental justice. Grassroots protests and government and academic research began to reveal how communities of color and low-income were faced with a disproportionate share of unwanted land uses and disparities in environmental protection. As a first response, the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) opened the Office of Environmental Equity in 1992, which became the Office of Environmental Justice. An important effort that emerged from this office was the creation of the National Environmental Justice Advisory Council—a federal advisory committee that consists of a range of stakeholders that provide advice to EPA on environmental justice matters. In 1994, Executive Order 12898 was signed requiring all federal agencies to ensure environmental justice issues are addressed in all agency programs, policies, and procedures. In addition, the Order required the formation of a federal interagency workgroup, chaired by EPA, to better ensure coordination across federal agencies in resolving environmental justice issues. By 2000 several federal agencies, along with an increasing number of state governments, local governments and members of the business community,<sup>2</sup> had initiated programs or taken actions to remedy environmental justice issues.

## *The Interagency Working Group on Environmental Justice*

An important component of the federal effort to address environmental justice issues was the development of the “Integrated Federal Interagency Environmental Justice Action Agenda” (Agenda) released in May 2000 by the federal Interagency Working Group on Environmental Justice (IWG). The overarching goal of the Agenda is to build “dynamic and proactive partnerships among Federal agencies to benefit environmentally and economically distressed communities.” In the Agenda the IWG stressed that that by working more effectively together, federal agencies would “enhance identification, mobilization and utilization of Federal resources...[enabling] distressed communities to improve environmental decision-making and more efficiently access and leverage Federal government initiatives.”<sup>3</sup>

To help implement the Action Agenda, the IWG selected fifteen national demonstration projects in June 2000. To make the selections, the IWG considered several criteria which included the extent to which the projects: were community-based; had strong community interest; represented areas that were predominantly minority or low-income populations; had sufficient resources to carry out activities; had previously taken steps to address or consider environmental justice issues; had the commitment of at least two federal agencies to participate; and were committed to using multi-stakeholder collaborative problem-solving as a tool for addressing environmental justice issues. Of the projects selected, eleven had specific local communities as focus areas; three had particular states or regions as their focus area and one focused on national tribal environmental justice policy. Some of the projects selected emerged as a direct result of the IWG designation process; others were already established and were selected to highlight their on-going commitments to multi-stakeholder collaboration<sup>4</sup>. Some of the goals of the various projects included:



- Cleanup of a polluted waterway;
- Community empowerment to better address local environmental justice issues;
- Conversion of vehicular fleets to cleaner fuels;
- Community economic development;
- Comprehensive lead abatement;
- Local air quality improvement;
- Contaminated site cleanup; and
- Asthma rate reduction.<sup>5</sup>

No special IWG funding awards were given to the projects as a result of IWG designation.

### *Why Collaboration?*

A critical component of these projects for the IWG were parties' commitments to collaborate with each other to address environmental justice issues of concern and federal agencies' commitments to coordinate with each other to help support the projects. After witnessing many years of environmental justice disputes end with less-than-ideal solutions and long-lasting negative relations between stakeholders, the IWG came to recognize the importance of encouraging a cooperative, problem-solving spirit across stakeholders. Once these issues are raised to the federal government, the IWG explains that, they typically "(1) cut across agency jurisdictions or areas of expertise; (2) involve many stakeholders holding mutually inconsistent perspectives about the nature of the issues confronting them; and (3) involve parties having longstanding, adversarial relationships."<sup>6</sup> In response, the IWG argues that use of a multi-stakeholder collaborative effort can be an effective way to achieve sustainable, quality-of-life improvements for communities in which issues have taken "the form of intractable, multifaceted, and multi-layered disputes." Furthermore, the IWG explains that championing collaboration at local levels, with federal agencies serving as partners, is a realistic and necessary response to the on-going environmental justice issues facing affected communities.

### *Towards an Environmental Justice Collaborative Model*

Less than a year following the designation of these projects, the International City/County Management Association hosted a forum, sponsored by the Ford Foundation. The Forum brought together numerous stakeholders to discuss opportunities for collaboration, identify elements for successful collaboration, and hear from different partners involved in three of the IWG's national demonstration projects. Following this forum, the IWG continued to champion collaboration as an important tool to address environmental justice issues. In its efforts to further promote an "environmental justice collaborative model" the IWG began outlining elements of success based upon the demonstration projects and past efforts that used multi-stakeholder collaborative problem-solving. The IWG grouped elements of success into five categories that include: issue identification and leadership formation; capacity- and partnership-building; strategic planning and vision; implementation; and identification and replication of best practices.<sup>7</sup>

Since the designation of the national demonstration projects, groups dedicated to issues of environmental justice have endorsed this collaborative approach to problem-solving. In 2001, the National Environmental Policy Commission's *Report to the Congressional Black Caucus Foundation Environmental Justice Braintrust* stated, "The IWG demonstration projects are particularly significant. They point to the potential to problem-solve across stakeholder groups in a constructive, collaborative manner, building relationships, avoiding duplicated efforts, and leveraging instead of wasting resources."<sup>8</sup> Furthermore, in June 2002, EPA's National

Environmental Justice Advisory Council recommended that EPA support advancement of the IWG's Action Agenda and "its collaborative interagency problem-solving model as exemplified in the fifteen demonstration projects."<sup>9</sup> In April 2002, the IWG announced a second round of nominations for projects working to address environmental justice concerns, and expects to make selections by mid-November. As part of the criteria for selection, the IWG asked proposal sponsors to discuss how their project exhibited elements of success mentioned in the paragraph above.<sup>10</sup>

### *Roots of the Environmental Justice Collaborative Model*

The emerging Environmental Justice (EJ) Collaborative Model is being built on lessons from the on-going national demonstration projects as well as upon on lessons from many existing comprehensive, collaborative efforts, such as the Dudley Street Neighborhood Initiative in Boston, Massachusetts, and the programs of the Bethel New Life Community Development Corporation in Chicago, Illinois.<sup>11</sup> Other important influences include the National Advisory Council on Environmental Policy and Technology's Integrative Environmental Justice Model Demonstration Approach, developed in 1993; the City of Clearwater, Florida's effort to develop a model environmental justice strategic plan for brownfields redevelopment, begun in 1996;<sup>12</sup> and lessons from a document entitled *Community Collaborative Wellness Tool*.<sup>13</sup> What sets the IWG's approach apart from these efforts is the IWG's emphasis upon systematically promoting multi-stakeholder collaboration as a tool for addressing environmental justice issues on a national scale. Through the IWG's national pilot projects and soon-to-be announced revitalization projects, the concerted effort by federal agencies to serve as partners in these projects, and enhanced federal participation and coordination, the IWG expects that distressed communities will be enabled to more easily access *existing* federal and other resources that enhance environmental protection and community revitalization.

### *Collaboration Explored in Brief*

Before reviewing the collaborative projects in more detail, it is helpful to discuss briefly the term collaboration. In her comprehensive treatment of the subject, Barbara Gray defines collaboration as "a process through which parties who see different aspects of a problem can constructively explore their differences and search for solutions that go beyond their own limited vision of what is possible."<sup>14</sup> Collaboration, according to Gray, is typically used to resolve conflicts or advance shared visions, and it can be used in a variety of settings including "joint ventures among businesses, settlement of local neighborhood or environmental disputes, revitalization of economically depressed cities, and resolution of major international problems."<sup>15</sup> According to Gray, the collaborative process typically consists of three phases: (1) the problem-setting phase, in which parties join together to discuss concerns; (2) the direction-setting phase, in which parties use organizational techniques such as agendas and subgroups to works towards and reach an agreement; and (3) the implementation phase, in which the parties generate outside support for their agreement and monitor it to ensure its proper implementation.<sup>16</sup> Gray associates several benefits with collaboration, which are listed below:<sup>17</sup>

### **The Benefits of Collaboration (from Gray)**

- Broad comprehensive analysis of the problem domain improves the quality of solutions.
- Response capability is more diversified.
- It is useful for reopening deadlocked negotiations.
- The risk of impasse is minimized.
- The process ensures that each stakeholder's interests are considered in any agreement.
- Parties retain ownership of the solution.
- Parties most familiar with the problem, not their agents, invent solutions.
- Participation enhances acceptance of solution and willingness to implement it.
- The potential to discover novel, innovative solutions is enhanced.
- Relations between the stakeholders improve.
- Costs associated with other methods are avoided.

Figure 1. *The Benefits of Collaboration (from Gray)*

Gray also points out several realities associated with collaboration. First, collaboration will not always work, as, for instance, when one party holds significantly higher power relative to the other participants. Second, collaboration may not always resolve complex, multiparty issues, especially when parties perceive the dispute as centering on a distinctly defined set of gains and losses. Furthermore, collaboration can be difficult when the parties' perceptions of a threat "have deep psychological and emotional roots." To overcome this challenge, Gray suggests that collaboration must pay careful attention to the design of stakeholder meetings. In addition, Gray suggests that effective collaboration requires a significant investment of time by the participants, and "the skill and forbearance of a convening organization and/or a skilled third party."<sup>18</sup>

In a more recent examination of the topic, Steven Daniels and Gregg Walker describe collaboration as a process involving "interdependent parties identifying issues of mutual interest, pooling their energy and resources, addressing their differences, charting a course for the future, and allocating implementation responsibility among the group."<sup>19</sup> They also describe several important features of collaboration, which are listed below.<sup>20</sup>

### **Key Features of Collaboration (from Daniels and Walker)**

1. *It is less competitive* and more accepting of additional parties in the process because they are viewed more as potential contributors than as potential competitors.
2. *It is based on joint learning and fact-finding*; information is not used in a competitively strategic manner.
3. *It allows underlying value differences to be explored*, and there is the potential for joint values to emerge.
4. *It resembles principled negotiation*, since the focus is on interests rather than positions.
5. *It allocates the responsibility for implementation* across as many participants in the process as the situation warrants.
6. *Its conclusions are generated by participants* through an interactive, iterative, and reflexive process. Consequently, it is less deterministic and linear.
7. *It is an ongoing process*; the participants do not meet just once to discuss a difference and then disperse. However, collaborations may have a limited life span if the issues that brought the participants together are resolved.
8. *It has the potential to build individual and community capacity* in such areas as conflict management, leadership, decision making, and communication.

Figure 2. *Key Features of Collaboration (from Daniels and Walker)*

The authors argue for the use of collaboration as an important public policy tool to address natural resource conflicts—one that can effectively balance two competing societal public policy goals of “technical competence and participatory process”.<sup>21</sup> They also carefully point out, however, that collaboration is a challenging endeavor. They explain that to collaborate, experts must learn to communicate without the use of jargon and to admit that their views reflect “fundamental value preferences.” Also, to collaborate, citizens must make a substantial investment of their own time, acknowledge contrasting “worldviews and political preferences” and take care to make only reasonable demands of agency staff and tax dollars.<sup>22</sup> Moreover, they explain that whether parties begin to collaborate hinges entirely with the participants, since “there is no practical way or ethical reason to force them to interact collaboratively.” They add to this by stating, “Collaboration cannot be forced, scheduled, or required; it must be nurtured, permitted, and promoted.”<sup>23</sup> As with Gray, Daniels and Walker also emphasize the importance of design in collaboration. They note that, “A process is not collaborative just because someone labels it so, but the collaboration emerges from the interactions of the participants, which, in turn, is encouraged, by the thoughtfulness of the design.”<sup>24</sup>

### *Overview of Case Study Development*

Although the EJ Collaborative Model is still emerging, since the launch of the Action Agenda, the IWG has been committed to learn from the national demonstration projects. By better understanding how these projects use collaborative processes, the IWG hopes to continue developing a collaborative model that other communities addressing environmental justice issues can more easily apply in the future. In the fall of 2000, the IWG began exploring the possibility of having the Evaluation Support Division in EPA’s Office of Policy, Economics, and Innovation conduct an evaluation of some of the on-going projects. Starting in November 2000, EPA’s Evaluation Support Division began working with the IWG to begin to frame the evaluation questions, with the expectation that findings from individual project evaluations would serve as the basis for a cross project assessment.

Recognizing early on that some stakeholders may be reluctant to participate in a government-sponsored evaluation, especially given that projects were voluntary, challenging issues were being addressed and, many projects were still in the early stages, the evaluation team took three steps. First, the team composed a set of environmental justice evaluation guiding principles (see Appendix B) intended to describe what an evaluation is, why it is useful, how it can be done in a manner that is respectful of the community, and how evaluation results can be used to empower the participants involved. Second, the team sought a high degree of input from a range of groups including the National Environmental Justice Advisory Council, the IWG, demonstration project leaders, program evaluators, business representatives, academia, and environmental justice activists. Finally, the team gave project leads the opportunity to review and comment on the questions in advance to obtain assurances that (1) the evaluation purpose was clear and acceptable to the community, (2) data collection techniques were considerate of interviewees’ time, and (3) interview questions were structured such that participants could provide the most accurate information.

Although the primary focus of the effort did not change based upon stakeholder input, the team did choose to develop case studies of the projects rather than individual evaluations

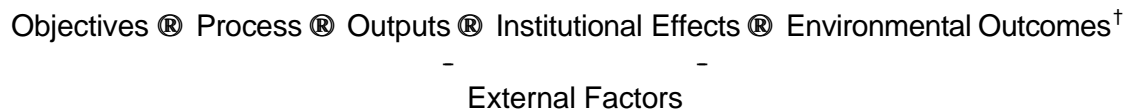
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<sup>\*</sup> In addition to providing both the NEJAC and the IWG the opportunity to comment on the evaluation approach, two facilitated national conference calls were conducted in 2001 to better inform the direction of the evaluation. To view proceedings of the national conference calls go to: <http://www.epa.gov/evaluate/ncc.htm>.

for the six projects reviewed. The six case studies were then analyzed to address the following topics:

- Partnership process, activities, and outcomes;
- Key factors influencing partnership success;
- Value of multi-stakeholder collaborative partnerships to address environmental justice issues; and
- Value of federal agency involvement in these efforts.

Data used to develop the case studies was generated through a combination of data collection approaches, including phone interviews, face-to-face interviews, and document review. Interview data was collected through use of a semi-structured, open-ended interview guide that was adapted when needed for the interviewees of different partnerships. The evaluation team generally followed the interview guide; however, not all questions were asked of all interviewees. Interview questions were structured loosely on the program framework described below.



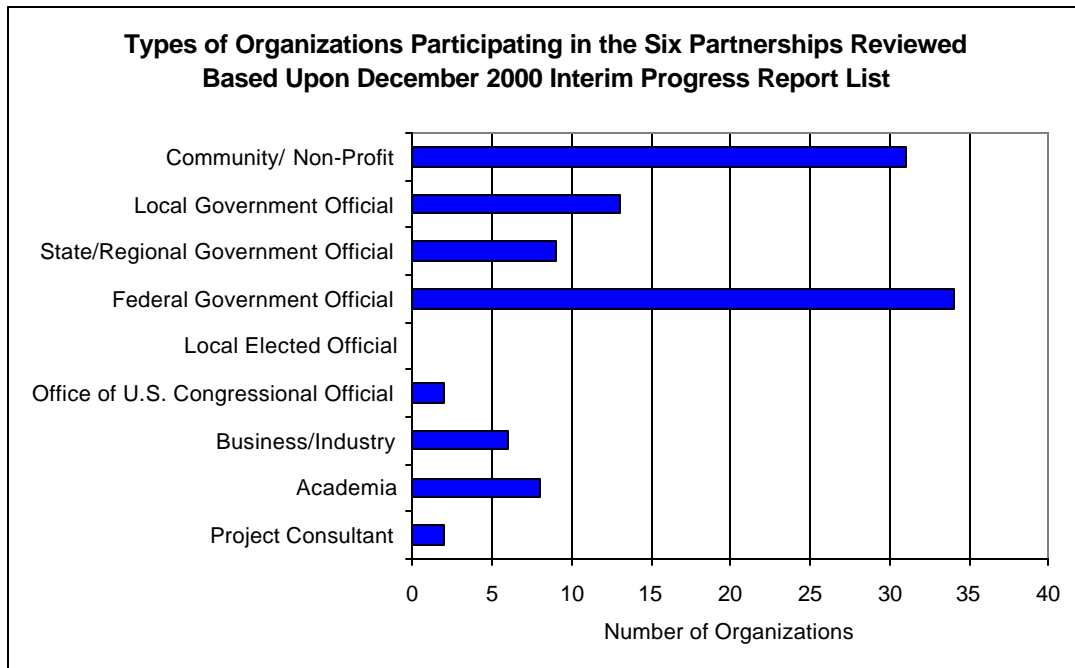
*Figure 3. Steps in a Program Framework*

A concerted effort was made to interview individuals that (1) possessed a strong understanding of the partnership they were associated with; and (2) accurately reflected the diversity of partnership interests. The evaluation team made the decision not to interview persons unaffiliated with individual partnerships. Such an effort would have required resources well beyond our scope. However, even by limiting the interviewee pool in this way, the evaluation team fully expected to uncover a diversity of responses within single partnerships.

To identify interviewees, the evaluation team typically developed a draft interviewee list based upon an initial review of partnership documents. A chart describing the types of organizations participating in each of the six partnerships reviewed, based upon a listing in the December 2000 IWG Demonstration Projects Interim Report, is included below.

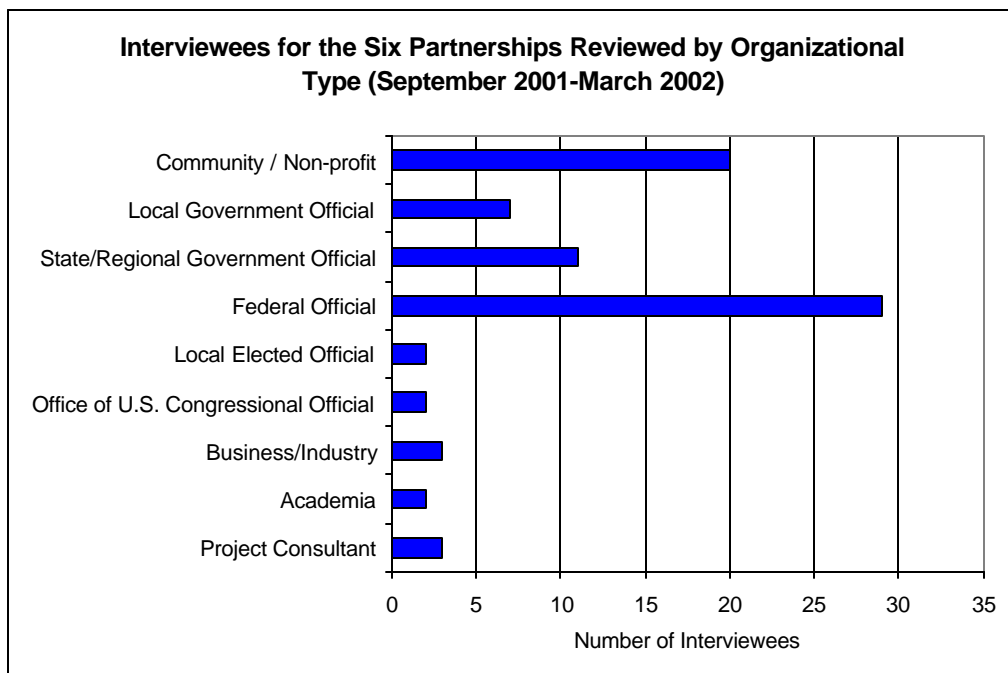
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<sup>†</sup> For the purposes of this figure “environmental outcomes” are also meant to include public health and quality of life outcomes.



*Chart 1. Types of Organizations Participating in the Six Partnerships Reviewed Based Upon December 2000 Interim Progress Report List*

Partnership leaders were then asked to provide feedback on the potential interviewees and suggest more suitable candidates if necessary. In total, the evaluation team conducted 66 separate interviews and a total of 79 individuals participated. Care was taken to work within the constraints of the federal Paperwork Reduction Act. The distribution of interviewee type is included below.



*Chart 2. Interviewees for the Six Partnerships Reviewed by Organizational Type (Sept. 2001–March 2002)*

As evident from the table, representatives of community organizations and federal agencies represented the bulk of the interviewees. When establishing the interviewee list at the on-set, community organizations and federal agencies were most often the main participants in the partnerships. Given the high degree of federal involvement in these projects, the distribution of interviewees by federal agency is also presented.

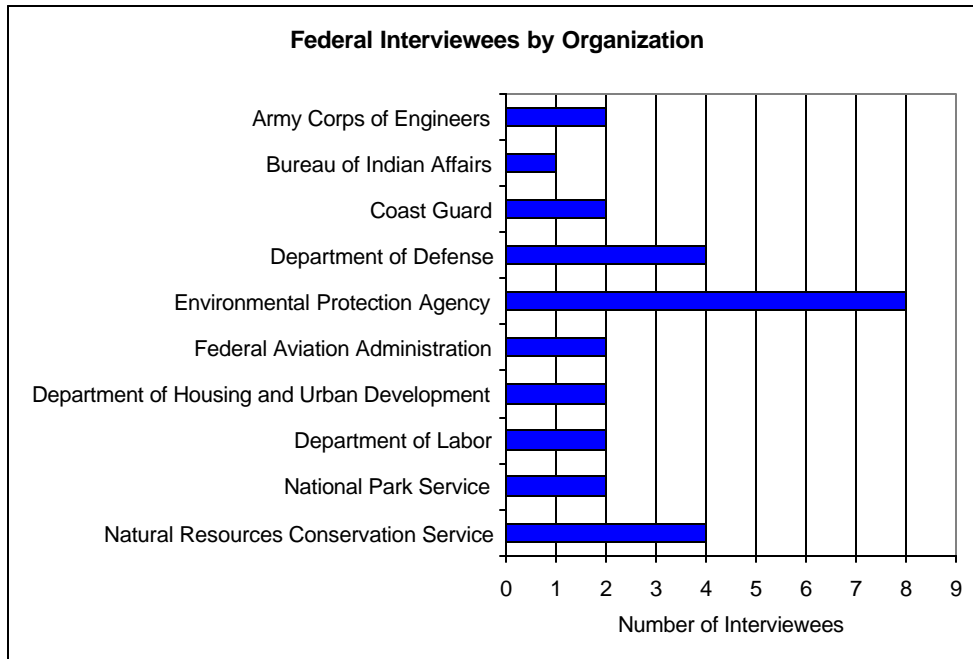


Chart 3. Federal Interviewees by Organization

Interviews were primarily conducted between mid-September and the first week of October 2001. However interviews for two partnerships were conducted between late November 2001 and April 2002. In addition, the evaluation team reviewed 15 to 75 documents, depending upon availability, to develop each case study. These documents included written community histories, formal project reports, fact sheets, site assessments, environmental management plans, community planning documents, and newspaper articles.

Case studies were structured to allow for cross-case analysis and included the following sections: (1) community history, (2) partnership background, (3) partnership goals and process, (4) partnership activities, (5) measuring partnership success, (6) partnership successes and challenges, (7) recommendations for improving the partnership, (8) lessons for other communities considering partnerships, (9) value of federal involvement, and (10) findings. Parts 1-4 were mostly descriptive and relied primarily on background documents, while parts 5-10 relied primarily on interviewee data. To conduct the analysis using interview data, responses to particular questions were reviewed to identify themes and patterns. Care was taken to ensure that the comments carefully reflected the sentiment of the interviewees' and the degree to which interviewees agreed with others on a particular topic.

Case study findings were based upon the interview data, the document review, and the evaluators' overall impressions of each partnership. Interviewees were also given two opportunities to review their partnership case study and provide comments regarding the case study's organization, content, accuracy, and readability. In addition, the evaluation team, on occasion, contacted a few specific individuals associated with the partnerships to clarify certain

questions related to partnership background and process. Case studies were written understanding that the descriptions and analyses of interviewee comments reflected interviewee perceptions about the partnerships at a single point in time. Moreover, the evaluation team recognized that the partnerships, and interviewee perceptions of them, would continue to evolve.

The case study partnerships were selected based upon several considerations including the extent to which they represented an adequate level of geographic variability and adequate variability in regards to the partnership types (both in terms of the partnership focus and the demographic characteristics of the affected community). In addition, attention was placed upon those partnerships that were more representative of those types of partnerships that the IWG expects will be more commonly implemented in communities in the future.

### *Overview of Case Study Partnerships*

The **Barrio Logan Partnership** is based primarily in an inner city community near downtown San Diego. The partnership formed in 2001 as part of the IWG designation after initial discussions between a senior EPA official and representatives of the Environmental Health Coalition, a local environmental justice organization with a long-standing history of working in the Barrio Logan community. Barrio Logan is faced with several challenges, most notably incompatible land-uses brought about through lack of proper zoning restrictions that led to the emergence of industrial land uses near residential homes. Through a structured, facilitated partnering process, the Barrio Logan partnership has brought long-standing adversaries together to discuss, form goals, and implement actions to address some of the numerous quality of life issues facing the community.

The **Bridges to Friendship Partnership** emerged in 1998 out of concerns that a major redevelopment effort in a distressed Washington, D.C. neighborhood would fail to benefit local residents and could eventually result in their displacement. Initiated by community organizations and officials at the Washington Navy Yard, these groups formed a structured but flexible partnership involving numerous community non-profits, several federal agencies, and the District of Columbia government to ensure that local residents would benefit from the redevelopment through better coordination, communication, and pooling of expertise and resources. With over forty partners today, partnership members view this coordinated approach as an effective way to conduct business and continue to search for opportunities to better serve local residents.

The **Metlakatla Peninsula Cleanup Partnership** is a unique emerging collaboration between the Metlakatla Indian Community (MIC), federal agency field staff in Alaska, and federal headquarters staff based primarily in Washington D.C. Its purpose is to ensure the cleanup of over 80 primarily government-contaminated sites on the MIC's home island in southeast Alaska. Through these coordinated efforts, the parties hope to cleanup the sites in a manner that is satisfactory to the Tribe, making more efficient use of resources, and map out a process for cleanup of complex multi-party sites. The issues are complex given the numerous agencies and other parties involved in the contamination, the different parties' policies and procedures for contaminated site cleanup, and disagreements over who should cleanup the sites and to what level. The partnership effort began in 2000 after the designation by the IWG as a national demonstration pilot and built upon an on-going local collaboration primarily between the MIC and Alaska federal agency field staff.

The **Metro East Lead Collaborative** is an effort that emerged after a local hospital and government officials determined that high lead levels in children in East. St. Louis and



surrounding communities may be a result of lead-contaminated soil. Recognizing the need for a comprehensive approach to reduce the threat of lead-poisoning, in early 1999, an EPA representative brought several groups already at work on lead and related issues together to form a structured partnership. Although initially focused on East St. Louis, the project soon expanded its focus to other nearby neighborhoods. In addition, the enthusiasm over the partnership's lead-reduction efforts spurred the partnership to begin simultaneously addressing brownfields redevelopment.

The **New Madrid Tri-Community Partnership** resulted in 1998 after local residents from one rural community in southern Missouri requested the assistance of the federal Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) to help it tackle numerous social, economic, and environmental challenges. Responding to the call, NRCS joined together with EPA, a regional non-profit, and two additional communities in the area to begin addressing common residential concerns. Soon after the partnership was designated by EPA as a Child Health Champion national demonstration project, these groups began taking a structured approach to addressing asthma, lead, and water quality issues in the three communities. Since then, the partners have made significant progress meeting the objectives outlined under their program.

The **ReGenesis Partnership** emerged in 1999, after the leader of a 1,400-member group representing two distressed and adjacent neighborhoods in Spartanburg, South Carolina brought together numerous stakeholders in an effort to cleanup and revitalize the area. By building a shared vision for redevelopment, the energy and enthusiasm surrounding the effort brought together approximately 70 organizations representing a range of interests, which includes the cleanup and redevelopment of two Superfund equivalent sites, the building of a health clinic, a recreational greenway, new road construction, and new affordable housing. This loosely structured partnership is headed by Harold Mitchell, the leader of ReGenesis, and guided by a core group including Mitchell, and representatives of the City, the County, and EPA's regional office based in Atlanta.

### ***Partnership Similarities and Differences in Brief***

Across the six partnerships reviewed are both similarities and differences. First, the partnerships started at different points in time. Some started as early as 1998 and others as late as 2000. Second, some partnerships were initiated by communities or community-based organizations while others were initiated by federal agencies. Most partnerships have identified issues, formed goals, and are taking actions or planning actions to address these issues. Most have well-defined operating structures, however only one regularly relies on a professional facilitator. The partnership coordination mechanisms range from tight to loose, and the scope of solutions sought by each of the partnerships vary from specific to comprehensive. In all partnerships diverse stakeholders are participating, however, most stakeholders represent community or government-based organizations. Finally, all partnerships have varying levels of community involvement.

<b>Partnership Title</b>	<b>Partnership Location</b>	<b>Demographics of Affected Community</b>	<b>Geographic Characteristics</b>	<b>Year Initiated</b>	<b>Partnership Focus</b>
Barrio Logan	San Diego, California	Predominantly Latino/Low income	Inner city	2000	Address immediate health concerns/ Boost overall quality of life
Bridges to Friendship	Southeast / Southwest Washington, D.C.	Predominantly African American/Low income	Inner city	1998	Increase overall resident employment/ Boost overall quality of life
Metlakatla Peninsula Cleanup	Southeastern Alaska	Native American/Low income	Rural/Island	2000	Cleanup contaminated sites
Metro East Lead Collaborative	East St. Louis/St. Clair County, Illinois	African American/Low income	Inner City	1999	Improve children's health by reducing lead poisoning
New Madrid Tri-Community	New Madrid County, Missouri	African American/Caucasian/Low income	Rural	1998	Address childhood lead poisoning, asthma and allergies, and water contaminants
ReGenesis	Spartanburg, South Carolina	African American/Low income	Urban/Rural	2000	Address and revitalize contaminated sites

Figure 4. Case Study Partnerships Summary

## 2 Barrio Logan Partnership

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*[This effort has] gotten people from these agencies talking and getting to know each other which is critical.*

*We're talking about safety, housing, trucks, and all the things that are important to the community.*

*Previous enemies are working together to figure out what they can do to fix the problem instead of fighting.*

*I saw this partnership as an opportunity to break the cycle that had been going on for the last 30-40 years.*

— Interviewees, Barrio Logan Partnership

### *Community History*<sup>\*</sup>

The City of San Diego is located on the southern California coast, less than fifteen miles from the northern border of Mexico. Home to a diverse population of approximately 1.2 million people<sup>25†</sup>, the City was named the most efficiently run city in California in February 2002.<sup>26</sup> The Mayor's Office is currently engaged in efforts to improve overall quality of life for San Diegans, focused on such goals as reducing traffic congestion, cleaning the area's bays and beaches and enhancing San Diego's neighborhoods.<sup>27</sup> Through San Diego's "City of Villages" initiative the City hopes to help its historically and culturally distinct communities thrive by working with them to address and integrate commercial, employment, housing, transit, and civic use needs.<sup>28</sup>

One San Diego community, where residents have been working for many years to strengthen its neighborhoods and boost overall quality of life for residents, can be found near the City's downtown area. Barrio Logan is a predominantly Latino community located on the border of the industrialized portion of the San Diego Bay.<sup>29</sup> Between 1910 and 1920, this area saw a large influx of immigrants from Mexico wanting to escape Mexico's poor economy and political turmoil.<sup>30</sup> Following this migration, Barrio Logan transformed into one of the largest Mexican-American communities in California<sup>31</sup> and came to be known as "the historical and symbolic center of the San Diego Chicano Community."<sup>32</sup> As San Diego's downtown grew, and both the state and the city began to modernize, however, Barrio Logan began experiencing a series of fundamental changes.<sup>33</sup> First, the revision of city zoning laws in the 1950s led to industrial growth in the community and brought a series of junkyards sited near schools and homes<sup>34</sup> as well as other industries, including plating, furniture, woodworking, auto body, and welding shops,<sup>35</sup> tanneries and canneries.<sup>36</sup> Second, U.S. Interstate 5 was built in the early 1960s, which "physically divided the community and resulted in forced relocation of residents."<sup>37</sup> Finally, in 1969, the Coronado Bay Bridge was constructed, leading to more displacement of

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<sup>\*</sup> Interviews for this case study were conducted primarily during the week of October 8, 2001. One additional interview was conducted in late October. Twelve separate interviews were conducted and a total of fourteen persons participated. Interviews were conducted with representatives of community organizations, federal, state, and local government agencies, local business, and industry.

<sup>†</sup> The current population total of the City of San Diego equals 1,223,400.

residents and further community resentment.<sup>38</sup> By 1979, Barrio Logan's population had fallen from 20,000 to only 5,000.

Today, roughly 6,000 people reside in Barrio Logan, of which approximately 85 percent are Hispanic.<sup>39</sup> The community consists of a tightly concentrated mixture of homes, commercial buildings, and industrial facilities, including a waterfront industrial and naval complex.<sup>40</sup> Despite a heavy concentration of industry, unemployment is significantly greater than the city average,<sup>41</sup> and 40 percent of households earn incomes below the state's poverty level.<sup>42</sup> Moreover, Barrio Logan residents struggle with antiquated, inadequate and poorly maintained housing, overburdened schools, and insufficient health care and social services.<sup>43</sup> In addition, Barrio Logan residents are faced with a myriad of environmental health issues. Today, nearly 3,000,000 pounds of toxic pollutants are emitted from facilities in the community, children exhibit an incidence of asthma at over twice the rate of the national average,<sup>44</sup> and the region's respiratory health hazard index is 100-200 times above acceptable standards.<sup>45</sup> In addition, residents are faced with pollutants from a high volume of commuter and truck traffic.

Despite its many obstacles, Barrio Logan residents have kept a strong sense of community and continue to push for improvements. This is perhaps best symbolized by an event in 1970 in which Barrio Logan residents resisted efforts by the California Highway Patrol to build a parking lot on land underneath the Coronado Bay Bridge that had previously been designated by the City to become a community park.<sup>46</sup> Born out of many years of negative relations between the community and the City,<sup>47</sup> these actions eventually resulted in the establishment of Chicano Park, which became famous for its collection of murals,<sup>48</sup> and other programs and initiatives including the Chicano Community Clinic and the Chicano Park Steering Committee.<sup>49</sup>

By the mid-1970s, residents, along with businesses and the City had begun to work together in an effort to boost the quality of life in the community.<sup>50</sup> An example of such an effort was the development of Barrio Logan/Harbor 101 Community Plan, adopted by the City Council, which called for a series of improvements in the community, including zoning and land use changes.<sup>51</sup> Despite activity within the community and the plan's call for new zoning in the community, change has not come quickly. For instance, the new redevelopment zone recommended in the Barrio Logan/Harbor 101 Community Plan was not established until 1991<sup>52</sup> and only included a portion of Barrio Logan.<sup>53</sup> Moreover, neither the new zone nor subsequent zoning amendments eliminated the mixed industrial-residential land use pattern in Barrio Logan.<sup>54</sup> Nevertheless, residents and different organizations continued to move forward on numerous fronts to improve Barrio Logan's quality of life and reduce the threat from air pollution. For instance, in another effort to stop incompatible land uses, community residents and a local environmental justice organization active in the Barrio Logan area, the Environmental Health Coalition, pressured the City of San Diego Land Use and Housing Committee to pass a measure in 1994 calling for the relocation of the chrome plating shops and chemical distribution facilities from Barrio Logan.<sup>55</sup> Similarly, in 1996, the City of San Diego along with the Barrio Logan Livable Neighborhoods Team developed the Barrio Logan Revitalization Action Plan, which, among several other action items, suggested that the City relocate existing polluting facilities to areas where they would not pose a risk to sizeable populations.<sup>56</sup> Despite these actions by the City, not one of the polluting facilities has yet been relocated from the area.<sup>57</sup>

Another initiative was an effort by the California Air Resources Board to do extensive testing for air pollution and health effects in partnership with several stakeholders in the community.<sup>58</sup> Others include a major multi-year study being conducted in cooperation with the University of Southern California, the Environmental Health Coalition, and a local health clinic to assess how air pollution in Barrio Logan may be linked to certain illnesses; and an effort

sponsored by the local American Lung Association chapter to reduce incidences of asthma among asthmatic children in schools.<sup>59</sup>

### *Partnership Background*

Although these and other initiatives were underway in the late 1990s to address different concerns of the community, and Barrio Logan's sister community of Logan Heights, most operated independently of each other. Project organizers did not regularly consult with one another to complement efforts, share lessons learned, and avoid project duplication. Further, despite the many efforts, community concerns were not being fully addressed. For example, some residents wanted neighborhood truck traffic, which passes by a local elementary school, rerouted, or speed limits lowered, to better ensure the safety of their children as they walked to and from school. Others were concerned about Barrio Logan's many vacant and abandoned properties. Based upon these observations, a senior advisor working out of the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency's Border Office in San Diego, who has since retired, sought an opportunity to help meld the many positive Barrio Logan initiatives into a more comprehensive community development approach.

