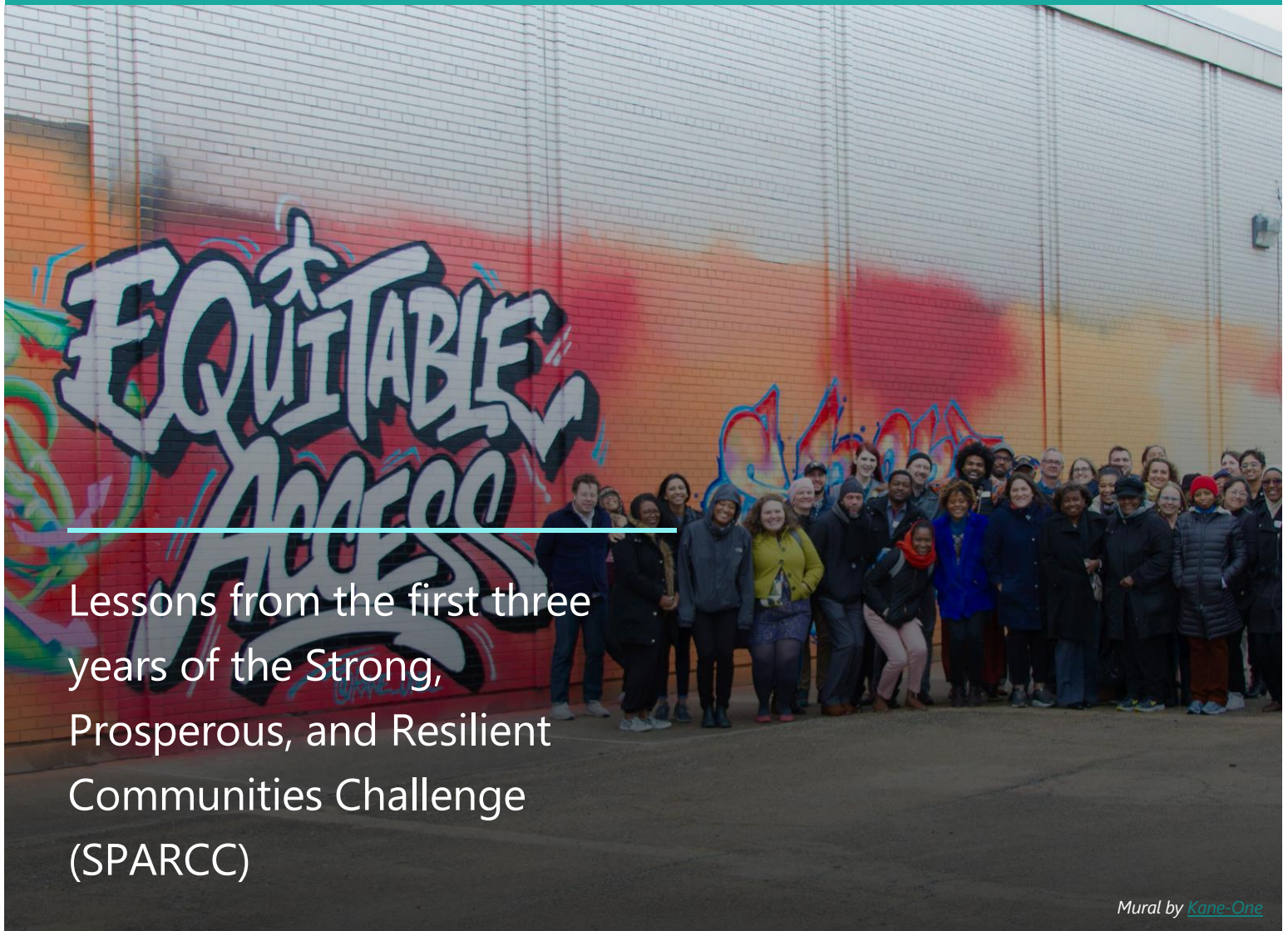


APRIL 2020



# Changing Systems in Community Development



Lessons from the first three  
years of the Strong,  
Prosperous, and Resilient  
Communities Challenge  
(SPARCC)

