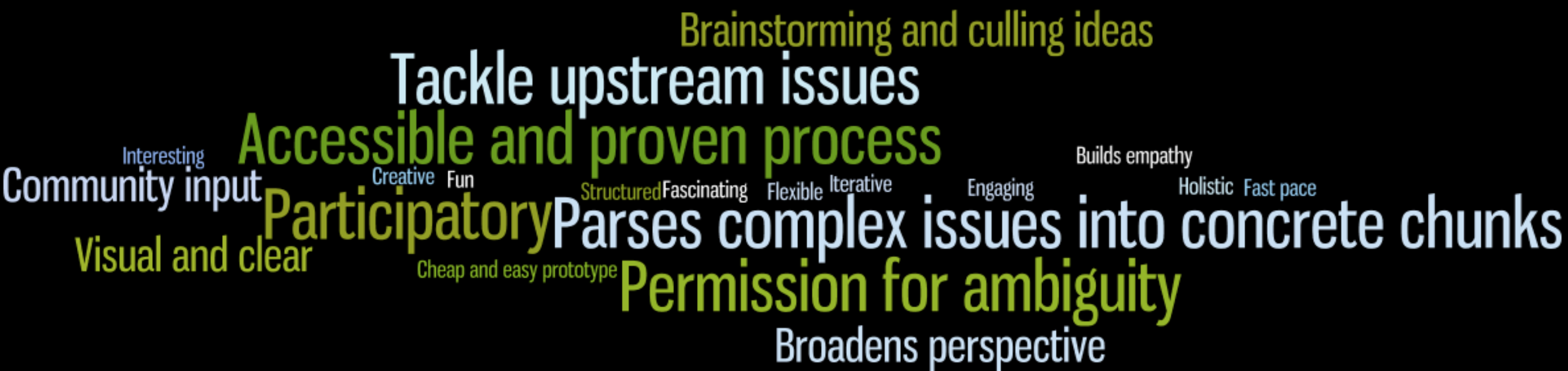


DESIGN SPRINT EVALUATION



Prepared by Jessica Vechakul

For the Best Babies Zone + Alameda County Public Health Department + the Gobeel Group

January 2014

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Jessica Vechakul conducted this evaluation as part of the Interdisciplinary MPH program at UC Berkeley's School of Public Health.

This evaluation would not have been possible without the wisdom and insights of the following interviewees:

Design Sprint Facilitators

Bina Patel Shrimali
Jessica Luginbuhl
Deja Kono
Kali Cheung

Design Thinking Advisor

Jaspal Sandhu

Key Stakeholders

Cheri Pies
Kiko Malin

Design Sprint Participants

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Kristin Palm
Lena Robinson
Kristin Spanos

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She is also grateful to Julius Orejudos, Diana Rios, and Jessica Zulema Woodard
for their help transcribing the interviews.



Best Babies Zone and the design sprint

The Best Babies Zone (BBZ) is a 3-year initiative aimed at reducing the infant mortality gap in three major US cities - Cincinnati, New Orleans, and Oakland, CA. The BBZ is funded by W.K. Kellogg and is led by the University of California, Berkeley. According to Dr. Cheri Pies, the Principal Investigator for this initiative, the BBZ's goal is to build community capacity so that all babies are born into conditions that enable them to thrive and reach their full potential. To demonstrate a variety of approaches in diverse circumstances, each of the three BBZ sites has a different lead organization and strategy. These sites are meant to provide blueprints for implementation in other cities nationwide.

The Alameda County Public Health Department (ACPHD) is the lead organization for the Castlemont BBZ in Oakland, CA. Kiko Malin, the Director of ACPHD Family Health Services Division (which oversees the Castlemont BBZ initiative) describes BBZ as a different perspective and paradigm shift that focuses on shifting the environment to be a supportive place for health, as a complement to individual case management or services.

The ACPHD BBZ team identified "design thinking" as a promising strategy. Design thinking is a structured process that consists of methods for developing an in-depth understanding of people who are directly impacted by an issue, generating creative ideas, and rapidly learning from small-scale pilots. Although design thinking is an established process commonly used in the private sector to create product, services, strategies, and programs, it is a new approach for public health.

The main objectives of the design thinking pilot in the Castlemont BBZ were

- 1) to enhance the capacity of the ACPHD to use design thinking,
- 2) to support community-led, small visible wins in the Castlemont BBZ, and
- 3) to leverage the strengths of the partner organizations in the Building Blocks Collaborative.

From March to June 2013, ACPHD and the Gobee Group facilitated a "design sprint" during which 14 individuals met for two hours every week for 12 consecutive weeks to generate four concepts for stimulating a vibrant local economy in the Castlemont BBZ. Based on feedback from Castlemont residents during interactive poster sessions at Center of Hope Church, Castlemont High School, and a local store, the Castlemont Community Market concept was selected for implementation.

The participants were an interdisciplinary group, representing the organizations from the sectors of public health, design thinking, community building, economic development, design thinking, social services, housing and retail infrastructure. The following organizations were directly involved in the design sprint:

- Alameda County Public Health Department
- East Bay Asian Local Development Corporation
- East Bay Sustainable Business Alliance
- Federal Reserve Bank of San Francisco
- Gobee Group
- Mandela MarketPlace
- Social Services Agency of Alameda County
- Youth UpRising
- Y&H Soda Foundation

The goal of this evaluation is to identify what aspects of the design sprint worked well and what can be improved, including specific recommendations for refinement and implementation of the Castlemont Community Market concept. The findings in this Evaluation Report are based on semi-structured interviews with the fourteen individuals who were involved in the design sprint and two key stakeholders for the overall BBZ initiative. Since Bina Patel Shrimali (ACPHD) and Jaspal Sandhu (Gobee Group) were the main project mentors for this evaluation and provided significant input for this report, their comments have been directly credited by name. In order to encourage candid responses, all other quotes and comments have been associated with the interviewee's role regarding the design sprint, rather than their name. The interviewees were categorized according to the following roles, and a list of the individuals in these groups is included in the Acknowledgements.

Facilitator refers to the ACPHD staff that planned the agendas and guided the group through the design sprint.

Design thinking advisor refers to Jaspal Sandhu who advised the facilitators on the design thinking process.

Participant refers to the individuals from partner organizations who were involved in design sprint activities.

Key Stakeholder refers to individuals who are key decision-makers who influence the BBZ initiative.



Table of Contents

Design Thinking 5

A summary of the design thinking process and how it may be applied to public health.

Design Sprint 12

An overview of the 12-week process, key factors, and lessons learned.

I Community Engagement 23

Reflections upon the levels of community engagement, lessons learned, and suggested strategies.

2 Public Safety 33

Perspectives on violence and public safety. Participants suggest how public safety can be acknowledged.

3 Community Market 37

A description of the Castlemont Community Market and some suggestions for implementation.

Looking Ahead 44

Long-term plans and strategies for sharing the work with various audiences.

Key Takeaways 47

The big picture concepts for design thinking and social sector work.

Design Thinking



Challenges can be paralyzing

"There's a sense of
'We can't do anything.'

There are all these barriers,
and it's not clear who the actors are.

So it's like pulling.

Where's that string that you pull on that unravels
the whole thing?"

Design thinking can parse complex systems into manageable parts.

"I feel like [design thinking is] a way to identify
strategies to move big complex issues.

We're all trained to think (especially in public
health) on the systems level where you see the
whole population and you can see every
challenge and how everything is interconnected
to everything else. And you write a plan that's like
20 million pages long. And it's on a shelf
somewhere because it's too overwhelming. And
there aren't the resources to implement it
because you know that every issue has a multi-
level intervention associated with it.

But I think what's great about design thinking - it's
like, here's a solution that we know is not going to
solve everything but it's our starting place and
that's going to build momentum, buy in, and
interest and resource to like continue to bolster
the work."