In early 2000, the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) official applied to have Barrio Logan designated as a national Environmental Justice Pilot Project, sponsored by the federal Interagency Working Group (IWG) on Environmental Justice, hoping that this effort would provide a forum for all the efforts underway in Barrio Logan to come together and bring additional resources and national attention to the community. In May 2000, the IWG selected Barrio Logan to be one of the fifteen national pilot projects. Following this, the EPA official asked the Environmental Health Coalition (EHC), an organization with a strong tradition of working with the Barrio Logan community, to serve with EPA as the project co-lead. EHC, however, was not quick to accept, concerned that participation in such a collaborative approach would curtail the organization's ability to participate in certain activities, such as community demonstrations, and ultimately limit its authority to advocate for the Barrio Logan community. Despite these reservations, EHC determined that the pilot project's potential to bring additional resources to the community outweighed the organization's initial concerns.

After agreeing to share leadership roles, EPA and EHC began developing a strategy to bring the organizations such as local industries, businesses, government agencies and community groups together and build a collaborative partnership. The pre-planning team realized that this would be a difficult endeavor since several potential members would find it difficult to work in concert due to past or present disputes, some involving litigation. For instance, several organizations, agencies, and industries have differing perspectives regarding the validity of data collected from local air monitoring stations and whether those results suggest that the local population suffers from disproportionately greater exposure to air emissions than other comparable groups. Recognizing the difficulties, EPA and EHC made the decision to hire a professional facilitator to help guide the collaborative process.<sup>‡</sup> One was selected with prior experience working in the Barrio Logan community, and over the next several months, EPA, EHC and the facilitator began framing the focus of the partnership and determining how best to build an effective partnership.

In November 2000, EPA and EHC held the kick-off session for the Barrio Logan Demonstration Project. Several organizations already working on projects in the area, whom the pre-planning team had previously identified, attended the session. During the meeting, the pre-planning team emphasized that the project would last two-years, be results-oriented, and

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<sup>‡</sup> The facilitator, funded by EPA, represents the company of Katz and Associates.

would “focus on addressing incompatible land use practices, unacceptable air quality, and associate health impacts for the residents of Barrio Logan.”<sup>60</sup> Due to the interest expressed by organizations in attendance, the pre-planning team chose to continue the partnership building process and formally request that all interested organizations apply to join the Barrio Logan Demonstration Project,<sup>61</sup> even those previously identified. No organization would be guaranteed acceptance into the partnership. In January 2001, EPA and EHC made this request in a letter sent to potential partners. An excerpt is included in the box below:

**Excerpt from EHC & EPA Letter Asking Potential Partners to Consider Joining the Barrio Logan Demonstration Project**

This letter is to solicit your organization’s interest in being a partner in this Demonstration Project and to outline the criteria for being invited as a partner. We are looking for a diverse group of partners, including federal, state, and local governments, business and industry, academic institutions, social justice groups, health promotion and community-based organizations. Based on the interest expressed at the first meeting and since then, we have set forth a process for selection of partners that will ensure that the group is as inclusive as possible and is committed to achieving common goals. We need to emphasize that the Demonstration Project is not an advisory group nor a discussion group, it is a working partnership with people committed to solving problems in Barrio Logan.

*Figure 5. Excerpt from EHC & EPA Letter Asking Potential Partners to Consider Joining the Barrio Logan Demonstration Project*

Included in the letter were four questions designed to enable the pre-planning team to better determine whether interested recipients would be asked to participate in a partnering session to be held at the end of January. The questions are listed below.<sup>62</sup>

**Excerpt from EHC & EPA Letter Asking Potential Partners to Justify Why They Would Make an Effective Partner**

1. Does your organization agree with the problem and goal statements on the attached sheet? (All project partners must fundamentally agree with these statements in order to participate in the project)
2. What is your organization’s primary interest and/or priority for this project?
3. What value (resources or technical assistance) will your organization add to this effort?
4. Who will serve as your organization’s representative? Please provide his/her name and contact information.

*Figure 6. Excerpt from EHC & EPA Letter Asking Potential Partners to Justify Why They Would Make an Effective Partner*

After receiving application letters and making decisions about who should be asked to participate, the partnering session, hosted by the Mercado Tenants Association in Barrio Logan, was held. The Association provided meeting space, language translation, and information to Barrio Logan residents affected by the demonstration project. The “One-Day Partnering Workshop” focused on outlining roles, responsibilities, partnership obligations and planned and potential partnership activities.<sup>63</sup> Furthermore, the workshop gave potential partners an opportunity to shape the Partnering Agreement, a draft document crafted by the pre-planning

team that was designed to create an arena of respect where partners could communicate and work together as equals.

Specifically, the Partnering Agreement provided background on the project and outlined key problem and goal statements for the project, and roles for both the project leads and project partners necessary to achieve project goals. The key problem and goal statements are included in the table below.<sup>64</sup>

<b>Key Problem and Goal Statements Outlined in the Barrio Logan Partnering Agreement</b>	
<i>Problem</i>	<i>Goal</i>
Emissions of air pollution and toxins from local industries, small businesses, automobiles, and diesel vehicles in Barrio Logan and Logan Heights pose unacceptable health risks to local residents.	Reduce exposure of residents to air pollution.
Incompatible land use in zoning in Barrio Logan and Logan Heights exposes residents to increased risks of hazardous materials accidents and health impacts from air toxic emissions.	Reduce incompatible land uses in Barrio Logan and Logan Heights.
Children's health is a concern for local residents due to ambient environmental factors as well as risks within the home and schools such as lead-based paint and other sources of indoor air pollutants.	Improve children's health by improving the ambient environment, as well as reducing exposure of children to health risks within the home, schools, and the community.

Figure 7. Key Problem and Goal Statements Outlined in the Barrio Logan Partnering Agreement

Roles of the project leads, as outlined in the Partnering Agreement, included (1) providing meeting notes; (2) maintaining the project web site; (3) complying with evaluation and reporting requirements of the demonstration project; (4) coordinating funding requests; and (5) preparing meeting summaries. Some of the roles of the partners included (1) staying committed to project success; (2) sharing data and information to assist partners and help the overall project meet its goals; (3) coordinating activities that could potentially complement or conflict with each other; (4) identifying obstacles to achieving project goals and developing solutions to overcome them; and (5) thinking creatively about how partners can collaboratively make a difference in the health and wellbeing of the Barrio Logan community.<sup>65</sup> In addition to describing the goals and roles, the Partnering Agreement also outlined several steps that would be taken in the event of disagreements between partners. The section describing these steps is included in the box below.<sup>66</sup>

**Excerpt from the Barrio Logan Partnering Agreement describing the Partnership's Conflict Resolution Process**

In the course of partnership activities, disagreements will inevitably arise regarding whether a course of action should or should not be taken. The Partners agree to work in a collaborative fashion and to facilitate consensus on these issues whenever possible. If consensus cannot be reached, the Partners agree to use mediation to attempt to reach a resolution. Further, the Partners agree they will attempt to resolve the disagreement expeditiously and constructively to benefit Project goals. In the event of an impasse, the co-leads shall be the final decision makers, carefully weighing the consequences of any decision to take action where there is a lack of consensus. If the co-leads cannot agree, then the action in question would not be taken. In any event, individual Partners cannot be compelled to participate in an action to which they do not agree. Individual Partners may also abstain from participation in a decision when they believe it would be inappropriate for them to do so.

*Figure 8. Excerpt from the Barrio Logan Partnering Agreement describing the Partnership's Conflict Resolution Process*

Following the partnering workshop, each potential partner was required, as a condition of participation in the partnership, to agree to statements put forth in the Partnering Agreement. By signing the document, partners were expected to show that they could look beyond the past, and “work together to demonstrate how agencies and communities working in concert can achieve meaningful improvements in public health for communities such as Barrio Logan.”<sup>67</sup> A diverse collection of partners ultimately signed the agreement. These included eighteen representatives from the city, county state, and federal government, community-based organizations, industry, a business association, environmental and public health groups, and the San Diego Port District. Several organizations decided they could not agree with or sign the Partnering Agreement. Representatives of these groups, however, were allowed to attend subsequent meetings and participate as observers. These included representatives from a local college, the San Diego School District, and offices of local and U.S. politicians. The list of organizations is included in Figure 10.

**Active**

American Lung Association  
 California Air Resources Board  
 California Department of Transportation  
 California Environmental Protection Agency  
 City of San Diego-Traffic Division  
 Environmental Health Coalition  
 Inner City Business Association  
 Katz and Associates  
 MAAC Project  
 National Steel and Shipbuilding Company  
 Mercado Tenant's Association  
 National Institute of Environmental Health Sciences  
 San Diego City Attorney's Office  
 San Diego Housing Commission  
 San Diego Unified Port District  
 South West Marine, Inc.  
 U.S. Environmental Protection Agency  
 U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development

**Observers**

Barrio Logan College Institute  
 City of San Diego Redevelopment Agency  
 Congressman's Bob Filner's Office  
 County of San Diego  
 County of San Diego Health and Human Services  
 Mayor Dick Murphy's Office  
 Private Citizen  
 San Diego City Councilmember Inzunza's Office  
 San Diego Air Pollution Control District  
 San Diego Unified School District  
 Supervisor Greg Cox's Office

*Figure 9. Barrio Logan Partnership's Partners and Observers*



Regular partnership working sessions began in March 2001. Sessions were held approximately once per month on a weekday and typically lasted around three hours. Sessions included (1) presentations by non-partners on various local initiatives that could impact Barrio Logan and partnership activities, (2) facilitated discussions between partners about different activities already underway in Barrio Logan and existing resources partners could provide that could benefit Barrio Logan, and (3) opportunities for partnership work groups to strategize and report out to the larger group their progress. As described in the Partnering Agreement, the Partnership decision making process was based upon consensus. In addition, to ensure that all would be heard, the facilitator typically tried to bring both majority and minority opinions into the discussion. Very few topics discussed provoked strong disagreement across parties.

At the close of the March 2001 meeting, partners agreed to develop three work groups that would each focus on one of the goals identified in the Partnership Agreement<sup>68</sup>. During the next meeting, partners organized themselves into three work groups: Land Use, Children’s Health, and Air Quality. The organizations participating in each work group are listed in the figure below.<sup>69</sup>

<b>Initial Barrio Logan Partnership Work Groups and Participating Organizations</b>	
<p style="text-align: center;"><b><u>Air Quality Work Group</u></b></p> <p>National Steel and Shipbuilding Company  San Diego Air Pollution Control District  San Diego City Attorney’s Office  California Air Resources Board  California Department of Transportation  San Diego Unified Port District  California Office of Environmental Health Hazard Assessment  Environmental Health Coalition</p>	<p style="text-align: center;"><b><u>Children’s Health Work Group</u></b></p> <p>American Lung Association  San Diego Housing Commission  San Diego Vacant Properties Coordinator  Mercado Apartments  San Diego County Department of Environmental Health  California Air Resources Board</p>
	<p style="text-align: center;"><b><u>Land Use Work Group</u></b></p> <p>Cal/EPA Dept of Toxic Substances Control  Cal/EPA Environmental Justice Program  Inner City Business Association  Environmental Health Coalition</p>

Figure 10. Initial Barrio Logan Partnering Work Groups and Participating Organizations

Each work group was then asked to discuss among participants three main questions that would help organize them. The questions are listed in the box below:<sup>70</sup>

<b>Organizing Questions for the Barrio Logan Partnership Work Groups</b>	
	1. Given the goal statement of your work group, brainstorm what an ideal wellness state would be for the community of Barrio Logan. What will success look like after achieving improvements in air quality/children's health/or land use planning?
	2. Looking at current and future resources/programs identified for Barrio Logan, where do you see gaps?
	3. What kind of initiatives or programs that currently do not exist, might begin to address the gaps identified above?

Figure 11. Organizing Questions for the Barrio Logan Partnership Work Groups

Each work group developed a series of responses for each question that was recorded on flip sheets. The facilitator then used these responses as a discussion point to help direct the work groups towards specific tasks they could work on. A representative from EHC then agreed to help combine the discussions of each work group into one matrix that would enable them to further identify priority action items and collaborative opportunities. This matrix was then discussed at the following May 2001 meeting. A sample of this matrix is presented below.<sup>71</sup>

<b>Barrio Logan Environmental Justice Demonstration Project Goals, Objectives and Solutions Matrix (Sample)</b>			
<b>GOALS</b>	<b>REDUCE AIR POLLUTION</b>	<b>IMPROVE CHILDREN'S HEALTH</b>	<b>REDUCE INCOMPATIBLE LAND USES</b>
<b>OBJECTIVES</b>	Fuller compliance with air regs	No exposure to indoor pollutants and lead	No polluters near resident
<b>SOLUTIONS</b>			
Political Will			
Community Power			
Stronger Regs & Enforcement			
Revise community plan & zoning			
Pollution Prevention			
Public Awareness			
Transportation System			
Low interest loans & tax incentives			
Healthy Homes Program			
Research & Data Collection			

Figure 12. Barrio Logan Environmental Justice Demonstration Project Goals, Objectives and Solutions Matrix (Sample)

Although the process was straightforward, partners experienced difficulties in prioritizing actions. Several factors may have slowed this process, including lack of partnership funding, lack of an effective partnership model about the most appropriate actions to take, lack of commitment from individual partners, and the inability of some participants to speak on behalf of their respective organizations. In addition, the partnership co-lead representing EPA retired in the summer of 2001, creating temporary uncertainty for the other partners about EPA's

leadership commitment while the agency secured a replacement. Nevertheless, the facilitator and partnership leaders worked to keep everyone on track. By May 2001, a spirit of collaboration had developed between the different parties and a foundation for partnering had been built, evidenced by the sharing of meals during regular meetings.<sup>§.72</sup> The partners have since continued to meet. An initiative that grew out of cooperation between two very distinct organizations starting in the late spring of 2000 had transformed into a genuine partnership representing several organizations by the spring of 2001. Some factors that may have contributed to this initial success may have included use of an effective partnership design, use of a skilled facilitator, leadership displayed by several organizations, a continued belief that the issues identified needed to be addressed, mutual recognition of the benefits of regular information sharing, and a shared belief that the partnership was moving in the right direction. The evolution of the Barrio Logan partnership is depicted in the graphic below.

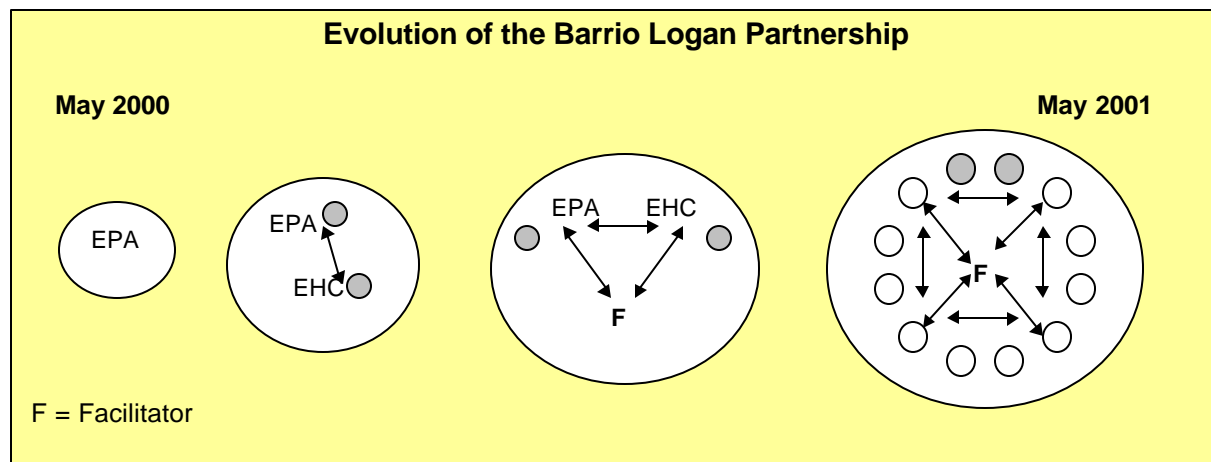


Figure 13. EPA Representation of the Evolution of the Barrio Logan Partnership

### Partnership Activities

By October 2001, the partnership was still undergoing a process of determining which actions should be taken to help the partnership reach the three main goals. Nonetheless, even to this point, the partnership had engaged in activities that would help the partnership members realize their goals. For example, the partnership had identified partners that many in the partnership had not previously known, including the Inner City Business Association and the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD).<sup>73</sup> Second, several partners had been actively involved in the solicitation of resources to benefit Barrio Logan residents. For instance, as of May 2001, four partners (EHC, the City of San Diego, MAAC Project, and HUD), were working together to obtain a Lead Hazard Control Grant that would provide Barrio Logan with \$1 million to remedy lead-contaminated soil and dust in homes.<sup>74</sup> In addition to securing funding through grants, several persons were contributing varying portions of their staff or volunteering to support the project.

The following sections primarily describe interviewees' responses to questions gathered from interviews conducted by EPA's Office of Policy, Economics, and Innovation during the week of October 8-12, 2001. The sections focus on interviewees' impressions regarding measuring partnership success, identifying successes and challenges, recommendations for

<sup>§</sup> Meetings are held at The Mercado or at the Logan Heights Police Department. Meetings are generally held during the day; however, as of October 2001, the partnership was considering changing the meeting time to boost participation from community residents.

improving the partnership, overall value of the partnership, and the value of federal involvement in the partnership.

### *Measuring Partnership Success*

As of October 2001, the partnership had not developed a framework for measuring the overall success of the partnership in meeting the three goals. However, the three goals agreed upon by the partners should serve as a critical basis from which the partnership can begin assessing partnership progress and success once activities are decided upon and implemented. Further, when asked how the partners might determine success, the fourteen interviewees addressing this topic had several suggestions—some focusing on general measurement considerations, and others focusing on specific indicators to measure. Regarding general considerations, three interviewees urged the need to be specific about what gets measured. For instance, one remarked that any measurement must focus on what the partnership can accomplish. Regarding the type of data that should be collected—quantitative or qualitative—one interviewee recommended that quantitative data be collected – through pre- and post-tests. Another, however, cautioned the use of quantitative data, suggesting that it may result in harmful disputes between partners.

Specific indicators recommended for measurement focused on such topics as public health improvement, community improvement (e.g., quality of life), and community empowerment. Suggestions for public health indicators included the extent to which schools in the area participate in the Open Airways and Tools for Schools programs and the extent to which trucks are re-routed or some people are relocated away from truck routes. However, another interviewee recommended that the rerouting of trucks not be considered an indicator of project success. Suggestions for community improvement indicators centered mainly on the extent to which the partnership results in a better quality of life for the community. Suggestions for community empowerment indicators included the extent to which the community becomes part of partnership solutions, the number of community plans adopted by the city government, and the extent to which community residents take ownership over the partnership.

### *Partnership Successes*

When asked if partners were satisfied with their ability to participate in the project decision-making process, twelve of the twelve interviewees who addressed the question responded positively. One noted that the process has given everyone a voice, and another remarked that she/he actually looks forward to the meetings. Three interviewees, however, qualified their remarks. Two noted that no major decisions had been made yet, and another remarked that while the process has been fine so far, it was still too early on in the process to genuinely judge.

Regarding whether interviewees were satisfied to the extent issues most important to them and their organizations were being addressed by the partnership, most indicated they were satisfied; however several qualified their remarks. Five out the eleven who addressed the question said yes, without providing any qualifying remarks. For instance, one mentioned that the partners “are talking about safety, housing, trucks, and all the things that are important to the community.” Two additional interviewees indicated that their issues were being addressed, but only to a limited extent. For example, one remarked that the zoning issues were not being addressed to the extent they should be. Two interviewees were less satisfied—one noting it was too early to tell, and another stating that his/her issues had not yet been addressed. Another flatly stated that his/her issues were not being addressed. Finally, one interviewee

remarked that his/her organization did not join the process to address a particular issue, rather, they joined to “participate in the process...[and] do [their] share.”

When asked about the outcomes, or results, of the partner activities for addressing the main issues of the affected community, not surprisingly seven of the ten addressing this question remarked that it was too early to tell.\*\* For instance, one interviewee remarked that the partnership was still identifying problems. However, four interviewees indicated that the partnership is already having a positive impact for the affected community. These include: agencies becoming more familiar with each other; enhancement of community pride; community empowerment; the highlighting of important health issues in the affected community; and a more coordinated community development. Even some who indicated it was too early to judge the outcomes of the partnership activities, later noted some positive outcomes. For example, one noted that bringing these organizations together has resulted in a greater rate of accomplishment.

When asked whether interviewees were satisfied with the outcomes of partner activities, nine of the eleven addressing this question indicated that they were satisfied. One indicated that she/he was very, very satisfied. Another indicated that the partnership had produced positive dialogue and relationship building. Two indicated they were satisfied but would like to see more tangible efforts being made to assist the community. Two others who were satisfied also explained that the process was slow, with one noting that this was to be expected. The one interviewee who was unsatisfied remarked that the process was moving too slowly. A final interviewee provided an ambiguous response.

When asked what has been their greatest success thus far, nine of the fourteen interviewees addressing this question referenced the partnership itself. For instance, one interviewee stressed that the partnership had brought diverse groups of people together, including some who were previously adversaries. When asked what had been the key factors contributing to the partnership’s development, interviewees cited the Partnering Agreement, the facilitator, and EHC’s and EPA’s leadership roles. Specifically, one noted that both organizations were able to get involved without being accusatory. Another also remarked that the two organizations’ outreach to potential partners had been important for the partnership’s development. This same interviewee also suggested that another key factor was the willingness of different groups to participate in the process.

Another interviewee explained “the fact that people have been able to set aside what goes on outside the partnership and still participate in good faith to bring results to Barrio Logan” was a critical success. Reasons for this success include obtaining partnership agreement on the goals, the partnering session, the Partnering Agreement, and the absence of participants that could harm the process. Finally, one interviewee cited the partnership’s ability to keep the partnership’s diverse members interested and talking with one another as the partnership’s greatest success. In addition, three remarked that it was still too early to tell what the partnership’s greatest success was.

Interviewees were also asked whether the organizational styles and procedures of the different partner organizations limited effective collaboration between partners. Participants rarely pointed to specific problematic organizational styles. Instead interviewees commented primarily on inter-group dynamics. Three interviewees explained that there seemed to be a

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\*\* During the interview process, interviewees were asked questions about both the outcomes of partner activities, and the impact of activities for the affected communities. From the responses, it was clear that most interviewees viewed the partnership activities in terms of outcomes, not impact. Therefore, the term outcome is used throughout this discussion.

strong willingness to work together within the partnership. For instance one stated that “everybody adopted the can-do attitude and they knew that they had different opinions and tried not to let this interfere with how these groups approached [the partnership].” Two additional interviewees indicated, however, that, despite a willingness to work together, some barriers still existed. For example, one explained that industry participants have a different decision-making style than EHC, whose style is more “community inclusive.”<sup>††</sup> Two others mentioned that potential partners that would have found it difficult to participate chose not to sign the Partnering Agreement. However, one of these same interviewees indicated that it was too early to truly tell if barriers between partners would arise. Similarly, another remarked that conflict might certainly occur in the future, as does with all large groups; however, she/he further indicated that this could be constructive. In addition, two interviewees were concerned about the motives behind some groups’ participation, and one was concerned about not being able to enroll the Air Pollution Control District as a partner.

Nine of the fourteen interviewees who addressed existing organizational barriers between partners referenced the facilitator as a main reason for enabling partnership members to work together. One interviewee noted that the facilitator fostered a “let’s work together” spirit amongst the partners. Another noted that “without [the facilitator] this group would not be able to exist.” Of the four not referencing the facilitator, three specifically referenced the Partnering Agreement as an important tool for enabling the different organizations to work together. One interviewee did remark, however, that to improve collaboration, a more active facilitator was needed.

### *Partnership Challenges*

When asked about the greatest challenges facing the partnership, interviewees produced a variety of responses. Four of the fourteen who addressed the question indicated that agreeing to and then implementing actions to address the goals is the partnership’s most significant challenge. Similarly, one interviewee noted that the biggest obstacle is simply accomplishing a tangible activity. She/he went on to say that the partnership “was trying to jump too far”, instead of taking calculated steps. Further, the interviewee expressed frustration at the partnership’s desire to address issues that she/he felt could not be accomplished in a short term such as the re-routing of trucks. A set of interviewees cited the partnership’s slow nature as a major obstacle. For instance, one noted this presented a problem since partners must answer to their organizations, which represent different goals and interests, and justify their time committed to the partnership. Another cited the partnership’s lack of a mandate or enforcement authority as an obstacle. To overcome this, she/he suggested getting the Mayor and city government more involved in the process. Other difficulties cited included: “synchronizing” participants so that they share a common base of understanding about the issues of concern; deciding how to relocate businesses away from residences and businesses; keeping key decision makers involved in the partnership; ensuring greater community engagement in partnership planning and implementation; a need for funding, especially for mailing, coordination, and translation activities; trust issues; and developing and implementing initiatives through a group consisting of volunteers.

### *Interviewee’s Recommendations for Improving the Partnership*

When interviewees were asked how the partnership could be improved, six of the twelve addressing the question recommended that the community be more involved in partnership

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<sup>††</sup> This interviewee did note, however, that the facilitator developed a decision-making process that addressed these concerns.

activities. Some interviewees were not convinced that the residents have enough information about the partnership and what the partnership is trying to accomplish. Further, although these interviewees believed they were working to improve the quality of life for the residents of Barrio Logan, they felt that residents should be more involved in how that happens. One interviewee remarked that “the community is not involved as much because they have not been asked. However, if asked, they will help.” To obtain greater participation, one interviewee suggested hosting partnership meetings at churches and the Barrio College, and at times when residents can more easily attend. Another interviewee recommended that partnership members go out into the community, visiting residents and companies in order to better understand what their concerns are. She/he concluded by stating that “sometimes [the partnership’s] views are different from the people that live here.” Directly related to community involvement, another interviewee recommended that the partnership make greater use of simultaneous translation in partnership meetings, because without it, some residents are excluded.

Four interviewees stressed the need to engage in activities that will produce real results. For instance, one urged the partnership to “pick a goal that will lead to tangible change.” Closely associated with this recommendation, one interviewee recommended that the partnership develop a workplan. Closely related to this recommendation, another urged that the partnership meet more frequently to ensure that partnership initiatives are planned.

A group of comments related to organizational structure and representation. Three interviewees recommended that the partnership be divided into sub-groups to improve partnership efficiency. Another recommended that partners be re-evaluated, particularly to better understand those that are active. Further, she/he added that the partnership should identify a clear leader, noting that “you can play a football game without a lineman, but you can’t play football without a quarterback.” In addition, two argued that the partnership needed the support of the City, and another added that the partnership needed members “with the authority to participate.” Additional recommendations included: using a more aggressive facilitator; obtaining a letter from U.S. EPA’s Administrator recognizing the Barrio Logan partners for their work in the area; encouraging partners to make more resources and educational opportunities available to the community; hosting a community health fair; and securing more funding for the partnership.

#### *Interviewee’s Recommendations for Other Communities*

Twelve interviewees offered suggestions for other communities interested in using collaborative partnerships to address environmental justice issues. One set of comments focused on building the partnership. Four comments encouraged partnership builders to focus on community involvement in the partnership’s formative stages. Specifically, two recommended that the community should be brought into join the partnership first. One of these recommended that the community be allowed to define the problems and be involved in decision making. Four additional comments recommended locating potential partners who are leaders and/or action oriented, with one directly urging partnerships to screen out those potential partners who are not inclined to participate. As stated by one interviewee:

Get as many people to the table as possible – the key players. Do whatever it takes to get the key players. Have some public notices. Let them know there’s a group out there and they are looking for input. Get the elected representatives at the table—the council, the city planning [department], the state and city representatives. Getting these folks in and partnering. You need the political will. Need power to make changes. Get

as many interested partners as possible—people that can actually do something.

Other recommendations regarding this topic included identifying partners that would be affected; ensuring that a full spectrum of stakeholders are involved; and encouraging as many organizations as possible to participate.

A second set of comments focused on how to create a genuine collaborative process. Two interviewees recommended using a partnering agreement. According to one, a partnering agreement helps to remove conflict. Similarly, one recommended making sure that all partners start from the “same page” and another recommended obtaining “buy-in” from all partners. Related, another interviewee recommended that a facilitator skilled in conflict resolution be brought in to guide the process after a thorough community assessment has been performed to help define the problems the partnership will address. Further, one interviewee stressed the need to “get people involved in a positive way from the beginning” and avoid bringing up history.

Once a partnership has been brought together, one interviewee stressed that it is important to obtain specific commitments from partners. Another recommended that partners develop realistic expectations about what each of the participating organizations can do, noting explicitly that “resources these groups may bring may not be funding.” Other recommendations included having patience, focusing on achievable goals since it is very important to see identifiable change in community, and providing resources for translation.

A final set of comments stressed the need for partnerships to incorporate a mechanism that will truly empower them. One interviewee remarked that partnerships such as Barrio Logan’s lack power. To boost the power of a partnership, one recommended building alliances with local planning bodies, noting that local officials don’t often go against the wishes of local planning bodies. A second suggested that for partnerships to have genuine power, they may need to be built using a top-down approach.

#### *Value of the Collaborative Partnership*

When asked about the value of the collaborative process used by the partnership, of the fourteen addressing the question, nine remarked that the collaborative process had added value, three indicated that it was too early to tell, and one remarked that she/he could not speak on behalf of the community. Five interviewees explicitly referenced information sharing. The information shared by the partners is not only seen as a resource, as in the sharing of expertise, it also enables more effective partnership planning. For instance, one remarked that involvement in the partnership has required agencies to reveal where they stand publicly on different issues. Further, another interviewee suggested that the partnership allows the partners and the community to understand what each agency can and cannot do, to see their areas of expertise and their limitations. Additionally, she/he added that many of the agencies, such as the planning department, the air district, and CALTRAN, seem to be natural partners, and sitting at the same table allows them to see how they can work together. The process of seeing how different groups can work together, “leaves the participants empowered.”

Two interviewees noted that having the representatives from the different organizations leave their offices to physically view this community and understand the needs of the residents has been very valuable. According to one, this would not have happened without the partnership. Further, this same interviewee added that this process of interacting with different groups in the community would result in the breakdown of negative stereotypes surrounding small businesses.



Two other interviewees cited the ability of the partnership to create change as its main value. One stated that the value has come from the partnership's ability to engage those that have the ability and authority to make changes to benefit the Barrio Logan community. Another indicated that although she/he can't prove it yet,

the value [of the partnership] is we've set the stage and foundation of synergizing for addressing the community issues. [The partnership] in a position to affect some changes with the city or city council that will have some long-range impacts in the community. Some resources have come the communities' way and if they can focus their energies they could get more. They can leverage this partnership to get more.

Additional value of the partnership cited by some interviewees includes: the securing of some additional resources for the community; the potential to leverage more resources; and a reduction in duplication of resources.

When asked if they thought the Barrio Logan community could use this same collaborative process to address similar problems in the future, seven of the thirteen addressing the question said yes, two said no, and four said they didn't know. For those responding yes, four remarked that strong leadership would be needed to make the process work, particularly local leadership. For those responding that they did not know, one interviewee remarked that the partnership might leave a core group in place. Another remarked that this type of process would only be used in the future if the Barrio Logan partnership produces tangible results. For those responding no, one interviewee voiced a concern that the current partnership would end if EPA and EHC were to leave the process. Further, she/he indicated that it would be very hard to pull a community coalition together. The other interviewee indicated that this process would not be used again because the community has not been effectively involved. However, she/he qualified her remark noting that if the community was brought into this process, the partnership could become an important conduit for change.

When asked whether the main issues affecting Barrio Logan would have been addressed without the use of a collaborative approach, responses were very mixed. Of the ten who addressed the question, two indicated yes, two indicated somewhat, two indicated probably not, three indicated unclear, and one indicated no. Of those indicating yes, one remarked that different agencies would address the issues; the other mentioned, similarly, that the issues would be dealt with through a piecemeal approach. The interviewee noting that the issues *probably* would not have been dealt with mentioned that the issues would have either been addressed contentiously or not at all. The interviewee indicating that issues would not have been dealt with remarked that any attempt to address them would have been too fragmented and resulted in too many disputes.

#### *Value of Federal Involvement In the Partnership*

When asked what was the effect of having federal partners participate in the partnership, eleven of the fourteen interviewees addressing the question indicated that federal involvement did, indeed, add value; two were unclear; and one indicated that federal partners did not provide value, except for name recognition. Of the eleven indicating value, five interviewees stated that federal partners brought credibility/legitimacy to the project. For instance, one remarked that federal partners make "local entities feel more accountable, like someone outside San Diego is looking at what they are doing." Four indicated that the federal partners have brought much needed resources to the project, including the sharing of information. One non-federal

interviewee remarked that “the [federal government] brings a lot of resources. The federal government is a very large resource. It’s up to us to utilize those resources.” Two mentioned that federal involvement has brought a sharp focus to the environmental justice issues in the area, with one noting that federal involvement encouraged state and local governments to acknowledge the environmental justice issues in the area. Two additional interviewees remarked that the personal skills EPA’s former senior advisor brought to the project were critical for project success. In addition, one remarked that the fact that the partnership had federal partners was essential to one company’s participation. Interviewees also indicated that involvement of federal partners would result in the partnership having a larger impact and higher status. Finally, one interviewee stated that having federal partners involved was very important.

Concerns regarding federal involvement were also raised. Two interviewees remarked that federal agency involvement in the partnership discouraged some potential partners from joining. Another remarked that along with federal involvement might come expectations that cannot be met. A non-federal interviewee noted that EPA’s reputation could be damaged if the project fails. Another interviewee remarked that federal partners have not interacted with the community, and the community feels that it has little say regarding federal agency activities. In addition, one noted that, although, she/he is excited by federal participation, the federal partners may be difficult to work with because of their bureaucracies. Finally, another interviewee noted that the community might not regularly distinguish between federal and state partners.

When interviewees were asked what they thought the federal agencies gained from the partnership, seven of the fourteen addressing the question stated that it gave them a better sense of how, when, and where agencies are able to participate in communities. For instance, one interviewee noted that “[b]eing there, seeing the problems these communities face, the struggles they endure—they can see firsthand how they can be a resource to solving local problems.” Further, another noted that by working in the community, federal partners could be more effective in how they perform their work. Two interviewees stated that partnership has provided an opportunity to build relationships and be more strategic. For instance, one noted that

Most federal agencies are looking to say ‘we are partnering.’ They want to be part of coalitions, joint efforts, leveraging resources, making communities aware of how to apply for resources. Clearly they want to be a part of things like this if they have staff time to do it.

Another noted that the partnership has enabled relationships to develop between EPA, HUD, and the National Institute of Environmental Health Sciences (NIEHS). She/he stated that HUD may not have become involved in Barrio Logan without the demonstration project, and further, it is unlikely that HUD would have encouraged the City to apply for the lead grant. Additional benefits of participating in the Barrio Logan partnership cited by interviewees included opportunities to: better understand environmental justice issues; show that federal partners are doing work to address these issues; share lessons learned with other communities; learn a combination of skills—both technical and social; and influence action. For the last comment, the non-federal interviewee remarked that “EPA can influence action because people listen to them.”