Mural by [Kane-One](#)

*This paper was prepared by the [Center for Community Health and Evaluation](#).*

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Mural by [Max Sansing](#)

## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

# Changing systems in community development: Lessons from the first three years of the Strong, Prosperous, and Resilient Communities Challenge (SPARCC)

The Strong, Prosperous, and Resilient Communities Challenge ([SPARCC](#)) aims to shift decades of racially discriminatory policies and investments that have resulted in racial disparities in health and climate resilience in communities throughout the United States. Since 2017, SPARCC has been addressing the barriers facing communities of color and low-income communities by advancing a community-driven development model, which evolved to focus especially on displacement.

SPARCC's work is implemented by multi-sector collaborative tables in six sites (Atlanta, the San Francisco Bay Area, Chicago, Denver, Los Angeles, and Memphis), together with four national organizations ("national team") that provide support and funding to sites. These include [Enterprise Community Partners](#) (Enterprise), the [Federal Reserve Bank of San Francisco](#) (FRBSF), the [Low Income Investment Fund](#) (LIIF), and the [Natural Resources Defense Council](#) (NRDC).

The [Center for Community Health and Evaluation](#) (CCHE) serves as the evaluation and learning partner to SPARCC with funding and support from the [Robert Wood Johnson Foundation](#).



The evaluation seeks to answer the following questions:

1. To what extent has SPARCC advanced changes in the systems that shape investments in neighborhoods, with the goal of racially equitable, healthy, and climate-resilient communities?
2. What is driving or impeding SPARCC progress?
3. What can be learned from SPARCC about promoting inclusive investment and integrated systems change?

The evaluation assessed systems change by looking at how SPARCC contributed to shifts in five conditions in the field of community development (see figure, right).

## ALL ABOUT RELATIONSHIPS: COLLABORATIVES BUILT AN EFFECTIVE FOUNDATION

**Having a foundation of multi-sector collaboratives was key, and seen as positive.**

SPARCC funded collaborative tables as a core element of its theory of change to formalize multi-sector relationships and facilitate collaboration. Working with new partners across an expanded network within and across sites has been one of the most valuable outcomes of SPARCC.

**All sites developed new relationships and collaboration among partners who had never worked together; approaches to collaboration varied.**

Sites were responsive to their own contexts and approaches to collaboration were influenced by geography, philosophy, and collaborative history. This affected how sites approached engaging membership, fostering community leadership, amplifying community voice, and creating structures for collaboration and decision making. Most sites established or strengthened formal collaborative structures to direct SPARCC work. Some sites established a network, or “table of tables,” bringing together several existing collaboratives under a more informal umbrella.

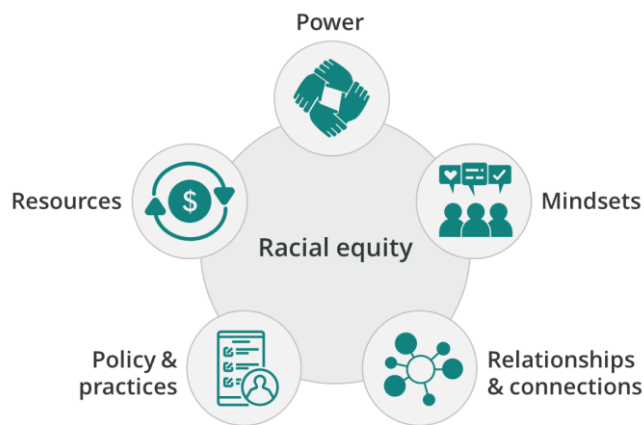
**“The kind of work they put in so far in devising a structure for this table is the first type of effort that looks like that in the area [North Memphis]. They are thinking about how to include people from the community who are affected by policies, and who don’t traditionally have a seat at the table.”**