- Bina Patel Shrimali, ACPHD

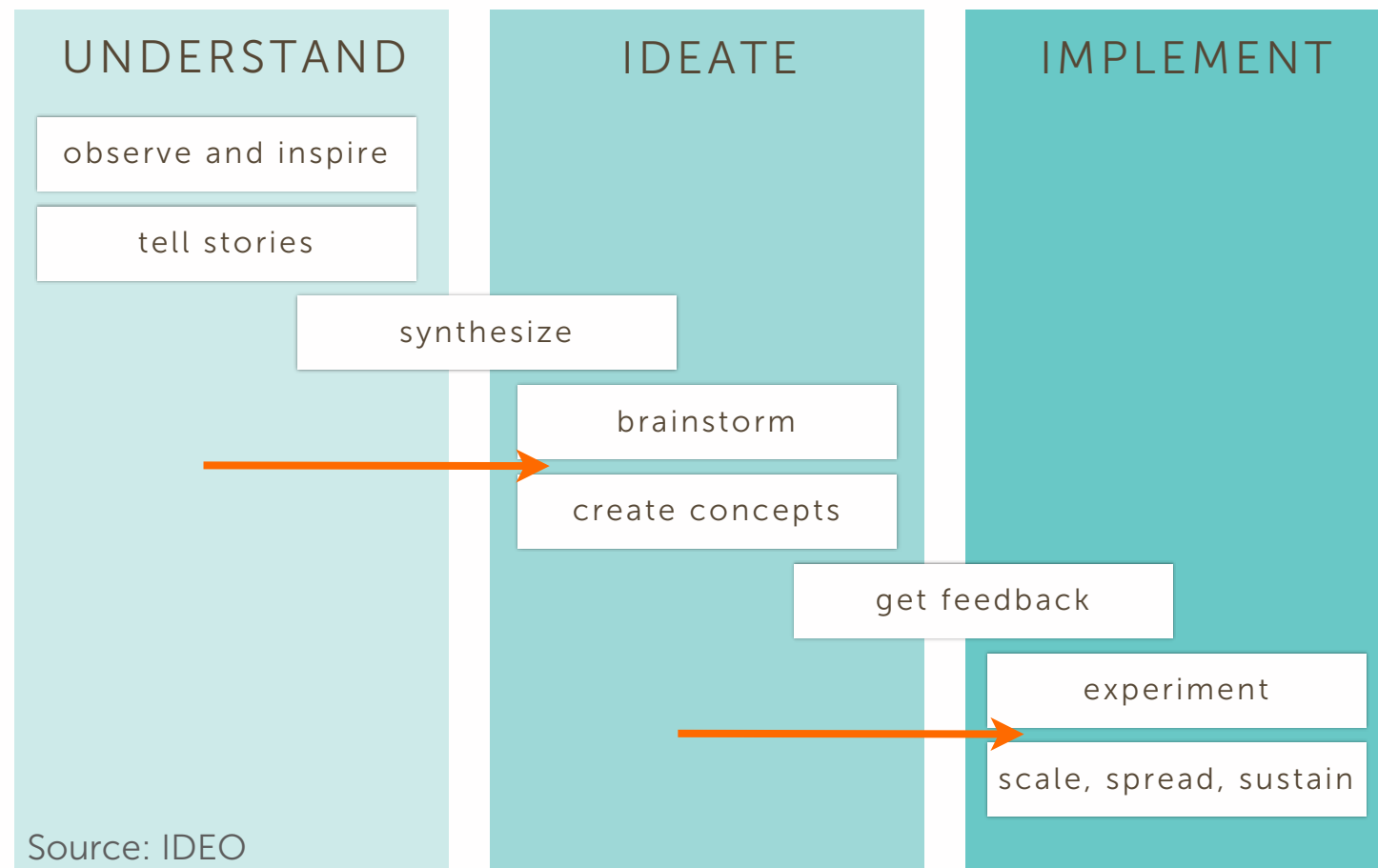




Applying design thinking to public health

Design sprint facilitators discussed how design thinking could be applicable to public health.

THE DESIGN THINKING PROCESS



Seeking diverse perspectives

"Going to where the people are" can offer perspectives from those whose voices aren't typically heard. "Talking to a store owner who's at that store for 12+ hours a day - he's not going to come to anything else, and he has a lot of stories to tell."

Unearthing and combining ideas for shared ownership

"I couldn't say that we take credit for the ideas as much as unearthing them from this process. [...] It's like combining energy with people that you meet and talk to in some way and then developing something that then is going to resonate with them because it's partially their thing."

Personally experiencing to be more responsive

"It seems like the kind of thing government agencies should be doing." These experiences can help people leverage power more responsibly to create change.

A place-based way to address social determinants of health

Design thinking could be a promising way to engage residents in focusing on social determinants of health. The process can be very locally responsive to what the assets, needs, and opportunities are in a place.

Testing ideas to get concrete results

Design thinking's approach of testing ideas minimizes risk. Going beyond theory and estimates, these tests produce concrete results that can secure buy-in from those who are resistant to change.



Benefits of design thinking

Design sprints reflected upon the benefits of design thinking.

A fast-paced process for learning and doing

"Let's stop thinking, and get out and do." And I think that's a really good reminder because you can really get in your head with all kinds of ideas."

-Facilitator

Systematic and structured process for inclusive creativity

Design thinking does not rely on a visionary leader. Everyone's ideas have equal weight regardless of their social status or hierarchical position.

"The fact that it's systematic makes it applicable to different settings and it like really pushes people to find that creative bone in their body."

-Facilitator

Community outreach without a completely set agenda

"I think going in really open is a great thing. We don't do that enough here. [...] I was and remain really interested in how you go into a community and talk to people without a completely set agenda. I really just want to hear what you have to say. I really want to look and see what I see. I really just want to take things in before I start narrowing things down and making assumptions based on things I've already narrowed down."

-Participant

Deep and intentional immersion in a problem

"If I had an hour to solve a problem, I would spend 55 minutes on the problem and 5 minutes on the solution." Referencing this quote by Albert Einstein, a participant mentioned how helpful it was to be immersed in the problem in an intentional way.

-Participant

A quick and affordable way to develop a strategy

Key stakeholders, facilitators, and participants noted that design thinking enables people to try ideas in a small-scale and learn quickly from mistakes. In that way, design thinking helps to illuminate the most promising path before investing a lot of resources.

Organically identify community leaders

Some participants mentioned that short-term pilots can help identify existing leaders in a community.

According to a key stakeholder, hands-on experience in a small trial can help community members decide whether they want to commit for a longer term.



Some challenges of design thinking

Design thinking is a process with some associated tools and methods. As with any process, there are strengths, weaknesses, and variations in how it is practiced.

Not sector-specific and not issue-specific

A facilitator noted that one disadvantage of design thinking is that design thinking consultants might not have any expertise in public health, the particular issues being addressed, or the community. Other approaches, like Community-Based Participatory Research, pre-supposes that practitioners have some sector or content expertise.

A key stakeholder noted that Jaspal Sandhu's public health expertise was particularly reassuring.

Encourages testing ideas, perhaps too quickly

A facilitator questioned whether there should be more caution about testing ideas when people are involved. She noted that other approaches typically allow more time to develop relationships and trust. Potential impacts or funding sources are also carefully considered before moving forward.

Setting an appropriate project scope is challenging

One participant also questioned the utility of debating about the 4 small wins as though they were panaceas. She said that it was doing the community an injustice by not dealing with the bigger issue of long-term disinvestment by players who are absent from the community.

Another participant thought that the initial focus on stimulating a vibrant local economy was too broad and complicated.

Seems “academic”

One participant mentioned the lack of design thinking expertise or time to learn the process as reasons why her organization would not practice design thinking. There is an assumption that one would need some training or theoretical understanding to practice design thinking.

Difficult to explain

One facilitator commented that the processes and phases were hard to explain.

Some participants found the three phases to be particularly helpful and clear. On the other hand, several participants couldn't clearly articulate what design thinking is.

Doubts about studying people

A key stakeholder mentioned that she initially had doubts about how design thinking as a process from the “commercial world” would be applicable to public health. She said the way another design firm described observation of individuals made it feel like “our clients would be under a microscope.” The design sprint shifted the focus from individual observation to neighborhood observation.



Potential applications of design thinking

Design sprinters commented upon potential application of design thinking in their organization or sector.

Decision-making driven by an understanding of people

"Understanding on the ground what actual people living there need and are experiencing. I think everyone comes from their own perspective and their own access to data and sometimes it is the data and not people that you're looking at when you're making investment decisions, and so being there and actually hearing from the community."

- Participant

Potential to address upstream challenges

One participant said that design thinking could be good for strategic planning or community engagement.

Another participant said that design thinking has the potential for "changing some system issues that service design can't do by itself - we can't service a community out of poverty."

Design thinking builds process skills

One participant had a design thinking cheat sheet on her wall, and two flip charts with the "plus, minus, new idea, change" framework in progress.

"I try to use it, like I share it with my team. [...] Let's think about the way that we're engaging our customers. It's that kind of thing. I like it as a way to build process skills so I use it for that. And then I use it also when trying to generate ideas. And just have people approach things differently. And also, just be solution oriented rather than talking about why things don't work."

- Participant

Makes theoretical concepts more tangible

"Economic development is hard to talk about often because it can be an amorphous subject. I really appreciated having these conversations where people could really get concrete about what is community economic development. And thinking of the jobs, the small businesses, the financial products, the child care, the work force, all the different things that come into play around the economic opportunity. I think it's great to get clear about what those things are. So I totally appreciated this as an opportunity to really dig into that a little bit because I think people... it's like they needed to touch it. What is economic development?"

- Participant

"There are larger systems at play that have neglected certain communities and not invested in communities for decades based on a legacy of racism and perpetuated poverty. But, I saw it. [...] I was in that neighborhood every week, watching this, and seeing the blighted area."

- Facilitator



Resources for design thinking

Design sprinters reflected upon what would help them or others apply design thinking to their organization or work.

Sharing lessons learned about different approaches

One participant suggested in-person process-sharing sessions amongst different organizations doing community engagement or economic development. She values being able to ask questions because processes are too complex to write down.

Building Blocks Collaborative meetings could provide a forum for sharing.

Case study, toolkit, or interactive website

One participant said that the design sprint seemed customized for economic development in Castlemont, and it was hard to figure out how design thinking would apply in her organization.

Two participants suggested that there should be a case study that documents the entire process or a toolkit explaining how organizations can apply design thinking to their work.

One participant suggested an interactive website. However, one key stakeholder preferred not to learn from websites.