When asked whether federal agencies have been able to better coordinate their activities as a result of their involvement in the Barrio Logan partnership, of the thirteen addressing the question, nine didn’t know, two said yes, and two said no. Of those that didn’t know, one interviewee remarked that the federal partners were probably sharing information. One didn’t see any coordination. One indicated that the federal partners had kept the

partnership informed. And finally, one suggested that HUD, EPA, and NIEHS needed to coordinate better. For those responding yes, that federal partners were coordinating more effectively, one federal interviewee remarked that coordination is especially improving in the Barrio Logan project. For those responding no, one interviewee remarked that she/he has not seen the federal partners contribute substantively to the partnership.

Interviewees were also asked if participating federal partners had identified conflicting requirements in their statutes or regulations that have been barriers to the success of the Barrio Logan partnership. Nine of the thirteen interviewees addressing this question indicated that none had been identified. One interviewee remarked that in the partnership's case, having federal agencies participate actually led to a larger collaboration since federal policies typically require a broad range of public involvement. Another remarked that although conflicting requirements had not been identified, working with federal bureaucracies could be burdensome. Two indicated that some policies or approaches could limit effective collaboration. One noted, for instance, that one federal partner's ability to participate is limited by its mission. Another remarked that one federal agency had an important philosophical difference with another federal agency about participating in the partnership. She/he added that originally, this agency did not want to participate, but the agency's regulations did not prevent the agency from participating. The agency ultimately chose to participate and now benefits from information sharing.

Finally interviewees were asked what they would recommend federal agencies do to best tailor their roles to participate in collaborative processes. Eight of the fourteen addressing this question stated that federal partners should provide funding. Directly related to funding, four suggested that federal partners should require that an evaluation component be built in to collaborative efforts. Three interviewees recommended that federal partners should provide collaborative efforts with facilitation services. However, one did suggest that requirements should be built into to allow for facilitators to be removed. Still related to funding, one interviewee suggested that federal agencies provide administrative support for such items as issue follow-up, the production of overheads, and organization of tours. Another added that translation services should be federally supported. Also on the topic of funding, one federal interviewee stated that most agencies have little or very few resources and limited funding; but added that they can provide resources by way of staff time and staff expertise.

Five interviewees urged federal agencies to enable communities to play key roles in the development and/or implementation of community-based partnerships. For instance, one recommended that partnerships/IWG demonstration projects be developed simultaneously with the community—defining goals and identifying problems. Three interviewees recommended that federal agencies allow certain partners—either a single partner, a single federal partner, or a group of partners—to take a stronger leadership role in these efforts. Two interviewees suggested that federal partners better focus their resources to support collaborative efforts. For example, one suggested that federal partners should better coordinate and plan with each other before going into potential partnership communities.

Interviewees also recommended that, in order to best participate in collaborative efforts, federal agencies should: develop a mix of both social and technical skills; maintain a federal representative in the partnership location; keep federal partnership staff consistent; use influence to encourage support for these efforts at the local level; initiate a partnership through local government channels; be patient; be active; and send high-ranking, personable staff to participate.

### *Key Findings (as of October 2001)*

- Overall the participants were satisfied with the partnership and their ability to participate in it. However, several were concerned that the partnership may lose momentum if it cannot produce tangible outputs in the very near future.
- Many of the participants would like to see greater attention placed on involving Barrio Logan residents in the partnership to a level the residents feel comfortable with. Several are concerned that the issues of powerful organizations will override residents' issues and concerns.
- Most participants agree with the decision to use a facilitator and a Partnering Agreement. They feel that these have been critical resources, and without them, it would be difficult to engage in genuine, productive partnering.
- Several participants agree that use of the collaborative process has, or will, greatly assist the Barrio Logan community. Without this process, it is doubtful that critical issues would be addressed to the extent they would without the partnership.
- It is clear that the Barrio Logan partnership is quite passionate about its mission. The many and diverse partners have been able to overcome several obstacles just to be able to sit in the same room and discuss issues. If the partnership can maintain resources and momentum, the partners should achieve their goals and leave Barrio Logan with better air, housing, and overall quality of life.

### *Afterword*

After interviewees had the opportunity to review the first draft of this case study, the Barrio Logan Partnership submitted an update regarding partnership activities occurring between October 2001 and June 2002. Since October 2001, partnership members have formed three task forces, or subcommittees of the larger group, to work on specified projects in furtherance of the partnership goals. The *Truck Traffic and Diesel Reduction Task Force* is identifying both short- and long-term strategies for truck traffic and diesel emissions reduction in the community. The *Regulatory Enforcement and Pollution Prevention Task Force* is targeting the automobile repair and auto body industry for pollution prevention education and regulatory enforcement. Finally, the *Community Planning Task Force* plans to produce a "how to" manual to assist residents in organizing a community planning group or similar body that can address land use and zoning issues.<sup>75</sup>

The Barrio Logan Partnership also provided comments that were developed at the Partnership's April 3, 2002 meeting, at which partners were asked about the value of the Demonstration Project so far. The comments are listed below:

- The partnership has served as a catalyst for getting elected officials more involved in both contamination and land use planning issues.
- The regular opportunity for communication among the Partners has deepened each other's understanding of the issues and problems.
- The California Air Resources Board agreed that it stayed in the community longer than would have been the case if the partnership had not heightened their concern. The San Diego Air Pollution Control District also agreed that participation in the partnership had

focused their attention on Barrio Logan and led them to do more outreach, such as the newsletter.

- The National Steel and Shipbuilding Company indicated that participation in the partnership had led to its engagement in several projects in Barrio Logan that it likely would have not gotten involved in otherwise.
- Overall, the group agreed that the Demonstration Project was very valuable, that positive things were occurring that would not have otherwise, and that in terms of the three work plans, they wanted to stay the course.<sup>76</sup>

Finally, the Barrio Logan Partnership explained that the City of San Diego has started the process of revising the zoning and community plan for Barrio Logan. On June 12, 2002, the Land Use and Housing Committee of the City Council considered whether to develop a workplan for revision of the zoning, community and redevelopment plans for the area. The partnership sent a letter to Councilmember Ralph Inzunza, the Councilmember for the area, in support of the elimination of incompatible land uses in Barrio Logan. Four partners provided testimony at the hearing. The matter passed unanimously.<sup>77</sup>

# 3 Bridges to Friendship Partnership

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*Partners are involved because they know it is the right thing to do and they have been doing it for four years.*

*It is like going from zero collaboration to a huge amount of collaboration.*

*The things important to the Navy are understanding, and identifying, issues that are important to the community, which include, jobs, environmental cleanup, parking, you name it.*

*[Bridges to Friendship] is trying to embrace the unique needs of the population through community visioning. Much work has happened in conjunction with what is going on [with] the Navy Base.*

— Interviewees, Bridges to Friendship Partnership

## Community History\*

Washington, D.C., the capital of the United States, is bordered by the states of Maryland and Virginia, and divided into four quadrants: Northwest, Northeast, Southwest and Southeast. The Southeast and Southwest quadrants consist of approximately 146,619<sup>+</sup> people representing a variety of racial and social backgrounds. Neighborhoods also vary ranging from upper middle class to low income. The Southeast quadrant is also home to the Washington Navy Yard, which is bordered by the Anacostia River to the south and occupies over seventy acres of space. The Navy Yard is surrounded by neighborhoods noted by the local press for high drug use and crime rates, a large unemployed population, and high numbers of welfare recipients.<sup>78</sup>

The neighborhoods in Southwest and Southeast D.C. traditionally housed lower to middle income Caucasian and African American working classes.<sup>79</sup> For example, in the late 1800's one of the first D.C. suburbs, called Uniontown, was created for the Navy Yard workers in Southeast D.C. Originally this was a "Whites-only" settlement but after the Civil War, Frederick Douglas broke the exclusive covenant and many free African Americans settled in the area.<sup>80</sup>

By 1920, Southwest and Southeast D.C. were made up of vibrant and diverse communities. For example, Anacostia, the section of Southeast D.C. east of the Anacostia River, claimed a higher percentage of home ownership than any other sections of D.C.<sup>81</sup> The area was made up of thriving neighborhoods where Navy Yard employees, doctors, lawyers and other community members shopped, visited movie theaters, and strolled down the scenic Anacostia waterfront.<sup>82</sup> Southwest D.C. was also thriving. Although traditionally poor, the years between 1895 and 1930 were hailed as the neighborhood's "golden years", characterized by rich cultural traditions and strong community ties.<sup>83</sup>

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\* Interviews for this case study were conducted from December 2001 through March 2002. Thirteen separate interviews were conducted and a total of sixteen persons participated. Interviews were conducted with representatives of non-profit organizations, federal agencies, and local agencies.

+ Figure calculated by using (1) D.C. Office Of Planning/State Data Center's information overlaying the 2000 census tracts on the D.C. quadrant divisions, and (2) the 2000 U.S. Census population data.

However, rapid population growth, poor zoning laws, urban renewal in selected D.C. neighborhoods and the creation of concentrated public housing lead to a socio-economic shift in the population of Southeast D.C. In 1967 the National Capital Planning Commission (NCP) began construction of 30,000 public housing units in Anacostia. Public service expansion did not keep pace with the influx of residents to Anacostia, however, and by the 1970's "the area schools were 83% over capacity" and there were an inadequate number of health care facilities in the area.<sup>84</sup> During this same time, areas in Southwest D.C. also underwent major transitions as neighborhoods perceived by city officials as slums were cleared, streets were widened, new streets and superblocks were constructed, and businesses, residents, and community landmarks were relocated or eliminated.<sup>85</sup>

Through the 1980s to the late 1990s conditions in several neighborhoods throughout Southwest and Southeast D.C. continued to deteriorate. The area's traditional diversity could no longer be seen, and in Anacostia in the late 1990's the population was approximately 90 percent African American, seven percent Caucasian, and two percent Hispanic<sup>86</sup>. In 1997, Anacostia residents had an average yearly income of \$26,000 versus a citywide average of \$40,000, and only 28 percent of the adult residents had attended college compared to 52 percent of adult citywide residents.<sup>87</sup>

Recently however, conditions in Southwest and Southeast, have taken a turn for the better. In 1997, for instance, the Good Hope Marketplace shopping center—the largest retail development in Southeast D.C. in over 20 years and one of only two supermarkets in all of Southeast—was completed.<sup>88</sup> Similar initiatives began in Southeast in conjunction with the planned redevelopment of the waterfront neighborhoods along the Anacostia River. During the increased revitalization efforts in Southeast D.C., the Navy Yard also began a major redevelopment effort. The division between the Navy Yard and the community, long symbolized by the Yard's high brick walls, were beginning to be bridged.

Bridge building began in 1995, when the Navy Yard was designated to serve as a major administrative facility for the Navy, through the Base Realignment and Closure Act. More than 5,000 additional military and civilian personnel were to be relocated at the Navy Yard over the next several years, doubling its workforce at the time. Furthermore, in 1996, a lawsuit filed by the Sierra Club alleging that waste from the Navy Yard and South East Federal Center (SEFC) discharged into the Anacostia posed an imminent and substantial danger to human health and the environment. In January 1997, under EPA oversight, the Navy completed an environmental investigation of the Washington Naval Yard facility, and in 1999, the Navy Yard was approved for cleanup under the Superfund program.

### *Partnership Background*

In conjunction with any installation restoration, in this case, the Superfund cleanup project, the Navy is required to establish a Restoration Advisory Board. The Navy Yard's Restoration Advisory Board began regular meetings to inform the community about the cleanup procedures at the Navy Yard and garner input directly from surrounding residents as well as from local community-based organizations. Issues associated with cleanup raised concerns from residents regarding area redevelopment and the potential displacement of surrounding community members by new Navy Yard personnel.

The new independent development in the area, along with indications that Navy Yard redevelopment would spur additional development outside the base, raised concerns of many local residents who feared that the purchase and/or restoration of deteriorating urban property

by developers or incoming, middle-class or affluent people would eventually result in the displacement of lower-income residents. At the same time, the Navy Yard, community-based organizations, federal, and city governments had begun to examine ways to respond to these and other issues, including concerns about the Navy Yard work force and limitations. Eventually, these different groups began pooling their resources in a collective effort to revitalize the Navy Yard's surrounding communities by providing "wide access to economic, employment, and training opportunities for residents".<sup>89</sup> This initial collaborative effort, referred to as Walls to Bridges, lasted less than a year. However, many of these same organizations regrouped to form a much stronger collaborative effort in 1998, which still operates today.

In July 1998, fourteen organizations signed a partnership agreement marking the beginning of the Bridges to Friendship (B2F) Partnership. Admiral Christopher Weaver, who had recently become Commandant of the Washington Navy Yard, began to champion the B2F mission. Since that time the B2F Partnership has recruited approximately 40 members, including six federal agencies, three city agencies, 25 community-based organizations, four for-profit organizations, and two universities. The partnership has also received significant attention and praise. In 1998, the White House formally recognized the B2F Partnership for its commitment to environmental justice and empowering community residents. Furthermore, in May 2000, the Interagency Working Group on the Environmental Justice demonstration project named the B2F Partnership a national Environmental Justice demonstration project, because of its commitments to collaborative problem-solving.

### *Partnership Process*

Upon signing the partnership agreement in July 1998, the 14 original B2F partner organizations developed an operational structure that consisted of five work groups, a steering committee composed of the five work group chairs, and an executive board composed of the original signatories to the partnership agreement. The Executive Board designated an executive director to continue building partnership resources, conduct overall coordination of the effort, and provide an administrative infrastructure. The executive director carried out his duties with the help of contractor support. A work group chair led each work group, whose focus was defined by direct and indirect (via community-based organizations) public input. The work group chairs were originally charged with implementing activities that would move the partnership forward to meet its goals. The chairs of the workgroups were given extensive autonomy and were expected to report to the Executive Board on actions, proposed milestones, and needs.

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|--|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Alice Hamilton Occupational Health Center</li> <li>Arthur Anderson</li> <li>Covenant House Washington</li> <li>D.C. Department of Employment Services</li> <li>Ellen Wilson Redevelopment LLC</li> <li>Friendship House Association</li> <li>Global Environment &amp; Technology Foundation</li> <li>U.S. Department of Agriculture, National Forest Service</li> <li>U.S. Department of Interior, National Parks Service</li> <li>U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development</li> <li>U.S. Department of Labor</li> <li>U.S. Environmental Protection Agency</li> <li>U.S. General Services Administration</li> <li>U.S. Navy, Navy District Washington</li> </ul> |
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*Figure 14. EPA List of Original Members of the Bridges to Friendship Partnership*

Originally the Executive Board and the Steering Committee met once a month, then settled into a quarterly schedule. The Executive Board and Steering Committee, whose roles have been somewhat integrated over time, are charged with the tasks of maintaining the partnership's mission and addressing conflicts or questions brought to the B2F Partnership from its member organizations. The executive director, David Ouderkirk, and Admiral Weaver



typically preside over these Executive Board/Steering Committee sessions, during which the participating organizations voice their views about the partnership's progress. In addition, the executive director also updates members on the plans and activities of the various work groups. Following Executive Board/Steering Committee sessions, session minutes are typically written-up, distributed to the session participants for review via electronic mail, finalized, and then made available to all B2F Partnership members. In addition to the Executive Board/Steering Committee sessions, the executive director occasionally calls all members together to discuss a critical topic, or to allow the work groups to update all partner members on their recent activities.

Executive Board/Steering Committee sessions usually produce decisions that are agreeable to all. This is perhaps, due, in part, to the notion that all those participating in the partnership want to see genuine community redevelopment in the area. Questions raised by partner members center more on how resources can be linked and made to fit together rather than on whether or not something should be done. Other important reasons for the sustainability of the effort may include the belief by participating organizations that it is in the best interest of their own organization to participate, consistent and effective B2F leadership, the fact that most participants either reside or work in or near the Southwest/Southeast D.C. area, and the implementation of activities that can be easily supported by partner members and the community. Although disagreements do arise between organizations about how activities should be implemented, in most instances the members make a genuine effort to work through them. If an issue around a certain activity proves irresolvable, the issue may not be addressed again or the concerned organizations in some instances may choose to no longer participate in that particular activity. According to the executive director, partners seek to reach consensus positions on issues that most parties feel positive about and accommodating positions on issues that generate strong reactions from a few or several organizations. No organization, however, has withdrawn immediately from B2F because of a conflict; rather, dissatisfied partners gradually reduce their participation in the partnership over time.<sup>90</sup>

Two B2F work groups currently design and implement most of the activities for the B2F Partnership. A work group chair is responsible for calling and facilitating work group meetings, during which members assess existing activities and, if necessary, brainstorm, plan, and decide how to implement new ones. Decisions on actions to take are typically based upon the needs of the Southeast and Southwest D.C. communities as perceived by the work group members and the resources that B2F members can provide. Once a work group agrees to a plan of action, this plan is communicated at the Executive Board/Steering Committee meetings. Although technically the B2F leadership can disapprove of a work group's plan, in most instances the action plans are endorsed.

As with the Executive Board/Steering Committee meetings, in most instances little disagreement has emerged amongst the parties within the work groups. This is due mainly, perhaps, to the same reasons outlined above. In addition, the work groups are not static. If members recognize that their work group is no longer critical, they either discontinue the work group or transfer the necessary remaining functions to a more active work group. Disagreements and challenges do arise, however. For instance, within the Job Training Work Group, disagreements centered on both the focus and the methods to be used for the B2F job training program.<sup>91</sup> In addition, some work group members have shown less commitment than others and some have been resistant to participation by various organizations with whom they have had issues in the past. Similar to the handling of difficult topics in the Executive Board/Steering Committee meetings, if work group members cannot resolve them, the topics may be left avoided, or the organization voicing the concerns may decide to leave the work group.

The partnership primarily relies on voluntary resource commitments from its partner members. It also originally relied upon federal funding to support the executive director position and to provide contractor support for B2F activities and publications. In October 1998, the Navy funded David Ouderkirk, an EPA employee under an Interagency Agreement, enabling him to direct B2F Partnership activities. Later, in February 1999, however, the partnership encountered problems funding its management infrastructure. Federal legal counsel determined that the B2F Partnership was a “non-federal entity”, prohibiting Navy personnel from directing the B2F Partnership and the use of appropriated funds for any B2F activity. This decision prohibited Ouderkirk from directing the B2F Partnership and prohibited the Navy’s contractor from working with B2F to provide support for meeting logistics, reporting, printing, web-page design and maintenance, and list serves. Furthermore, in November 1999, the Interagency Agreement for the executive director position had expired, and EPA found itself in the position of no longer being able to loan B2F a full time employee. At the same time, the partnership agreed that the position had to be funded by a non-federal organization due to the ruling of the federal lawyers. These funding and placement issues took months to resolve and B2F had its first regroup meeting in July 2000. These various set backs greatly hampered the participating groups’ abilities to coordinate their actions and slowed the partnership’s momentum. The funding problems have only temporarily been resolved. For the time being the executive director position is funded by the City, but located within the federal government (U.S. Navy). There are still no extra resources for administrative contractor support.

Despite these challenges, approximately 40 organizations continue to participate in the B2F Partnership and exhibit a high level of enthusiasm when working together. Although B2F maintains a well-defined operational structure, the partnership allows for a significant degree of organizational flexibility by design. Organizations can participate in the partnership to gain and share information about resources and opportunities that are pertinent to their work. If organizations identify a problem or project that fits with B2F’s mission and goals, the organizations then join the partnership, providing information, resources, and enthusiasm. If these organizations continue to have projects that fall in line with B2F’s mission as well as resources to contribute, they become permanent partners and continue to enrich and add depth to the partnership. If however, their plans no longer coincide with B2F’s mission, the organizations stop sending representatives to B2F meetings and stop assuming partnership responsibilities. A representation of the B2F Partnership is shown in the figure below.

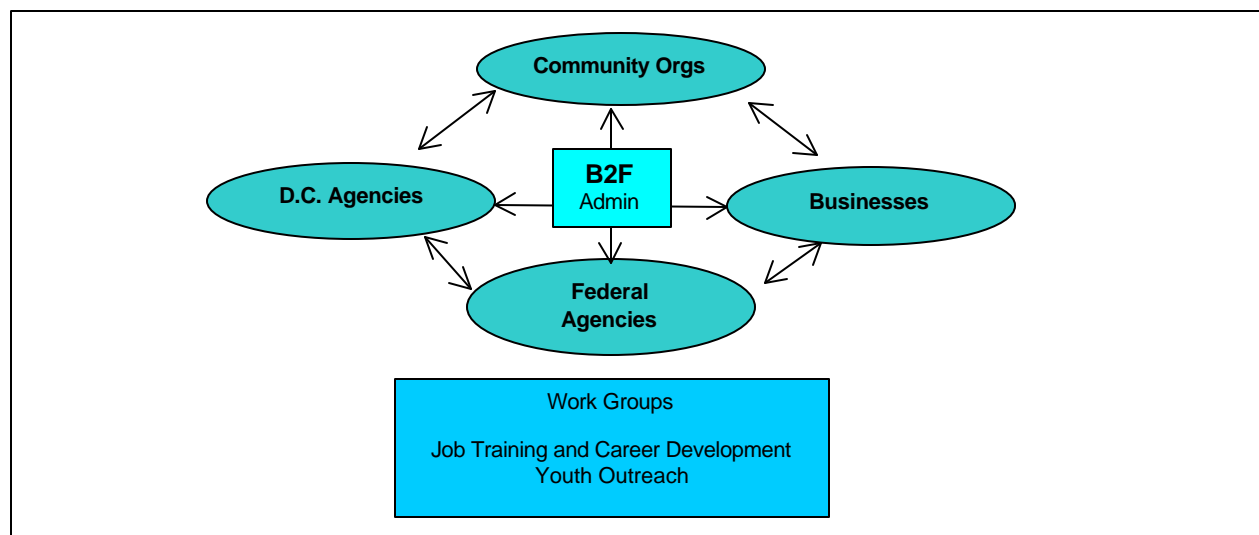


Figure 15. EPA Representation of the Bridges to Friendship (B2F) Partnership, Washington, DC

## Partnership Goals

As part of B2F's formal agreement, B2F developed a vision statement, mission statement, and statement of purpose. B2F's vision statement is described below.<sup>92</sup>

### **Vision Statement of the Bridges to Friendship Partnership**

To bring about revitalized Southeast and Southwest Washington D.C. communities, to preserve and enhance the quality of life and the natural and cultural heritage of the area, Bridges to Friendship will leverage existing resources and expertise, act as a catalyst, create new synergies, and support existing efforts.

In order to bring about this revitalization, the B2F partnership, as described in its mission statement, seeks to maintain "a process for organizational collaboration and delivery of services in a positive operating environment for all of the partners to nurture trust, understanding, and a shared vision."

In addition to the statement of purpose, mission statement, and vision statements, B2F has articulated five main goals. The partnership describes these goals as follows: (1) support the federal government's commitment to environmental justice, (2) provide residents with job training and the opportunity to compete for real jobs, (3) empower the community and promote community building, (4) restore the environment, and (5) promote sustainable economic development.<sup>93</sup> Furthermore, each workgroup has developed its own goals. The Job Training and Career Development Work Group seeks to create sustainable job training and lifelong learning opportunities in Southeast and Southwest D.C. The Youth Outreach Work Group seeks maximum participation of youths five to 25 years of age in activities and opportunities generated by the redevelopment of the Navy Yard. The purpose of this activity is to promote and improve youth educational, social, and economic development. Moreover, this work group seeks to provide work skills and training opportunities for youth in the construction and environmental industry while exposing them to diverse training opportunities through job shadowing, internships, and job placement.

The now discontinued Small Business/Private Sector Outreach Work Group, whose work has been absorbed to an extent by the other by the remaining two work groups, sought to achieve sustainable economic development by creating entrepreneurial opportunities for the greater Southeast D.C. area. Additionally, the group sought to foster interaction and support from the private sector. This work group was responsible for fostering relationships with contractors and potential private sector partners. Ultimately, the group focused on increasing the number of quality businesses operating in Southeast and Southwest Washington, D.C. The now discontinued Community Outreach Work Group, whose work was also been absorbed by the remaining two work groups, sought to broaden community awareness and interaction beyond sub-community boundaries through an improved environment, more-attractive urban landscape, and increased perception of safety and trust.

## *Partnership Activities and Accomplishments*

*The primary product of Bridges to Friendship is the process of building organizational bridges and fostering their use – identifying and organizing the sharing of resources and serving as a broker, catalyst or implementor to reach common goals.*

-Excerpt from the B2F Statement of Purpose

The B2F Partnership activities and accomplishments center around (1) securing and leveraging resources, (2) linking Southeast and Southwest D.C. youth to local job opportunities, (3) and sharing information among partner organizations and the community. While B2F's partner organizations carry out many of the B2F activities, the partnership has been responsible for enhancing the magnitude and number of accomplishments of its partner members. During the first year the B2F Partnership was credited by its partners with helping garner over \$4 million in grant funding. This money was distributed to individual partners, and used to help accomplish the goals embodied in B2F's statement of purpose, mission statement, and vision statements.

As part of B2F's efforts to link Southeast and Southwest D.C. youth to local job opportunities, B2F has engaged in a number of activities. As of January 2002, the B2F Partnership's environmental job training program had graduated more than 300 students with a job placement rate of over 70 percent, according to the Alice Hamilton Occupational Training Center, one of B2F's partners. These students were trained in hazardous material clean-up, asbestos abatement, lead paint abatement, general construction industry safety, first aid/CPR, control of biochemical hazards in construction, and other topics. Graduates from the environmental jobs training program were involved with the cleanup activities at the World Trade Center, Pentagon and Brentwood Postal Facility.

In addition to its environmental job training program, the B2F Partnership is branching into other promising career fields in order to provide more opportunities for neighborhood youth. For instance, two B2F partners—the Navy Yard and Covenant House Washington—recently signed a Memorandum of Understanding, signaling the start of a child care training and job placement focus for the B2F Partnership. In addition, B2F partners including EPA Region 3, Covenant House Washington, the Low Impact Development Center, Community Resources, Inc., and the Sustainable Communities Initiatives have developed a low-impact development training program.

Bridges to Friendship has also facilitated job shadowing, internship, and elementary school programs along with life skills workshops. Internships have been provided by a number of federal agency partners. For example, Covenant House Washington and the National Park Service implemented Operation Challenge in 1999, an internship program that provided summer employment opportunities for 40 community youth. Furthermore, the Alexandria Seaport Foundation has joined together with Covenant House Washington in order to provide pre-apprenticeship training for the building trades. The partnership has also teamed with Starbase-Atlantis, a program designed to stimulate disadvantaged youth's interest in science, math, and technology development. In addition, the partnership has collaborated to develop a "Pathways to Your Future" workshop that includes a manual with different modules on personal development, including such topics as writing effective resumes and giving effective interviews.

The B2F Partnership, along with individual members, is further working towards reforming a number of federal processes. For instance, the Navy Yard has made efforts to

refine their hiring processes in order to facilitate hiring of local residents. In addition the B2F Partnership has produced a document issued by Naval District Washington, entitled “Lessons and Suggestions for Effective Community Partnering.” This document provides feedback on opportunities to improve federally funded services.

Moreover, B2F has engaged in a number of activities to facilitate the sharing of information between partner organizations and the community. For instance, the partnership is collaborating with the Workforce Organizations for Regional Collaboration to track and make available information regarding employment opportunities for District residents using a database. In addition, B2F implemented “Columbia Rising,” a series of community dialogues whose “purpose is to create neutral ground for discussion among community representatives with diverse viewpoints on major community issues, and move toward the collaborative resolution of those issues.”<sup>94</sup> Finally, the partnership has orchestrated a number of community meetings and published a series of newsletters, brochures, fact sheets, and one annual report, in order to advertise B2F activities and gain community input for future activities.

The partnership also tried to stimulate new development in the area, particularly courting businesses that will provide jobs to local residents. The B2F Partnership has organized business development seminars and fairs in order to provide contracting opportunities and technical assistance to local businesses. The partnership has also partnered with the Anacostia Waterfront Initiative, a District, federal, and community partnership, centered on revitalizing the Anacostia waterfront and nearby communities<sup>95</sup>. B2F is further active in community pride activities, by participating in community events and clean-up days. For instance, the Navy regularly conducts community cleanup days where Admiral Weaver along with his staff participate alongside local residents to remove trash along the Anacostia River and from local neighborhoods.

The following sections primarily describe interviewees’ responses to questions gathered from interviews conducted by EPA’s Office of Policy, Economics, and Innovation during from the month of December 2001 to the month of March 2002. The sections focus on interviewees’ impressions regarding measuring partnership success, partnership success and challenges, recommendations for improving the partnership, overall value of the partnership, and the value of federal involvement in the partnership.

### *Measuring Partnership Success*

The B2F Partnership initiated several efforts to monitor and evaluate the partnership to help partners determine success of its activities. Efforts were unsuccessful due to severe limitations on the administrative resources of the partners and the partnership as a whole.<sup>96</sup> Despite this, B2F partners provided several suggestions for measuring success. Nine of the thirteen interviewees who answered the question mentioned that counting the number of people pre-trained, trained and placed in a job would be one way that B2F could measure success. Four of thirteen specifically mentioned the D.C. Department of Employment Services-sponsored database developed by B2F that tracks the number of students pre-trained, trained, and placed in jobs as a tool that could be used to support this monitoring effort. Three interviewees suggested that counting the number of community events and the number of people who attended those events would serve as a measurement of success, with one noting that, for example, one B2F-sponsored event had more than 3,000 people in attendance. One interviewee noted that after a “clean up day” there is an immediate observation of stronger community pride, as well as an indirect correlation between the amount of visible community trash and neighborhood pride. They suggested that this was a measure of success. Another interviewee mentioned the number of businesses that invest and move into the area could be a

measure of success. To actually measure success, she/he noted that the B2F Partnership could count the number of private and public sector jobs that open up in the area. Finally, one interviewee noted that another measure of success would be the number of residents in the community that know about the B2F Partnership.

### *Partnership Successes*

When asked whether interviewees were satisfied with their ability to participate in the partnership's decision-making process, sixteen out of the sixteen indicated they were satisfied. As one interviewee described it, "effort put into the process is directly proportional to the benefits received." However, three interviewees mentioned that although the involvement opportunities were available, their organizations were not attending as many meetings as they would have hoped.

When asked if the issues most important to their organization were adequately addressed, nine out of the sixteen interviewees stated that the collaboration was not only making a genuine effort to meet the B2F Partnership goals but that the issues most important to them were being addressed. The seven other interviewees were generally satisfied with partnership activities but qualified their statements with the following comments. One federal representative cited his/her frustration with continually needing to convince new agency deputy administrators about the merit of the B2F Partnership. Another mentioned that the problems of gentrification and poor quality school systems were not being adequately addressed. Two interviewees mentioned that not enough jobs were available once the job training activities were over. Finally, one stated that he/she "wished that B2F could measure its success."

When asked about the outcomes, or results, of the partner activities for addressing the main issues of the affected community, of the twelve answering the question, six cited B2F's skills-building efforts for community residents.<sup>†</sup> For instance, one interviewee noted that six hundred people have been trained and employed in environmental jobs as a result of B2F efforts. Similarly, one interviewee cited development of a community-based resource—the still on-going apprenticeship center. Two other interviewees remarked that the partnership has provided the community with greater access to development opportunities. For instance, one interviewee remarked that B2F has linked local residents to local employment opportunities. This same interviewee further added that the partnership has prevented local residents from being driven out of the area because of area redevelopment. Another interviewee explained that B2F was having a very subtle impact for the affected community. Finally, one interviewee explained that it was difficult to gauge B2F's impact, because it lacked an appropriate baseline by which to measure, and another interviewee provided an ambiguous response.

When asked if they were satisfied with the outcomes of partnership activities so far, five out of the twelve who addressed this question answered positively. Three stated that they were very satisfied with some of the outcomes, for example, the aspects of job training, but were dissatisfied with the outcomes of other partnership activities including job placement results. Finally, four of the interviewees said that they would never be satisfied, but agreed that B2F was doing an excellent job with the resources they had.

When asked about the greatest success of the B2F Partnership ten of the fifteen interviewees addressing the topic cited the partnering with others and building of a network as

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<sup>†</sup> During the interview process, interviewees were asked questions about both the outcomes of partner activities, and the impact of activities for the affected communities. From the responses, it was clear that most interviewees viewed the partnership activities in terms of outcomes, not impact. Therefore, the term outcome is used throughout this discussion.

the greatest success. For instance, one interviewee stated, "If you have a partnership you can accomplish darn near everything you want to." Four stated that the B2F Partnership was fostered by equal commitment from all the partner members to the partnership goals, mutual respect for all the partners involved, and good communication between the partners. Four interviewees believed that the B2F Partnership decreases the amount of duplicative activities completed in the communities by partnering agencies and organizations. Three interviewees noted that the B2F Partnership approach offers more creative ideas to resolve difficult issues.

Eight of the fifteen interviewees cited B2F-sponsored job training as a success. Furthermore, seven of the twelve interviewees cited B2F's youth outreach programs as an important success. As one interviewee stated "We (B2F) are trying to match a person to the job they really want." Other successes cited included: (1) community's increased understanding of the Navy Yard; (2) community's improved understanding that federal agencies care about what happens to them; and (3) federal agencies' improved understanding of the needs of the community.

### *Partnership Challenges*

When asked about the challenges facing the B2F Partnership nine of the fifteen interviewees addressing this topic cited the challenge of ensuring sufficient funding, specifically as it relates to administrative support. The interviewees stated that the B2F Partnership would benefit greatly from the establishment of an administrative support staff, however, there is no funding currently available, and David Ouderkirk, the executive director, currently does the majority of the administrative work alone. One interviewee stated that the lack of resources associated with the designation of the B2F Partnership as an IWG demonstration project was a challenge since more work accompanied the demonstration project designation. Finally, one interviewee said that the B2F Partnership did not establish itself as a 501(c)(3) non-profit status. An interviewee clarified by explaining that non-profit status would resolve funding issues within the partnership but it would not allow the federal employees to sit on the Executive Board. This would greatly hamper information sharing, a main activity of the partnership, between the community and the federal government.

Five of the fifteen interviewed agreed that the tragic events occurring on September 11, 2001 have affected the B2F Partnership. The B2F Partnership's workgroup and executive board meetings have been impacted since that date. Furthermore, there has been limited civilian access to the Navy Yard since that time. Finally, two interviewees said that the momentum that B2F had gained earlier was deflated a bit after the tragedy. Related to the events of September 11, was the rise of unemployment in the community surrounding the Naval Station immediately following. Some interviewees believe B2F helped relieve and improve this situation with programs already in place.

Four of the fifteen interviewees stated that the B2F Partnership needed to re-energize, and regain momentum. For instance, one stated that the B2F Partnership moved too slowly and needed "more action and less talk." Another interviewee mentioned that maintaining momentum without regularly scheduled meetings was difficult. Another stated that if the community's needs were not met quickly the residents' interest in the B2F Partnership would wane. Other difficulties cited included community outreach and partner recruitment.

When asked if different organizational styles were barriers to partnership success seven out of the eleven interviewees who addressed this topic said yes. Three cited the federal government's lack of ability to fund the partnership as a barrier to success. Two interviewees expressed concern generated by federal agencies' standard protocol which encourages

regional staff, as opposed to headquarters staff, to take the lead in assisting in community-based efforts, even when the headquarters staff are already based in or near the affected community. One interviewee stated that the historically adversarial relationship between the District of Columbia and the federal government made it difficult for the two to effectively work together. Finally, one interviewee mentioned that it was impossible for federal employees to be on the executive board of a non-profit organization. She/he further explained that this barrier prevented B2F from switching to a non-profit status and assuring funding. Four interviewees, however, did not identify any organizational barriers, noting, instead that B2F's main purpose was to work around them.

Interviewees were also asked if there were conflicting federal regulations that limited the success of the partnership. Eleven out of the thirteen that answered the question said yes. Five mentioned the federal government's inability to neither legally finance the executive director position nor provide funds for B2F contractual support was a major barrier. One interviewee mentioned a particular instance when a federal agency was not able to provide a grant to a non-profit partner because of statutory restrictions. Finally two interviewees mentioned that the restriction prohibiting a federal employee from participating on a non-profit organization's executive board was a major barrier to B2F success.