MEMPHIS INSTITUTIONAL PARTNER

**Multi-sector collaboration and leading adaptive work takes significant skill, time, and resources.**

Sites that invested more time and effort in building their collaborative infrastructure saw more payoff in outcomes (i.e., community power and leadership, capital resource investment, and policy and practice change). Challenges to sites’ abilities to develop a strong shared vision included leadership turnover; integration into a preexisting structure and set of priorities; and coalescing diverse organizations, geographies, and priorities. Some sites encountered inherent challenges in SPARCC’s design as a regional initiative with local focus areas, making it hard to define who was needed to participate in the collaborative tables.

### SYSTEMS CHANGE FRAMEWORK



## SHIFTING POWER AND MINDSETS IN COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT

### Mindsets: leading with racial equity

The SPARCC initiative strengthened its emphasis on racial equity over time, which brought energy, momentum, new ways of working, and new partners to the collaboratives. A focus on racial equity has also given cover and credibility to anti-racism work within local power centers, pushed constructive dialogue, and catalyzed strategic changes within all four national team organizations.

**“SPARCC has helped us grow and incorporate new lenses of climate and health and allowed us to lead with racial equity. We always had equity in ‘e’TOD but people didn’t want to hear about it. SPARCC gave us power and permission and stability to lead with racial equity.”**

ATLANTA TABLE MEMBER

### Community power drives change

Supporting and harnessing community leadership and power is also core to SPARCC’s model. Community power influenced collaborative table priorities and informed many local and regional decisions. Tables created new processes for getting community input, provided resources for local community power building, and increased individual and organizational capacity to engage in capital and policy work. Community leadership and power also drove capital investments and started to shift the community development paradigm in some places. Sites found this required slowing down to ensure a strong, collaborative foundation that prioritized racial equity, particularly through community-driven decision-making structures and mechanisms for authentic community participation and leadership.

When Google bought public land near a transit station in the Bay Area, the local SPARCC table brought its influence, securing seats for residents on a steering committee and bringing research on local rent impacts. These and related grassroots advocacy efforts pushed Google to commit to \$1 billion in housing investments (5,000 affordable homes), including affordable housing benefits in the public land it bought, and to establishing a \$250 million investment fund to support affordable housing.

### Resources: Financial support for built environment projects

SPARCC disbursed over \$3.4 million across 25 capital projects (including one loan) to historically disinvested communities, supporting built environment projects prioritized by local communities that are showing positive benefits and impact. Capital work at the sites was supported by having a champion with capital expertise, having potential borrowers connected to the table, and developing a pipeline of projects in alignment with communities’ priorities. Using SPARCC debt to finance projects at sites took longer than anticipated due to several challenges, including ongoing tension between projects that are feasible to finance with SPARCC debt resources and communities’ own priorities for projects. The SPARCC national team continues to learn what sites need to advance capital projects in alignment with SPARCC goals and available financial tools. It is adapting its support and resources accordingly. SPARCC is elevating gaps and opportunities in the field of community development and provides a unique model for a philanthropic community development initiative.

In Denver, the Accessory Dwelling Unit (ADU) Pilot Program provides moderate and low-income families the opportunity to build wealth by renting out secondary structures built in their backyards. This program addresses equity within economic opportunity and mitigates displacement by offering affordable housing. This program was made possible through a \$250,000 SPARCC grant and a Fannie Mae Sustainable Communities Challenge award in addition to a partnership with the City of Denver.

## Policy & practices: Shifting how development happens

Sites reported a tension between working at the regional level at the same time that they were trying to mobilize and build community power locally since each required significant time and attention. Sites, mindful of leading with racial equity, often found it important to do the local work first. At the same time, sites were able to strengthen their positions as regional actors to move forward local policy priorities and institutional practices to help mitigate the displacement of legacy communities of color and low-income communities. The focus on regional agencies like transit proved impactful.