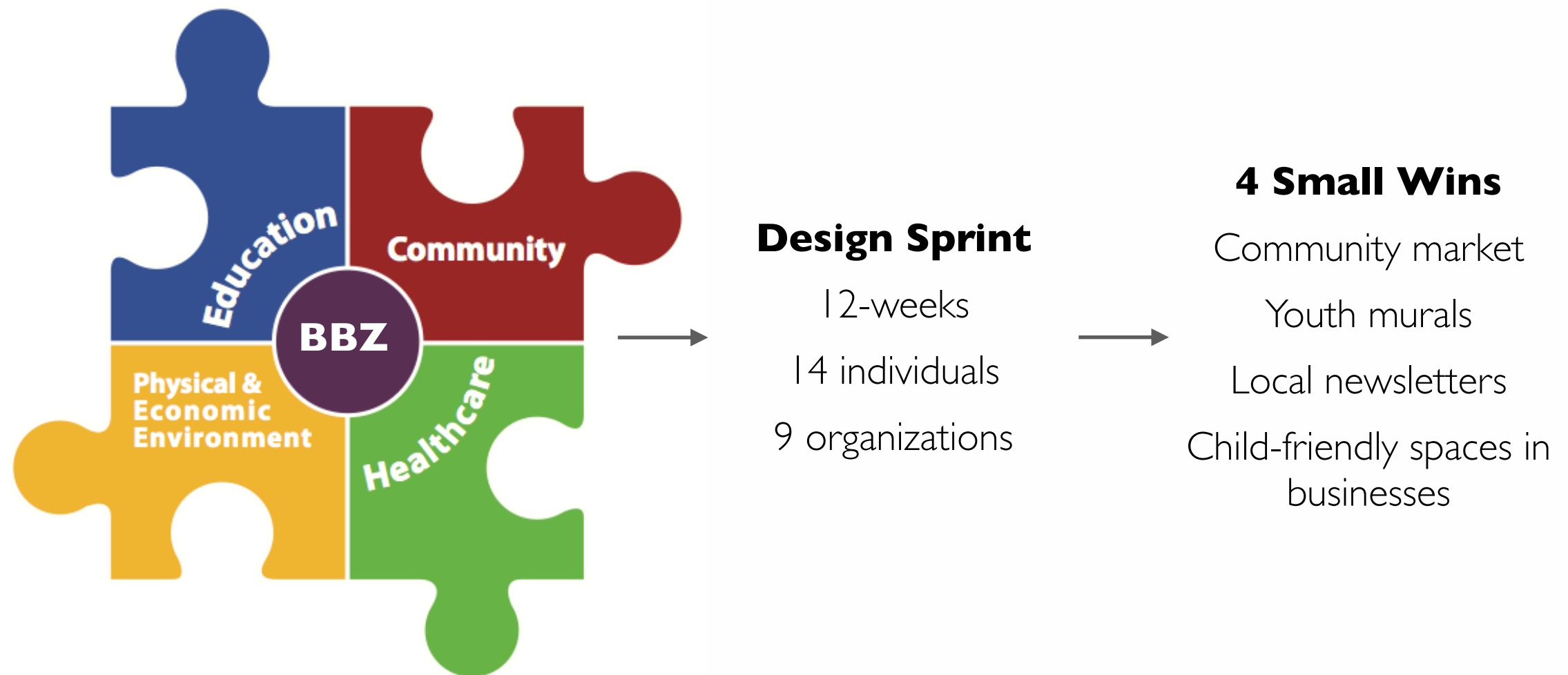
Existing design thinking toolkits and self-guided trainings online can help introduce the process and methods. However, experiential learning is the most effective way to learn design thinking.

Design Sprint



Conceiving the design sprint

Figuring out how the ACPHD BBZ team was going to learn design thinking and use it to further the BBZ work was a huge challenge. It was a moment of clarity when the design sprint was conceived. The complex system of BBZ's multi-year, inter-sector initiative was parsed into a manageable 12-week design sprint focused on economic development and small wins.





Selecting economic development as an issue

Based on existing county-level and neighborhood survey data, conversations with people connected to Castlemont, phone calls, and internet searches, several priority issues emerged. These factors helped to determine the focus of the design thinking pilot on economic development.

Internal capacity

The ACPHD BBZ team had more experience and stronger allies working on economic development than violence prevention and mental health. One of the ACPHD facilitators had previously partnered with a group of women from Castlemont and a student in the UC Berkeley-UCSF Joint Medical Program on a Photovoice project on economic issues in Castlemont (Chow, 2013).

Depth and breadth

Economic development is an issue that many residents care deeply about.

According to Youth UpRising's Youth-Led Participatory Action Research surveys of 12% of Castlemont residents, 97% of respondents said that jobs were very important (Youth UpRising, 2012). This finding is supported by secondary data indicating that in 2011, the unemployment rate in East Oakland was 30% - three times more than that of Alameda County (Youth UpRising, 2012).

Leveraging allies

For the design sprint, Bina Patel Shrimali recruited participants who were open to trusting a new process, and who would gel quickly.

Several design sprinters were also part of the Building Blocks Collaborative economic development working group and contributed significant expertise about that sector. This group had been meeting for several months and already had a strong working relationship.



Design sprint objectives and outcomes

The design sprint had three main objectives:

- 1) to enhance the capacity of the ACPHD BBZ team to use design thinking,
- 2) to support community-led, small visible wins in the Castlemont BBZ, and
- 3) to leverage the strengths of the partner organizations in the Building Blocks Collaborative.

The facilitators and participants generally thought that the design sprint achieved these goals. The long-term outcomes remain to be seen.

Facilitators deepened their knowledge of design thinking.

Those that had prior design thinking experience were able to deepen their knowledge by applying the process and techniques to complex societal issues.

The facilitators learned by having to plan the agendas and activities.

Understandably, those who were new to design thinking and were not able to attend all the sessions were not able to articulate what design thinking is.

Partner organizations formed stronger bonds.

Some participants noted that the design sprint enabled them to build a sense of true partnership, trust, and friendship.

"I can call any of the members and be like, 'Oh my God, I have these burning questions, please help me,' and they will reply. I don't think that happens magically in organizations and in community initiatives."

- Participant

This participant mentioned that critical dialogues about the realities of the community also helped to form this trust.

Responsive, actionable ways to build momentum.

The team was able to maintain a systems perspective on all the challenges in the community and also identify manageable first steps. The process resulted in actionable ideas that people were willing to work on.

One facilitator said, "Some of the data that helped me feel like it did work was that when we shared back the ideas, people were really jazzed about them. They were like 'Yeah, let's do this! Can we do it by 4th of July?'"



Design sprint timeline

From March to June 2013, the 12-week design sprint included the design thinking phases of *Understand* and *Ideate*. Due to staffing shifts and needed fund development, the *Implement* phase began in late summer 2013. Since then, ACPHD has been supporting neighborhood residents in the refinement and implementation of the Castlemont Community Market. The Market is intended to provide a venue where local entrepreneurs can earn income and to serve as a community resource for goods, services, information, and recreational activities.

| UNDERSTAND | | | | | | IDEATE | | | | | |
|-------------|---------------------|---|---|---------------------|-------------------------------|------------------|-----------------------------------|-------------------------------------|-------------------------|--|---|
| 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 | 8 | 9 | 10 | 11 | 12 |
| Orientation | Neighborhood walk 1 | Brainstorm insights & strategies Community history | McDonald's meeting Share top 3 insights & strategies | Neighborhood walk 2 | Synthesis of Understand Phase | | | | | | |
| | | | | | | Reframe Question | Brainstorm for small visible wins | 2x2 matrices to categorize concepts | Selected top 4 concepts | Planned & conducted resident feedback sessions | Vote to select Community Market concept |
| 3/20 | 3/27 | 4/3 | 4/10 | 4/17 | 4/24 | 5/1 | 5/8 | 5/15 | 5/22 | 5/29 | 6/4 |



A glimpse of the design sprint

The BBZ team recognized that being in the neighborhood was important for gaining an understanding of the community. Most meetings were hosted and held at Youth UpRising, a community transformation center in Castlemont. In spite of the perceived conflict with public health, the team also held one meeting at McDonald's to gain perspective on Eastmont as a diverse community hub.





Participant involvement

Several factors influenced the participants' level of involvement.

Opportunity to engage with community members

Some participants are in roles in which they do not often talk with community members. Some participants were particularly interested in learning about Castlemont.

Valuing the partnerships with ACPHD and the group

Some participants said they were engaged because they wanted to deepen the organizational partnerships.

Passion about economic development

Several participants were drawn to this project because they believe in its potential to improve lives.

Curiosity about design thinking

Several participants had heard about design thinking and were enticed by the opportunity to learn more about it.