#### *Interviewees' Recommendations for Improving the Partnership*

When asked about ways to improve the B2F Partnership, twelve of the sixteen interviewees stated that B2F would benefit from an increase in funding and resources. Specifically nine interviewees explained that increased funding and resources to support administration work would significantly enhance the partnership. Similarly, three interviewees mentioned that increasing administrative capacity would greatly increase the success of the B2F Partnership. Along these lines, three interviewees mentioned the need for B2F to provide a set agenda before meetings to ensure a common basis of understanding from which to work. Seven recommended that the partnership establish a permanent time and location for meetings. As one interviewee stated "a way to improve this problem (scheduling conflicts) is to establish a permanent meeting location and set a permanent date (e.g., the first Tuesday of every other month)." She/he added that the permanent location should be a comfortable space and have parking availability. Two other interviewees, concerned about lack of all partners' email capacity, recommended that the partnership only use technology that every partner possesses to distribute pertinent information.

Three interviewees recommended soliciting greater direct input from the community before B2F-sponsored programs are initiated. To help do this, one interviewee noted that the B2F Partnership should establish an ombudsman for the community. Finally one interviewee mentioned the need to continue to break down the bureaucratic barriers in the federal system as a way to further improve the B2F Partnership.

#### *Interviewees' Recommendations for Other Communities Using Partnerships*

When asked to provide recommendations for other communities interested in using partnership approaches to address environmental justice issues, eight of thirteen interviewees addressing this question suggested defining a clear vision statement and focusing on what the member organizations want to accomplish in the beginning stages of the partnership formation. They went on to say that it is necessary for communities to construct their partnership structure around this defined vision statement. Four interviewees stated that an agency should expect to donate money and time. Two expanded this by saying in initial stages of the partnership formation process, partners should require potential members to explain what resources their



organization can supply to the partnership. Three went on to say the partnership should be inclusive, and open to all who want to participate with the understanding that every organization will have something to contribute.

Two interviewees recommended that communities using partnerships enlist the services of a strong facilitator and coordinator. Another remarked that the partnership should account for issues of member burnout. To avoid this she/he recommended that the member organizations rotate personnel who are the key contacts to the partnership. Another interviewee recommended that the partnership stay flexible since the flexibility within the B2F Partnership is what makes it successful. In addition, another interviewee cautioned other communities using partnerships to be aware that as the “level of expectation rises, the level of action seems to reduce.”

Finally, two non-profit representatives advised other non-profit organizations to avoid expecting that entry into a partnership will result in increased funding. They further explained that non-profit organizations need to understand that a partnership, and resulting network, allows participating organizations to tap into a wide range of resources, only one of which may be money. According to the interviewee, partnerships “will yield you gains”, but only if the non-profit organization believes in the partnership as a whole. In addition, she/he warned that non-profit groups cannot “circumvent the group for their own enhancement.”

### *Value of the Collaborative Partnership*

When asked if the issues facing the affected community would have been addressed had the B2F Partnership not been formed thirteen of the fifteen interviewees who answered the question stated that the issues would not have been addressed to the same extent, if at all. Four remarked that the partnership model was the only way to fully address the issues facing the affected communities, and added that the services provided by individual organizations would have been fractured, inconsistent, and would not have received as much “buy-in” from the community. However, two interviewees felt that the community was empowered before the partnership came into being and, therefore, many issues were already being addressed. However, one of these interviewees acknowledged that B2F enhanced and focused the groups.

When asked about the value of addressing issues through a collaborative partnership approach, three of the fifteen interviewees who addressed this topic stated that the B2F Partnership provided a network of resources and contacts for support. Four mentioned that the partnership provided a structure for different organizations to pool their individual resources. Further, three others stated that this pooling of resources and increased communication between individual organizations reduced the redundancy of services provided to the affected community. Four interviewees said the B2F Partnership provided an excellent forum where community issues can be discussed. One went on to say that the partnership ensured community participation, specifically through the inclusion of non-profit community organizations. Two others mentioned that because all organizations were working together, this reduced the likelihood that one organization would take the lead within the community. Finally, one interviewee mentioned that the collaborative method was a “good vessel for the environmental justice campaign.”

Interviewees were asked if the B2F Partnership could be used to address similar issues that the community might face in the future. Eleven of the sixteen stated that the model could be used for future issues. Five thought that the collaborative model approach is the new way the government should do business. Two interviewees commented that the B2F membership has the expertise needed to cover many areas of the affected community and the uniqueness of

this project is in its depth. Another interviewee went so far as to say the “collaborative is the only way to overcome classic bureaucratic barriers blocking good things from happening.” However, three interviewees were skeptical of the model. One mentioned that the approach is still untested. Another thought it was a good approach but still needed to be improved, and one thought that “we are too bureaucratically trained” for the collaborative model to continue to work.

### *Value of Federal Involvement in the Partnership*

When asked about the effect of having federal agencies participate in the B2F Partnership, thirteen of the thirteen interviewees who answered the question had positive things to say. Ten stated that federal involvement has added credibility to the partnership. One explained that federal involvement in the collaboration validated the community’s concerns that a problem exists. Five stated that the federal government provides resources and expertise in the form of money, training, outreach programs, and accountability via documentation. Furthermore, two of those interviewees mentioned that federal involvement boosts community enthusiasm and increases the community’s organizational capacity. Three of the thirteen interviewees stated that federal involvement results in greater information sharing between the community and other organizations.

When asked what the federal agencies gained by participating in the B2F Partnership, eight of the fourteen interviewees who answered stated that the federal agencies now have a greater understanding of the affected communities. Four clarified by stating that the B2F Partnership allows federal agencies to “see who in a community is benefiting from their mandates.” One said that the federal agencies “sometimes deal with policy rather than people,” and the collaborative process is helping the federal agencies better identify ways to help troubled communities. Three interviewees stated the agency activities performed collectively have a greater impact on the community. Two others mentioned that the collaborative process has helped the federal agencies identify the activities of other federal agencies in the community and therefore reduced redundancy of services provided.

Four interviewees stated that federal employees have gained job satisfaction from working within the B2F Partnership. They expanded by mentioning that they really enjoy this type of “hands on” work as well as the satisfaction received from seeing newly trained youth in their offices everyday. Another interviewee mentioned that the B2F Partnership has increased the visibility of the federal government within the affected community and that this has provided validation of the agencies’ work within the community. Finally one said that the collaborative process allows federal employees to expand the boundaries of traditional government work.

When asked whether federal agencies have been better able to coordinate their activities as a result on their involvement in the B2F Partnership, eleven out of eleven interviewees that answered responded positively. One interviewee stated that “every time agencies get together and understand how they can relate and what resources they each can bring to the table they are more likely to do it again.” Two others said that they are “gaining contacts and starting [partnership] spin-offs.” Another interviewee, however, remarked that while the partnership has increased coordination between agencies, it hasn’t directly resulted in improved coordination within his agency. Finally, one interviewee remarked that the partnership had resulted in increased coordination with staff and mid-level managers. She/he added, however, that some federal agency managers wanted their agencies to take credit for accomplishments that should be attributed to the B2F Partnership, and thus the partnership, according to the interviewee, could benefit from improved coordination.

Interviewees were also asked what federal agencies could do in order to better participate within community-based partnerships. Four out of the thirteen that answered this question thought it was necessary for the agency to provide the partnership with a point of contact, whose role would be to represent the agency in all the partnership activities while keeping the partnership's mission in the minds of management. Two of these same interviewees mentioned that it was very important to pick the right person for this role, stressing that the representative needed to be energized and interested in the project. Two others mentioned providing flexibility under non-profit status regulations in order to allow the federal representatives to the B2F Partnership to continue to participate if the B2F Partnership officially organized into a non-profit.

Two interviewees mentioned that federal agencies should support the collaborative problem solving method at all levels within the member organization and structure themselves in a way that would facilitate their participation in partnership efforts. Along these lines, two interviewees stated that federal agencies need to better market use of collaborative approaches. They felt that this would increase federal agencies' support for participation in these efforts. Two remarked that federal agencies should understand that they are part of the community as well as the needs of that community when participating in partnerships. Two interviewees also stated that federal agencies need to be prepared to take risks and be able to cope with failure when partnering. One of these further suggested that agencies should not be afraid to invite the public onto their facilities and explain to them what role the agency plays in the community. Finally, one interviewee said that work assignment rotations should be incorporated into every government employee's job requirements in the hopes that the rotation will allow them to see how their decisions affect the "real world." She/he went on to say that federal agencies should be given incentives to participate in community-based partnerships.

### *Key Findings*

- The collaborative approach used by the B2F Partnership has allowed its member organizations to better ensure that some of the most disadvantaged members of Southeast and Southwest D.C. communities benefit from the recent development in the area and are not forced to relocate, particularly those living near the Washington Navy Yard. The majority of interviewees agreed that without the B2F Partnership it is unlikely that concerns of the disadvantaged community members would have been considered to the same extent.
- B2F has experienced substantial success since its inception in 1998, in leveraging resources, sharing information and resources, building job skills and identifying job opportunities for youth. All interviewees believe that the partnership has made a genuine effort to meet the B2F Partnership goals and that the issues most important to them were being addressed. The members of the B2F Partnership consider the on-going collaboration a success.
- B2F would benefit from a fully funded, executive director position and increased administrative support to ensure that it can continue its many positive efforts thus far. Funding would help to coordinate the partnership, advertise the partnership's activities and accomplishments both within the community and amongst potential members, and ensure that the partnership does not lose its momentum yet again.
- In part, the success of the B2F Partnership can be attributed to the strong, charismatic personalities involved. For example, many interviewees stated that the partnership would not have enjoyed the same level of success without the continuing effort of the executive

director, David Ouderkirk, to maintain the lines of communication and act as organizer for the partnership. Interviewees also mentioned the importance of Admiral Weaver, a highly visible champion who increased the visibility and credibility of the B2F Partnership. It should be mentioned, however, that the B2F partners may rely too heavily upon these individuals, and that if they were to leave the partnership, B2F might not continue to be as effective.

- The operational structure within the B2F Partnership allows for a unique flexibility. Potential partners are able to come to the B2F Partnership with a proposed activity and as long as that activity coincides with B2F's overall goals the partnership will expand to perform that activity. The partnership members have a positive attitude and continuously look for ways they can help member organizations solve problems and attain goals rather than focusing on the reasons why a certain problem is impossible to solve.
- B2F continues to have the strong support of numerous and diverse partner organizations including federal agencies, city government, non-profit and community organizations, and academic universities.
- Although many interviewees listed measures that could be used to track the success of the B2F Partnership, no formal measurement and evaluation system is currently in place. It would benefit the partnership to institute a system to enable it to more systematically measure the group's progress towards achieving its goals, better focus resources, and more easily understand when to make programmatic changes. The partnership could also use the results of this measurement system to more easily communicate its accomplishments.

## 4 Metlakatla Peninsula Cleanup Partnership

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*We are struggling with past relationships and trust issues. As long as we move as a group with no one individual making decisions we're ok.*

*Between feds -we have varying interpretations of what [standards] the site should be cleaned up to...This makes [cleanup] difficult.*

*The [Partnership] saves everyone time and facilitates the overall cleanup. Saves everyone time, especially for the Tribe. Could be a huge value for them in the end.*

*Knowing people at the other agencies has been a tremendous help. You get to know people in the other agencies, and you start to look to them for other project partnerships dealing with other issues.*

— Interviewees, Metlakatla Partnership

### *Community History\**

Annette Island is located on the southern tip of a chain of islands in southeast Alaska and covers approximately 200 square miles. Mild winters, cool summers and heavy rainfall, along with both flat and mountainous terrain, forest, lakes, bogs, coastal beaches and rocky shoreline, characterize the island. Annette supports a range of fish and wildlife, including wolves, deer, three species of salmon, and American Bald Eagle. In addition, humpback whales typically migrate alongside Annette's shorelines.<sup>97</sup>

In 1887, William Duncan, an Anglican missionary based in British Columbia, secured rights to an Alaskan island for himself and a small band of Tsimshians Indians followers after fundamental disagreements with church officials and a growing loss of control over Tsimshian territory to government officials and non-natives.<sup>98</sup> Mr. Duncan, along with 700 Tsimshians then left their home in Metlakatla, British Columbia and traveled 100 miles to Annette Island.<sup>99</sup> The Tsimshians established New Metlakatla on the northern tip of a major peninsula in the island's southwest region. Four years later, Congress formally established this and nearby surrounding islands as a permanent reserve for the Tsimshians.<sup>100</sup> In New Metlakatla, "the Community created for itself a life that combined the old with the new."<sup>101</sup> Residents built a church, sawmill, fish cannery, community hall, guesthouse, and Victorian-style houses connected by boardwalks.<sup>102</sup> They also re-established the native council<sup>103</sup> and continued subsistence patterns of fishing and gathering.<sup>104</sup>

At the onset of World War II, the U.S. government recognized the strategic importance of Annette Island's location and leased 12,000 acres six miles south of Metlakatla from the Metlakatla Indian Community (MIC) in order to build an Army Air Force base and small Navy base. Several federal agencies assisted in the development of over 700 buildings that

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\* Interviews for this case study were conducted between November 29, 2001 and April 4, 2002. Eight separate interviews were conducted and a total of ten persons participated. Interviews were conducted with the tribal environmental coordinator, an environmental consultant for the tribe, and representatives of six different federal agencies. Interviews with federal agencies included representatives from both headquarters and field level staff based in Alaska, and the Bureau of Indian Affairs, which serves as the federal steward for tribal lands.

eventually supported roughly 7,000 troops.<sup>105</sup> At the war's conclusion the facilities quickly emptied;<sup>106</sup> however, soon afterward the federal government once again began using a portion of the facilities. In 1948, the Federal Aviation Administration (FAA), and later the U.S. Coast Guard (USCG) leased the airfield which served as the airport for Ketchikan,<sup>107</sup> a nearby Alaskan city.

New construction in the 1940s resulted in “runways, taxi routes, hangars, storage tanks and facilities, housing, docks, a hospital, and infrastructure improvements to water, sewage, and communications” and, until that time, was the only development on the peninsula outside of Metlakatla.<sup>108</sup> Federal involvement on the island was important for the Metlakatla economy<sup>109</sup> and brought a limited number of well-paying employment opportunities for local residents.<sup>110</sup> However, such benefits diminished with the cessation of most federal activity by the mid-1970s. When a new airport opened in Ketchikan in 1974, FAA transferred most of the airfield and equipment to the MIC.<sup>111</sup> Metlakatla residents made use of several former FAA housing structures for forestry offices. Further, community members developed a small sawmill inside the hangar as well as a mill machinery maintenance shop in another building nearby. However, most of the sites went unused.<sup>112</sup> To support itself, the MIC continued to primarily rely upon its commercial fishing and timber harvesting operations.

Today the MIC consists of roughly 1,400 residents.<sup>113</sup> The median income for Metlakatla families in 1990 was over \$38,000 and unemployment was 13 percent.<sup>114</sup> However, by 2000, unemployment had risen above 80 percent, as many residents lost jobs and saw their royalty payments disappear primarily due to federal timber restrictions that began taking effect in the mid-1990s.<sup>115</sup> Even before the restrictions and a disastrous fishing season in 1995,<sup>116</sup> however, the Tribe was making plans to diversify its economy and fortify its natural resource base. For instance, the MIC eventually developed plans to construct a water bottling plant, a tribal economic development office, and a rock quarry and engage in several other economic development initiatives.<sup>117</sup> A primary focus of the Tribe's, however, was the cleanup of the abandoned facilities, debris, and potential contamination primarily leftover at the former airfield site.

### *Metlakatla Peninsula Cleanup Background*

Concerned about the former sites' potential impact on health, local food supply, and the economy, in the early 1990s the Tribe took steps to investigate the former site in more detail. The Tribal Environmental Coordinator, along with the Tribe's contractor, identified over 80 sites with environmental concerns, including “underground and above-ground storage tanks, disposal areas, barrels, explosives, asbestos-containing materials, lead-based paint, and spills.” A summary report later developed noted that, “Environmental contamination presents a risk to residents and workers at the site and to sensitive wetland and coastal environs.”<sup>118</sup>

Instead of pursuing a Superfund designation for the Peninsula, the Tribe sought to work cooperatively with the federal agencies that had contributed to past contamination. In January 1995, the MIC sent a formal letter to FAA asking the agency for it to assist in addressing the environmental issues identified by the Tribe.<sup>119</sup> The Bureau of Indian Affairs (BIA), COE<sup>†</sup>, USCG, and FAA responded by conducting an environmental review to assess past government impacts on the island completed in August 1997.<sup>120</sup> In the meantime, FAA and COE began working on a Coordinated Comprehensive Cleanup (C3) Plan to better coordinate cleanup efforts by the federal agencies and make effective use of resources.<sup>121</sup> MIC's contractor, in

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<sup>†</sup> Under the Department of Defense's Formerly Utilized Defense Sites program, COE is the lead agency for cleaning up sites used by the U.S. Army, Air Force, and Navy (See Federal Aviation Administration, *Annette Island Environmental Restoration Issues*, p. ES-1).

cooperation with the Tribe, also developed a master plan describing resources required for cleanup and how MIC members could be hired to support cleanup activities<sup>122</sup>. By July 1999, several agencies, either formally or informally, had signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU), along with the MIC, to ensure cleanup cooperation.<sup>123</sup> Today, the MOU Work Group consists primarily of field-level representatives from FAA, COE, the MIC's environmental coordinator, and the contractors for each organization.<sup>‡</sup>

### *MOU Work Group*

It is useful to think of the MOU Work Group's activities as roughly falling into three main categories: (1) administrative, (2) environmental, and (3) community involvement and outreach. In reference to the first, the MOU Work Group, as well as individual members, engage in several activities to enhance cooperation and coordination. First, the MOU Work Group hosts bi-weekly teleconference calls guided by a strict agenda where the members discuss "issues associated with accomplishing the cleanup work, including MIC priorities, technical approaches, regulatory requirements, sharing of data, coordinated scheduling of work activities, and community outreach."<sup>124</sup> Meeting minutes as well as numerous other cleanup-related documents are posted on an Annette Island cleanup site sponsored by FAA. Second, the MOU Work Group has developed several additional tools, including a quality assurance program plan, to expedite cleanup work.<sup>125</sup> Third, COE and FAA (and USCG to a more limited extent) also share resources to enhance efficiency of the cleanup effort. For instance, COE and FAA shared office space, exchanged personnel, and used a single engineering firm. By collaborating on these activities, as well as community involvement efforts that will be discussed in detail below, FAA estimates that the federal agencies involved saved over \$750,000 from 1999 through 2001.<sup>126</sup>

Regarding environmental activities, agencies involved in the MOU Work Group have made concerted efforts to cleanup all single party sites, although the MIC has yet to issue a "closed" status for any. Further, FAA and COE have teamed up to address two-party contaminated sites involving FAA and a DOD-led agency. Once money becomes available, and allocation responsibilities have been identified, the responsible agencies will move to cleanup these more complex sites. A list of specific environmental accomplishments from October 1999, through October 2000, is listed in the table below.<sup>127</sup>

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<sup>‡</sup> BIA is an original MOU signatory but is not a regular participant in MOU Work Group activities. USCG signed on to the MOU Work Group as an informal member. Since 2001 the agency has not participated with the MOU Work Group, although it is still involved in limited cleanup activities on the island.

**Environmental Accomplishments of MOU Work Group Members and USCG  
October 1999 through October 2000**

<b>BIA</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Eight contaminated buildings and pads dismantled and disposed</li> <li>▪ Scrap metal removed in conjunction with FAA</li> </ul>
<b>COE</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ 10,000 feet of former fuel line drained and cleaned</li> <li>▪ 7,000 gallons of fuel/water mixture removed</li> <li>▪ Additional mercury-impacted soil removed at one site</li> </ul>
<b>FAA</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Debris removed from 30 sites</li> <li>▪ 53 sites investigated to determine extent of contaminants possibly released into environment</li> <li>▪ 45 abandoned towers with lead-based paint demolished and recycled</li> <li>▪ 800 abandoned drums removed and recycled off the island</li> <li>▪ 14 underground one aboveground fuel storage tanks decommissioned and disposed of off island</li> <li>▪ 700 tons of scrap metal removed from island</li> </ul>
<b>USCG</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Process for removal of three storage tanks begun</li> </ul>

Figure 16. Environmental Accomplishments of MOU Work Group Members and USCG October 1999 through October 2000

Community involvement and outreach activities of the MOU Work Group members include consultation and outreach, actively hiring local MIC residents, and Work Group team building. Regarding this first activity, members of the MOU Work Group provide briefings to the Tribal Council approximately once per year. MOU Work Group members have also conducted several community outreach activities, including participating at the Tribe's yearly Founder's Day celebration and community health fair. Members of the MOU Work Group have also actively sought to hire MIC residents to conduct cleanup activities, a critical objective of the MIC. For instance, COE hired seven local residents (50 percent of total field workforce) in 2000.<sup>128</sup> In addition, MOU Work Group members, and most noticeably FAA, have been actively pushing for enhanced teamwork between members. Recently this desire culminated in a rigorous one-week team building exercise held in Ketchikan, Alaska in March 2002, paid for by FAA.

Although the MOU Work Group experienced some successes in coordinating and initiating cleanup actions on several sites, according to an FAA document, cleanup efforts have been hampered for several reasons, including lack of full coordination across MOU Work Group members, insufficient funding, varying agency environmental policies, and lack of single overall lead agency.<sup>129</sup>

*Partnership Background and Goals*

Recognizing the need for additional assistance and an opportunity, in early 2000, an agency official within the Department of Defense (DOD), based near Washington, D.C., developed a proposal for the cleanup work at Annette Island to be accepted as a federal Interagency Working Group on Environmental Justice national demonstration project. The DOD official hoped that this national designation would enable enhanced coordination of agency officials at the Headquarters level, and, in turn, enable parties involved directly in the cleanup to identify, assess, and remediate contaminated sites more efficiently. The MIC agreed to this approach, recognizing that such a designation would help better ensure that cleanup work on the island would be completed. In June 2000, the proposal was accepted, and, soon after, the Environmental Justice (EJ) Work Group was formed, consisting primarily of agency



headquarters officials from FAA, COE, USCG, BIA, as well as EPA. The MIC is also a member, however, issues involving distance and coordination has limited the MIC's involvement. The EJ Work Group and the MOU Work Group do not regularly hold formal meetings together; however, loose coordination exists between the two.

Although not well defined, it is helpful to visualize the partnership around the issue of island cleanup as consisting of three distinct components: (1) the MIC; (2) the EJ Work Group; and (3) the MOU Work Group. All groups have as a common goal to cleanup the contaminated sites on the island; however, they each have a slightly different focus. The MOU Work Group members are focused primarily on cleaning up sites. The EJ Work Group is focused primarily on facilitating the resolution of difficult cleanup issues; and the MIC, although represented on both work groups, is focused on ensuring that cleanup will take place in a manner that meets the needs and priorities of the Tribe. The Metlakatla Peninsula cleanup partnership is depicted in the graphic below.

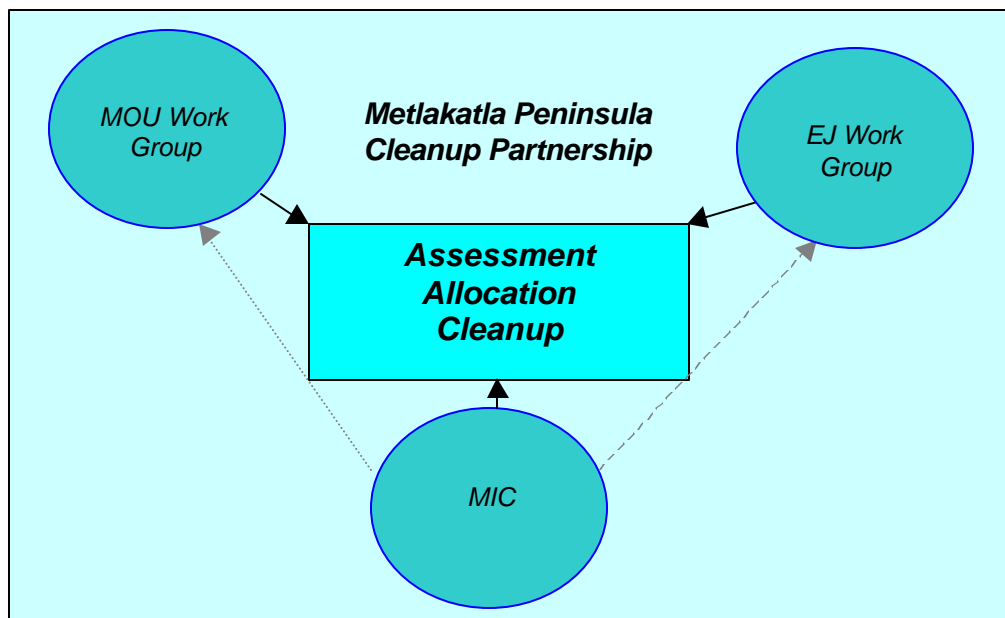


Figure 17. EPA Representation of the Metlakatla Peninsula Cleanup Partnership

In addition, after the MIC was designated as a Brownfields Showcase Community in October 2002, efforts were made by the EJ Work Group, MOU Work Group, and EPA Brownfields officials to ensure that communication lines between the cleanup effort and the Brownfields redevelopment effort would remain open. By integrating cleanup and potential options for reuse at three sites through the cleanup and Brownfields work, the parties hope to better ensure that the cleanup will match the Tribe's desired reuse of the site and potentially make much more efficient use of resources.

#### *On-Going Issues Impeding Cleanup*

Despite the EJ Work Group's intention to resolve challenging issues impeding site cleanup, progress in cleaning the more challenging multi-party sites has been slow. Two critical issues are discussed in more detail below.

*Allocation of responsibility for cleanup at multi-party sites.* The numerous parties involved, the numerous transactions involving property, and insufficient records, complicate allocation. For instance, the MOU Work Group identified 18 parties that may be liable for cleanup costs including nine US federal agencies, two Canadian federal agencies, the State of Alaska, the MIC, and five private companies.<sup>130</sup> Closely related are the complicated tasks of determining who should fund cleanup at multi-party sites and then who should be responsible for conducting the remediation.

*Determination of what constitutes a “clean” site.* Members of the MOU Work Group desire to seek official approval indicating that their site is clean once appropriate remedial action has been taken. This matter is complicated, however, as it is not clear to all parties involved what entity has responsibility to make such a determination, nor what level of cleanup might be considered appropriate. As a sovereign nation that can be delegated authority from the federal government to manage its environmental programs, the MIC has developed, and received approval from EPA for several cleanup standards put forth by the Tribe. However, the Tribe has yet to develop and/or receive approval for standards that correspond to all the contaminants found at the sites.<sup>131</sup> Further, the various parties involved in the cleanup often have varying internal guidance recommending that different levels of cleanup should be met.<sup>132</sup>

FAA-Alaska has been active in putting forth suggestions to resolve remaining issues,<sup>133</sup> however, no action was taken in response to these suggestions. Further, most Metlakatla Peninsula Cleanup partners expect that solutions to the remaining issues will need endorsement from the EJ Work Group before moving forward in concert. In an effort to resolve some of the on-going obstacles, the EJ Work Group initiated an alternative dispute resolution process (ADR) in 2001 led by a team from EPA’s Conflict Prevention and Resolution Center. In January 2002, the ADR team submitted preliminary recommendations to the EJ Work Group on how to improve the process. This was followed up by a two-day meeting in Seattle held in June that involved the Tribe and members of both the MOU and EJ Work Groups. It is too early to tell the impact the meeting will have on improving the course of cleanup activity on the island.

The following sections primarily describe interviewees’ responses to questions gathered from interviews conducted by EPA’s Office of Policy, Economics, and Innovation from late November 2001 through late April 2002. The sections focus on interviewees’ impressions regarding measuring partnership success, partnership success and challenges, recommendations for improving the partnership, overall value of the partnership, and the value of federal involvement in the partnership. It is important to note that this case study diverges from others in that only two main categories of partners, federal agencies and the MIC, are currently playing a central role alongside the MIC in this partnership effort. Interviewees include the MIC tribal environmental coordinator, the MIC’s environmental consultant, BIA, DOD Headquarters, COE-Alaska, FAA-Headquarters, FAA-Alaska, USCG-Alaska, USCG-Headquarters, and EPA-Headquarters. BIA is the federal steward for tribal lands and is perceived as somewhat more closely allied with MIC interests, while EPA is considered to be a neutral party.

### *Measuring Success*

The Metlakatla Partnership does not have a measurement framework to determine success of their effort. However, five interviewees had thoughts regarding what success might look like and how the project should be evaluated. First, two interviewees noted that project success would be indicated by cleanup of the contaminated sites. One added that currently 60-70 cleanup sites had an “open” status, meaning that the Tribe was not in agreement that the

sites had been adequately cleaned up. Similarly, another interviewee felt that success would be indicated by a cleanup of the island to a degree that the MIC was comfortable with. Further, she/he added that an additional indicator of success would be a cleanup that took ten years as opposed to twenty to complete. In addition, she/he added that milestones should be used to help gauge project success. Another interviewee suggested that the on-going accumulation of cleanup data should be used to evaluate success. She/he further suggested that periodic checks by a federal representative should be conducted to ensure that cleanup is going as planned. Finally, one of the same interviewees remarked that an evaluation framework is needed, but that no single framework should be required for Interagency Working Group Environmental Justice pilot projects.

### *Partnership Successes*

In terms of greatest overall success, no clear consensus emerged from the interviewees' responses. Four referenced the coordination of the partnership as its biggest success. Specifically, two cited the coordination between agencies in the field. Another cited more generally the coordination between the federal agencies, noting that the technical communication between them is very well established and the agencies' engineers are very knowledgeable. This interviewee added that the effective coordination between the federal agencies has resulted from these agencies' dedication of funding, enthusiastic people, and management support. Along similar lines, another interviewee noted previous cleanup efforts were very sporadic and that mere involvement in this type of project "is a big deal." She/he went on to say that, "People are pulling together because everyone sees it as something positive for the community." Related to coordination, two interviewees directly referenced the involvement of certain stakeholders as the partnership's greatest success. One noted specifically the involvement of DOD's Len Richeson as critical in leading the EJ demonstration project. Another cited the involvement of (1) federal agencies, particularly those not previously active in working with Tribes (which may have resulted from the EJ Demo pilot designation); (2) a tribal representative who has a leadership role; (3) a strong technical consultant for the Tribe who can act in accordance with tribal values.

Another major success, according to two interviewees was dedication. One interviewee noted that the MOU Work Group's dedication despite many frustrations was the partnership's greatest success; while a second emphasized the dedication of the EJ Work Group, which has continued to meet after two years despite many frustrations. She/he added that the group has continued to meet because of their obligations to clean up the sites. Another noted that the greatest success of the effort, thus far, was the agreement by the MOU Work Group members to participate in a rigorous team building session. She/he went on to say that it's important for the members to talk first about "what makes us tick" and then discuss allocation. Finally, one interviewee stated that the partnership's greatest success has been the visibility it gained when the cleanup effort was designated as an Environmental Justice national demonstration project. Because of this, according to the interviewee, agencies provided more funding for the effort.

### *Partnership Challenges*

Interviewees voiced several challenges facing the partnership. The most consistently raised challenges centered on issues of trust and communication, allocation, and cleanup standards. First, several interviewees raised concerns over communication and trust issues. Specifically, five cited problematic communication issues between the MIC and federal agencies. Of these, two noted that it appeared that federal agencies did not allow sufficient Tribal input in decisionmaking. One noted that within the EJ Work Group it "seems like they are not letting the community in." Two remarked that the federal agencies were not given sufficient

access to the Tribal Council. One of these explained that the federal agencies only had access to the Tribal Council once per year but additional meetings were needed. She/he went on to explain that the lack of timely meetings can be especially problematic when the agencies want to obtain site “close-out” standards from the Tribe. Also related to communication difficulties, one of the same interviewees stated that the federal agencies did not fully understand their trust responsibilities in relation to the Tribe. In addition, a sixth interviewee stated that the EJ Work Group did not sufficiently communicate with the MOU Work Group. Finally, one interviewee noted that one of the major difficulties has been establishing trusting relationships between all the federal agencies and the Tribe.

Second, four of ten interviewees noted the difficulty of determining cleanup responsibility for the multiparty sites on the island. One remarked that the on-going allocation process has been “really, really challenging.” She/he went on to say that part of this difficulty stems from an inability to set meeting times when all parties can attend. Another interviewee commented that the parties are willing to discuss allocation, but some are becoming frustrated.

Third, four interviewees cited the lack of consensus regarding cleanup standards as a major partnership hurdle. Interviewees voiced concern that the Tribe may have set standards too high in some instances, or that the Tribe’s standards aren’t equivalent to EPA’s or the State of Alaska’s. One interviewee noted that his/her organization is regularly required to cleanup to the most stringent level, but in some instances current technologies do not detect to levels required by MIC standards. Another voiced concern that the Tribe wanted his/her agency to remove certain contaminants to a level beyond background levels. She/he did note, however, that the concerns over cleanup standards were being negotiated one standard at a time.

Other barriers to success cited include: (1) inconsistency between some of the various agency policies and terminology guiding cleanup, such as what is meant by the term “lead agency”; (2) getting reluctant parties to address their contamination cleanup responsibilities; (3) lack of sufficient involvement by EPA Region 10 to help guide the cleanup process; (4) lack of agreed upon contamination testing procedures; (5) lack of appreciation for the need to obtain an allocation agreement for the multi-party sites, especially since most of these, according to the interviewee, are the most contaminated; (6) determining who will actually conduct the cleanups once allocation is determined; (7) consistent lack of funding; (8) disparities in funding availability between parties; (9) ineffective communication about which cleanup issues are top priority; (10) insufficient tribal experience to oversee the cleanup program; (11) addressing Tribal issues not directly related to cleanup, which could confuse the cleanup process; and (12) winter weather, which can slow the cleanup process.

When asked whether the organizational styles and procedures of the different partner organizations limited effective collaboration between partners, of the ten interviewees addressing this topic nine mentioned that some styles and procedures have limited effective collaboration. Of these nine, five cited varying organizational policies regarding site cleanup standards as problematic. For instance, one remarked that agencies under the Department of Defense are only required to cleanup to approved EPA/State requirements, which could pose a problem if the Tribe wants sites cleaned to a greater degree than EPA standards. Two voiced concern that one agency’s cleanup standard is based on risk, another’s is based on the most stringent standard approved, while another agency does not have a clear policy regarding this, making it difficult to determine to what extent a site should be cleaned.

Another organizational barrier cited by two interviewees centered on budget/funding issues. One remarked that different budget cycles made collaboration more difficult, while another expressed concern about the inability for some organizations to consistently send their

principle people to meetings. She/he added that a centralized travel budget might help alleviate these concerns. This same interviewee also explained that the Tribe's lack of resources for environmental programs made it difficult for the Tribe to respond to issues raised by other members of the MOU Work Group in a timely fashion. Another interviewee explained that his/her organization's policy prevented contracting with the MIC directly to perform cleanup operations, thus limiting the number of MIC residents that could be hired. Another interviewee voiced concern over a historical lack of trust between two partner organizations. She/he added, however, that as long as EPA is seen as neutral, and all the members continue to make decisions in a collective manner, this issue should not pose too great a difficulty. Finally, one interviewee remarked that the federal agencies' inability to always know what the others were doing contributed to project difficulties.

### *Interviewees' Recommendations for Improving the Partnership*

Interviewees provided several different recommendations for improving the effectiveness of the Metlakatla partnership. Three of the nine interviewees addressing this topic recommended completing the allocation process. One advocated bringing together the EJ Work Group members, ADR officials, and Brownfields representatives together in one room to work out all issues associated with allocation. Another emphasized that allocation may only work if a consent order can be applied. Related to the allocation process, one interviewee urged all parties to come together and agree to a consolidated, massive cleanup effort, and then urge Congress to appropriate the necessary funding. Contrasting with this recommendation, two interviewees urged EPA to expand its leadership over the effort, while another urged that one person be put solely in charge of the project who would act as the "information hub."