In Chicago, the SPARCC table helped pass an eTOD amendment to Chicago's TOD ordinance. This amendment includes strategies aimed at avoiding displacement of residences and businesses, reinvesting in low-income communities and communities of color, supporting equitable transit investment, and ensuring appropriate density levels and parking aligned with neighborhood needs.

At the national level, some of the most promising outcomes to-date may be changes within the national implementing organizations reflecting SPARCC values. This included explicitly naming "racial equity" as an outcome goal in strategic plans and processes, providing anti-racist and anti-bias trainings, embedding the SPARCC frame of racial equity, health, and climate resilience into long-term organizational work, and informing the evolution of non-SPARCC initiatives.

**"We have to do a better job building political will to make change [between mayor, city council and board of supervisors]. It's building those alliances and educating folks. It's a critical time to get in there and build support for more equitable solutions, not just geographic equity but social and racial equity."**

LOS ANGELES TABLE MEMBER

## CONCLUSION

SPARCC is elevating gaps and opportunities in the field of community development, bringing new partners together, influencing local policy, raising issues of race in local power centers, and changing mindsets. Equally important, SPARCC values have influenced the national implementing organizations in how they prioritize and advance racial equity internally and externally in their work. SPARCC has received funding for a second phase in which it will continue to hone its unique model for philanthropic community development.

## LEARN MORE

For more lessons and details that bring the SPARCC systems change progress to life, the full evaluation report follows. More information about SPARCC can be found at [sparcchub.org](https://sparcchub.org).

The evaluation report was prepared by the Center for Community Health and Evaluation. If you'd like to find out more about the evaluation, email [CCHE@kp.org](mailto:CCHE@kp.org).



## FULL EVALUATION REPORT

# Introduction

## BACKGROUND ON SPARCC AND THE EVALUATION

The Strong, Prosperous, and Resilient Communities Challenge ([SPARCC](#)) began in 2017 to change the way we invest in and shape our cities to promote racial justice, health, and climate resilience. SPARCC is implemented by multi-sector collaborative tables in six sites (Atlanta, the San Francisco Bay Area, Chicago, Denver, Los Angeles, and Memphis), together with four national implementing organizations (“national team”) that provide support and funding to sites: [Enterprise Community Partners](#) (Enterprise), the [Federal Reserve Bank of San Francisco](#) (FRBSF), the [Low Income Investment Fund](#) (LIIF), and the [Natural Resources Defense Council](#) (NRDC)<sup>1</sup>. (See Appendix A for a summary of the SPARCC tables.)



<sup>1</sup> The FRBSF did not receive or disburse any funds related to SPARCC.



The [Center for Community Health and Evaluation](#) (CCHE) served as the evaluation and learning partner to SPARCC with funding and support from the [Robert Wood Johnson Foundation](#).

The evaluation was designed to serve the SPARCC national team, SPARCC sites, and RWJF by identifying and documenting SPARCC progress and outcomes, and packaging feedback and reflections from sites and national team members to support reflection, learning, and adaptation by the national team and RWJF. Also, part of the mandate for the evaluation was to make it publicly available for use by like-minded organizations and funders, stakeholders, policy advocates, and community leaders and residents. A second phase of SPARCC was recently funded for an additional three years.