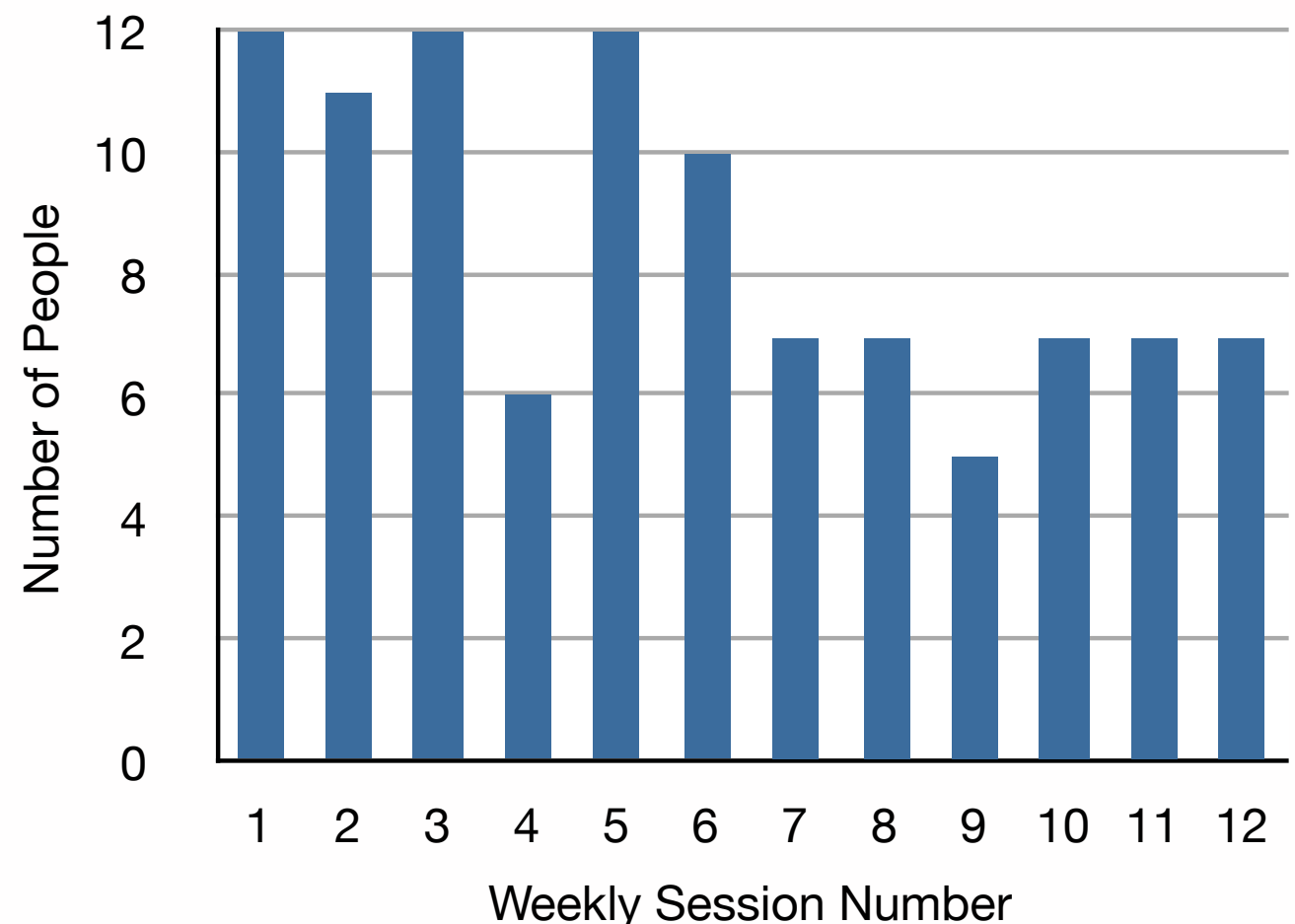
Jobs had to take priority

Three participants said they participated as much as they could, but their organizations did not work in Castlemont so it was hard to justify the time.

Carpools would help

Two participants said that it made sense to meet in Castlemont, but that carpooling would have helped to reduce travel time on public transit.

Attendance Each Week





Reframing the question

After synthesizing insights from two sets of neighborhood walks and several informal conversations, the design sprint team intentionally reframed their guiding question in order to retain a systems perspective while narrowing down towards an actionable solution.

How might we
build a vibrant economy
in the Castlemont neighborhood?



How might we
work with community members
and **leverage existing assets and resources**
to support a **visible small win** to
build a vibrant local economy
in the Castlemont neighborhood?

Discussions about refining the scope were valuable in and of itself

"It also was interesting how it went from a really big idea to kind of a small one. [...] It allowed different folks to reach a different understanding of what they saw as something tangible. To me, it was important that we didn't promise community members something that we couldn't do—or to not to think too big because we don't know what we are going to find and if we had funding for something smaller. But something big, we would have to have a pilot before launching a bigger model, so that was good too."

- Participant





Managing expectations

Tradeoffs had to be made in balancing the objectives of the design sprint. Different stakeholders had different priorities, and it was sometimes unclear what the priorities of the group were. Navigating these tradeoffs and ambiguities is part of the process. Managing expectations can help mitigate confusion and frustration.

Reassure people that feeling tense is part of the process

The principles of design thinking are accessible and simple, design thinking takes continual practice. It's natural to feel tense when there is ambiguity.

A facilitator acknowledged that "it feels like you're going through the motions without feeling like you're achieving anything."

One participant was particularly appreciative of the reassurances about ambiguity: "'It's going to be gray. You're going to want to go into solutions mode. You're going to want to do that.' That was really helpful to just say because you're so used to: 'Okay, we need to focus. We need to figure it out.' And to have the permission or the reminder 'We will get to that - let's relax. It's freeform. It won't always be free form.'"

Reiterate the objectives and rationale for decision-making

Having multiple objectives sometimes led to confusion, such as why community members weren't at the table.

One facilitator explained:

"Our group was trying to learn about how to use design thinking. And it probably got confused with a question we had to use... because we brought all these economic folks to the table and the topic had to frame around that. [...]"

I think it was confusing because we're trying to use a real example of engaging community members. [...]"

It was never a decision not to include folks. It was just we were trying to understand the process ourselves and get to that place so we can include folks. Because there's nothing worse than to bring in, or wanting to partner with residents when we don't know what we are partnering about, or don't know what we are talking about, and want to make sure we have at least the framing."

Destination unknown, but trust the process and team

When practicing design thinking, it is not possible to know in advance what the final direction or outcome will be. This open-ended aspect of design thinking creates opportunities to innovate and address unexpected needs.

The design sprint was intended to deepen understanding of Castlemont, and generate concepts. The design sprint team made an intentional decision not to include implementation in the 12-week process. Once the direction became clearer, ACPHD was able to find resources to continue the work.

To do this work, one must trust the process and the people to figure out the direction even when the destination is unknown.



Great facilitation, great group

The design sprinters appreciated the hard work of the facilitators, guidance of the design thinking advisor, and the thoughtfulness and expertise of the entire team.

The facilitators were “super organized and communicative.”

With the help of support staff, a lead person was responsible for setting the agenda, sending reminders and updates, and making sure tasks are completed.

Several participants said they highly respect all the facilitators and were excited and honored to be involved.

“Having everything organized and ready to go as soon as you got there. Knowing what you are going to be doing next. Being really clear about what the ‘homework’ was in between. It was just easy as a participant to know what the expectations were. Come in, sit down, know what we’re going to be doing that day, what we’re trying to achieve. Knowing that the people facilitating and organizing were going to keep things on track and not just let things get sidetracked.”

- Participant

Stepping back let the BBZ team learn by doing.

The design sprinters learned a lot from Jaspal Sandhu, the design thinking advisor. They noted that stepping back to let people use design thinking skills helped them learn by doing.

“I think he uses a bit of a popular education technique. He definitely kind of let you figure a lot of the stuff out. We would ask, “well what do you think, Jaspal?” And he’d be like, “well, what do you think?” And I think a lot of times, that’s more effective, because you actually learn it.”

- Facilitator

The diverse group learned a lot from each other.

One participant noted that the facilitators did a great job fostering an environment for thoughtful, insightful conversations. Setting ground rules helped the group feel comfortable and bond.

“They’re really smart and interesting people that have worked all over the nation and in different places in the world too. And are super invested in the work. I was very inspired by our colleagues, and I learned a lot from them.”

- Facilitator

“What was really effective was learning with such a unique group of people that all wanted to learn and had really different talents and skills. You know, we had philanthropists and economic development specialists. And you know, public health people. And then, Jaspal’s an engineer, by training.”

- Participant



Facilitators reflect on improvements

The facilitators and design thinking advisor reflected upon their roles and how to improve.

Divide, and conquer

A facilitator mentioned that at first, it was confusing who was meant to do what on the facilitation team. Instead of having everyone work on the agenda together, she thought it was more efficient to assign a point person to do it and gather feedback afterwards.

Constraints inspire creativity

The design thinking advisor described how seeking everyone's input or consensus on too many decisions can be problematic because it can make things seem too unbounded and fluid. He suggests:

"Put some constraints on systems. Then people can be actually creative in the space that you actually give them."

- Jaspal Sandhu, Gobee

Facilitator not implementer

The ACPHD BBZ team realized that their role should be to facilitate and support community members. Rather than implementing directly, ACPHD will be building community capacity to identify challenges, generate ideas, and test solutions.

Use simple terms

A key stakeholder noted how "fancy language or people with highfalutin ideas" can distance or alienate people.

When engaging community members in design thinking, emphasize that everyone already solves problems and has the ability to be creative. A structure or training may be helpful but is not essential. The core of design thinking is engaging with people.

Clarify the role of experts.

Three participants said that they felt like outsiders during the design sprint. Two also doubted whether they could contribute to the process since they were not community organizers, residents of Castlemont, or experts in community revitalization.

Some participants may be willing to provide expert advice for implementation. Clarifying how they can add value may encourage participants to stay involved.

1

Community Engagement

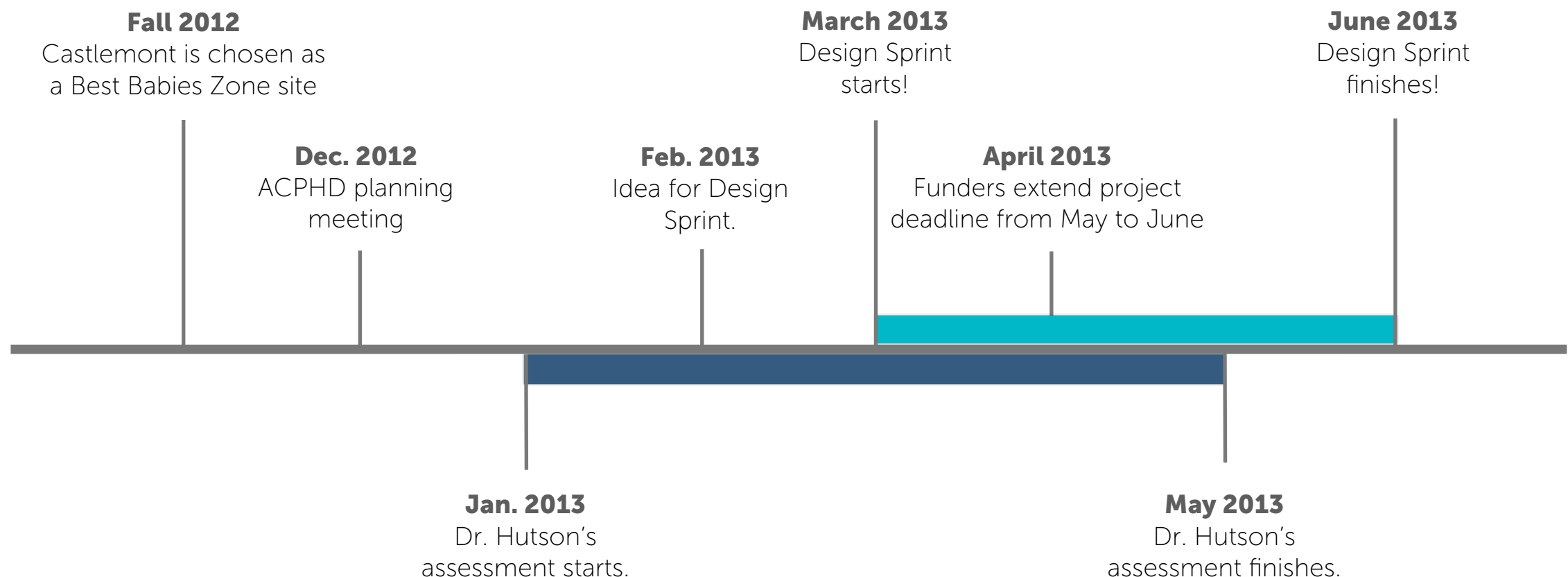


Preparing to involve residents in the future

Considering several constraints, the ACPHD BBZ team deliberately decided that the design sprint would be an opportunity to learn more about Castlemont and develop a more robust community engagement plan for the future.