Other recommendations included: (1) increasing coordination with EPA Region 10; (2) conducting the MOU Work Group team building initiative; (3) ensuring that there is early, substantial communication with the Tribe; (4) dividing the EJ Work Group members into smaller groups to work on MIC priorities once they are fully understood; (5) providing greater follow-up, such as meeting notes, following the EJ Work Group meetings; (6) training the MIC community on ensuring effective communication with federal agencies; (7) ensuring that the MIC has close communication with agency representatives in charge of implementing the ADR process regarding allocation; (8) being realistic about cleanup schedules and funding requirements; and (9) having EPA build a unifying framework to incorporate the many different activities associated with the cleanup effort, including the environmental justice component, Brownfields, and DOD's Native American Lands Environmental Mitigation Program.

### *Interviewees' Recommendations for Other Communities Using Partnerships*

All ten interviewees provided recommendations for other communities using partnerships to address environmental justice issues. The first set centered around structural and operational considerations of partnerships. Three interviewees suggested using central points of contact/single project leads. For instance, one stated that partnerships need to "assign a lead agency...you need an established authority/decision maker from the beginning of the process." Two interviewees emphasized that resources be made available to ensure the implementation of the partnership. One specified resources for "pulling the different member organizations together in the collaborative" and another specified the need for administrative support. Another interviewee suggested taking time to understand the local political structure. Finally, one of these same interviewees urged that partnerships set standards about what they intend to accomplish.

The second set centered on themes of openness and inclusiveness. Two interviewees stressed the need for recognizing differences within agencies. For instance one of these stated that when working with agencies “you need to learn differences in agencies, what their processes are, and what their scope is.” Similarly, another interviewee encouraged communities interested in partnerships to “be open and willing to talk.” Finally one interviewee provided several recommendations regarding inclusiveness. She/he stated that when developing a partnership it is important to “identify all the players in a project, include every group even the ones that are not visible. Emphasize participation.” She/he went to say that it is also important to use National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) and environmental justice guidelines to help guide partnership development. Moreover, the interviewee added that it is important to keep in mind that tribal communities may lack the communication infrastructure (e.g., email, television, and radio) that non-tribal communities have.

### *Value of Collaborative Partnership*

When asked about the value of addressing issues through a collaborative partnership approach, seven of the seven interviewees addressing this topic indicated that collaborating had added value, although one of the interviewees remarked that collaborating had not been as valuable as she/he had hoped. Four interviewees noted that the value of collaborating was the efficiencies gained, such as time and money. One of these stated that by using the same contractor, two agencies have saved between \$600,000 to \$1 million in cleanup expenses alone. Another interviewee stated that the cost savings from collaborating would be most significant for the Tribe, who, because of the partnership, no longer need to work out disagreements with the different federal agencies on a one-to-one basis. She/he noted that these savings for the Tribe could be really enormous by the time the cleanup effort is completed. Related to economic benefits, one interviewee remarked that the partnership has resulted in a large amount of money being injected into the MIC economy. Another explained that the effort has resulted in the professional training of some MIC residents. These same two interviewees explained that the partnership has resulted in some sites being cleaned up, and a greater appreciation by the MIC that the federal agencies are addressing their cleanup responsibilities. Finally, one interviewee explained that “the project fostered a better understanding of involvement and a greater understanding of the different agency views of the project.”

When asked whether the collaborative process could be used to address other issues that the MIC is facing, of the six addressing this topic, four indicated yes, while two were ambiguous in their responses. One who responded with yes remarked that this same type of approach is beginning to be used in the Metlakatla landfill cleanup project.

When asked whether the main issues affecting the MIC would have been addressed without a collaborative approach, of the nine that addressed the question, two indicated unequivocally that the issues (primarily the cleanup issues) would not have been addressed, one that the issues would not have been addressed unless a court order would have been imposed, and four that some cleanup would have occurred but the effort would not have been as effective. Two gave ambiguous responses. Of those indicating that the cleanup effort would not have been as effective, one stated that without a collaborative approach, FAA would not have been as extensively involved and that COE may have avoided cleanup until later and then, once it began the cleanup, would have simply informed the MIC what it was doing, performed the work and then left, all without (1) making use of local knowledge to enhance the cleanup effort and (2) aiding the local economy by hiring local residents. Two interviewees indicated that the cleanup effort would have taken a lot longer to complete, with one adding that the cleanup would not have been performed to a level that would be satisfactory for the Tribe. In addition,

another interviewee stated that sites simply would not have been identified to the extent they would have without the partnership. Of those that were ambiguous, one remarked that it is simply hard to say, while another remarked that every once in a while his/her agency has thoughts about withdrawing from the partnership, but then, according to the interviewee “reality hits home.”

### *Value of Federal Involvement in Partnership*

When asked about the effect of having federal agencies participate in the Metlakatla partnership for the Tribe beyond the immediate issue of federal cleanup responsibility, the five interviewees addressing this topic produced a variety of responses. Two interviewees stated that federal involvement helped improve the Tribe’s understanding of environmental issues, such as environmental contaminants. Similarly, another interviewee stated that federal participation enhanced the Tribe’s appreciation for the role of the regulator in environmental protection. One of these same interviewees also stated that federal involvement resulted in the training of some MIC residents for cleanup activities and improvement of their management skills. Another interviewee explained that federal involvement has boosted the image of the Tribe, heightened attention regarding activities needed to cleanup the island, and enabled the Tribe to more easily gain access to key decision makers. Finally, one interviewee stated that federal involvement has simply been critical to the cleanup work on the island.

When asked what federal partners have gained by participating in the MIC partnership, five of the seven that addressed this topic indicated that federal agencies improved their understanding of tribal issues. For instance, one interviewee stated that, “The agencies have a greater appreciation for federally recognized tribes and a clarification of what it means to be federally recognized.” Another interviewee explained that agencies “have gained the understanding that Indian communities do not think like the rest of the world. The federal agencies now know that they must deal with the cultural and the spiritual identity as well as idiosyncrasies of tribal communication.” Similar to this, another interviewee indicated that federal agencies have gained awareness of the difficulties tribal communities have in dealing with multiple agencies. She/he added that, “We now understand their perspective and realize some of their frustrations when comparing the different requirements of the federal agencies. It has helped us rethink and focus on our communication.” Interviewees also stated that federal agencies have accrued other benefits as a result of their participation, including: (1) a better means of communicating between federal agencies; (2) an improved understanding of environmental issues in Alaska; (3) cost savings for the federal government; (4) lessons learned about the allocation process; and (5) a new model for conducting multi-federal agency cleanups.

When asked whether federal agencies have been able to better coordinate their activities as a result of their involvement in the Metlakatla partnership of the seven interviewees addressing this topic, three indicated yes, three indicated they weren’t sure, and one gave an ambiguous response. Of those indicating yes, one interviewee explained that the partnership had challenged his/her agency’s ability to work with public and private organizations, and increased his/her agency’s ability to work together, even at the headquarters level. Another interviewee explained that the federal agencies are coordinating better “because they now understand steps to take...[for] a project of this magnitude.” For the interviewees indicating possibly, two indicated that each’s own agency’s ability to collaborate has improved. The other stated that “it is hard to see the influence of this compared to the whole great number of coordinated projects; it is, however, reinforcing the federal collaborative trend.”

Interviewees were also asked what federal agencies could do to be more effective partners in local collaborative efforts. Ten of the ten interviewees addressed this topic. Five

interviewees emphasized establishing points of contact to help guide the partnership. Of these five, two suggested that single points of contact should be established within each agency, and added that the partnership work must be a priority for them. Two other interviewees recommended that one agency should be made to serve as the overall lead for the partnership. One of these added that participating agencies should establish a common process and a concise set of guidelines to grapple with issues where each agency has its own procedures, such as with NEPA. Another interviewee recommended that the affected community be empowered so that the partnership would be locally controlled and locally sponsored. She/he added that partner members should only look to agency headquarters for support and advice, not to guide the partnership.

Two interviewees provided suggestions specifically for cleanup. One interviewee recommended that participating agencies develop some mechanism for determining cleanup goals and persuading the responsible parties to negotiate cleanup issues. The second interviewee urged EPA to make its cleanup expertise more available to other federal agencies, especially ones not experienced in cleanup issues, although she/he added that regulatory barriers prevented this. The interviewee further explained that if EPA had become involved in helping coordinate cleanup issues earlier in the process, much time and money would have been saved. Finally, one interviewee presented more general recommendations, suggesting that federal agencies should communicate openly with affected communities and take time to explain the everyday activities they are performing.

#### *Key Findings<sup>§</sup>*

- The MOU Work Group and the MIC have made significant progress to ensure that the contaminated sites on Annette Island will be remediated, although several issues, including the allocation of cleanup responsibility for multi-party sites and reconciliation of varied perspectives regarding appropriate cleanup standards, will need to be resolved before the sites are cleaned to a level acceptable by all parties.
- The overall cleanup effort could benefit by much more substantive interaction and open communication between the EJ Work Group and the MOU Work Group. The Tribe, a member of both work groups, appears satisfied with its involvement in the MOU Work Group, but desires increased involvement with the EJ Work Group.
- The goals of the MIC and the federal agencies have not been integrated. The Tribe sees federal involvement on the island as an opportunity to address other environmental, public health, and economic priorities in addition to contaminated site cleanup; whereas the federal agencies involved in cleanup work are primarily concerned about cleaning up the contaminated sites and don't show signs they are ready to expand this vision. Openly reconciling these two converging viewpoints should help reduce frustrations for all parties in the future.
- Better integrating the goals of the Brownfields effort, the cleanup effort and other similar Annette Island initiatives where clear overlap exists, although challenging, would increase efficiency and reduce frustration regarding cleanup and redevelopment efforts for both the participating federal agencies and the Tribe.
- Efforts by the MOU Work Group to openly communicate, establish common procedures, and share resources have resulted in tangible benefits for all the parties involved,

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<sup>§</sup> Findings based primarily upon data collected between 11/29/01-4/24/02.



including an estimated cost savings for the participating federal agencies of over \$750,000 between 1999-2001.

- The MIC has performed a difficult task in inventorying and assessing numerous contaminated sites on the island, urging federal agencies to begin cleaning them, and negotiating the different cleanup policies of the federal agencies. However, federal agencies involved in the cleanup would appreciate if the MIC's environmental program had a greater number of technical staff that could assist in guiding the cleanup effort and reviewing technical documentation.

#### *Afterword*

As noted earlier, during June 10-11, 2002, a meeting was held between Metlakatla Partnership members to further address some of the remaining issues preventing additional cleanup on the Metlakatla peninsula. Comments provided by one member indicate that the meeting was well attended and participants were able to come to agreement on a process for addressing allocation issues. Parties were asked to identify remaining sites they would cleanup on their own. For those sites not identified for cleanup by a particular party, parties were to then review a matrix to be used to enter into agreements between other parties responsible for contamination at certain sites. Starting August 5, 2002, parties were to actively participate in an allocation process and complete the process as soon as possible. Parties were then to work together to cover their costs for site cleanup subject to the allocation. Finally, following the completion of the allocation parties were to work together to support any share of costs that may be determined by the allocation to be affiliated with past MIC activities. Parties were also expected to jointly fund and cooperate to ensure completion of cleanup at sites subject to the allocation.<sup>134</sup>

## 5 Metro East Lead Collaborative

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*We joined because it was important that we not duplicate efforts with Illinois EPA and the Lead Collaborative.*

*Now everyone knows what the other is doing...We were doing the same thing. Now we partner.*

*Value [of the collaborative effort] will be the benefit to the kids. A...generation of kids will be protected.*

— Interviewees, Metro East Lead Collaborative

### *Community History<sup>+</sup>*

The City of East St. Louis and nearby surrounding communities including Brooklyn, Alorton, Centerville, and Washington Park, in St. Clair County, are located in southwest Illinois directly across the Mississippi River from St. Louis, Missouri. Built up around heavy industry, as late as 1961, East St. Louis had a population of 77,000 benefiting from a strong economy and a number of well-paying jobs. However, by the late 1960's the economy had suffered a severe setback resulting in factory closures and the exodus of more than half of the city's population.<sup>135</sup> Today, East St. Louis consists of approximately 32,000 residents. The population is 99 percent minority. The poverty rate of the area is 45 percent. Sixty-five percent of the residents are low income, and 24 percent are unemployed.<sup>136</sup> The area is pocked by numerous vacant lots (four miles out of the fourteen total miles making up East St. Louis are vacant) and abandoned properties (one out of eight housing units are vacant)<sup>137</sup>, several of which serve dual roles as children's playgrounds and illegal junkyards. Old, dilapidated lead smelters and lead paint factories are common, and at least twenty of these industrial sites are contaminated.<sup>138</sup> The East St. Louis region also has significant air quality and flooding problems. In addition, children in the area suffer from lead poisoning at a rate of four times higher than the national average.<sup>139</sup>

The U.S. Agency for Toxic Substances and Disease Registry has reported that nearly one in six children in America have high levels of lead in their blood. The long-term effects of lead in a child can be severe, including learning disabilities, decreased growth, hyperactivity, impaired hearing, and even brain damage. Most homes built in the U.S. before 1960 contain heavily leaded paint and some homes built as recently as 1978 may also contain lead paint, placing many young children at risk, especially children ages infant to six, who may ingest the metal.<sup>140</sup> Lead levels are perceived as dangerous by the U. S. Center for Disease Control (CDC) at levels of 10 parts per million (ppm) or higher. However, Dr. Bruce Lanphear of the Children's Hospital Medical Center in Cincinnati has recently linked lead levels above five ppm to low reading test scores and increased juvenile delinquency.<sup>141</sup>

High blood lead levels have been a known problem in East St. Louis and surrounding areas for over a decade.<sup>142</sup> However, extensive blood lead screening and lead soil sampling in

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<sup>+</sup> Interviews for this case study were conducted in early October and early November 2001. Ten separate interviews were conducted and a total of ten persons participated. Interviewees included representatives from community organizations, state, federal, and regional agencies, and business.

the area starting in 1999 began to reveal how much additional work was needed to alleviate the threat.<sup>143</sup> In the spring of 1999, St. Mary's Hospital Corporate Health Center, the area hospital, carried out school physicals in order to assess the extent of lead contamination in the school children's bloodstream.<sup>144</sup> The results of the tests showed that one in five children in the East St. Louis area had lead levels approaching the CDC dangerous level of 10 ppm. Further, lead levels greater than 5 ppm were found in 70 percent of the children tested.<sup>145</sup> Not only were the lead levels abnormally high, but the ages of those poisoned were older than expected, six to twelve.<sup>146</sup> These findings led St. Mary's Hospital to speculate that children must be coming into contact with lead through means other than lead-based paint<sup>147</sup>. The hospital's concerns prompted the Illinois Department of Public Health, in conjunction with the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA), to conduct a study to assess the level of lead in soil in selected East St. Louis neighborhoods. Results subsequently showed high lead levels in soil at different sites.

It is unclear why community organizations and government institutions have not had greater success in removing the threat of lead poisoning in East St. Louis even after several years of attention has been placed on the issue and a steady flow of resources have been used to address the problem. There are likely many varied and overlapping factors, a few of which are briefly mentioned. The full extent of the problem may not be known. The scope of the problem may be out of proportion to the financial and human resources required to address it. Therefore, residents and parents in particular may not understand the threats, the symptoms, or possible remedies. Moreover, even though they may recognize that lead's effects can be quite dangerous and possibly severe, some residents may stay silent on the issue fearing that if they spoke out, they would face repercussions from landlords and county officials, including the potential loss of their homes<sup>148</sup> and public funding assistance.<sup>149</sup> In addition, efforts by different organizations to fully remedy the existing threat and locate and treat children already exhibiting lead poisoning symptoms may not have been coordinated effectively due to staff and budget constraints in the public health care sector<sup>150</sup>.

### *Partnership Background*

As previously mentioned St. Mary's Hospital turned to EPA and the Illinois EPA for assistance in addressing the high incidence of child blood poisoning their testing program revealed in East St. Louis and Washington Park. At the same time, several other organizations were engaged in separate lead-based remediation efforts in the area, including the City, the County, community-based non-profits, and the U.S. Department of Agriculture's Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS). The EPA official, who headed the agency's lead-based work in St. Louis, came to the recognition that a multi-pronged strategy—one that could simultaneously address lead paint in homes and lead in soil—would be needed. To be effective, the official surmised that EPA would need to collaborate, link, and build off existing efforts of the groups already at work, or capable of working in the East St. Louis area. Although based in EPA's regional office in Chicago, while the soil sampling was continuing the EPA official began networking with a number of different organizations that were already working in the East St. Louis area.

In early 1999, EPA called a meeting of stakeholders. As a result of this meeting the stakeholders organized and began to call themselves the East St. Louis Lead Collaborative. In May 2000 the East St. Louis Lead Collaborative was named as an Interagency Working Group on Environmental Justice national demonstration project. In 2001, the collaborative expanded to include additional communities in St. Clair County and changed its name to the Metro East Lead Collaborative (MELC). The members of the MELC are described below.

<b>MELC Member Organizations and Eventual Resource Contributions</b>		
<b>Organization and Type</b>	<b>Community Represented</b>	<b>Eventual Contribution to MELC</b>
East Side Health District (Local)	East St. Louis	Blood lead screening, Outreach
East St. Louis Community Development Block Grant Operations, Inc. (Local)	East St. Louis	Lead assessments, housing remediation
East-West Gateway Coordinating Council (Regional)	East St. Louis	Grantee, Soil Sampling, Outreach
Enterprise Community Vision 20/20 (Non-Profit)	East St. Louis	Lead assessment, Redevelopment efforts
Illinois Department of Public Health (State)	NA	Grantee, Soil sampling, Blood lead screening
Illinois Environmental Protection Agency Collinsville, IL office (State)	NA	Technical assistance, Outreach, Grant money
Neighbors Technical Assistance Center (Non-Profit)	East St. Louis	Grantee, Outreach, Lead-safe yards
NEIGHBORS United for Progress (Non-Profit)	East St. Louis	Lead based paint assessments, Outreach
Regional Vocational System (Academic)	East St. Louis, St. Clair County	Outreach
Southwestern Illinois Resource Conservation Development (Regional)	St. Clair County	Grantee (biosolid remediation program)
St. Clair County Intergovernmental Grants Department (County)	St. Clair County	Grantee, Blood lead screening, Lead assessment, Outreach, Housing remediation
St. Mary's Hospital of East St. Louis (Non-profit)	East St. Louis, St. Clair County	Grantee, Blood lead screening, Outreach, Coordination, Meeting space
St. Louis Community College (Academic)	East St. Louis	Grantee – job training, Outreach
U.S. Army Corp of Engineers (Federal/St. Louis, MO)	N/A	Technical assistance and site assessment, Implemented Brownfields Showcase Community Award
U.S. Dept of Agriculture/Natural Resources Conservation Office (Federal/Champaign, IL)	N/A	Technical assistance, Grant money
U.S. Dept of Housing and Urban Development (Federal/Springfield, IL) and The Lead Hazard Control Grant Office (Federal/Washington DC)	N/A	Technical assistance, Grant money
U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (Federal/Chicago, IL)	N/A	Facilitation and technical assistance, Grant money

Figure 18. MELC Member Organizations and Eventual Resource Contributions to MELC

### *Partnership Process*

The initial meeting of the original MELC took place in February 1999 at St. Mary's Hospital in East St. Louis. Approximately 16 organizations attended. The meeting was used primarily as a forum for the different participating organizations to get to know each other, conduct a thorough analysis of each organizations' activities, and identify what capacity the organizations had to adapt their activities to best meet the needs of the community<sup>151</sup>. Representatives described their organizations' mission and what they had done previously or were currently working on to reduce the threat of lead poisoning in the Metro East area. Following this discussion, the organizations then put forth ideas regarding how they could eliminate the redundancy of lead-focused services, how they might collaborate, and how they might even join resources to better address local lead issues.<sup>152</sup> The spirit of cooperation that emerged from the initial meeting was positive so the organizations agreed to meet every two months at St. Mary's Hospital. At subsequent meetings, members would update the other members on their organization's progress and talk further about how they might potentially assist each other.

The EPA official developed the agendas, distributed announcements and meeting times via electronic mail, and then facilitated the collaborative meetings. She began collaborative discussions by describing a potential collaborative strategy. The official would then ask how

many agree to this approach by asking for a show of hands. Following this she would then begin asking those who did not agree what their concerns were and how the strategy could be modified to obtain their support. On most issues, consensus was reached. Consensus in the context of the collaborative discussions did not mean that everyone was to be completely satisfied with the decision; rather that everyone could live with the decision.<sup>153</sup> Since the early meetings were primarily forums for better understanding each of the other organizations, instead of collectively strategizing how lead work in East St. Louis should best be accomplished, the issues were not overly contentious. Regarding some topics, however, members would reach a point where they would agree to disagree. This was especially true for discussions that centered on government rules and regulations.<sup>154</sup>

Soon after these initial meetings, participants in the collaborative organized themselves into two subcommittees according to resources and expertise. The subcommittees held meetings outside of the larger collaborative meetings. Subcommittee members also regularly spoke with each other via electronic mail and the telephone. Although the subcommittees did not have designated chairpersons, members discussed opportunities for working together to ensure the continuance of lead testing and community outreach on lead issues, and the identification and cleanup of lead contaminated sties and homes. From these discussions emerged unofficial plans of action, which included basic goals, and how each subcommittee member would contribute to achieving these goals. The subcommittee members then discussed their plans at the full collaborative meetings. The plans generated questions and discussions from collaborative members but they were both accepted. Following this, the subcommittees then began to provide regular updates on their success at full collaborative meetings.

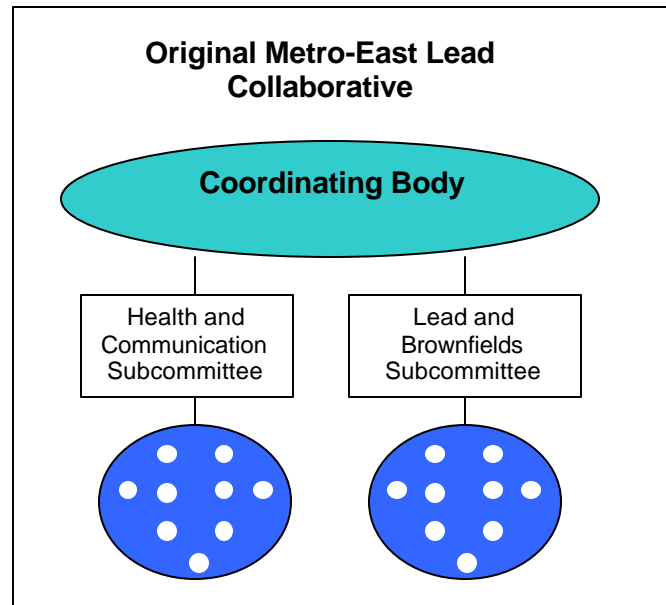


Figure 19. EPA Representation of the original Metro East Lead Collaborative.

The management of the high number of organizations participating in the collaborative at one point did become somewhat challenging for the EPA official. Nevertheless, she remained committed to keeping everyone updated about collaborative meetings and activities. Meanwhile, support and enthusiasm for the effort remained strong. Potential reasons that the organizations continued to meet are likely several, but some most likely include: (1) a shared belief and commitment across organizations that the goal of lead prevention would be better achieved by participating in these dialogue sessions;<sup>\*</sup> (2) the commitment of the different organizations' leadership, which gave staff a mandate to actively participate;<sup>155</sup> and (3) the leadership, interpersonal, and networking skills of the facilitator and representatives of several organizations including St. Mary's Hospital, the City, and the County.

<sup>\*</sup> One indicator of this commitment, according to the EPA official, was the flexibility shown by several organizational representatives who regularly adjusted their schedules to continue participating in Collaborative meetings that frequently continued past their scheduled time (Noemi Emeric, City of Los Angeles; Brownfields Program Manager (formerly with U.S. Environmental Protection Agency; Region 5), Phone Interview, 21 January 2003.

Reducing redundancy of services was a critical focus of the collaborative. One area of redundancy identified by the City, County, and local health department centered on the various lead safety brochures distributed by numerous different organizations, all containing different information. To counter this, each organization participating in the collaborative contributed lead safety information specific to each organization that was combined into a single lead safety brochure that included a Metro East Lead Collaborative logo. Another instance centered on how collaborative members should best interact with the community on lead remediation efforts. At one meeting EPA explained that it desired to notify tenants and homeowners it suspected had yards containing high lead levels through a formal notification process. A letter was to be sent to residents describing the problem and indicating a number to call if they wanted their yards tested. Other federal representatives in attendance agreed with this approach. However, local government and non-profit organizations argued that the only way residents would respond affirmatively would be to go door-to-door and explain the problem. After some discussion, members of the collaborative agreed to a process that they felt would not only inform a greater percentage of residents of potential lead dangers in their yards, but, at the same time, inform them of opportunities for free lead-blood screening and indoor lead remediation. To do this, three MELC members—EPA, Neighbors United for Progress, and the Community Development Block Grant Operation—formed a three-person team that traveled door-to-door in the affected neighborhoods. The team focused on: 1) educating residents about i) the threats of indoor and outdoor lead contamination, ii) opportunities for blood-lead screening, iii) opportunities for indoor lead remediation; and iv) opportunities for outdoor lead remediation; and 2) helping residents fill-out the appropriate forms to access these services. According to one of the partners closely involved in this effort, this multi-pronged team-approach was much more efficient than traditional practices and much more mindful of residents' time.<sup>156</sup>

Since October 2001, the MELC processes have changed considerably. For example the coordinating and facilitating responsibilities, once mainly assumed by EPA's regional office in Chicago, are now provided locally.<sup>†</sup> St. Mary's Hospital of East St. Louis began providing coordination and communication responsibilities while meeting many of the facilitation needs. The hospital's department of Environmental Health & Community Action works closely with other members of the collaborative to develop meeting agendas and to move forward with collaborative-identified projects and goals. Members of the collaborative have widened their leadership efforts by serving on local and regional boards and committees to further coordination efforts, including increased partnership with the St. Louis Lead Prevention Coalition, a non-profit regional agency working to end childhood lead poisoning in the metro region. Increased participation by MELC agencies in MELC leadership, as well as regional leadership, has increased ownership over the collaborative process and also decreases the MELC's overall dependence on EPA for coordination.<sup>157</sup> While many residents of the East St. Louis area are not directly participating in the MELC meetings, the empowerment of the community groups and service providers representing them in the collaborative helps to increase the sustainability of the MELC.

In addition, MELC members agreed to begin rotating the MELC meeting place every four months during which a different organization with the collaborative assumed increased responsibilities. However after recognizing that rotating meeting places hurt attendance levels, the MELC returned to holding its meetings once again at St. Mary's Hospital with coordination provided by the hospital.

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<sup>†</sup> The EPA official involved in the early coordination of the MELC was Noemi Emeric. She has since taken a position with the City of Los Angeles and can be contacted at 213-978-0863. To learn more about the on-going work of the MELC contact 618-482-7080 or see the MELC website at: [www.metroeastcollaborative.com/](http://www.metroeastcollaborative.com/).

This case study explores background material and interviewee's responses to selected questions from early October 2001. Therefore the goals, activities, and findings of this case study describe the MELC before it underwent the transformation described above.

### *Collaborative Goals*

The MELC's overall goal was to improve children's health in the affected areas by coordinating existing locally-based efforts to address lead. By sharing information and limited resources, the MELC expected to reduce the redundancy of the lead-related activities already underway in the East St. Louis area. Specific benefits of MELC's coordination efforts were to include:

- Assessment of uncontrolled lead releases to surface soils in residential yards, schoolyards and parks;
- Lead-based paint hazard assessment and remediation throughout the county;
- Housing rehabilitation and the removal of lead from abandoned lots;
- Blood lead screening of children and pregnant mothers; and
- Medical care referrals for cases of high lead blood content.<sup>158</sup>

### *Collaborative Activities*

At the time of the interviews the MELC's main activities centered on securing funding, lead testing, cleanup and outreach. The MELC effectively organized and tapped into the many resources provided by the individual partners. The MELC had secured over \$3,250,000 from the Army Corps of Engineers, the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA), the U.S. Housing and Urban Development Agency (HUD), U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) Natural Resources Conservation Service, the Illinois Environmental Protection Agency, the St. Clair County Intergovernmental Grants Department, and East St. Louis Community Development Block Grant Office<sup>159</sup> for the effort. MELC applied these resources to implement different projects that facilitated the achievement of their goals.

Once necessary resources were secured, partner members fully sampled and mapped the affected communities to identify lead-contaminated homes and industrial sites, and later began to identify high-risk groups in the area. By early October 2001, five homes were completely remediated and 75 were identified and waiting to be completed. Five industrial sites were in the process of being cleaned, and twenty others were identified. Approximately 25 percent of the children under age six in St. Clair County were tested for high blood lead levels and St. Mary's Hospital and other partners continue to test the community children's blood lead levels. After children with high blood lead levels are identified their names are given to the County. The County then passes these high blood lead level notifications, and subsequent identification of possible property remediation sites, to MELC partners responsible for site remediation. The MELC then sends an MELC representative to personally notify the families whose children have high blood lead levels and assist them with home remediation applications. Following these actions site cleanup begins.

The MELC is also actively implementing an outreach campaign in order to (1) educate residents of the dangers of lead poisoning, (2) inform residents of the existence of the MELC, and (3) describe how the MELC can help residents solve their lead-related health risks. To assist with its campaign, the MELC employs the media and regularly releases press kits. Part of this effort resulted in a news special that reported the dangers of lead poisoning in the East St. Louis area, which aired on KPLR WB 11 in St. Louis. The MELC also distributes brochures

and flyers to local church leaders and community members describing why lead is a problem, who is affected most by lead, the symptoms of lead poisoning, where children can be tested, how the doctor checks for lead, what parents can do to protect their children from lead poisoning, and where lead is found around the house. Similarly, MELC partners have also handed out “Lead Folders” which contain magnets and bookmarks with information that children can share with their parents. Moreover, MELC partners have written articles, describing lead health-risks and MELC support services, that have been featured in community newsletters including the St. Mary’s “Neighborhood Care”, “Lead A Special Edition”, and the “Community Environmental Resource Program newsletter”.

In addition, the MELC hosts community meetings in order to disperse information about lead poisoning. For example, the MELC held two meetings in the Jackie Joyner Kersee Youth Center in East St Louis. Although attendance by local residents was low, those who did participate received free blood lead screenings and school supplies for their children ages zero to 14 years. MELC partners also provided updates on MELC activities including the ongoing lead soil sampling investigation, the lead paint and housing rehabilitation initiative, and the blood lead screening and education campaign. Finally, the MELC also trains local residents to act as community facilitators and share information about the dangers of lead to their neighbors.

The following sections primarily describe interviewees’ responses to questions gathered from interviews conducted by EPA’s Office of Policy, Economics, and Innovation during the week of October 1, 2001. The sections focus on interviewees’ impressions regarding measuring collaborative success, collaborative successes and challenges, recommendations for improving the collaborative, overall value of the collaborative, and the value of federal involvement in the collaborative.

### *Measuring Collaborative Success*

The MELC has not developed an evaluation and monitoring framework to track implementation of activities and measure. Nevertheless, the interviewees did have several suggestions regarding this topic. Six out of the ten mentioned the importance of being able to gather quantifiable data to measure success. These interviewees suggested counting the actual number of contaminated sites cleaned up, homes made safe from lead paint, and children tested and treated for lead poisoning. Along these lines, one interviewee added that the MELC should work to have 125 homes cleaned of lead paint by the end of December 2002. Two interviewees suggested conducting a comparative study that would quantify the number of children with decreasing blood lead levels after the implementation of lead removal actions. Similarly another interviewee mentioned conducting a comparative analysis of blood lead levels in children of this generation with those of the next. In terms of what would actually constitute success, more broadly, one interviewee mentioned that overall reduction of lead contamination in East St. Louis would be one measure. Other interviewees suggested measures including improved capacity of the community to address lead contamination issues, visible changes in the local environment, housing redevelopment, the inflow of money and people back into the community, and the development of additional green spaces.

### *Collaborative Successes*

The majority of interviewees were satisfied with the role they played in the development of the MELC and their ability to participate within the partnership. In addition, all of the interviewees thought the issues most important to their organizations were being adequately addressed. One community interviewee specifically mentioned being pleased to see an emphasis on community capacity building demonstrated through local environmental job



training in cleanup techniques for the community. Along these lines, an agency representative stated that the MELC was doing a good job coordinating its efforts, citing as an example St. Mary's Hospital's willingness to refocus on some of EPA's goals.

When asked about the outcomes, or results, of the partner activities for addressing the main issues of the affected community, few common themes emerged.<sup>‡</sup> Two remarked that the partnership is not yet mature enough to have the intended impact on the community. Two other interviewees noted that the partnership has resulted in the injection of additional resources into the affected areas. Two additional interviewees remarked that the partnership has resulted in the communication to residents about environmental and public health risks. Related to public education, another interviewee explained that because of the collaborative, agencies are developing a better understanding of the issues facing the affected community. Another interviewee explained that the collaborative has resulted in the cleanup of five homes with 75 more to go. Finally, one interviewee stated that, "The cleanup is having a major impact...The realtors are aware...that we are testing with St. Mary's."

When asked if they were satisfied with the outcomes of their activities so far four of the ten interviewees that answered the question said unequivocally yes. Five interviewees were somewhat satisfied with the current outcomes. They clarified by stating that: (1) they were afraid that the activities could not be sustained by the community organizations if other partners did not continue to participate; (2) the activities were not being performed fast enough; and (3) there is always more to be done. Finally, one interviewee thought it was too early to comment since "he/she did not know what the outcomes were yet."

The interviewees did not express a consensus about the "greatest success" of the MELC and several responses focused on different qualities of the MELC. Five out of ten interviewees agreed that the MELC's greatest success was its ability to join diverse groups together and provide a forum where these organizations could effectively discuss what resources and expertise each could provide. They added that this information exchange reduced duplication of efforts. Further, by better understanding what each organization could provide, the organizations were able to more effectively identify contaminated sites and children at risk from lead poisoning and more quickly initiate lead remediation activities. Two interviewees also mentioned the procurement, organization, and assignment of funds within the collaboration as a major success. On a related note, one interviewee commented how impressive it was that the MELC had been able to accomplish so much without one major argument, especially given the diverse organizations participating. Another commented that one of the important achievements of the MELC has been its "staying power," adding that the MELC is not only surviving but actually gaining momentum.

Other successes of the collaborative mentioned by two interviewees included the assessment of soil contamination and the identification of contaminated sites/houses. More specifically two community interviewees mentioned the identification of twenty contaminated sites and the subsequent cleanup of five as the project's greatest success. One further explained that EPA's follow-through on this remediation work was a major success. Two interviewees commented that even though the community residents were not empowered as individuals, the community organizations involved in the collaboration were, which to them was seen as a success. Other successes mentioned included fostering of community pride, and the designation of the MELC as an Interagency Environmental Justice Demonstration Project.

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<sup>‡</sup> During the interview process, interviewees were asked questions about both the outcomes of partner activities, and the impact of activities for the affected communities. From the responses, it was clear that most interviewees viewed the partnership activities in terms of outcomes, not impact. Therefore, the term outcome is used throughout this discussion.

## *Collaborative Challenges*

Interviewees gave many different answers when asked about the greatest challenge facing the MELC. Although several viewed the level of coordination within the MELC as a success, six of the ten interviewees also mentioned continued coordination and cooperation as the most significant difficulty. Interviewees added that trust issues proved a major barrier to working together. For instance, three mentioned that individual organizations were reluctant to share their information, knowledge, and expertise with other partners. They went on to say that this was being addressed by focusing on effective communication between partners as well as through the increased understanding of the roles each partner played within the MELC. Another barrier to collaborative effectiveness was voiced by three interviewees and centered on difficulties in ensuring organizational involvement, keeping the MELC focused, and maintaining momentum for MELC's efforts. They said this might be due to a lack of coordination. Many interviewees suggested that the MELC hire or assign an individual/organization to fill the role of coordinator. These interviewees, however, clarified their remarks noting that too much dependence on a coordinator may undermine the sustainability of the MELC, especially if the coordinator were to leave.\*

Seven interviewees suggested that other main challenges were the (1) inability to generate community awareness of the existence of the MELC or the dangers of lead poisoning, and the (2) inability to gather local support for MELC sponsored activities. Interviewees stated that the MELC has employed an extensive outreach campaign, however, several factors have limited the MELC's ability to work with the community. Two interviewees suggested that the reason residents were so hesitant to take part in the project were trust issues with the government and one interviewee thought the residents actually perceived the MELC as the "government" rather than a collaborative including local non-government organizations. The two interviewees added that the MELC could not build community support because the MELC did not truly understand the community and therefore could not communicate effectively with community residents. For example, one interviewee cited HUD's challenging application process for home redevelopment, which inhibited parents from applying even when they were fully aware their children had high blood lead levels. According to that interviewee, in order to overcome this problem the MELC has its members personally accompany notices informing parents that their children are poisoned. The MELC representative then directly assists the residents in filling out the home redevelopment applications.