## SPARCC AS A SYSTEMS CHANGE INITIATIVE—WHAT DOES THAT MEAN FOR THE EVALUATION?

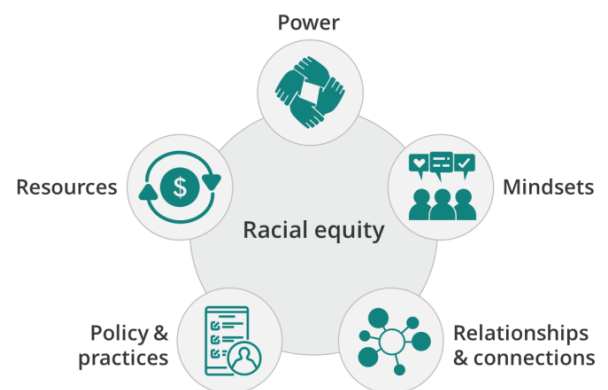
Systems change is about shifting the conditions that are holding a problem in place.<sup>2</sup> SPARCC aims to shift decades of racially discriminatory policies and investments that have resulted in racial disparities in health and climate resilience in communities throughout the United States. SPARCC addresses the structural barriers facing low-income communities and communities of color by advancing a community-driven model of development. To organize and communicate SPARCC progress and lessons, the evaluation adapted a systems change framework,<sup>3</sup> which identifies five major conditions critical to a system's functioning. These are conditions that can hold a problem in place but—with systems change—can also be the conditions that drive a new system of community development leading with racial equity, i.e., prioritizing racial equity in conceiving of, structuring, and implementing projects (figure at right).

Progress toward the systems change SPARCC seeks is assessed by the degree to which the sites and the national team contribute to shifts in these five conditions in the field of community development. The SPARCC initiative logic model (Appendix B) shows temporally that this type of systems change takes a long time and describes what is reasonable to expect in three years. The evaluation used mixed methods, including interviews, site visits, and a survey, to uncover early signals of shifts in these conditions. For more

Three learning questions guided the evaluation:

1. To what extent has SPARCC advanced changes in the systems that shape investments in neighborhoods and in the built environment (i.e., the policies and practices, capital, and community leadership systems) for racial equity, climate resilience, and healthy communities?
2. What is driving or impeding SPARCC progress?
3. What are major lessons uniquely from SPARCC about promoting inclusive investment and integrated systems change, such as the specific contribution of SPARCC to the sites' work?

### SYSTEMS CHANGE FRAMEWORK



<sup>2</sup> Adapted from Social Innovation Generation. "Ecosystems for Systems Change." Retrieved from <http://www.sigeneration.ca/ecosystems-systems-change/>

<sup>3</sup> Adapted from Foster-Fishman, P., & Watson, E. (2017). Understanding and promoting systems change. In M. A. Bond, I. Garcia de Serrano, & C. Keys (Eds.), *APA Handbook of Community Psychology* (Vol. 2). Washington, DC: American Psychological Association.



information on the data sources that informed this report, see Appendix C.

## PURPOSE AND ORGANIZATION OF THIS REPORT

The purpose of this report is to summarize successes and lessons from the first three years of SPARCC (2017-2019). It is organized by the systems change framework to facilitate better understanding of shifts beginning to be made in these conditions, and to elevate key lessons.

## Summary of progress

During SPARCC's first three years, foundational work for changing the systems of community development addressed structural barriers facing people of color and low-income communities. The evaluation revealed shifts in all five conditions of a system: new relationships and connections, increased community power, improved policy and practices, changes in how capital resources are allocated, and evolving mindsets. These conditions are not mutually exclusive; they overlap and interact with each other. For example, community power and relationships were important factors in policy and practice changes, as well as capital resource allocation. The impact of SPARCC's influence is evident in policy wins, capital projects, early regional influence, and changes within SPARCC's national implementing organizations.

### **Relationships: Six communities have strengthened collaborative infrastructure, with new partners who had never worked together and new work in traditionally disinvested communities.**

Collaborative tables were foundational to SPARCC's success and all of them established or refined systems and processes for collaborative action. Tables have been building relationships and partnerships and positioning themselves as regional actors. At the same time, all tables indicated they see room for improving how community members are engaged in their table and the SPARCC work.