By Fall 2012, ACPHD had selected Castlemont as a Best Babies Zone, and were compiling data, building relationships in the zone, and figuring out staffing. The plan for the design sprint did not emerge until February 2013. Ideally, there would have been more time before the design sprint to thoughtfully recruit residents. Since the grant timeline required that the project finish by June 2013, it was not possible to delay the design sprint.

Except for Youth UpRising, most of the organizations involved in the design sprint did not actively work in Castlemont. As a robust and visible organization, YU is involved in many projects. During with the design sprint, YU's team of youth researchers were working with a group of UC Berkeley students conducting a separate assessment of Castlemont under the guidance of Dr. Malo Hutson.

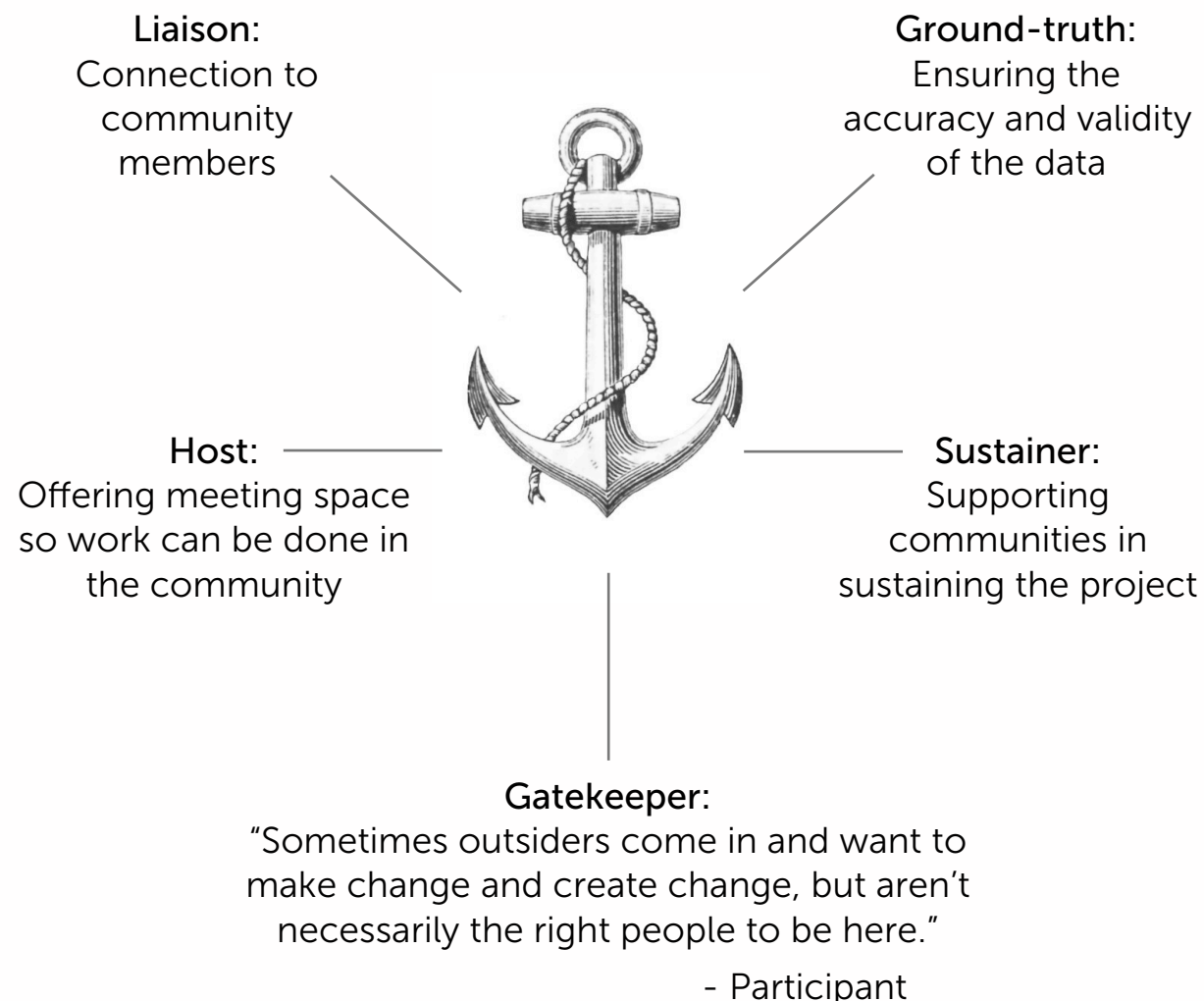




Roles of anchor organizations

The timeline of the design sprint did not allow for adequate time and resources to involve community members as design sprint participants. “Anchor organizations” are organizations with long-term relationships with the community. There is sometimes an implicit expectation that anchor organizations will bring community members to the table. Anchor organizations have to hold many roles, and must consider the priorities and interests of community members and partner organizations. Several factors must be considered in deciding when and how to involve community members in a project.

THE ROLE OF ANCHOR ORGANIZATIONS





Levels of community engagement

"What is most important is to recognize the level of participation and proceed with according humility and care. For us, we were really seeking ways to meaningfully engage residents and not tokenize their participation. We recognize that this takes staff time and we were not in a position to be able to do it. The design sprint really set us up to be able to do it with the Game Changers."

- Bina Patel Shrimali, ACPHD



Climbing the ladder, and going beyond

As the BBZ team moves through the levels of engagement represented by the ladder, they are also mindful about how community is defined and how to facilitate meaningful engagement at each level.

Limited input and consult:

During the design sprint, the team organized interactive poster sessions at Castlemont High School, Center of Hope Church, and a local store to solicit feedback on the four concepts for stimulating a vibrant local economy. The design sprint enabled the team to incorporate diverse perspectives from those who do not typically attend community meetings.

Comprehensive consultation and influence:

The ACPHD BBZ team meets regularly with market vendors to plan and evolve the Castlemont Community Market.

Towards community leading:

The design sprint provided a deeper understanding of the community and set the foundation for more meaningful community engagement. In 2014, ACPHD will be working with partner organizations to implement a 1-year *Game Changers* program. The program is intended to enhance the ability of eight to ten Castlemont residents to address community-identified priorities. Based on community assessments, these priorities may include violence and safety, early and K-12 education, increased social cohesion and creative expression, job opportunities, and local places to purchase healthy food.



It's challenging to balance learning a new process with engaging the community.

Several factors tipped the scale towards not having residents at the table for the design sprint. The team continued to struggle with how to enable some level of community engagement.

"The part that makes me feel weird about the exercise is almost feeling like swooping in, like a scientist, looking at a neighborhood. It just feels uncomfortable [...] but at the same time, there's great intentions and great ideas, and this commitment to engaging the community. So all of that makes it totally worthwhile." -Participant

Learning a new process

Feeling like novices in design thinking
Knowing that including some meant excluding others
Needing to build stronger relationships first
Not wanting to raise false hopes
Thinking community members may be burnt out
Recognizing the power dynamic

Desire for community-driven

We are not the community
Sustainability requires community leadership



Lessons learned about community engagement

Design sprints reflected upon key takeaways regarding community engagement.

Support existing capacity

"We have an orientation about the need to build trust and also acknowledge that everyone has a spark in them that we want to pull on or create a venue for."

- Bina Patel Shrimali, ACPHD

Coordinate efforts

According to a participant, UC Berkeley students from Dr. Malo Hutson course and design sprints inadvertently talked to the same community members. The students mentioned in their assessment report that some store owners refused to talk with them because they had already been asked the same questions by another group.

There are efforts to maintain communications among the growing network of collaborators in Castlemont so groups can stay informed about other activities and initiatives in the neighborhood.

Don't rush up the ladder

There's an implicit assumption in community-based work that community members should be as deeply involved in every stage as possible. It could be damaging to hastily rush up the ladder of engagement.

"I was very conscious of not wanting to waste the time of the residents. It's not useful to have residents come in have to go through discussions that they've gone through before and say things like, 'Violence is a big thing in my neighborhood.' I thought we should get up to speed first. The twelve weeks was nothing. It was a very short period in a multi-year process, and by the time we got to residents, we'd hopefully ask more intelligent questions and have more constructive engagement with them."

- Jaspal Sandhu, Gobe Group



An alternate form of community engagement

Walking around the neighborhood and having informal conversations with residents was transformative for participants.



Talking with people developed empathy and a more balanced view of people's lives.