The final challenge to progress mentioned was regulatory barriers. Two interviewees stated that none of the federal agencies involved in the partnership are able to use their money for demolition. It was further stated that this poses a real problem in East St. Louis, since derelict structures are one of the major hazards in the area.

### *Interviewee's Recommendations for Improving the Partnership*

Interviewees responded with many suggestions when asked how to improve the MELC in the future. Six interviewees mentioned that increasing the number and diversity of the participants would be beneficial. Four interviewees stated that a greater number of federal participants could increase both the MELC's scope and effectiveness. Two other interviewees mentioned the need for greater partner diversity within the MELC expressed through increased

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\* It is worth mentioning that the MELC has addressed many of these challenges through reorganizing the partnership process. According to one MELC member rotating the lead coordinator role has increased the level of individual partner participation, fostered information sharing, and improved the overall momentum of the project.

participation from local political leaders and businesses. They indicated that local government (the Mayor) should be represented in order to increase trust between the MELC and community residents. The interviewees also stated that the MELC would benefit if it took greater strides to include and educate landowners and landlords of the MELC's work. The interviewees thought this might greatly facilitate housing remediation.

Three interviewees stated the MELC could benefit most from an increase in funding. Another interviewee commented that every entity within the partnership should help secure funding. Three interviewees expressed that additional time spent discussing each partner's role and the resources they could provide would be most helpful. For example, one interviewee said every member of the partnership should have a working knowledge of every other organization in the partnership, and be able to refer questions to appropriate individuals. Along these lines, one interviewee mentioned that the roles of the participants be better defined within the collaboration in order to better coordinate the MELC's activities in the community. Further, two interviewees mentioned that a coordinator/secretary should be used to pull the group together and help keep it focused. Interviewees suggested that a community facilitator be used, someone who was well known in the community to act as a liaison. One interviewee mentioned a team building retreat in order to build trust.

#### *Interviewee's Recommendations for Other Communities*

Eight of the ten interviewees offered suggestions for other communities interested in using collaborative partnerships to address environmental justice issues. Six stressed the importance of having the partnership be locally led. These interviewees stressed that community organizations should lead locally based partnerships since they are closest to the community and its problems, and would, therefore, more easily gain the trust of local residents. Three interviewees emphasized that local partnerships need an array of partners including representatives from community organizations as well as federal, state, and local agencies. They implied that this would not only increase the amount of resources available to a collaborative but also allow for more procedural flexibility for using those resources. Along these lines, two interviewees stated that collaborative partnerships should work to ensure that "the right people" get involved, particularly partners with a common mission who can easily join services and organize resources. Another interviewee recommended that partnerships work to define roles of the collaborative members and ensure that the lines of communication between partners stay open. In addition, one interviewee suggested that the goal of collaborative partnerships should be to empower local residents to help themselves.

#### *Value of the Collaborative Partnership*

Interviewees gave a variety of answers when asked about the value of the collaborative process. Nine out of the ten interviewees stated that the issues facing the East St. Louis community would not have been addressed to the same extent, if at all, had the MELC not been formed. However, one interviewee did comment that it "was hard to say since EPA [and many of the other organizations in the MELC] had been working in the area for a long time." This interviewee acknowledged that many organizations had been working in the area before the formation of the collaborative, and suggested that it is impossible to know how much these organizations would have accomplished separately.

Five interviewees stated that the collaborative process was most useful in stopping redundancy of services. This was accomplished by opening the lines of communication between MELC members, which allowed them to learn what other partners were doing in the community and organize their resources and actions accordingly. For example, one interviewee

commented that, “Everyone is doing their own little piece of the pie,” rather than trying to tackle this large and complex problem on their own. Two stated that the collaborative process increased individual partners’ capacity to work together. They went on to say that the collaborative process has enabled organizations within the MELC to develop a much better understanding of what it means to work together. The lines of communication have been opened and the organizations are more likely to work together in the future. Two interviewees also stressed that the collaborative process resulted in a more effective outreach campaign focused on educating residents on the dangers of lead poisoning and opportunities for assistance. However, one interviewee did criticize the process the MELC was following. The individual thought that this process was too slow thereby allowing gaps to form while services were being delivered, citing as an example, the two-month delay between child lead testing and the follow-up calls to the families.

Along these lines, interviewees were asked if the MELC could be used to address similar issues that the East St. Louis community may face in the future. Six out of eight interviewees were very confident that the model could be used for future issues. Three mentioned that organizations within the partnership were already thinking about how the model could be implemented to combat asthma. One interviewee stated that the MELC model has already been used as a basis framework for a similar collaboration in the nearby community of Washington Park. Two interviewees, however, were skeptical. One was unsure if the residents even knew the MELC existed, and the other did not think that the community had the resources to further address the lead issues without continued federal intervention.

Finally, interviewees were asked if the organizational styles and procedures of different partners were barriers in the collaborative process. No interviewee felt that the different organizational styles limited the performance of the MELC. Several, in fact, remarked how the MELC used the differences of the organizations to its advantage. For example, one noted that during MELC’s initial stages, participating organizations were given particular tasks that fit within each organization’s mission to help carry out and fulfill the collaborative goals. In addition, seven out of the ten interviewees remarked that the nature of a collaborative process is to overcome procedural restrictions. For instance, since EPA did not have the jurisdiction to test the blood lead levels of children, two other partners took action. St. Clair County obtained a necessary grant and St. Mary’s Hospital had staff conduct the actual testing. EPA can now use the results of the tests to direct additional federal attention on contaminated sites for cleanup in East St. Louis.

#### *Value of the Federal Involvement in the Partnership*

Six of the eight interviewees who answered had positive things to say about federal involvement in the MELC. Two non-federal interviewees went so far as to say that the MELC would not have existed without the federal partners and, subsequently, the problems would not have been addressed. Four interviewees stated that the agencies contributed funds and expertise to the MELC. They also said that the federal agency representatives maintained open lines of communication, were easily accessible, answered questions, and provided advice to the other MELC members. Two said, the federal agencies helped foster a more holistic approach to problem solving in this community. Two interviewees mentioned that federal involvement brought attention to the affected communities and gave the project needed credibility.

When asked what the federal agencies gained by participating in the MELC six out of seven interviewees stated that the federal agencies now have greater community awareness. They added that the federal agencies are now better able to assess the capabilities of the communities they are working with. One community interviewee mentioned that “we have

opened their eyes and they can see our handicaps.” Interviewees representing community partners mentioned that the agencies have gained an increased sensitivity to peoples’ needs and are aware that they have to customize the information and solutions they supply to the communities they are dealing with. The federal agencies have learned how to listen to the communities they are trying to help. Moreover, they are better equipped to work with the communities rather than “tell the local representatives what to do.” For instance, according to one interviewee in East St. Louis the agencies have learned that mass mailings do not work, and a television/radio outreach approach is best in that community. Another interviewee commented that the federal agencies have learned how to “network” with one another and will be better able to work together in the future.

When asked whether federal agencies have been able to better coordinate their activities as a result of their involvement in the MELC, interviewees responded positively. All the interviewees stated that the federal agencies have been better able to coordinate their activities as a result of the collaborative process. The agency representatives said that they are coordinating better between themselves, and one even saw improvement in his/her relationships with state agencies participating with him/her on other projects. Many interviewees expressed that the agencies are sharing information and “thinking outside the box.” One interviewee mentioned that the agencies are coordinating to innovatively use funds and other resources on the project. However, two interviewees did say that despite these gains the agencies could do better. Specifically, they could do a better job of sharing information, pooling ideas, and defining their roles within the MELC.

Interviewees were also asked what federal agencies could do in order to better participate within community-based collaboratives. Two out of the seven interviewees that answered this question stressed the importance that federal agencies ensure participation of local federal agency representatives. In this case the EPA representative was stationed in Chicago, and many of the other federal representatives had their offices well out of the East St. Louis area. One interviewee stated that it is very important to have a community-based person participating with the federal agencies, one that can act as a liaison between the collaborative and the community. The interviewee made this suggestion in reference to the trust issues between the community and the “government.” This interviewee believes that the residents equate the MELC with the “government.” Two interviewees stated that the federal agencies should better recognize their responsibility to provide funding. One added that the agencies should better advertise the grants that are available to combat the problems facing the target community. However, two interviewees stated that it is important for the federal agencies to be “more hands on,” and that agencies should participate in collaboratives not only with money, but also with a willingness to share information and planning responsibilities. An interviewee said it is important for federal agencies to work to find a collaborative model that works for the affected community. Another stated that time should be spent identifying the problems and the resources available to combat those problems.

### *Key Findings*

- The collaborative approach used by the MELC has enabled its member organizations to reduce duplication and improve efficiency of key activities. For instance, the coordination of blood lead level testing, site/house remediation, and community outreach programs in East St. Louis and the surrounding region. Without the collaborative process it is unlikely that the problems facing the affected community would have been addressed as efficiently or effectively.

- The members of the MELC regarded the collaboration as a success. However, interviewees did see a possibility for improved local participation. Interviewees suggested that agency representatives should have local offices in the region and that the MELC should have local membership including local political leaders. The interviewees said that a collaborative would achieve its goals most efficiently when it is locally lead.
- A major challenge faced by the MELC was a lack of trust between partner members for each other. In order to increase trust between members it was suggested that every partner should have a working knowledge of every other partner.
- The MELC has also had difficulties effectively communicating with local residents about its programs. To overcome this the MELC has focused on improving its understanding of local residents and modified its outreach campaigns accordingly.
- Although the MELC has made significant strides to reduce risks from lead, a substantial number of interviewees feel that the MELC would be even more effective if the partner organizations' roles were better defined and/or a full time coordinator was hired. Since October 2001 the MELC has modified its procedures and better defined partner roles. This action may have addressed the concerns voiced by the interviewees.

#### *Afterword*

According to a facilitating member of the collaborative who has been involved in MELC coordination since the summer of 2001, the collaborative continues to meet every two months in general meetings, and as frequently as two times a month in committee meetings to move special projects and goals forward. Development of educational materials and programming, a community health educator program that trains community residents, development of MELC promotional materials, and the obtainment of additional resources represent just a few of the MELC's more recent efforts. In addition, an informal MELC leadership team working to provide strategic recommendations for the general collaborative's review and approval has emerged over the course of the past six months.

Additionally, the MELC has taken a great deal of regional leadership and helped to design a regional campaign, Lead-Free 2003, which included production of a calendar funded through combined partner efforts that showcases children's artwork promoting lead-safe messages. Additionally, the MELC began a federal letter campaign in March 2002, which eventually culminated in a regional event bringing regional partners together with ten high level federal officials visiting from six agencies. Participants spent the day touring the area, learning about current local capacity to address lead poisoning, and discussing strategies to increase this capacity. Based on feedback received through this process, MELC members began developing a five-year strategic plan. The strategic plan will be available on the collaborative's web site ([www.metroeastcollaborative.com](http://www.metroeastcollaborative.com)) and in print by March 2003. In addition, a MELC documentary highlighting the collaborative process produced by Illinois EPA will be available by April 2003.

While there have been changes in membership and individual leadership, the MELC remains mission-driven, coordinated, and committed to improving the health and well-being of children and their families in the Metro East.<sup>160</sup>

## 6 New Madrid Tri-Community Partnership

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*For community there was a self-consciousness. They wanted to see a change. There was a focus on making sure change occurred.*

*My mayor—he asked me and several people [to participate in the Partnership]. He told me...you go to this and represent [our community]. I participated as a community team person and facilitator.*

*I've been in the agency for 24 years. That may have been the best collaborative effort I have seen. Everyone involved took a piece of the project. Team effort all the way.*

*As far as going in there to do what the resource plan called us to do - yes. There is always more that can be done to help the community.*

— Interviewees, New Madrid Partnership

### *Community History\**

Howardville, Lilbourn, and North Lilbourn are three small rural communities grouped closely together in the Bootheel region of Missouri, approximately 175 miles south of St. Louis and less than five miles from the Mississippi River. Howardville and North Lilbourn are both nearly 100 percent African American, while Lilbourn is roughly 60 percent Caucasian and 40 percent African American. Surrounded mainly by privately held farmlands, a majority of the local residents are employed by the nearby farms, agricultural businesses,<sup>161</sup> and industries in the region. Neither Howardville, Lilbourn, nor North Lilbourn, however, have a sustainable economic base and a majority of residents live in poverty and reside in substandard housing.<sup>162</sup>

Up until the late 19<sup>th</sup> century, much of Southeast Missouri was covered by water. In the 1890s, however, efforts were made to drain some of the area in order to provide additional land for settlements and farming. Lilbourn, located just north of Howardville and just south of North Lilbourn, was built up around a railroad junction in this region starting at the turn of the century.<sup>163</sup> Today it is the largest of the three communities with a population of just over 2,000. Howardville and North Lilbourn were first established in the late 1930s when the Farmers' Security Administration built housing for sharecroppers<sup>164</sup> displaced by increased reliance on farming machinery.<sup>165</sup> In the following decades, Howardville and North Lilbourn, along with Lilbourn, were beset with unemployment problems and a continued "socio-economic demise" resulting from the region's transformation to machinery-based agriculture. Without a thriving economic base, "[d]ilapidated houses, debris, and vacant lots gradually emerged as residents could not afford household repairs or to rebuild homes that burned down." Although the communities had some success in securing basic services, residents are faced with several environmental hazards, in part due to lack of funding to support local infrastructure and maintain

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\* Interviews for this case study were conducted during the weeks of September 24 and October 1, 2001. Nine separate interviews were conducted and a total of thirteen persons participated. Interviewees included community members, representatives of local and regional organizations, and representatives of federal agencies.

housing. Threats include “lead, radon, and carbon monoxide exposure resulting from substandard housing, inadequate water and wastewater treatment, water contamination by pesticides and fertilizers; and presence of potential disease vectors such as mosquitoes, roaches, and rats.”<sup>166</sup> Residents have also expressed concern about use of a defoliant in nearby cotton fields that residents claim contributes to outbreaks of asthma.

Despite common challenges and a willingness shown by community residents to work to improve their living situations, the three communities have not always worked well together. In the 1960s, Lilbourn, historically the most diverse and prosperous of the three communities, secured a safe drinking water supply. In 1965, North Lilbourn installed a connection to Lilbourn’s drinking water supply. The financial arrangement between the two, however, proved satisfactory to no one, and for many years following, arguments between the two communities centered on how much North Lilbourn should be charged for water use. The debate climaxed in 1995 and, after three years of assistance from a team of lawyers from the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency’s regional office in Kansas City, an acceptable water use agreement between the two communities was finally reached.

Around this time, the three communities showed a willingness to work together to address some common difficulties after North Lilbourn initially sought help on its own. This cooperative effort had its origins in 1995 when the North Lilbourn community, frustrated by the continued economic and environmental problems facing its community, sent a letter directly to the Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS), an agency within the U.S. Department of Agriculture, asking for help. NRCS officials based in Missouri responded by holding meetings and conducting walking tours in the community. After observing North Lilbourn’s severe living conditions<sup>167</sup>, NRCS began working with the community residents to identify and prioritize community needs. During this time, recognizing the benefits of working together to address common problems, Howardville and Lilbourn sought to join the partnership with NRCS and North Lilbourn.<sup>168</sup> All the communities and NRCS agreed to this and subsequently formed the New Madrid Tri-Community Team.

### Partnership Background

After the partners concluded their community assessments in 1997, the Tri-Community Team and NRCS requested community development assistance from numerous federal, state, and local entities. In August 1997, NRCS hosted a large meeting in North Lilbourn with representatives from approximately thirty different organizations. Among the players that emerged as key partners, in addition to NRCS and the Tri-Community Team, were EPA’s regional office and a regional planning organization referred to as the Great Rivers Alliance Natural Resource Districts (GRAND). Together, EPA, NRCS, and GRAND<sup>†</sup> formed an interagency agreement that defined how these organizations would work together to best

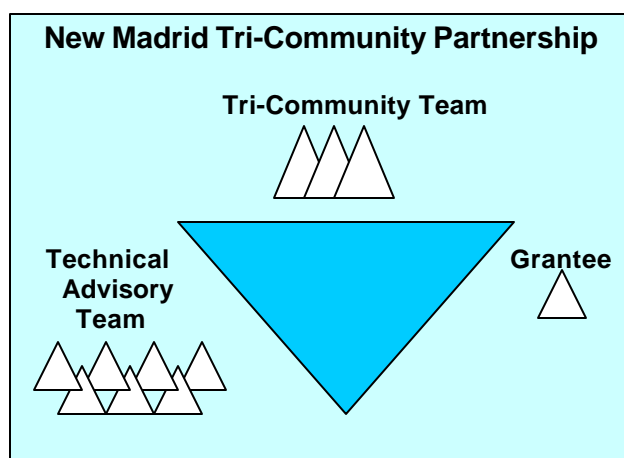


Figure 20. EPA Representation of New Madrid Tri-Community Organizational Structure

<sup>†</sup> GRAND is based in St. Louis and is closely affiliated with the Natural Resources Conservation Service. Formed in 1994, GRAND’s overall mission is to coordinate soil and water districts in Illinois and Missouri.



meet the needs of the New Madrid communities.

Following the formation of the original partnership, EPA's new Child Health Champion Campaign was launched in 1997, to place added emphasis on protecting children's health. In 1998, EPA selected the Tri-Community for a Child Health Champion national pilot project. Following its selection, the Tri-Community Partnership organized to ensure that the overarching objectives of the Children's Health Initiative would be met. The modified partnership organizational structure included the Community Team, made up of the mayors plus three mayor-appointed residents from each community; a Technical Advisory Team, represented by government and community service organizations; and a coordinating organization led by GRAND, responsible for the distribution of project funding made available by EPA's Office of Children's Health and overall project coordination.<sup>169</sup> Major partners included representatives from Howardville, Lilbourn, and North Lilbourn,<sup>170</sup> GRAND, NRCS, EPA, the Bootheel Lead Nurses Association, the Delta Area Economic Development Corporation, Headstart<sup>‡</sup>, and the Lincoln University Cooperative Extension.<sup>171</sup> Together, these organizations agreed to a mission statement provided below that outlines their overall vision.

**Mission Statement of the New Madrid Partnership  
as stated in New Madrid Child Health Champion Action Plan**

Our Mission is to create self-sustaining communities by building trust, communication and collaboration within communities of Howardville, Lilbourn, and North Lilbourn. We will prioritize and resolve various environmental challenges and improve the environment in our homes and communities to protect our children from these environmental hazards.

Child Health Champion projects were asked to identify children's environmental health hazards; set community-specific goals; and then develop action plans to eliminate risks to children.<sup>172</sup> EPA provided \$35,000 the first year of the project for baseline planning and assessment, and then another \$100,000 for implementation of project goals. Most of the money was used to fund a part-time local coordinator residing in the area, community facilitators, and the purchase of materials to help address the priority health risks. EPA was also expected to provide technical assistance to communities as needed. However, the process for determining baseline information, setting goals, and developing the action plan was to be initiated and led by the Community Team.<sup>173</sup>

Although several priority areas were identified in the initial Tri-Community needs assessments, EPA requirements for the Child Health Champion projects encouraged the partners to narrow their focus to a handful of priority items. The core initiatives taking place in New Madrid came to center on the goals developed for the Child Health Champion project. However, other initiatives have taken or continue to take place in the Tri-Community area that, although related, are not necessarily identified as core partnership activities. These include a local recycling project, an energy conservation and home weatherization project, a farmers' cooperative, and a Federal Transit Authority Jobs Access Project.<sup>174</sup> These efforts have received support from NRCS and EPA, but unlike with the Child Health project, EPA and NRCS

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<sup>‡</sup> The Tri-Communities Head Start program is operated by a not-for-profit organization in Howardville. Head Start and Early Head Start are comprehensive programs focused on young children, pregnant women, and their families. The Head Start program is administered by the Department of Health and Human Services (HHS). HHS makes grants available to local public health agencies, private organizations, Indian Tribes and school systems in order to operate Head Start programs at the community level (September 5, 2001 <http://www2.acf.dhhs.gov/programs/hsb/about/index.htm>).

were not necessarily acting in concert in support of these activities. For clarity, this case study will primarily focus on the work conducted by the three communities through the Child Health Champion project.

### *Partnership Goals and Process*

Starting in the summer of 1998, with the Community Team in the lead, partnership members worked together to assemble baseline data on environmental and human health risks and began identifying risk priorities. The first meeting took place in June and was facilitated by an EPA field representative based in St. Louis. The Community Team, including representatives from each of the three communities, attended along with the project manager representing GRAND, and technical advisors representing NRCS, EPA and other organizations. EPA representatives started the meeting by explaining the details of the project. EPA then suggested a potential plan for selecting priority risks. After some discussion, the participants unanimously agreed to a risk prioritization process. Participants decided that EPA would conduct a science-based data collection on priority environmental and health risks, community representatives would talk with their respective communities about what they view as priority risks, a member of the local health department would discuss priority risks with other health department colleagues, and a local Head Start representative would assess priority health risks from an education perspective.<sup>175</sup> The partnership then held meetings every two weeks through December 1998 giving experts, technical advisors, and local residents the opportunity to provide different perspectives on the many environmental threats facing the Tri-Communities.

Once these were complete, the Community Team and the Technical Advisory Team members selected the priority health risks. To do this, the EPA facilitator started by listing all risks identified by the different researchers as priority health risks. The facilitator then grouped risks that demonstrated related cause-and-effect patterns in order to ensure that a greater number of health risks could be addressed. Debate about the priority risks included comments from both the technical advisors as well as community representatives. However, after the grouping exercise, participants had little difficulty choosing the top three risk areas,<sup>176</sup> which included: childhood lead poisoning, asthma and allergies, and water contaminants.

Lead exposure was selected as a priority issue since several homes in the Tri-Community area were built before the use of lead paint in homes was outlawed. Asthma and allergies were primarily chosen as a priority area since most childhood illnesses in the area requiring treatment or hospitalization are due to some form of asthma or allergy. Finally, the issue of water contaminants was selected as a priority area since residents had long voiced concerns regarding both their drinking water and stagnant water in the area. Specifically, the Community Team pointed to stagnant water as a common risk that can contribute to several public health problems. The Team recognized drinking water as a potential risk since the local water treatment facility lacked a quality control process to review effectiveness of drinking water treatment techniques.<sup>177</sup>

Following the identification of the priority areas, the Community Team and the Technical Advisory Team began operating on two tracks. The Advisory Team took the role in researching potential activities that could be carried out locally to help address the priority environmental health risks. Advisory Team representatives would then meet each week to discuss what each was learning. Then, they would participate in bi-weekly meetings held by the Community Team to discuss promising activities and obtain input from the Community Team representatives. After a series of meetings, the Community Team selected a set of actions to help address each priority risk. Following this, the EPA facilitator and representatives of the Community Team together crafted an action plan that described how the risk areas would be addressed.<sup>178</sup>

For the most part, the joint meetings of the Technical Advisory Team and the Community Team to help identify Action Plan activities worked well.<sup>179</sup> Possible reasons why the Technical Advisory Group and the Community Team worked effectively together include: a strong desire by all parties to improve health conditions in the Tri-Communities, strong management support within each of the participating organizations, key logistical support and timelines put forth by the Office of Children’s Health, effective facilitation at the Child Health Champion meetings, strong overall project management by GRAND, and the solid foundation of local collaboration that started in 1997.

However, according to an EPA official, tension did arise between EPA and NRCS officials regarding how the joint meetings between the Technical Advisory Team and the Community Team should be run. EPA had continued to use the same EPA representative who facilitated the initial Child Health Champion meetings on priority health risks. NRCS officials, however, balked at this approach explaining that in order to strengthen the capacity of the communities, EPA should play the role of coach, instead of leader, and that EPA should train and call upon local residents to lead the meetings. If not, NRCS argued, the community would become too dependent upon EPA assistance. As it happened, at a few meetings, the regular EPA facilitator could not attend, and the community participants indicated they did not want to move forward without her. Although recognizing the validity of NRCS’ concerns, EPA still felt compelled to help drive the process of identifying action items forward. EPA was concerned that if it turned the process of reaching consensus on action items completely over to the Community Team, the Community Team would not be able to meet the deadlines set down by EPA’s Office of Children’s Health. To resolve the issue, EPA began facilitating these meetings in tandem with a community representative.<sup>180</sup>

The action plan was completed in 1999,<sup>181</sup> and approved for implementation by EPA’s Office of Children’s Health in January 2000.<sup>182</sup> Following this, a kick-off celebration was held in New Madrid that included high-ranking officials from EPA’s Office of Children’s Health, EPA’s deputy regional administrator based in Kansas City, and Congressional as well as state representatives. The action plan described the priority health risk areas along with goals, objectives, and activities, which together, were expected to result in reduced risk from the environmental threats. The overall approach used to address risks outlined in the Action Plan included a combination of education, capacity building and proactive measures.<sup>183</sup> First, trained community members as well as technical experts were to educate community members on the three priority risk areas through a series of risk-specific mini-workshops, door-to-door visits to high-risk families, and a major health fair. Second, capacity building was to be done by training community members as peer facilitators in each of the three priority risk areas so they could help lead the mini-workshops and door-to-door visits in the community. Finally, actions were to be taken to immediately address existing problems, including planting trees and shrubbery to reduce blowing dust in the area and reduce risks from allergies, providing in-home sampling kits to test drinking water for insecticides, and improving stormwater drainage. A sample from the action plan describing goals, objectives, and activities for reducing the threat from lead poisoning is included below:



Figure 21. EPA Representation of New Madrid Partnership Approach

<b>Tri-Community Team's Efforts to Reduce Children's Exposure to Lead</b>	
<b>Community Goals</b>	
Assure that 40% of all families in the Tri-Community has knowledge of the threat of lead poisoning at no cost to the families	
Provide necessary, time, place, and personnel to screen/test children in the Tri-Community for lead poisoning at no cost to the families	
Facilitate community capacity building for a more informed decision-making process resulting in an improved quality of life	
<b>Measurable Objectives</b>	
All children in the targeted age group (6 mos. –72 mos.) in the three communities will be screened/tested in the next 12 months for lead poisoning at no cost to the families.	
<b>Activities</b>	
Health Fair	
Lead Specific Training Workshops	

Figure 22. *New Madrid County Tri-Community Partnership Action Plan Excerpt Describing Community Goals, Measurable Objectives, and Activities*

### *Partnership Activities*

Following action plan approval, the next step in the process was to train representatives from the community on the three priority health risks areas so that they could conduct educational sessions with other community residents. At first, the Community Team planned to ask community residents to participate as the facilitators. However, Community Team members ultimately decided that they themselves could undertake the facilitation efforts.<sup>184</sup> Community Team meetings then were used as opportunities to train members as facilitators and to make plans for the different educational sessions that would be provided.<sup>185</sup> Community facilitators had to undergo training over period of 40-50 hours for each specific risk or until they showed mastery of the material.<sup>186</sup> They also had to undergo a pre- and post-test to assess their learning.<sup>187</sup> Community facilitators received a small stipend both for the training they received and the educational workshops they performed.<sup>188</sup>

Different technical experts, provided training to community facilitators on the priority risks and how to address them. In a train-the-trainer workshop on asthma and allergies, for example, trainers taught community facilitators how to recognize asthma and allergy attacks, advise children and parents on the use of inhalers, and how to recognize an asthma attack. They also trained them on the various risk-specific pamphlets, booklets, and videos that could be used to help educate community members.<sup>189</sup> According to a Child Health Champion evaluation, community facilitators learned most of the information about the priority health risks by studying information from EPA or other sources on their own.<sup>190</sup>

Ten Community Team members received training as community facilitators and conducted most of the Child Health Champion education work.<sup>191</sup> Implementation of the primary Child Health Champion activities took place between the spring of 2000 and the fall of 2001. Community. Community facilitators conveyed information “in group and one-on-one settings during health fairs, in classrooms, and in workshops set in various community locations.”<sup>192</sup> A health fair, designed to educate families about the priority risks and provide professional services to address health care concerns related to these risks, was held in the spring of 2000. The health fair involved more than twenty local health care organizations, and provided health exhibits and demonstrations, workshops for youth on asthma and lead hazards, and elevated

blood-lead level tests for all children ages six and under who attended the fair. An EPA progress report describes the health fair as very successful, with high attendance by residents from each of the three communities.<sup>193</sup> Several mini-workshops focused on lead and asthma/allergies involving the community facilitators were also conducted and, as of October 2001, were still on going. As a result of the health fair and mini-workshops, approximately 2,000 adults and 800 children in the Tri-Community area have been educated about the priority risks.<sup>194</sup> For each training, community facilitators issue workshop participants pre-tests and post-tests to better understand the extent to which participants are enhancing their knowledge of the priority risk areas.<sup>195</sup>

As part of the Child Health Champion effort, approximately 150 trees for windbreaks have also been planted in North Lilbourn to reduce blowing dust from the surrounding agricultural fields. However, according to one partner interviewed, the trees died because of poor timing and soil conditions. Tree planting was scheduled for the other two communities for the spring of 2001, but it is unclear whether this has been completed. Remaining activities include lead and asthma home visits and activities associated with water quality. Mini-workshops focused on water quality were scheduled for the fall of 2001. In addition, local stormwater drainage ditches were cleared as part of the effort.

Furthermore, although not stated as an activity in the action plan, securing partners and funding has been an instrumental partnership activity. As of October 1, 2001, the partnership consists of fifteen partners including federal, regional, state, local and community organizations plus the direct involvement of each of the town's mayors. Although financial dollars made available from EPA's Office of Children's Health has been key in ensuring that several major activities could take place, contributions from the Community Team have served as the foundation for this effort. The Community Team assisted with soliciting community input, project coordination and the health education of the Tri-Community citizens. Also instrumental has been the work of GRAND, NRCS, and EPA. GRAND distributed project funds made available by EPA and supported a senior project advisor and part-time local coordinator. The NRCS Midwest Office committed both technical and capacity building assistance. EPA, through its regional office, also provided considerable technical and capacity building assistance in the three priority risk areas.

In addition, state, local, and academic partners played important roles. Missouri's Department of Natural Resources<sup>196</sup> and Department of Conservation<sup>197</sup> provided technical advice and resources, and Missouri's Department of Public Health provided educational information on the three priority risks. Locally, the New Madrid County Health Department, the Bootheel Nurses Association, the Howardville Headstart program provided health information, health screenings and referrals, and the Delta Area Economic Development Corporation, another local partner, helped run educational workshops.<sup>198</sup> At the university level, the Lincoln University Cooperative Extension program trained Tri-Community Team members on safe-drinking water approaches and conducted water testing; the St. Louis Institute of Technology trained Tri-Community residents on techniques for lead removal in the home; and the Lincoln University Community Development Corporation provided necessary telecommunications assistance to ensure that the training on lead could take place. Furthermore, organizations including the Southeast Missouri Health Network helped sponsor certain partnership activities.<sup>199</sup>

The following sections primarily describe interviewees' responses to questions gathered from interviews conducted by EPA's Office of Policy, Economics, and Innovation during the weeks of September 24 and October 1, 2001. The sections focus on interviewees' impressions regarding measuring partnership success, partnership success and challenges,

recommendations for improving the partnership, overall value of the partnership, and the value of federal involvement in the partnership.

### *Measuring Partnership Progress*

From the beginning of EPA's effort to sponsor a series of Child Health demonstration projects around the country, EPA's Office Children's Health (OCH) placed significant emphasis on evaluation. For its evaluation approach, OCH required that each Child Health Champion project develop a plan to monitor and evaluate progress in meeting project goals and objectives. OCH hoped that by encouraging Child Health Champion project communities to more systematically document their successes and lessons learned, EPA would build the evaluation capacity of these communities, resulting in greater sustainability of their projects. Using the individual Child Health Champion project evaluations as a foundation, OCH then hoped to use these results to inform a larger national evaluation of Child Health Champion projects that would help it better understand whether the pilot projects worked as expected as well as other issues, and bring lessons learned to new communities interested in trying similar approaches.<sup>200</sup>

For individual project evaluation plans, each Child Health Champion project was required to describe how the Community Team expects to track and evaluate: (1) the progress of its efforts to reach intermediate and final outcomes; (2) the team-building and management process; and (3) the cost to implement the different project activities. However, after recognizing the difficulty that Community Teams were having in developing their action plans, EPA had an evaluation consulting firm, Mathematica Policy Research (MPR), assist Community Teams with this effort.<sup>201</sup> MPR gave Community Teams wide latitude to develop evaluation plans that would be most conducive to their priority risks and related activities.

For the Tri-Communities Child Health Champion project, MPR made two field visits to New Madrid County to meet with project members, review New Madrid's evaluation plan, and assess project progress. The Community Team made plans to collect both qualitative and quantitative data.<sup>202</sup> Specifically, health fair attendance was to be documented, and lead screening rates for New Madrid were to be reviewed before and after lead intervention efforts. Training workshops were to be assessed by reviewing participant satisfaction and knowledge and awareness levels. Asthma reduction efforts were to be evaluated by collecting and comparing data on asthma triggers in homes and school absences before and after one-on-one home visits.<sup>203§</sup> MPR made generic templates available that the Community Team used for data collection purposes. These were then made available to GRAND who could assess and modify them for its own data collection purposes.<sup>204</sup> According to a former member of MPR who was closely involved in this effort, at first members of the Community Team were skeptical of the evaluation effort, but after they began to understand the tracking forms and how they could be used, they became more appreciative of the approach. Community facilitators used the evaluation forms for both the lead and asthma-related educational efforts throughout the implementation period. GRAND, in particular, valued the evaluation forms because they enabled the organization to better monitor the overall project's effectiveness.<sup>205</sup>

During interviews conducted by EPA's Office of Policy, Economics, and Innovation, in the fall of 2001, interviewees were asked how the New Madrid Partnership was measuring project success. Two interviewees directly referenced the evaluation plan, while several interviewees identified specific measures for the priority risk they were focusing on that paralleled the measures described above. For instance, one interviewee stated that success in

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<sup>§</sup> According to the Child Health Champion final evaluation report, asthma reduction efforts were not evaluated using these measures because data on pre- and post-period school absences was not available, and home visit interventions were not conducted (p. 65).

addressing asthma/allergies would be measured by reviewing the number of missed school days due to asthma/allergies before and after the asthma workshops. Another interviewee provided more general measures of success, which included setting goals, enabling the communities to work together, and restoring community pride.

### *Partnership Successes*

When asked if partners were satisfied with their ability to participate in the project decision-making process, seven of the nine interviewees who addressed the question responded positively. However, one of the seven did not approve of the way that the three priority risk areas were selected. Further, two interviewees explained that they did not feel their role was to be involved in the decision-making, but rather to focus on capacity building. Regarding whether interviewees were satisfied to the extent issues most important to them and their organizations were being addressed by the partnership, six of the seven addressing this question indicated they were satisfied. One interviewee provided an ambiguous response.

When asked about the outcomes, or results, of the partner activities for addressing the main issues of the affected community, all eleven interviewees responded positively. In terms of specific outcomes, however, interviewees did not reveal a strong agreement around any one type of outcome.\*\* One outcome mentioned by three interviewees centered on increasing the awareness of the community regarding the three priority health risks. Three separate interviewees remarked that the partnership has fostered a spirit of working together, with one also adding that it fostered community pride. More generally, three interviewees noted that the partnership has had positive impacts. For instance, one interviewee explained that the partnership efforts have made living conditions a lot better. Two interviewees, one already referenced, remarked that the partnership efforts resulted in boosted capacity of the community. For instance, one explained that the community could now use tools to gain assistance and provide assistance to them. Finally, another interviewee explained that the partnership has generated a positive spirit.

When asked whether interviewees were satisfied with the outcomes of partner activities, five of the ten addressing this topic indicated they were satisfied, one interviewee indicated she/he was satisfied but would like to see more done for the partnership communities, three were somewhat satisfied, and one interviewee provided an ambiguous response. One interviewee expressed concern about the viability of the project once funding was discontinued. Along these same lines, another interviewee remarked that more work could be done with the Tri-Communities. In addition, another interviewee expressed regret at the lack of progress made on water issues.

Early reports describe overall project activities as having been very successful in meeting project objectives. Interviewees confirmed this impression as well. In addition, several interviewees remarked that two related, but more difficult to measure outcomes, of these activities have been the fostering of community pride and the improved ability of each community to work together.

Despite overall satisfaction with project activities, interviewees were not in agreement on what has been the greatest success of the project so far. Four of the ten interviewees addressing this question commented that the partnership's focus on the community was it's

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\*\* During the interview process, interviewees were asked questions about both the outcomes of partner activities, and the impact of activities for the affected communities. From the responses, it was clear that most interviewees viewed the partnership activities in terms of outcomes, not impact. Therefore, the term outcome is used throughout this discussion.

greatest success. For example, three interviewees remarked that the greatest success has been community empowerment, noting that the knowledge developed for this project as a result of the health fair, training of community people as facilitators, and mini-workshops, will stay within the Tri-Communities. Two interviewees cited lead testing of children as the projects' greatest success. Another two interviewees cited improved agency understanding between EPA and NRCS. And one interviewee suggested that the project's greatest success was the formation of the farmer's cooperative, an initiative associated with, but not directly related to the Child Health project.

Similar to this last interviewee's comment, an additional success may be the increased number of initiatives taking place in the Tri-Communities that, while not directly related to the Child Health project, may be an indirect result of the positive work initiated by the Tri-Community Partnership. For instance, one EPA progress report emphasizes that since the start of the New Madrid Children's Health project, this single effort has "grown into a full blown initiative" including a North Lilbourn recycling project, an energy conservation and home weatherization project, the farmers' cooperative mentioned above, and a transportation jobs access project.<sup>206</sup>

### *Partnership Challenges*

When asked about the greatest challenge facing the partnership, interviewees gave several different responses. The most common theme, however, focused on the difficulties of working together. For instance, three interviewees remarked that simply getting the communities to work together has been the biggest obstacle to success. One of these stated that this was due to the fact a project like this had never been tried before and was overcome because residents recognized that their overall goal was to help children. Another remarked that this difficulty had been resolved because of communication and leadership shown by GRAND's advisor, GRAND's local coordinator, and EPA's regional office. Another interviewee suggested that forming the action plan was the biggest challenge because of the difficulty in working with many different people. The interviewee added that this had been overcome through discussion. Two additional interviewees remarked that competing interests between the participating communities had been major obstacles to success, with one noting that this had been overcome through communication. In addition, one of the same interviewees noted that racial issues between the communities had served as a major barrier to success, remarking that this too was overcome through communication.

In addition to the difficulties faced by working together, interviewees cited other obstacles as well. Three interviewees cited communication issues as a problem. One commented on the poor quality and lack of communication during the project's formation. Specifically, the interviewee remarked that initially outside partners showed a lack of respect for the knowledge community residents had and failed to communicate and dialogue with the community on the objectives of the project. Related to this obstacle, one interviewee from a federal agency remarked that gaining the community's trust initially in the process was a challenge, indicating that not until "things materialized" did the agency feel they had the community's trust. In addition, this interviewee remarked that becoming accustomed to the different styles of other participating agencies was also a challenge. Another interviewee commented on the current state of project communication, specifically noting that the GRAND headquarters office needed more communication with federal agencies issuing project grant monies and partners actually implementing project activities. Another interviewee commented that implementing some of the water-related activities described in the action plan had been the biggest challenge. Finally, one interviewee remarked that an important challenge was obtaining



parental support for child lead testing. This was overcome, however, through parental education about lead.

Interviewees were also asked whether the organizational styles and procedures of the different partner organizations limited effective collaboration between partners. Most responses centered on the difficulties that EPA and NRCS faced when initially starting to work together. Interviewees noted that NRCS and EPA have two distinct styles: 1) NRCS is focused on technical assistance whereas EPA has a stronger regulatory focus; and 2) NRCS encourages a “locally-led process” for local projects, whereas EPA, through its Community Based Environmental Protection approach, has tended to play a more “hands-on” role in locally based projects. Although a positive relationship developed between EPA and NRCS, the contrasting styles and approaches, as well as the personalities involved, created obstacles for both organizations early on in the process. According to two interviewees, these differences were resolved through communication and setting ground rules. In addition, one of these interviewees added that the involvement of a project advisor supported by GRAND was also critical.

Interviewees cited other organizational barriers as well. Three interviewees commented that certain agency requirements placed on funding made it difficult to purchase needed items for the partnership. For instance, although tree planting was designated in the action plan, project money from EPA could not be used to actually purchase trees. In addition, one interviewee noted that certain health agency requirements created an initial challenge for conducting lead screening. According to interviewees, however, creative thinking enabled the project partners to get around these challenges. For example, the project was able to obtain the trees through donation and conduct lead screening by holding a health fair. Finally, one interviewee noted that conflicts arose when individuals participating in the partnership served on more than one of the partnering organizations.

#### *Interviewees’ Recommendations for Improving the Partnership*

Interviewees had few common suggestions for improving the future of the partnership, due in part, perhaps, to the partners’ overall level of satisfaction for the project. Two interviewees suggested ensuring that the project has a project manager, one who can ably grasp the overall vision and goals as well as the project details. Two interviewees also commented on the need for continued communication. Specifically, one interviewee recommended that this be done by re-starting a group meeting process that occurred early on between EPA, NRCS, and GRAND but has since been discontinued. However, the meetings should be less frequent (e.g., once a month) and a community liaison should participate. A second interviewee suggested that the partnership must stay focused on communication, dialogue, and openness between partners, and stay dedicated. Another interviewee suggested that the partnership host a final ceremony at the project’s end, similar to what was done at the project’s beginning in order to provide a sense of closure for participants. Other suggestions included establishing one common meeting space for partnership members to meet, giving additional respect to local residents, allowing local residents to take full control over the project, and emphasizing patience.

#### *Interviewees’ Recommendations for Other Communities*

Interviewees had several suggestions for improving future partnerships. Five of the nine interviewees who addressed this issue emphasized the need for ensuring clear, up-front communication about partner roles and responsibilities. One interviewee stressed that the New Madrid partnership would have proved more effective if in the early stages all partners could

have sat down together and clearly explained what each was committing to the partnership were to be. One interviewee also emphasized the need for participating federal agencies to work closely together to understand what their roles would be vis-à-vis each other and decide who would serve as the overall federal agency lead. The interviewee went on to suggest that if one agency can't identify itself as the federal lead, they both end up sending conflicting messages to the community.

Three interviewees emphasized the need for partnerships to stay focused on what they are trying to accomplish. One interviewee added that using facilitators to provide overall direction is critical. Two more interviewees suggested that partners be open-minded, with one adding that federal agencies should focus on more than just statistics when they are determining how best to help communities. Another set of interviewees stressed that partners in collaborative approaches must be patient, obtain local support, and look for "out of the box" solutions. Other recommendations include focusing on communication, getting the whole community involved, identifying one local partner member who has experience working with federal agencies, keeping partnership activities transparent, providing transportation for partners if necessary, and obtaining parental consent if children's health activities are planned. Finally, one interviewee recommended that one contact person be made available in each community or county that can answer questions community residents may have about issues related to public health and the environment.

### *Value of Collaborative Partnership*

When asked directly about the value of addressing issues through a collaborative partnership approach, most interviewees commented on the additional and shared resources associated that partnerships can provide. One interviewee noted that in a partnership, if one organization is not able to contribute the needed resources the partnership can network and look to another partner to provide support. Another interviewee commented that through shared resources, the partnership is capable of addressing multiple stages of a problem. Other values of partnership approaches expressed by interviewees include improved understanding between organizations, increased capability to identify issues and problems facing affected communities, and a greater diversity of experience from which to draw upon. In addition, one interviewee noted that the collaborative partnership is a non-traditional approach that can be very useful mechanism for addressing issues in non-traditional communities.

When asked whether the collaborative process could be used to address other issues that the New Madrid Tri-Communities are facing, nine of the nine persons who addressed this question indicated that the process could certainly be used again. Three interviewees were confident that once the project concluded, a model would be firmly in place to be used again. Others added qualifications to their statements. One indicated that the collaborative model, along with the capacity building skills that had been transferred to the Tri-Communities as a result of the project, would enable other issues to be addressed through a similar process. Another interviewee remarked that the model would work, but a challenge for the existing project stems from some groups being still unwilling to participate in the process. Finally, in a related comment, one interviewee noted that the collaborative process will effectively address other issues depending on who does or does not participate.

Interviewees were also asked whether the main issues facing the Tri-Communities would have been addressed without using a collaborative approach. Of the eight who addressed this question, three stated simply that the issues would not have been addressed. For instance, one interviewee stated that continued concerns over allocation of resources between the communities would have discouraged any effective work in the area. Five of the

eight felt that some of the issues would have been addressed, but probably to a lesser extent, and some would not have been addressed at all. For example one agency interviewee remarked that the interviewee's agency would have addressed what was allowable given standard operating procedures, but the interviewee would have never thought to contact an outside agency.

### *Value of Federal Involvement in the Partnership*

When asked about the effect of having federal agencies participate in the New Madrid Partnership responses fell into three categories: resources, knowledge, and credibility. Of the seven who addressed this question, six identified resources as the key ingredient that the federal agencies provided. One interviewee explained that the project could not have been implemented without federal money. Another explained that because of federal involvement the communities received a significant amount of high quality training. Closely related to the category of resources is knowledge. Three interviewees specifically commented on the information that the federal agencies shared that helped improve the project. For example, one cited the federal agencies' broad understanding of available resources and willingness to share that information as being very important to project success. Another interviewee noted that the federal agencies greatly assisted by their continual willingness to answer questions, offer guidance, and provide coaching tips for the partnership project teams. In addition, two interviewees remarked how federal involvement brought an increased level of credibility to the project. For instance, one remarked that without external assurance from federal agencies, communities could feel nervous about addressing environmental issues for fear of opening up a "Pandora's box." With federal involvement, however, communities feel confident they can move forward. In a related comment, one interviewee noted that when federal agencies get involved, communities feel that work may happen at a more rapid pace. Finally, one interviewee observed that despite the benefits of federal involvement, EPA's presence in the Tri-Communities intimidated farmers in the area. However, the interviewee felt positively about the about the partnership and did not suggest this hampered the partnership's ability to function effectively.

When asked what federal partners have gained by participating in the New Madrid Partnership, responses fell into three categories: better understanding of the community, the right to claim success at the local level, and ability to use this model for future partnerships. Four of the nine persons addressing this issue indicated that the federal agencies gained an improved understanding of how to work with communities. For example, one remarked that by working in these communities, the participating federal agencies gained perspective, learning first hand how some of their policies and regulations impact the local level. Similarly, a fifth interviewee stated that the agencies gained an improved understanding of the Tri-Communities, including knowledge about their residents and public health problems. Three interviewees stated that federal agencies gained the right to say they were successful. Specifically, two noted that federal agencies could claim success as a result of their effective cooperation with other organizations. Two other interviewees remarked that federal agencies gained the ability to use or participate in collaborative partnerships at other sites in the future. Related, another interviewee also remarked that federal agencies gained additional experience in regards to networking and better project management skills.

Only six interviewees addressed whether federal agencies have been able to better coordinate their activities as a result of their involvement in the New Madrid Partnership. Three said yes, and three were equivocal, indicating that they were not sure. One agency interviewee who responded affirmatively felt very strongly that collaboration had indeed increased. The interviewee noted that the NRCS Midwest and EPA regional offices have met a few times and

recently made plans to partner together to identify and work with other distressed communities. Of the three who were equivocal, one stated flatly that it was not clear whether coordination has improved. Another remarked that although federal agencies may have been better able to coordinate their efforts for this project, the key reason for this was the personalities involved, and there is no indication that effective coordination will occur in future similar efforts. A third interviewee was doubtful that effective collaboration occurred in the New Madrid project, noting that in the beginning of the New Madrid project, only NRCS was visible, but towards the end, only EPA was. The interviewee then added that most of the effective collaboration seemed to occur between the individual federal agencies and the community, not necessarily with each other.

Interviewees were also asked what federal agencies could do to be more effective partners in local collaborative efforts. Interviewees offered several different suggestions ranging from improving communication skills to better understanding the communities. Four of nine recommendations centered on the need for federal agencies to stay open-minded when working in collaboratives. Particularly, two of these interviewees emphasized the need to use more than statistics when determining how to best help communities, and one stressed not letting regulations prohibit involvement. In addition, three interviewees stressed the importance of coordinating resources between federal agencies. Two interviewees, in particular, remarked that agencies should focus more on getting the job done than their independence, and use an umbrella coordinator, similar to GRAND, to ensure that the needed collaborative work will be implemented. Other recommendations included entrusting the community to lead the partnerships, developing a better understanding of the community before partnering, staying committed to and honest within the partnership, setting ground rules, trying a different approach if the current one is not working, and avoiding taking partnership issues personally.

In addition, one agency interviewee stressed that the key to best participating in a collaborative partnership is by educating yourself about who your federal partners are and the resources they have available. Speaking from experience, the interviewee explained that to do this, it is important to invite federal partners to your agency meetings, such as environmental justice forums, and meet with federal partners in one-on-one meetings. Interestingly, another agency interviewee remarked that federal agencies do not need to tailor their roles to best participate; rather, since they already have expertise, they should come to the table ready to use their expertise to accomplish the goals of the project.

### *Key Findings*

- Participants overall are satisfied with the partnership's progress and outcomes of the partnership's activities. However, concerns have been raised regarding the progress of the water-related activities and additional work that will still be necessary in the Tri-Communities once the Child Health project has ended in order to genuinely enhance quality of life.
- Without a collaborative process, it is unlikely that community concerns would have been addressed as effectively as they are now. The New Madrid Partnership has brought shared and additional resources and enabled creative solutions to problems.
- One of the partnership's key strengths has been its focus on community involvement and capacity building. Not only have the participating community representatives been in the lead for determining priority risks, the community representatives actively sought input from other community members that weren't directly participating in the project. In addition, community representatives have been trained in facilitation and in the priority

risk areas, better ensuring that the knowledge gained as part of the project will stay within the community, and that the Tri-Communities will find it easier to prioritize and devise solutions to risks or other challenges their communities currently face or will face in the future.

- Another key strength of the project has been the working relationship between NRCS, EPA, and GRAND. Arguably, without effective cooperation between these organizations, it is doubtful that the New Madrid Partnership would have experienced the success it currently does.
- Use of a detailed action plan developed with significant community involvement has enabled project participants to better understand how they fit within the overall project framework and made it easier to keep the project focused and monitor progress. However, use of the action plan to drive the project implementation has, perhaps, had the unintended effect of limiting other activities that the partnership engages in.
- It is unclear how the other on-going initiatives taking place in the Tri-Communities, such as the farmer's cooperative and the home weatherization project are associated with the Child Health project. If these activities take place outside an integrated coordination process, local residents as well as outside parties may find it difficult to understand how these different parts fit together and important opportunities for synergy may be lost.

#### *Afterword*

Since interviews were conducted between September 24 and October 1, 2001, the New Madrid County Child Health Champion project has officially closed, according to an EPA official closely involved in the project. The Community Team, its community facilitators, and the members of GRAND and Technical Advisory Team all helped to implement the actions described in the New Madrid Child Health Champion project action plan. The Community Team that first formed around 1997 has dissipated. However, the skills acquired or enhanced and new relationships formed that first begun around 1997 still bears fruit today. For instance, one former Community Team member recently helped initiate a community development corporation in Howardville, which has been responsible for building new homes. Another former Community Team member has been involved in the development of a new day care center in the New Madrid area.<sup>207</sup> In addition, EPA, Lincoln University, and the Missouri Department of Natural Resources, all important components of the New Madrid Tri-Community Partnership, have kept their working relationship in tact and committed to developing an environmental justice resource center for New Madrid County and the surrounding region that will continue to identify and offer support for local environmental protection, public health, and community development initiatives.<sup>208</sup>

# 7 ReGenesis Partnership

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*In the beginning there was no cooperative spirit. Early the community was not happy with the current state of affairs.*

*Harold made the first step reaching out...saying we want you to be involved and asked for our input.*

*The community group is the driver and the most important partners are the local government partners.*

*Now we actually have federal, state, local, and community all sitting down talking about the same issue. Previously only adversarial stances were taken...[Now] everyone more or less sharing the same vision.*

*This has been a real coming of age for people in the community. So much face-to-face contact. It caused local people to recognize the extent of resources available.*

— Interviewees, ReGenesis Partnership

## *Community History\**

The County and City of Spartanburg are located in the upper northwest region of South Carolina. Since 1970, the county's population nearly doubled from 174,000 in 1970 to over 250,000 today.<sup>209†</sup> The City has remained at around 40,000 since that time but is located in the center of an urban area that supports an estimated 115,000 people. Coupled with the increases in population has been the Spartanburg region's gradual transformation from a traditional textile-based economy to a much more diversified one. By most indicators, the Spartanburg area has been thriving over the past several years. The County now hosts more than 115 internationally owned firms, and the City is currently undergoing a major downtown revitalization effort that, through a \$75 million public/private partnership, will bring a major hotel, an office park, and a golf-learning center to the downtown area.<sup>210</sup>

Despite the prosperous economy, at least one section of the City has not benefited from the economic expansion. The Arkwright and Forest Park neighborhoods are located just beyond the City's major downtown area. This community has a 96 percent African American population in a county that is predominantly Caucasian and a city that is essentially half African American and half Caucasian.<sup>211</sup> Established around textile mills and other industrial facilities, this community has been faced with the negative consequences of mill and plant closure.<sup>212</sup> The area has not benefited from any significant commercial development for several years and

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\* Interviews for this case study were primarily conducted during the week of October 1, 2001. Two additional interviews were conducted in late November. Fourteen separate interviews were conducted and a total of sixteen persons participated. Interviews were conducted with representatives of community organizations, staff of local and federal political representatives, federal, state, and local government agencies, a company, a local college, a consulting firm, and a regional environmental organization.

† The current population total of Spartanburg County equals 253, 791 (75.1% Caucasian and 20.8% African American).

residents have difficulty accessing groceries, restaurants, or other shops unless they drive or take a cab to other more affluent<sup>213</sup> parts of the city.<sup>214</sup>

Most notably, however, the Arkwright and Forest Park community residents live near several actual and potentially contaminated sites and an operating industrial plant. Residential neighborhoods in Arkwright are closely intertwined with industrial areas due to minimal local land use controls before 1976 and “a continued lack of zoning restrictions.”<sup>215</sup> The areas of most concern to local residents are a 40-acre site of an abandoned (and now deconstructed) fertilizer plant referred to as the International Mineral and Chemicals (IMC) site, a 30-acre former municipal dump, and an operating chemical plant located on a 35-acre site owned by Rhodia Inc. Approximately 4,700 residents live within one mile of the site, 200 live within ¼-mile of the landfill,<sup>216</sup> and a handful of residents live adjacent to the chemical plant boundary.

The many economic, environmental, health, and public safety concerns that residents have attributed to these sites have prompted some to refer to this area collectively as the “Devil’s Triangle.” Residents have stated that, “For decades, [they] have endured dump truck traffic, smoke and fumes from landfill fires, and odors from the two industries.”<sup>217</sup> Residents have also stated that “there is a high percentage of cancer in the neighborhoods, especially lung, bone, and colon cancer.”<sup>218</sup> In addition, residents report that the area supports a high rate of infant mortality, miscarriages, and birth defects.<sup>219</sup> One resident also explained that from January 2000 to July 2000, 24 people living within ¼-mile of the dump had died.<sup>220</sup> Beyond health concerns, locals have reportedly seen their housing values fall since the 1970s.<sup>221</sup> Community members suggest that new residents cannot move in because of their concerns regarding the facilities and contaminated sites, and current ones are unable to move out because they lack the resources to do so.<sup>222</sup>

### *ReGenesis*

During the 1990s residents in the neighborhoods of Arkwright and Forest Park began to inquire about the abandoned sites and put pressure on government agencies to clean them up. One person in particular, Harold Mitchell, grew increasingly concerned about what he saw as an alarming number of deaths and incidences of diseases in his neighborhood after returning to live there in 1993. Observations and stories of criminal activity taking place at the fertilizer facility, directly across the street from Mitchell’s home, also raised Mitchell’s and other local residents’ level of concern.<sup>223</sup> He soon began looking into both sites. Starting in 1994, Mitchell obtained a file from the state environmental agency<sup>224</sup> that described the type of hazardous chemicals used in the fertilizer plant’s production processes<sup>225</sup> and had informal conversations with local residents about the type of work that took place at the facility<sup>226</sup>. His efforts to generate support to address the abandoned sites were put on hold in 1996, however, because of a serious illness in Mitchell’s family. In 1997, Mitchell once again turned his attention to the abandoned sites.<sup>227</sup>

Around this time Mitchell also founded ReGenesis, a local environmental justice organization made up of residents from the affected neighborhoods. While initially focusing on getting the sites cleaned up, ReGenesis’ attention soon began turning to the revitalization of the entire area.<sup>228</sup> Today, with over 1,400 members from the affected area, this community-based and community-driven organization<sup>229</sup> continues to have strong support from the community and is the primary body responsible for consulting with government agencies on the cleanup of the contaminated sites in the area. In particular ReGenesis is working closely with government agencies to ensure clean up of the former Arkwright Dump site and the abandoned fertilizer plant. ReGenesis also participates in periodic meetings with the operating chemical plant in the area to address concerns raised by community members. Finally, ReGenesis serves as the

main point of contact for the ReGenesis Partnership, a broad-based multi-stakeholder effort to revitalize the Arkwright and Forest Park areas.

### *Abandoned Fertilizer Plant*

The abandoned fertilizer plant, located directly north of the abandoned Arkwright Dump opened in 1910, and continued to operate until closing in 1986. The facility, owned by IMC Global, was then left idle and began to deteriorate.<sup>230</sup> During its operations it employed many residents from the Arkwright community. Some residents believed, however, that its operations had a negative environmental impact on the community. In prior interviews conducted with former IMC employees and Arkwright residents by EPA, interviewees noted that at times the neighborhood had been filled with acid smells from the facility. They also noted that the acid or particles from the plant had corroded the aluminum siding on their homes, roofing materials, and the paint on their cars.<sup>231</sup> After the plant's closure, according to ReGenesis, the community voiced concerns about the abandoned site.<sup>232</sup> Between 1991 and 1995, South Carolina's environmental department required three groundwater assessment investigations, and continuous periodic sampling of groundwater, at the site. Groundwater contaminants during that time, and remaining at present, include several metals, nitrate, and fluoride. Based on the levels detected, which are above groundwater standards, South Carolina's environmental department had required further investigation via deeper wells, and additional wells, but had not required groundwater cleanup actions as of 1995.<sup>233</sup> As discussed above, starting in 1994 Mitchell began to investigate this site as well as the abandoned dump. In late 1997, after a call from Mitchell to EPA's regional office in Atlanta, EPA began to examine the fertilizer plant site more closely.<sup>234</sup> An initial review by EPA found no short-term public health threat from the site; however, EPA, subsequently, began more intensive investigations under the Superfund process<sup>235</sup> in order to assess the potential for long-term risk.<sup>236</sup> An expanded site investigation by EPA, began in January 1999<sup>237</sup>, revealed several chemicals of concern at concentrations above background levels.<sup>238</sup>

During EPA's expanded site investigation, the then private owner of the site, who had purchased the abandoned facility from IMC in the late 1980s, began an unauthorized demolition of the plant in June 1998.<sup>239</sup> South Carolina's state environmental agency halted the demolition within hours, and later issued the owner a Notice of Violation and fine for the violation of local and state regulations.<sup>240</sup> Soon after, concerned about the site conditions, Vigindustries Inc., a subsidiary of IMC Global, purchased back the fertilizer plant site,<sup>241</sup> and put in place a deconstruction plan developed in cooperation with nearby residents, Vigindustries, and appropriate federal, state, and local officials to ensure the safe deconstruction of the facility.<sup>242</sup> Deconstruction took place under State and EPA oversight over the summer and fall of 2000.<sup>243</sup> During this time, IMC staff and ReGenesis began to work cooperatively to address more long-term clean up issues while EPA's investigation continued.<sup>244</sup> IMC appeared ready to see that the fertilizer plant site would be redeveloped in accordance with ReGenesis' overall revitalization goals for the area after the clean up activities were completed. By the summer of 2000, however, the cooperation ended as over 1,200 residents filed suit in federal court against IMC Global, who, according to a local newspaper report, accused the company of "multiple offenses, including assault and battery through the release of toxic chemicals, concealing facts about environmental dangers and practicing environmental racism in the predominantly black community."<sup>245</sup> With the legal battles still ongoing, in July 2001, Vigindustries signed an Administrative Order on Consent with EPA. The order commits Vigindustries to conduct a two-part study of the fertilizer site, assessing the level of contamination at the site and determining options for cleanup.<sup>246</sup>



## *Abandoned Arkwright Dump*

The Arkwright Dump opened in 1954. According to a government report, it was purchased by the City and reportedly used for disposal of municipal, medical, and automotive wastes. It operated with relatively little oversight until it was closed in 1972 and capped with a thin layer of topsoil. In 1976, the site was sold to a private citizen. Virtually no records exist for the facility. Nearby residents continue to have open access to the dump area where thin vegetation covers the waste and debris.<sup>247</sup> As mentioned earlier, in 1994, Harold Mitchell began investigating the abandoned dump along with the abandoned fertilizer facility. In early 1998, Mitchell raised the issue of the abandoned dump to the attention of EPA's regional office in Atlanta.<sup>248</sup> South Carolina's state environmental agency subsequently became involved. State personnel conducted an initial walk-through of the site, finding no immediate health threats.<sup>249</sup> After receiving the appropriate paperwork from the state agency, EPA had discussions with community residents and a consultation with the state agency, and ultimately chose to take the lead in evaluating the site.<sup>250</sup>

Between October 1998 and May 1999, EPA sampling efforts at the site indicated contaminants in the soil, groundwater, surface water, and sediment.<sup>251</sup> At EPA's request, the U.S. Agency for Toxic Substances and Disease Registry (ATSDR) then conducted a preliminary health assessment based upon EPA's sampling data. ATSDR's report indicated that the contaminants did not constitute a health threat, but added that more extensive data gathered during EPA's in-depth site evaluation could change their initial assessment and recommended additional investigation of the site.<sup>252†</sup> EPA then made a determination to cleanup the site using a traditional Superfund process<sup>§</sup> in order to address long-term environmental and human health risks.<sup>253</sup> In November 1999, the City signed a voluntary agreement with EPA, referred to as an Administrative Order on Consent,<sup>254</sup> committing the City to conduct a two-part study of the abandoned landfill, assessing contamination levels at the site and determining options for cleanup.<sup>255</sup> Although the City's agreement with EPA does not commit the City to address the site, EPA expects the City and other groups who have previously contributed waste to the landfill to participate in the site activities. EPA anticipates that the second part of this study will be completed in the spring of 2002.<sup>256\*\*</sup>

## *Operating Chemical Plant*

The operating chemical plant is directly south of the abandoned fertilizer site, bounded to the east by the Arkwright Dump, and bounded to the west by a railroad line. Residences begin just off the chemical company's fence line. In the mid-1970s a South Carolina businessman purchased the Arkwright Dump and opened up a chemical warehouse next to the site. However, residents living in the community at the time state that they were told the site would be used to develop low-income housing. After a few years, the chemical warehouse became an operating chemical plant.<sup>257</sup> In 1998, Rhodia, an international specialty chemical company,<sup>258</sup> purchased the plant. Recently EPA recognized Rhodia as a member in its new EPA Performance Track Program and the state recognized Rhodia with a pollution prevention environmental award.<sup>259</sup> Despite these special designations by the federal and state government, many residents in the Arkwright and Forest Park areas feel strongly that a

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† This document was finalized in May 2000.

§ Although EPA Region 4 is addressing contamination at the Arkwright Dump site through traditional Superfund means, the Arkwright Dump site has not been placed onto the National Priorities List (NPL), which is the list of the nation's most hazardous sites; instead, EPA is addressing the Arkwright site through an "NPL-equivalent process." Region 4 has a number of sites being addressed in this manner. The term "NPL-Equivalent" has been used by Region 4 to denote such sites.

\*\* On August 6, 2002, EPA presented its "Proposed Plan" for site cleanup to the community in a public meeting. A Record of Decision is expected in September 2002.

chemical company nearby is incompatible with their plans to improve quality of life and would like to see the facility relocated. Rhodia reviewed the option to relocate but found it prohibitively expensive. Rhodia is now working to build better relations with the community. In addition to reaching out to better gauge community concerns and introducing more local residents to the facility operations through open houses, Rhodia is currently undergoing a series of facilitated dialogue sessions with ReGenesis in an attempt to address issues of contention and identify best how it can participate in the ReGenesis' plans to redevelop the area.

### *Partnership Background*

For many years, the residents of Forest Park and Arkwright, according to Harold Mitchell, had virtually no interaction with each other. Mutual concerns over the cleanup of the abandoned fertilizer facility, however, helped bring the two communities together.<sup>260</sup> The residents began regularly interacting in 1998 and 1999 during meetings and workshops held with community residents, EPA, and the state environmental agency to discuss issues related to cleanup and Superfund site redevelopment. It was during these discussions that, according to Mitchell, an EPA employee suggested how the residents could fully redevelop the area.<sup>261</sup>

In addition to forming ideas about broad-scale revitalization, these meetings and workshops also played other critical functions. First, they were used to identify other organizations that would need to participate to make a full-scale revitalization a reality. Mitchell and other residents recognized the importance of this because of past, only marginally successful attempts by groups in the area to implement urban redevelopment efforts.<sup>262</sup> These groups, according to Mitchell, excluded other important players like the City and the County.<sup>263</sup> Second, these meetings helped residents work out their animosity they had towards past company, facility, and government officials whom they felt had allowed a considerable amount of harm to come to their community.<sup>264</sup>

As an outgrowth of these meetings and workshops, ReGenesis soon began seeking involvement of organizations to assist in the revitalization by engaging potential partners in one-on-one discussions and hosting a series of facilitated forums. This strong emphasis on collaboration also led to the identification of the ReGenesis partnership as an Environmental Justice Demonstration Project by the Interagency Working Group in May 2000. The first of ReGenesis' revitalization forums were held January and August 2000. Participants included local, state, and federal government and officials, business, political representatives and community development experts. The objectives of the forums were as follows:

- 1) Educate stakeholders in the fundamentals of brownfields;
- 2) Share the impact of the brownfields in the Arkwright/Forest Park Area;
- 3) Work together to build local commitment and plan to develop partnerships at the local, state, and federal level;
- 4) Learn about tools and resources available to help the community revitalize brownfields and promote sustainable reuse;
- 5) Lay the foundation to take a new look at the future development and growth of Arkwright/Forest Park and Spartanburg as a whole;
- 6) Generate recommendations to ensure community involvement as well as short and long-term development strategies; and
- 7) Achieve a beneficial revitalization for the Arkwright/Forest Park community.<sup>265</sup>

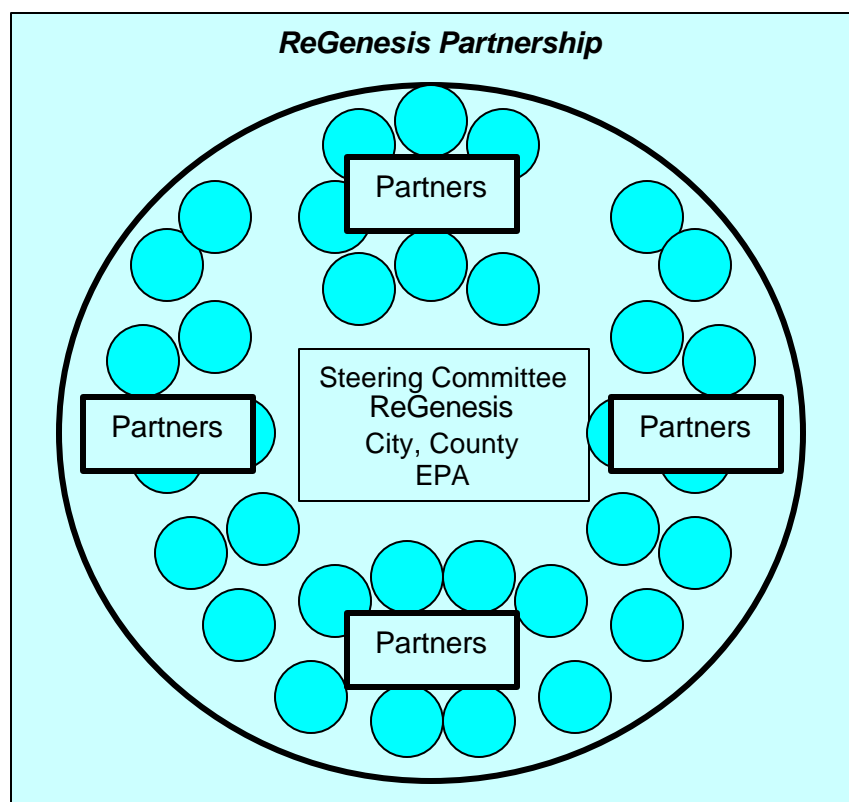
Although the first forum was described as successful,<sup>266</sup> crucial events took place during the second forum that eventually molded the partnership into the shape it still holds today. First, a consultant for the community alienated potential supporters by presenting himself as

overconfident and misrepresenting the Arkwright and Forest Park neighborhoods by explaining that they lacked the capacity and money to lead the revitalization effort.<sup>267</sup> Following the forum, a member of the IWG explained to Mitchell that only the community could represent itself and that the community needed to take full leadership over the redevelopment process. Up until this time, according to Mitchell, the community felt that it needed outside consultants to act on the community's behalf. In response, ReGenesis, and particularly ReGenesis' director, Mitchell, began to serve as the leader for the two neighborhoods. Second, the IWG representative, according to Mitchell, also explained that ReGenesis needed to make sure that its vision and priorities align with the vision and priorities of both the City and the County. If these can align, the IWG representative pointed out, the federal agencies would be in a much better position to offer assistance.<sup>268</sup>

Following another forum held in September, participants asked that specific individuals be named to represent the community, the City, and the County. The City was involved because of its role in the clean up and redevelopment of the Arkwright Dump. The County was involved because much of the area ReGenesis planned to redevelop falls within the jurisdiction of the County. Mitchell was selected to represent the community, Michael Garrett was selected to represent the City, and Elena Rush was selected to represent the County. These three came to form the core steering committee for the ReGenesis partnership.<sup>269</sup>

A representative from EPA's southeast regional branch also began to regularly participate in the core steering committee meetings because of its cleanup roles with the Arkwright Dump and fertilizer plant sites and its current commitment as an Environmental Justice Demonstration Project member.