"There are phenomenal people everywhere. I was just so inspired by her. Clearly she had a very hard upbringing herself. She was really trying to change things for her kids but not just her kids, the kids in her neighborhood. That kind of stuff was really inspiring. I still think about her."

- Facilitator

"Definitely walking the neighborhood and just talking to residents and observing the physical aspects of the neighborhood, like how many fences there were and how many 'beware of dog' signs there were. It just felt like everyone is kind of scared and closed off. And then talking to some of the residents and them saying that 'Yeah, you can't walk out of the house with good clothes on or you're going to get mugged.' Having those conversations was pretty powerful."

- Participant

The walk helped to form a personal connection with Castlemont.

"I think even picturing the neighborhood in my mind's eye - I don't just picture Youth UpRising and the high school anymore. I picture the barbershop or the guy in the corner, who was talking to us about his life. [...] I have more of a picture of the neighborhood, rather than the institutions."

- Participant

"Taking the time to look at all the storefronts and talk to business owners and just sort of like, 'Stop, and look and listen,' in a way that you don't often take the time to do. I think any neighborhood that you hear of, you have a certain image or understanding in your mind. And I think that's so limited most of the time so it broadens your understanding and perspective of the people in the place - just the little details that you didn't notice before."

- Participant



Community engagement is multifaceted

Design sprints shared their introspections about community engagement.

It's hard to navigate asking questions, without raising false hopes.

One participant was concerned that talking to community members about services could raise false hopes. She would have liked more preparation about what to say, and especially what to not say.

Some believe in community leadership. Others believe institutions must lead.

"I don't think community engagement always works. I think that sometimes people just want to see something happen. So it doesn't necessarily have to be about community engagement. Because in communities that are so highly impacted by poverty and by so many other social issues, I don't know that they necessarily have A) the answers, or B) the wherewithal."

- Participant

Whose voices are heard? And whose aren't?

Two participants mentioned that the neighborhood walk was ad hoc or random. There was some discomfort around decisions being made based on only a few conversations with residents who may not have been representative of the community.

Meeting at the same time each week also limited the range of residents that the team could engage. One participant thought that the people who would have provided the most valuable insights were probably working or taking care of their children during the day.

However, the facilitators had already asked the team to block off the same time in their schedule for 12-weeks, so it was difficult to find a new time to meet.

When and how should we involve residents?

A few participants suggested that walking with community members may make it safer, and also provide insights into the neighborhood.

On the other hand, some design sprints doubted that residents would have agreed to walk around the neighborhood with strangers.

Some also thought that it was better to wait to authentically partner with community members. There was concern that rushing the process would tokenize community participation.



Strategies for community engagement

These strategies were suggested by design sprint participants.



Take leadership, get feedback, and show tangible results.

One participant was adamant that institutions should take the lead in developing a plan for 2-3 priority areas, and then get feedback from the community. She pointed out that community members have limited time, energy, and attention span, and really just want institutions with resources to implement something.

This participant shared the following comment from a community member: "She said, 'Are you sure something's gonna come of this? We are always beings studied and always being invited to participate in these kind of meetings, not case studies, but these focus groups - and we don't really see the results.'"

Prepare the community to participate fully and equally.

"Work needs to be done with the community to prepare them to be equal participants. And so you're not having the first meeting where neighborhood members and those of us who participated in the first phase are there together. [...] Having people be ready to be sharing their voices and really understanding the purpose of the work, and where it is in the process, and how they weigh in. I think you just have to do that kind of prep work before you just throw everybody into the mix and say weigh in." - Participant

Be careful about not overloading a community-led process with experts, and have an exit strategy so community members can sustain the project.

Make it easy for the community to participate.

"You really have to make it easy for them to participate. You have to work at it and then make it easy. We really want you involved. We want your opinions. We want your input. And what time do you need us to do that?" - Participant

"Be really clear that whatever activity you're working on, is for them, for their benefit, and that your nonprofit really trying to build up the community." - Participant

Three participants said that childcare and stipends are important. Another participant suggested working with community members before offering stipends since financial incentives may draw people who are not interested in the project itself.



Issues to consider

These are lingering questions, with some comments from interviewees.

Which community groups should be involved?

- Community leaders (e.g. Michael Scott, the former principal of Castlemont HS)
- Churches (e.g. E.C. Reems Center of Hope)
- Castlemont HS (e.g., Tim Bremner, teacher of the Sustainable Urban Design Academy)
- Other schools
- Youth, mothers, and fathers
- Seniors
- Small business and market owners

Who are other critical stakeholders?

- Economic development experts
- Investors
- City of Oakland
- Police or criminal justice experts
- Process experts (community organizers, design thinking advisors, etc.)

When should the community lead?

One community organizer said that it takes at least 1 to 1.5 years to build trust in a community. She thought it might not be realistic to expect community members to meet more than once per month.

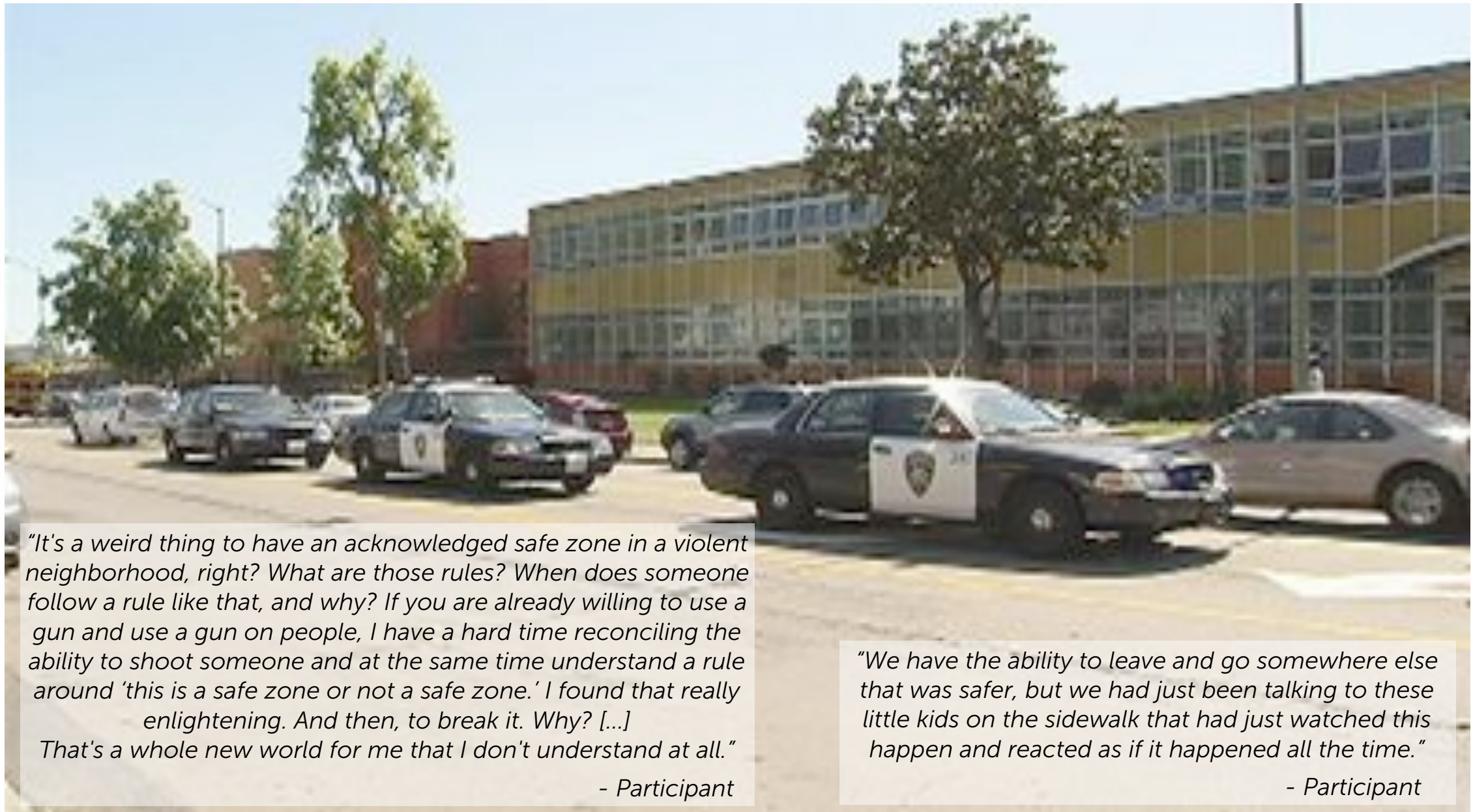
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Public
Safety



Public safety is paramount

There were several shootings near Castlemont High School in April 2013. A group of design sprint participants witnessed a shooting, and several other shootings occurred in the neighborhood around the same time. These incidents elicited a lot of deep thought and complex feelings about violence and public safety.



"It's a weird thing to have an acknowledged safe zone in a violent neighborhood, right? What are those rules? When does someone follow a rule like that, and why? If you are already willing to use a gun and use a gun on people, I have a hard time reconciling the ability to shoot someone and at the same time understand a rule around 'this is a safe zone or not a safe zone.' I found that really enlightening. And then, to break it. Why? [...]"

That's a whole new world for me that I don't understand at all."

- Participant

"We have the ability to leave and go somewhere else that was safer, but we had just been talking to these little kids on the sidewalk that had just watched this happen and reacted as if it happened all the time."

- Participant



Critical dialogues stimulated empathy

The critical dialogues sparked by the shooting incidents helped design sprinters to develop empathy for those who deal with violence regularly. These conversations also helped the design sprint team bond with one another.



"It's hard to get other things done in your personal life or in your community life, if you're worried about your safety. It was a reminder to me to listen when people say, 'We need to figure out crime and safety in this neighborhood.'"