The committee began to meet regularly and jointly plan partnership forums. However, the process has not always gone smoothly. For instance, early on, the County wanted greater assurances that Harold Mitchell was, indeed, the spokesperson for the community. In response, the ReGenesis board sent the County a letter explaining that in fact, Mitchell did fully represent ReGenesis, which in effect represented the residents of Arkwright and Forest Park. The steering committee uses these pre-forum meetings to explore important decisions regarding the revitalization effort. Although formal consensus is not the goal, the steering group members regularly strive to reach agreements acceptable to all, even amidst often-conflicting viewpoints. The partnership revitalization forums are then used as opportunities to report out progress being made on the revitalization effort. Typically Mitchell opens the forums with an introduction, and then the



**Figure 23. EPA Representation of ReGenesis Organizational Structure**

steering committee members give updates on specific tasks. Following this, a distinct component of the revitalization process may be discussed in detail, such as a specific brownfields redevelopment or the overall planning process.<sup>270</sup>

Two additional partnership forums were held in 2000. Starting in 2001, the steering committee began holding forums on a quarterly basis.<sup>271</sup> In addition to the partnership forums and the work of the steering committee, a special Spartanburg Workgroup at EPA meets monthly to coordinate its Spartanburg activities, often conducting conference calls with members of the core partnership group. Mitchell explained that through the work of Rush and Garrett, the community has begun putting its trust once again in both the City and County. Mitchell explained that previously the community expected that once the City or the County made a decision, the decision was final, irrespective of what the community had to say. Now, according to Mitchell, the community views the City and County as allies.<sup>272</sup>

Although the partnership continues to expand its organizational capacity, and has recently more thoroughly defined its organizational structure, the partnership is best explained as consisting of a broad collection of individual connections between the partnership steering committee and various organizations. ReGenesis has tirelessly persuaded new partners to become involved in the redevelopment effort. However, the County has taken an active role in keeping track of the existing and new partners through an electronic database and informing partners of upcoming forums either through electronic or regular mail.<sup>273</sup> As of September 2001, a partnership summary indicated that 76 partners currently contribute, or intend to contribute, to the redevelopment efforts.

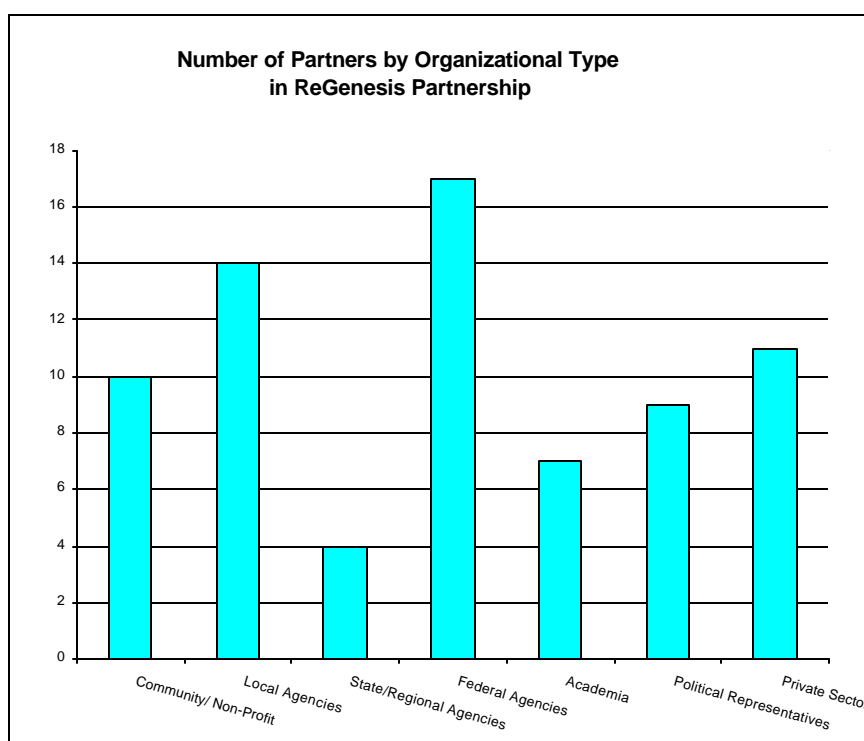


Figure 24. EPA Estimate of Partners in ReGenesis Partnership

### Partnership Goals

The overall vision of the ReGenesis project is to clean up and revitalize the Arkwright and Forest Park areas through the use of collaborative partnerships in order to transform the community “into a nice place to live.”<sup>274</sup> To achieve this vision, ReGenesis partners have identified seven project goals. These include: (1) creating a comprehensive redevelopment plan; (2) cleaning up contaminated sites; (3) providing for public safety, education, and life skills; (4) ensuring public health; (5) improving transportation access; (6) creating green space and

greenway trails; and (7) developing affordable and energy efficient housing.<sup>275</sup> In addition to outlining the project elements, the project partners have identified five project approaches that should be used (or adhered to) in pursuit of the project goals. These include: (1) collaborative partnerships; (2) environmental justice; (3) community revitalization; (4) community empowerment and participation; and (5) local problem-solving.<sup>276</sup>

### *Partnership Activities*

The ReGenesis partnership is still in the early to middle stages in terms of meeting project goals and few major partnership activities have been implemented. The recognition that the partnership has more work to be done is reflected in the fact that relatively few tangible effects from the cleanup and revitalization efforts can be seen. Apart from the deconstruction of the fertilizer plant, the community is still waiting for EPA to make final determinations on the cleanup of the Arkwright Dump and fertilizer sites before cleanup and revitalization activities can begin.

Although most activities have not begun, the partnership has been heavily engaged in laying the necessary groundwork to ensure planned activities will take place, which, in addition to the cleanup of the contaminated sites, include the building of a job training center, a technology center, and a public health clinic; the development of a parkway more easily linking the neighborhoods to the greater Spartanburg community; the construction of a series of greenspaces and greenway trails; and the development of affordable, energy efficient housing. To ensure these activities will take place, the partnership members have been working to secure funding and additional partners.

Since 2000, the partnership has secured over \$1.1 million through grants. The primary sources of funding include: Senate Appropriations initiated by Senator Ernest Hollings (SC-D) issued through HUD Neighborhood Improvement Grants; EPA Superfund Redevelopment, Brownfields, and Environmental Justice grants; and a Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) health center grant. The City and Vigindustries have also made monetary contributions. The partnership has also identified over ten additional potential funding sources for cleanup and revitalization activities. In addition to securing funding through grants, several persons are contributing varying portions of their staff time or volunteering to support the project. EPA's southeast regional branch alone has over eight people involved in various aspects of the partnership.

Another key partnership activity, underway since May 2001, has been periodic meetings hosted by the City to identify which parties, in addition to the City, may have significantly contributed waste to the Arkwright Dump. One of the first of its kind, this collaborative effort, following EPA draft policy guidance, involves regular conference calls<sup>277</sup> and interviews with community members to determine the history of the site and better identify all possible waste contributors. One interviewee commented that although community input to identify potentially responsible parties is typically not significant, the Arkwright and Forest Park community has provided an uncharacteristically large amount of helpful information. Finding additional responsible parties that can help finance the cleanup will be critical since the Dump cleanup costs are expected to be more than the City can pay.

The following sections primarily describe interviewees' responses to questions gathered from interviews conducted by EPA's Office of Policy, Economics, and Innovation primarily during the week of October 1, 2001. The sections focus on interviewees' impressions regarding measuring partnership success, partnership success and challenges, recommendations for

improving the partnership, overall value of the partnership, and the value of federal involvement in the partnership.

### Measuring Success

The ReGenesis Partnership has not developed a framework to measure if and how well their activities are being implemented, or if their activities are a success. Some measures of success are, however, being built into discreet project components such as the health care clinic work plan, the Brownfields assessment work plan, and the Arkwright Dump Superfund Redevelopment Initiative (SRI) work plan. A sample of measures of success from the SRI work plan<sup>278</sup> is included below.

<u>Goal</u>	
Coordinated efforts between US EPA, the County, the City, the Community and other stakeholders	
<b>Objective:</b> Create newsletter and website to inform all stakeholders	<b>Measure:</b> number of hits on the website, number of newsletters distributed
<b>Objective:</b> Meetings with residents and stakeholders	<b>Measure:</b> input from community meetings; tracking participation at the public forums; community participation on the various committees; and number of inquiries about the project
<b>Objective:</b> Identify stakeholders	<b>Measure:</b> survey results for stakeholders' needs and concerns of the project
<b>Objective:</b> Coordinate communication between all stakeholders involved	<b>Measure:</b> evaluation surveys; preparation of a table of ongoing initiatives, the recipient or entity responsible for managing the funds, and key contacts

Figure 25. Sample of Measures of Success for Arkwright Dump Redevelopment Initiative

Several interviewees indicated that overall success would be measured in tangible terms such as contaminated site cleanup and clinic construction. Another interviewee indicated that some measures have been developed, but that they were dependent upon the cleanup of the contaminated sites. One interviewee indicated that no overarching measures had been developed, but such an effort would be valuable. Another endorsed the need to establish timelines for each of the project goals.

### Partnership Successes

Most interviewees expressed satisfaction with the direction of the partnership, their ability to participate in it, and indicated that their interests were being met. Regarding the success of project activities, most indicated that it was too early to determine the success of partnership activities since most were still planned for the future. However, interviewees expressed strong support for the actions that have been undertaken so far and felt strongly that the future actions will have the desired effect. Two interviewees remarked that one direct outcome of all the activities performed up to this point has been the bringing of real inspiration and excitement to a group of people that previously had very little about the prospects in their community.

In terms of greatest overall success, most interviewees indicated that the development of the partnership itself has been the greatest success. According to interviewees, the partnership has brought former adversaries together. One interviewee explained that with the partnership different groups now had a common cause and were emotionally united. Another explained that simply getting people together in the same room to work together on issues has been very important. Asking for the reason behind the partnership success, most indicated Harold Mitchell and ReGenesis first. The work of ReGenesis has enabled an atmosphere that is conducive to partnering. As one interviewee noted, ReGenesis “extended the olive branch.” ReGenesis wanted “everyone to be involved and everyone to benefit.” ReGenesis was “interested in harmony instead of friction.” Other reasons given for the partnership’s formation include the leadership roles of the Mayor and the County and the Interagency Working Group’s urging of the various groups to come up with their own solutions to the challenges facing the Arkwright and Forest Park.

Another major success, not entirely separate from the development of the partnership, has been the securing of funding. Although some interviewees identified successful fundraising for discreet project initiatives, such as the funding of the health clinic, others indicated that they were pleased so far with the overall ability of the partnership to secure funding and resources. Interviewees did not directly address why the securing of funds has been so successful, however, it is likely that most would attribute this success to focused partnership leadership and enthusiastic support for the partnership from a variety of different organizations.

In addition, interviewees cited the partnership’s commitment to community involvement as an important success. Of the thirteen persons who addressed this issue, twelve highlighted the efforts being made to involve the Arkwright and Forest Park neighborhoods in almost every aspect of the project. The key reason for the high rate of community involvement is ReGenesis, through which community members can have their concerns fed directly into the partnership. The only challenge faced by ReGenesis, suggests one interviewee, has been the organization’s difficulty in continually translating large amounts of technical information to the community on a regular basis.

### *Partnership Challenges*

Interviewees voiced several challenges facing the partnership but no clear consensus emerged from the responses. Five interviews cited communication/organizational issues as an impediment to success, noting that the numerous players and the many discrete components of the project make it difficult to understand what the overall project goals are, what the roles of each of the partners will be, and/or what activities are planned for the future. For instance, one interviewee voiced a strong desire to contribute significantly, but has so far only participated on a limited basis because of lack of guidance from the partnership on how best to participate. Similarly, two interviewees remarked that a lack of a single point person for the project inhibits success. Currently, Harold Mitchell is the overall leader of the project, however, neither Harold nor anyone else participating in the partnership has the time or resources necessary to devote full attention to project coordination and management. Despite these concerns, it is important to note that within days before these interviews were conducted, the partnership steering committee had distributed an information packet describing in detail the project elements, the actual and potential resources dedicated to the project, and designated lead partners for implementing each project element in preparation for an upcoming full partner meeting. It is conceivable that this, in combination with the full partner meeting, served to clarify project goals and elements along with partner roles and responsibilities.

A second challenge centered on industry/community tensions. Specifically, three interviewees identified the conflicting viewpoints between ReGenesis and Rhodia as barriers to success. To overcome this tension, one interviewee recommended that Rhodia and ReGenesis continue their on-going dialogue. The interviewee also recommended that Rhodia work to develop a better relationship with the nearby community. Two of these same interviewees also identified the ReGenesis lawsuit against IMC as a potential barrier to success. Another interviewee noted more generally that conflicting interests between the affected community and industry might inhibit partnership success.

A third challenge focused on partnership sustainability. Because of the complexity of the project and the length required to address the various issues, four interviewees indicated that efforts to sustain momentum and support would be key. Expressing frustration, one interviewee remarked that even finalizing a voluntary agreement between the City and EPA regarding the Arkwright Dump took several months. In order to sustain the enthusiasm for the partnership, one interviewee noted that new parties must be continually courted and regularly involved, such as business leaders, over the next few years.

Another challenge centered on issues of funding. Four interviewees cited the difficulty the partnership may face in ensuring adequate funding for partnership activities, even though over a million dollars in grants has been secured so far. This is not surprising, however, since the cleanup projects will undoubtedly prove to be very expensive. No suggestions were provided on how to overcome this obstacle.

Other barriers to success cited by interviewees include obtaining the full support of the City and the County for the cleanup and revitalization effort; bringing all the partners together in a timely manner; persuading companies to take responsibility for their roles in the Arkwright Dump site; fully engaging the business community as a partner; changing the mindset of the community so it views itself as a driver of the revitalization process instead of simply another participant within the partnership; ensuring that the contaminated sites are cleaned up; understanding what constitutes success for the affected community; and completing a detailed comprehensive plan for the revitalization effort. The comprehensive plan, which is being developed out of funds from a Brownfields assessment grant provided by EPA, is currently in its formative stages.

Interviewees were also asked whether the organizational styles and procedures of the different partner organizations limited effective collaboration between partners. Of the twelve who addressed this topic, seven indicated that the different organizational styles have not been barriers. One explained that the great number and diversity of partners is actually a strength of the partnership. Two interviewees remarked that even when differences emerge between partners, solutions are sought in a cooperative manner. Another remarked, however, that even though organizational differences limiting the effectiveness of the partnership were not apparent, some organizations were not performing as capably as they could be. Five interviewees highlighted organizational differences that have contributed to partnership difficulties. One explained that differing organizational requirements within a government agency had hindered the interviewee's ability to complete a project grant proposal in a timely manner. An agency interviewee remarked that federal agency travel restrictions limit some federal agencies from participating as effectively as they could. This same interviewee also noted federal agencies often don't participate more constructively because it is not always clear how their participation will directly relate to each agencies' mission. A second agency interviewee indicated that, in certain circumstances, certain ethics rules might limit agencies' abilities to participate as effective partners. The interviewee cited a recent example where the partner agency had been asked to send a letter to another ReGenesis partner agency



endorsing a distinct component of the partnership. The agency's ethics attorney explained that it was inappropriate for either the agency or agency personnel to endorse a company or entity. However, after consultation with the agency's ethics attorney, the agency revised the letter from one of support for the partnership component, to one expressing the agency's interest towards supporting the goals of the partnership that will partly be met by the implementation of the partnership component.

#### *Interviewees' Recommendations for Improving the Partnership*

Interviewee recommendations for improving the effectiveness of the ReGenesis Partnership fell into three rough sets of recommendations. The first set centered on the need for training. Three interviewees highlighted areas where the partnership could benefit from training. Each, however, recommended different types of training. One suggested that more general environmental justice and community involvement training be made available for partners. A second interviewee suggested that partners should participate in leadership training in order to better ensure that partner commitments are kept. A third recommended that partners participate in training on professional collaborative management. Related to issues of leadership and professional collaborative management, a second set of recommendations focused on better establishing timelines and commitments. One felt strongly that timelines should be produced for the main goals and that partners should then be kept accountable. Similarly, a second interviewee indicated that more work needed to be done to secure stronger commitments from partners. A third suggested that additional work was needed at the close of each partner meeting to ensure important points were captured and clarified for all partners to see, possibly being made available in a newsletter. A third set of recommendations focused on ensuring that ReGenesis' chairman, Harold Mitchell, was made executive director of the partnership and given the resources necessary, such as an office, to perform all necessary functions associated with the position. Other recommendations included ensuring that one objective party be put in place to guide the partnership, making more information available about the community, increasing communication between different federal agencies, obtaining quicker responses from federal agencies, keeping an open mind, and respecting differences in perspectives.

#### *Interviewees' Recommendations for Other Communities Using Partnerships*

Thirteen interviewees offered suggestions for other communities interested in using collaborative partnerships to address environmental justice issues. Most felt that a well-planned partnership was essential. To achieve this interviewees recommended the following activities: make a list of all possible partners from the federal to local levels, learn about their interests, and then identify how their interests overlap and can benefit the partnership; bring partners into the process early; establish a solid vision; ask partners what you want your community to look like in ten years; obtain consensus on the goals and objectives; categorize and prioritize goals and objectives; and secure buy-in from high level stakeholders. Three interviewees also placed emphasis on the need for the community to speak with one voice. One even went as far as suggesting that action be taken to better encourage and support grassroots leaders to emerge from affected communities. Two interviewees also emphasized the need for communities to obtain education on environmental justice issues at the start of the partnering process. They added that that it is important for partners to understand how the affected community perceives environmental injustice. Along with environmental justice training, one of the same interviewees recommended that underlying issues of race and history be openly explored before taking actions to address the immediate concerns. Finally, one interviewee suggested that communities identify a federal contact when starting a partnership, and another suggested reviewing other partnership success stories.

### *Value of Collaborative Partnership*

When asked directly the value of addressing issues through a collaborative partnership approach, interviewees came up with a variety of responses. One interviewee indicated that partnering results in quicker decisions. Another indicated that partnering, or acting like a team in the words of the interviewee, gives all interested parties a chance to provide their input and feel positive about their contributions. Related to the team concept, one interviewee stated that the partnership process has resulted in more people becoming aware of each other, and another stated that the process enables partners to see the “connectivity across issues” since each get to share their views. Also related to the team concept, one interviewee noted that in a partnership, partners act as “lifelines” to each other through their willingness to share expertise. Two interviewees noted that partnerships aid in the leveraging of resources. Particularly, one noted that once different groups show a willingness to work together, others are more likely to join in and participate. Finally, one agency interviewee noted that the partnership has made it easier to encourage other agency colleagues working in Spartanburg to engage in additional community involvement efforts.

When asked whether the collaborative process could be used to address other issues that the Arkwright and Forest Park community is facing, thirteen of thirteen partners addressing this topic responded affirmatively. In addition, most indicated that this approach could be used in many other communities to address a variety of issues. One interviewee remarked that this model would be very useful to begin applying in other communities facing Brownfields redevelopment issues. Another mentioned that this model could certainly be used to address future environmental justice issues facing other communities, and added that local leaders could be persuaded to buy into a process like this every time. One interviewee cautioned, however, that despite the seeming success of the partnership approach in Spartanburg, advocates should not rely on a single “cookie-cutter” approach when pulling partnerships together.

When asked whether the main issues affecting the Arkwright and Forest Park community would have been addressed without a collaborative approach, of the twelve that addressed this question, two indicated that the issues would have been addressed but the process would have taken much longer. For example, one stated that the issues would have been addressed in a “very piecemeal and unorganized fashion.” Another was less confident, stating that the issues may have been addressed, but less successfully. Five interviewees felt that only some of the issues would have been addressed without a partnership approach. For instance, two stated that while the contaminated sites may have been cleaned up, the effort to plan the redevelopment of the Brownfields would not have been initiated. The remaining five indicated that the issues would not have been addressed. For example, one interviewee suggested that the competing interests between different parties could not have been resolved. Another remarked that the parties would have ended up arguing the issues in court.

### *Value of Federal Involvement in Partnership*

When asked about the effect of having federal agencies participate in the ReGenesis Partnership, responses covered two broad categories: resources and credibility. Five interviewees remarked that the greatest effect of federal involvement has been the resources the federal agencies bring to the table. Specifically these resources, as indicated by the interviewees, include money, technical assistance, and expertise. One interviewee stated that without the federal technical expertise and dollars, the partnership would not have emerged. Additionally, another type of resource that federal partners bring is a knowledge of resources that other federal agencies may have available. One interviewee stated that enabling the

community to identify the broad range of resources available at the federal level covering everything from transportation to issues of public health is a key part of a holistic approach to revitalization. Regarding issues of credibility, three interviewees specifically indicated that federal involvement has elevated the level of trust and credibility surrounding the project. Along these lines, another explained that having federal partners has helped the partnership earn the trust of banks in the area. Additionally, the interviewee noted that having federal partners involved helps to better ensure that money allocated for partnership activities does not get misspent. Also related, but more intangible, one interviewee noted that having federal partners involved helps provide a national presence and a direct connection with Washington, D.C. Finally, one interviewee noted that having the federal partners involved “has been one of those uplifting, empowering things for the community.”

When asked what federal partners have gained by participating in the ReGenesis Partnership, most interviewees indicated that they gained a better knowledge of the community. Specifically, they learned about specific threats that the community faced, such as the Arkwright Dump. In addition, federal partners have learned more about how to effectively work with communities and design policies that better meet the needs of local people. For instance, one interviewee remarked that involvement in Spartanburg has helped the interviewee’s agency better appreciate that the source of true collaborative problem solving is at the local level. In addition, interviewees noted that federal partners have learned more about issues of environmental justice and how to address them. One agency representative noted that before becoming involved in this project, the interviewee did not fully appreciate the disparities facing minority communities. In fact, before getting involved in the project, the interviewee typically assumed that communities would look to federal agencies if they had problems. But involvement in this community project enabled the interviewee to more fully appreciate how some communities have lost full trust in the government to assist them. Other interviewees noted that involvement in the ReGenesis project has helped federal partners gain the good will of the community, learn how to think innovatively, and better appreciate that communities with significant environmental problems may still be unidentified.

When asked whether Federal agencies have been able to better coordinate their activities as a result of their involvement in the ReGenesis Partnership, most found it difficult to answer, especially since EPA has been the federal agency most visible in Spartanburg. Although three out of the eight interviewees who addressed this issue felt that EPA was doing a good job in its coordination both with the City and the community, most interviewees were unclear whether better federal coordination across different federal agencies has occurred. One interviewee explained that towards the beginning of the partnership, several agencies indicated they had resources to contribute; however, since that time it has appeared that many of these same federal agencies have disengaged. This observation was also echoed by another interviewee’s statement. Finally, one interviewee felt that having federal partners involved has resulted in better coordination, mainly through improved understanding of the different agencies resources, but that agencies still have a lot to learn in this area.

Interviewees were also asked what federal agencies could do to be more effective partners in local collaborative efforts. The first set of recommendations centered on how agencies should interact with communities. These included getting involved early on in the partnership, meeting with the affected community at the ground level, genuinely listening to community concerns, and ensuring that agency representatives possess sufficient maturity, skill, and community involvement experience to participate effectively. One interviewee remarked that it requires significant effort to undo damage resulting from actions taken, or comments made, by agency representatives inexperienced in community work.

Another set of recommendations focused on how agencies promote and make their resources available. Two interviewees suggested that federal agencies should do a better job of disseminating information about applying for funding. Another suggested that agencies should make community focused resources more user-friendly. Citing the former Livable Communities initiative as a model, this interviewee added that this could be done in a number of ways, including asking each agency to support one person in each region and state who could effectively talk about available resources with communities. These persons should then be listed in a directory, similar to what the Interagency Working Group on Environmental Justice (IWG) currently makes available describing federal contacts. Other suggestions regarding this topic included making one agency serve as a lead agency for directing interested communities to resources available at other agencies, and requiring that each agency involved in a partnership use only one person to work directly with the community. One local interviewee explained that it was intimidating to try and understand the different work EPA was trying to do in Spartanburg. The interviewee further explained that with three-four different points of contact at EPA, it made it that much more difficult to understand all the actions being undertaken. Echoing this sentiment, an agency interviewee explained that EPA was working to ensure better internal coordination at EPA of all those that were working directly on the Spartanburg issues. To accomplish this, an internal work group has been functioning since the summer of 2001. The work group has even developed a set of principles to better guide the work of the group. Other recommendations to improve how federal agencies work in partnerships include sharing the stories of these efforts around EPA more regularly, continuing the IWG, working to learn more about the different resources that each agency has available, and requiring that more than one federal agency be involved local partnerships in order to develop a fuller picture of resources that are available.

### *Key Findings*

- Partners are generally satisfied with the current state of the partnership and their ability to participate in it. They are satisfied that their interests are being met and are optimistic about its future activities.
- Participants would appreciate greater information on project goals, objectives, timelines, measures of success, roles, and action items from meetings. This would enable partners to feel confident about their role within the partnership and how they can best apply resources to support it.
- Partners are very satisfied with the level of community involvement in the partnership. ReGenesis has been effective at keeping the Arkwright and Forest Park community well informed about the actions of the partnership. In addition, ReGenesis ensures that input from the community will be heard and used to help define and refine the overall partnership vision and direct activities necessary to implement that vision.
- Federal involvement played a significant role in helping the partnership emerge. Specifically, federal partners have provided integral resources and technical assistance. In addition, by directly participating, federal partners have boosted the credibility of the partnership effort and raised expectations of the Arkwright and Forest Park community that the overall partnership goals will be met.
- Local participation by the City and County has also been critical to the partnership. However, some partners feel that additional support from the City and County is still needed in order for the partnership activities to be fully implemented.

- Much of the partnership's concern regarding future activities centers on the investigation and cleanup of the contaminated sites and the development of the Brownfields comprehensive plan. EPA has not yet made final decisions regarding the cleanups of the Arkwright Dump and fertilizer plant sites. Although expectations are that cleanup issues will be resolved, several activities must be put on hold until key decisions regarding the sites are made. Another key component is the development of a comprehensive plan for the area. This plan will help better define the overall vision of the partnership, but until a final plan can be completed and agreed to, few revitalization efforts can proceed.
- Unresolved disputes, between ReGenesis and Rhodia, and between ReGenesis and IMC, could adversely impact the effectiveness of the partnership in the future. However, few partners believe that these disputes will significantly detract from the partnership achieving its overall cleanup and revitalization goals.

### *Afterword*

After interviewees had the opportunity to review the first draft of this case study, a member of the ReGenesis Partnership's steering committee submitted an update regarding activities of the partnership since March 2002. These are summarized briefly below. First, over 100 partners are now involved in the ReGenesis Partnership effort. Second, the ReGenesis Partnership has been awarded a \$230,000 Ford Foundation grant; and a \$1.2 million U.S. Senate appropriation for transportation development (U.S. Senator Ernest F. Hollings). Third, the partnership has been awarded a \$250,000 Weed and Seed grant from the U.S. Department of Justice. Finally, in June 2002, Harold Mitchell was awarded EPA's National "Citizens Excellence in Community Involvement Award."<sup>279</sup>

## ***List of Interviewees***

### **Barrio Logan Partnership**

Don Ames~	California Air Resources Board
Norma Chavez	Metropolitan Area Advisory Council on Anti-Poverty Project
Susana Concha-Garcia~	American Lung Association of San Diego & Imperial Counties
Paula Forbis	Environmental Health Coalition
Clarice Gaylord	formerly with U.S. Environmental Protection Agency
Steven Gold	San Diego Attorney's Office
James Justus	Inner City Business Association
Jerry Martin~	California Air Resources Board
Lane McVey	National Steel and Shipbuilding Company
David Merk	Unified Port District
Lewis Michaelson	Katz and Associates
Frank Riley	U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development
Sonia Rodriguez~	Mercado Tenants Association
Charles "Muggs" Stoll	California Department of Transportation

### **Bridges to Friendship Partnership**

Richard Allen	U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development
Uwe Brandes	District of Columbia
Brian Christopher	Alice Hamilton Occupational Health Center
Gentry Davis~	U.S. National Park Service
Camille Destafny	U.S. Navy
Judith Dobbins~	Covenant House D.C.
Christine Hart-Wright	Strive DC, Inc.
Linda Jackson	Building Bridges Across the River
David Ouderkirk	U.S. Navy
Randy Parker~	U.S. Department of Labor
Reginald Parrish	U.S. Environmental Protection Agency
Mike Shannon~	Covenant House D.C.
Maxine Snowden~	U.S. National Park Service
Mike Wallach	Anacostia Economic Development Corporation
Babette Williams~	U.S. Department of Labor
Admiral Christopher Weaver	U.S. Navy

### **Metlakatla Peninsula Cleanup Partnership**

Jeff Benson~	Metlakatla Indian Community
Garth Beyette	Federal Aviation Administration
Robert Deering~	U.S. Coast Guard
Frank Esposito~	U.S. Coast Guard
Jere Hayslett	Federal Aviation Administration
Robert Johnson	Army Corps of Engineers
Cliff Mahooty	U.S. Bureau of Indian Affairs
Felicia Wright	U.S. Environmental Protection Agency
Len Richeson	U.S. Department of Defense
Callie Ridolfi~	Ridolfi Engineers

~Denotes that individual participated in a group interview.

### **Metro East Lead Collaborative**

Chris Anderson	East St. Louis Community Development Block Grant Operation
Tony Camillo	St. Mary's Hospital
Noemi Emeric	U.S. Environmental Protection Agency
Dave Eustis	Southwestern Illinois Resource Conservation and Development
Blair Forlaw	East-West Gateway Coordinating Council
Tom Miller	Illinois Environmental Protection Agency
Rebecca Perkins	Neighbors United for Progress
Deb Roush	Army Corps of Engineers
Joan Scharf	St. Clair County Intergovernmental Grants Department
Lue Walters	Natural Resources Conservation Service (USDA)

### **New Madrid Partnership**

Walter Bone~	Great Rivers Alliance Natural Resource Districts
Victor Blackburn~	Natural Resources Conservation Service (USDA)
Mary Evans~	Community Facilitator
Gwen Farr	Community Health Team
Darvin Green	Lincoln University Cooperative, Community Development Corp.
Adrienne Hunter-Wells~	Community Coordinator
Laura McKeever~	Great Rivers Alliance Natural Resource Districts
Rose Minner	Community Facilitator/Community Team Member
Althea Moses	U.S. Environmental Protection Agency
Willie Pittman~	Natural Resources Conservation Service (USDA)
Fred Reeves	Natural Resources Conservation Service (USDA)
Ervin Schaedler~	Great Rivers Alliance Natural Resource Districts
Louise Typler	Headstart

### **ReGenesis Partnership**

Doug Bracket	Spartanburg Technical College
George Fletcher~	Fletcher Consulting
John Funderburk	Upstate Assistant for U.S. Senator E.F. Hollings
Mike Garret	City of Spartanburg
Dr. David Goolsby	South Carolina Department of Health and Environmental Control
Brian Holtzclaw	U.S. Environmental Protection Agency
Ralph Howard	U.S. Environmental Protection Agency
Kelly Long	Office of U.S. Congressman Jim DeMint
Harold Mitchell	ReGenesis
Cynthia Peurifoy	U.S. Environmental Protection Agency
Lewis Pilgrim	Arkwright Neighborhood Association
Robert Reed~	Councilman for City of Spartanburg
Elena Rush	Spartanburg County
James Talley~	formerly Mayor of City of Spartanburg
Jim Trafton	Rhodia, Inc.
Brad Wyche~	UpState Forever

~Denotes that individual participated in a group interview.

## ***Copy of Interview Guide***

### Evaluating the Environmental Justice Collaborative Model

## **Interview Guide**

### Background

The Interagency Working Group on Environmental Justice (IWG) made the development of a collaborative problem-solving model a priority last year by promoting fifteen environmental justice demonstration projects. To better assess the value of the collaborative model and capture lessons learned to benefit future partnerships, the IWG committed to the development of an evaluation methodology.

To assist the IWG in carrying out this important task, the EPA Office of Policy, Economics and Innovation's Evaluation Support Division is preparing case studies of selected demonstration projects. These case studies seek to identify lessons learned in a number of important areas to gain a better understanding of this emerging collaborative model. The \_\_\_\_\_ project/partnership/collaborative has been selected to be a candidate for the case study effort.

To gather the information needed to develop the case studies and assess the overall value of the collaborative model, the Evaluation Team has created a series of interview questions to discuss with stakeholders participating in the \_\_\_\_\_ project/partnership/collaborative. Your responses to these questions will provide lessons that the Evaluation Team can use to better understand:

- key factors contributing to project success and challenges;
- the effectiveness of multi-stakeholder collaborative partnerships to address environmental justice issues; and
- the effectiveness of Federal agency involvement in these projects.

The guide includes standard questions we plan to draw from in our interviews with partners from each of the participating projects. We may also ask a limited set of additional questions that are more specific to your project. The interview will take approximately 60-90 minutes.

Your responses to these questions will be used solely by the Evaluation Team to develop the evaluation/case study report. Your name or organization will not be directly associated with any quotations used or narrative developed unless you specifically grant permission. Our notes from your interview can only be made available to outside parties through a Freedom of Information Act request; however, formal requests for interview notes are very rare.

We appreciate your assistance in this effort, and look forward to speaking with you.

### 1. General Background

- a. Briefly describe the main issues facing the affected community that brought the \_\_\_\_\_ project/partnership/collaborative together?
- b. How long have you been a part of the \_\_\_\_\_ project/partnership/collaborative?
- c. Why did you decide to join the \_\_\_\_\_ project/partnership/collaborative? What is your role with the project/partnership/collaborative? (e.g., facilitator, project coordinator, participant)



- d. Briefly describe how the \_\_\_\_\_ project/partnership/collaborative came about.  
-When was the project/partnership/collaborative started?  
-What stage of development is the project/partnership/collaborative in now? (e.g., early, middle, or late stages)

## 2. Background on Collaborative Process

- a. Please describe generally how the \_\_\_\_\_ project/partnership/collaborative works?  
-How often do you and your project/partnership/collaborative partners meet?  
-How do you make decisions as a group?  
-How were you and others asked to participate?  
-How does the group address difficult issues that arise between members?
- b. Have the organizational styles and procedures of the different organizations limited effective collaboration between partners? How do you and your partners break down organizational barriers?
- c. How does the \_\_\_\_\_ project/partnership/collaborative allow for meaningful community involvement? (e.g., are meetings open to the public, are meetings structured so that community participants can effectively participate, are technical issues clearly explained) How has input from the affected community been used in prioritizing action plans during the planning process?
- d. To what extent has the \_\_\_\_\_ project/partnership/collaborative resulted in greater collaboration with Federal, State, Tribal, and local governments and organizations?

## 3. Satisfaction with Collaborative Process

- a. Have you and your organization been satisfied with your ability to participate in the project decision-making process? Please explain.
- b. Are the issues most important to you and your organization being adequately addressed by the \_\_\_\_\_ project/partnership/collaborative? Why or why not?

## 4. Project Activities and Results

- a. What are the main activities the \_\_\_\_\_ project/partnership/collaborative has undertaken so far? (e.g., air quality monitoring, brownfields redevelopment, community visioning workshops, etc.)
- b. To what extent has the organization you represent been able to dedicate resources to help implement these activities? (e.g., volunteer time/expertise, staff time/expertise, \$, technical assistance)
- c. What impacts have these activities had at addressing the main issues facing the affected community?
- d. Are you satisfied with the outcomes of these activities so far? Please explain.

## 5. Project Successes and Challenges

- a. How does the \_\_\_\_\_ project/partnership/collaborative plan to measure the success of these activities?
- b. What has been the greatest success of the \_\_\_\_\_ project/partnership/collaborative so far? What have been the main reasons for this success?
- c. What has been the biggest challenge of the \_\_\_\_\_ project/partnership/collaborative so far?
  - What have been the main reasons for this challenge?
  - Has your group been able to overcome this challenge? How?

#### 6. Value of Collaborative Process to Affected Community

- a. What has been the overall value of using a collaborative process to address the main issues facing the affected community?
- b. Do you feel that the collaborative process used in the \_\_\_\_\_ project/partnership/collaborative can address similar issues that the affected community may face in the future? Please explain.
- c. How would the main issues facing the affected community have been addressed if the \_\_\_\_\_ project/partnership/collaborative had not been formed?
- d. What would you recommend to improve how the \_\_\_\_\_ project/partnership/collaborative works in the future?
- e. What additional lessons can you share with other communities interested in using a collaborative process?

#### 7. Value of Federal Involvement

- a. Have participating Federal agencies identified conflicting requirements in their statutes or regulations that have been barriers to the success of the \_\_\_\_\_ project/partnership/collaborative?
- b. What has been the effect of having Federal partners participate in the \_\_\_\_\_ project/partnership/collaborative for the affected community?
- c. What do you think the Federal agencies have gained by participating in the \_\_\_\_\_ project/partnership/collaborative?
- d. Have participating Federal agencies been better able to coordinate their activities as a result of the \_\_\_\_\_ project/partnership/collaborative?
- e. What would you recommend so that Federal agencies best tailor their roles to participate in collaborative processes?

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### **Introduction**

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