- Participant

Another participant said that going through that difficult experience together increased her trust in the team. She appreciated how people continued the project and didn't run away. She also appreciated that "the mentality didn't change to the point where they felt like they were the only people that can save the community."

"Now we get why that's so terrible and it's scary. [...] A few of us came back and talked to our leaders about "What the heck? Why isn't violence seen as a... Why don't we have this state of emergency around violence here in Alameda County? And why isn't there an immediate response to people experiencing this kind of trauma?"

- Facilitator



How might we address the issue of public safety?

Design sprints reflected upon how public safety intersects with their own work.

Economic development is interwoven with public safety.

A participant noted that economic development suffers when there is crime and safety issues, and it can also help to alleviate it. She suggested the following:

What if some of the proceeds from businesses went towards covering police or private security?

What if policies required hiring local people to create more job opportunities with reasonable incomes?

Make issues less theoretical by experiencing them directly

Design sprints discussed whether it makes sense to walk around areas with high crime and violence rates.

A facilitator said, "That should be our job because if we're not really experiencing it then we're not feeling that sense of urgency and trying to make our system more responsive to it."

Have an open dialogue about public safety.

"It's not necessarily the role of BBZ or the design thinking team to solve the issues of safety and crime in the neighborhood. I just think, it is the role to acknowledge that those issues are coming into play in the economic development work that we're trying to do, to sort of keep it in the conversation."

- Participant

Social isolation and mental health are roots of violence.

"For me, it's emanating from social alienation. [...] I think there's a mental health component here that nobody's talking about. And that mental health component is creating a lot of oppression, a lot of depression, a lot of just all of these sort of demonstrations of people who are still socially-isolated and alienated."

- Participant

Prepare participants to be streetwise.

"It's a dangerous neighborhood and we didn't, at all, talk about how to be safe."

- Participant

This participant suggested that a formal conversation acknowledging the public safety issues would allow participants to decide for themselves whether they were comfortable with that risk.

She also realized that it's a tricky balance to acknowledge safety issues without scaring people or promoting negative stereotypes about a neighborhood.

Two participants suggested walking around the neighborhood with residents. Another participant suggested making sure that there's an emergency plan, and that everyone has each others' phone numbers.

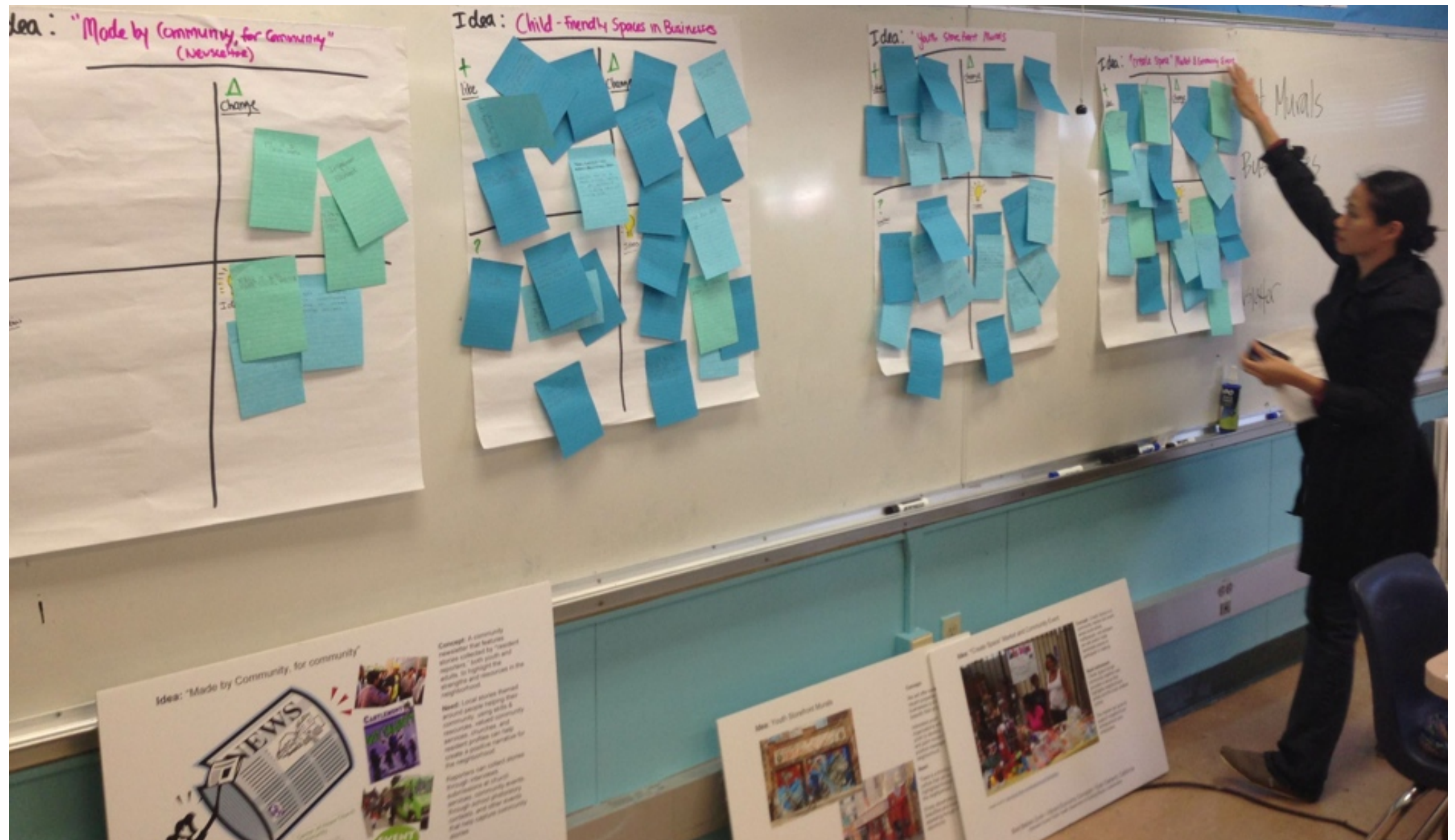
3

Community
Market



Castlemont Community Market

Based on feedback from Castlemont residents during interactive poster sessions at Center of Hope Church, Castlemont High School, and a local store, the Castlemont Community Market concept was selected for implementation. The BBZ team used a design thinking method to gather feedback from residents about what they liked, what they would change, questions, and new ideas related to or inspired by each concept.





Castlemont Community Market

A Full Service Community School Event Open to the Public

CASTLEMONT HIGH SCHOOL FIRST SATURDAY

COMMUNITY MARKET

Farmer's Market * Holiday Gifts * Arts & Crafts
Graphic T-Shirts * Jewelry * Food * Music



HELP-PORTRAIT™
Free Family Photos
Hair & Make-Up Provided
10am-7pm, Youth Uprising
510-777-9909 X181 for Appointments



**EAST OAKLAND
PLAY DATE**
Family Fun & Games
Arts, Crafts & Basketball
10:30am-1pm, Ages 0-15
YU Skate Park & Playground

DECEMBER 7, 2013 NOON - 3PM
Castlemont High School, 8601 MacArthur Blvd. Oakland, CA 94605

Coordinating Partners:
Castlemont High School, Best Babies Zone, Youth Uprising, Alameda County Public Health Department, East Oakland Play Date

Be a Vendor. Interested in participating in the Market?
Contact Mariela Uribe, mariela. Uribe@acgov.org, 510-208-1223

Michael Scott, the Full Service Community Director and former president of Castlemont High School, had independently thought of the Castlemont Community Market. Two facilitators commented that when they talked with Michael about the Market concept, he said, "Get out of my head! It's an idea I've been about for a while."

ACPHD is partnering with Michael to organize the Castlemont Community Market. The Market will be held on the first Saturday of each month at Castlemont High School, and is intended to provide a venue where entrepreneurs can earn income and to serve as a community resource for goods, services, information, and recreational activities.



Communicating the vision and long-term goals

The interviewees expressed generally positive responses to the Market. Clearly communicating the vision and long-term goals could address critiques that the concept may not be original or systemic.

Validated by other processes

"I think that when we presented our ideas to the Castlemont High School kids or the church group, they really liked our ideas. Those ideas were very much in line with the Berkeley students. [...] They came up with remarkably similar ideas to what we had come up with, which was really surprising. I think they spent even more time than we had. So it was kind of like, ok, we definitely did some things right."

- Facilitator

Came from the community

A key stakeholder discussed how the Market was exciting because it "came from the community" and is a way of "building a grass-roots economy" that "helps people feel like they have a role and talent that they are sharing with others in their neighborhood." She also hopes the Market will be a way to increase social capital and social cohesion.

Promising but not systemic

One participant thought that after so many meetings, it would have been possible arrive at more systemic interventions and ideas (e.g., to address the issue of absentee landlords). Even so, she thought the market would be good for building trust in the community.

Useful but unoriginal

Three participants thought that perhaps a community market would be useful for Castlemont, but it seemed like just a standard economic development project.

In response to these comments, Bina Patel Shrimali stated:

"Focusing on a systemic problem through neighborhood action is our goal. We want to engage entrepreneurs, find out what supports they need and barriers they face, and build solutions out of that. And the way to do it and build neighborhood momentum is through a community market. We are working to set up conversations with the City of Oakland to talk about how they can structure supports for the resident entrepreneurs we meet. Eventually, our goal is to get these entrepreneurs set up in empty storefronts along MacArthur. I think that the thing that is innovative about this is that it's a grassroots approach to place-based economic development. It's not Walmart coming in, attracted by policymakers. It's more responsive to what people enterprising in the neighborhood want. It is harder. It is messier. It will take time. This might be a communication challenge for us."



Ideas for the Castlemont Community Market

Vetted ideas can also be innovative. These ideas were suggested by the interviewees.



A creative spin on a traditional market

"There could be some really innovative ideas that come out of it, that are creative. And I don't know whether or not it's bringing in some of the other principles around public art or childcare, or whatever it is. Or how do you build in some of those places so the community is cultivating what they need from this community market concept."

-Participant

Two participants mentioned time banking, which allows people to share skills and services through an exchange of time. For example, an hour of a gardening is worth an hour of babysitting or any activity. Some Castlemont residents already barter their time. Time banking has helped to strengthen and weave together communities by building social networks.



A flea market as a step towards formal businesses

One participant suggested that the market could be a platform for people to access training or entrepreneurship programs to develop their cottage industries into formal businesses.

Another participant noted that Mandela Foods Cooperative is a business that grew out of a similar process that Mandela MarketPlace led.

Another participant thought that if there were something unique about the Castlemont Market, it could draw people and resources from outside the neighborhood.



Financial sustainability through booth fees or sponsorship

"It doesn't seem like it should be too costly. There should probably be some staff time unless they have an intern or volunteer or something. And table rentals are probably like \$10-\$20 per vendor, if you're getting table cloths or chairs or whatever, and then marketing - you have to have some money to market. I think that over time, the vendor fees should probably cover it."

-Participant

"If someone wants access to either the vendor community or small business community or the residents that would be attending - and if there is someone, they could potentially be a sponsor."

-Participant



Ideas for the Castlemont Community Market

These ideas were inspired by interviewees and reading assignments from Meredith Minkler's "Community Organizing and Community Building" course.

Art for community building

Art can be a powerful tool for community building because of its ability to get people involved who might otherwise be disinterested or intimidated. To engage youth, perhaps ACPHD can partner with an art teacher at Castlemont HS or YU to organize an art contest with a theme of "Thriving Community."

The art can be showcased at the Market where friends, family, and neighbors can vote on art pieces to be incorporated or enlarged as a mural at Castlemont HS.

The process of creative expression can be transformative in and of itself. In addition to sparking a transformation in the artists, the art pieces can spark conversations about what people think of as a "thriving community" and how Castlemont could keep progressing towards that goal. This dialogue can be a way for partner organizations to learn about the community's priorities and perspectives.

Incentives for market vendors

It will take time to promote the Market and draw customers. It is important to have incentives for Market vendors.

One participant suggested that offering trainings once per month could develop valuable skills for starting a business. Training sessions could be offered on financial literacy, entrepreneurship, and leadership. If vendors completed certain milestones, like writing a business plan, they could be offered support for loans.

Attract residents with more than opportunities to buy

One participant suggested that the market could be a place where people could talk with mental health counselors or get referrals for food stamps.

Engage youth in promotion

Perhaps ACPHD could also commission YU Create to work with market vendors and Castlemont HS to develop a brand and logo for the Market.

Youth interns can also be paid stipends to do promotional activities, like creating a street banner, signs, or flyers to promote the market. Youth could also create Facebook page and Twitter feeds to promote the Market.

ACPHD is already planning on hosting two youth from the Castlemont Sustainable Urban Design Academy starting in mid-January 2014.



Learning from others

Participants brainstormed about organizations and other initiatives that can inform the Castlemont Community Market.

What can we learn from others' experiences?

Community development organizations:

- Dudley Street Neighborhood Initiative
- Local Initiatives Support Corporation (LISC)
- New America Foundation
- Central Community Partners
- SparkPoint

Thriving neighborhoods:

- Temescal
- KONO

Markets:

- Mandela Foods Cooperative
- Lake Merritt Farmers' Market
- Ashby Flea Market
- KONO Market
- People's Community Market concept

How might we leverage partners' networks?

- East Oakland Building Healthy Communities
- Youth UpRising (e.g. Olis Simmons and Sikander Iqbal)
- Mandela MarketPlace
- East Oakland Youth Development Center
- Oakland Community Organizations

Looking
ahead



Plan for the long-term

The design sprint is just the first step. Economic development will take at least 10 years. Design sprinters commented upon planning for the long-term.

Invest in a community development corporation.

According to one participant, when there has been long-term disinvestment in a community, there is market failure, and it is the government's responsibility to develop the community's capacity to receive economic development capital.

She suggested that a community development corporation may serve as an intermediary facilitating capital flows into the community. They may handle large financial transactions, planning and zoning decisions, and housing and business development projects that are beyond the purview of community-based organizations. The community marketplace may be a step towards creating such a corporation.

Two participants mentioned the Dudley Street model from Boston. This non-profit has been granted the power of eminent domain and is recognized by the local government.

Secure buy-in from organizational leadership.

A participant suggested that ACPHD and the leaders of other partner organizations must come together to discuss the opportunities and value of this partnership. If collaboration is the goal, each of the leaders must be allowed to give input into the process. Otherwise, this project may seem like a pet project for ACPHD.

Sharing resources, such as expertise and data, as well as best practices will be mutually beneficial for all partner organizations.

Develop a theory of change.

The design sprint was not intended to produce a theory of change. This type of analysis will be necessary for long-term planning. A participant suggested that the team identify the critical elements for stimulating a vibrant local economy.



Share stories to amplify the impact

There are multiple audiences that would benefit from hearing about this work. Consider the possible venues, media, and impacts of sharing these stories.

How might we share back what we heard from residents?

Residents' input was critical in shaping this process. Sharing back what was heard, how some suggestions were integrated, and why other input could not be addressed is important for strengthening relationships. Asking for input and ignoring it can also be disempowering.

How might we spread the *process* lessons learned to other practitioners?

One participant said it would be particularly interesting to have a blog showing the whole process with descriptions of why certain decisions are made. This could also be an opportunity for residents to tell the story from their point of view. Regular periods for reflection could also enhance learning.

How might we keep participants informed and engaged?

"It's felt like, "oh it's over. We got all this momentum, and all these ideas... like, now it is over." Participants appreciated the recent email update, and said it would help to have more information about what happened after the design sprint.

How might we report good work to attract resources?

In addition to sharing lessons learned, the design thinking advisor noted that spreading stories about good work will be good for the medium and long-term to attract more resources.

Key Takeaways



Crucial ingredients for design thinking

Bina Patel Shrimali (lead facilitator from ACPHD) and Jaspal Sandhu (design thinking advisor) commented upon conditions needed to effectively practice design thinking.

Adopting a different process must be demand-driven

It's important to have buy-in from leaders of initiatives or organizations, and the people learning this process must also have a genuine desire to try it. Leaders cannot dictate what approaches or processes people should use.

Bina and Jaspal noted that design thinking may not be suitable for all organizations or projects, but people who are open-minded may benefit from this structured approach.

Other groups may look to this pilot as an example to decide whether they would be interested in doing this work. If yes, design thinking may be able to work with their existing skills and resources.

In particular, Jaspal noted that design thinking has several similarities with quality improvement processes and community-based participatory research.

Recruit the right people for the challenge

Show people that they have a role to play in achieving the bigger picture.

Bina Patel Shrimali selected people who would be open to embracing a new process, and called each person individually to personally invite them to participate in the design sprint. Bina noted that "having people who are willing to explore, willing to disagree within a common vision was important." She was able to recruit a diverse and talented group of people, who care deeply about community development and economic development. The team may not have had much design thinking experience, but they had more expertise in the sectors involved than a typical design firm would.

Jaspal also commented that the fact that these experts and change agents dedicated half a day each week [including travel] to this process was "a true testament that we must be onto something."

Shift from juggling meetings to dedicated project time

If work is only done in meetings, and meetings only happen once a month, it's hard to make progress. Dedicated time to work on a project is essential for maintaining momentum and leaving flexibility for inspiration and insight.

Jaspal commented:

"Working through meetings doesn't lend itself well to design. For this kind of stuff to be successful you need to have teams that have the flexibility to just go off and do some stuff. And where their entire schedule is not dictated by a calendar. But I think that culture of the County is not unique to Alameda County and not unique to Public Health Departments or even the public sector. I think it's become a victim of 'everything has to happen in a meeting or in an email' and I don't think that's conducive to meaningful collaboration and creativity and things like that."



Lessons learned from the design sprint

The facilitators shared their perspectives on key lessons learned.

Not rushing to solutions yields richer end products

"Forcing ourselves to spend a lot of time in areas that we felt uncomfortable, Like during the Understanding Phase, or even the Ideation, forcing ourselves to spend more time coming up with ideas, or finding alternative data pieces in the neighborhood, allowed us to have a richer end product."

- Facilitator

Informal conversations builds relationships

One facilitator noted that traditional interviewing or survey methods tend to be formal in a way that is sometimes a barrier.

The open-ended nature of the interviews conducted during the design sprint allowed design sprinters to build relationships with community residents.

These methods can be complementary rather than substitutional.

Backbone organization and lead person

One facilitator was adamant that it is important to have a backbone organization and lead person. County organizations tend to have more resources and staff than non-profits and can draw on partnerships with other large organizations. However community-based organizations have the advantage of strong relationships with communities.

Shorten the planning of a project by testing small parts

One facilitator commented that in Public Health, there's a tendency to do multi-year pilots. She emphasized that design thinking can shorten the development cycle of projects. Rather than a 3-year pilot, you can figure out what you want to know, and test out small pieces with fewer people in a shorter period of time.

Capacity building in addition to providing services

"Design thinking was a more way to see more nuance and strength in the neighborhood. To hear from folks that 'there is more good than bad' and to see it in action. Part of our work is challenging the dominant 'service' paradigm that assumes that people need help and gives it to them, rather than creating opportunities and avenues for people to be engaged, harness their strengths and ignite their power. Rather than this being textbook and theoretical, the open-endedness and focus on what was surprising to us allowed the ability to form a new understanding about how we can and must do that!"

- Bina Patel Shrimali, ACPHD