**Power:** Supporting and harnessing community leadership and power is core to SPARCC's model. **Through SPARCC, community power influenced table priorities, informed many local and regional decisions, and prompted conversations about racial equity with decision makers.** Community resident voices are also driving capital investments in SPARCC sites. SPARCC tables contributed to new ways for community members (especially residents) to lead and be involved in transformational efforts in four ways: creating processes for community input, providing resources for community power-building, building new and improved table governance structures, and increasing individual and organizational capacity, all of which facilitated community mobilizing and leadership. With leadership from sites, SPARCC learned and demonstrated ways to change community power dynamics, particularly through table-driven capacity-building strategies for individuals and organizations, peer learning, and tables having a core member organization with strong community relationships and leadership development capacities.

**Policy and practices: All sites contributed to moving local policy priorities and institutional practice changes forward to preserve affordable housing and prevent and mitigate displacement of long-standing communities of color and low-income communities.** Tables positioned themselves as regional actors influencing policy and practices, and all sites did groundwork to identify systemic root

causes of issues, challenges, and potential solutions. All sites used collaborative decision-making to determine where to invest resources on policy work, and then individuals or sub-sets of table members worked on implementation based on their areas of expertise. At the national level, some of the most promising outcomes to date may be changes within the national implementing organizations reflecting SPARCC values— such as a greater focus on racial equity.

**Resources:** Capital projects moved forward at all six sites. **SPARCC disbursed nearly \$3.4 million across 25 capital projects (including one loan) to historically disinvested communities, supporting local projects that are showing positive benefits and impact.** Projects have demonstrated proof of concept, built momentum, and generated additional funding and support. The national team and sites established structures and processes for ensuring resource investment is informed and driven by communities and promotes racial equity and positive health and climate outcomes. Technical assistance and project specific support helped sites move potential built environment projects from concept through pre-development. Getting SPARCC capital resources into the hands of sites took longer than anticipated and the SPARCC national team continues to learn what sites need to effectively develop and advance projects in alignment with SPARCC goals. It is adapting its support and resources accordingly.

**Mindsets:** Intentionally applying a frame that named and integrated the concepts of racial equity, health, and climate was new for most sites. **Sites found that leading with racial equity brought energy and momentum, attracted new members to their tables, gave them permission to do things in a new or different way, and prompted conversations that pushed their partners to evolve their thinking.**

The following sections describe in more detail SPARCC's contributions to advancing each of the five conditions within a systems change framework.

## What are SPARCC's contributions to the systems of community development? How and why did progress occur?

### RELATIONSHIPS AND CONNECTIONS

One condition critical to systems change is **Relationships and Connections**. These include both formal and informal relationships among individuals and organizations that provide the vehicle for exchanging information, resources, and learning and form the foundation for collaborative partnerships and collective action. For SPARCC, this includes the collaborative table development, which is foundational for much of the sites' work in this report.

**Collaborative tables were foundational to SPARCC’s success and all six sites have established systems and processes for collaborative action.** SPARCC funded collaborative tables as a core element of its theory of change to formalize multi-sector relationships and facilitate partnership. The evaluation looked at the development and functioning of the tables using CCHE’s collaboration model, which looks at six areas essential to effective collaboration (see box and appendix D). A primary data source for understanding these elements was an annual survey of table members that asked respondents to rate elements of table effectiveness as either “needs improvement,” “adequate,” “good,” or “outstanding.”

Significant work occurred over the last three years to establish or strengthen this collaborative infrastructure—it has been a focus of all sites to varying degrees. No two tables look the same—they took different approaches to defining and engaging their membership, fostering community leadership and amplifying community voice, and creating structures for collaboration and decision making. (See appendix A for a snapshot of each table.) Specifically, the two SPARCC sites in California established a “table of tables” bringing together several existing collaborative tables under one loose umbrella to advance the agenda of SPARCC in the region—these tended to have less formal collaborative infrastructure. The other four SPARCC sites included two newly established tables and two existing tables. It is not clear if there is one ideal model, but there are many lessons learned.

**Shared purpose:** Two tables (one new and one existing) undertook an intentional and strategic process to develop a formal, shared sense of purpose. This has been the cornerstone of these two sites’ work, building the foundation that table leaders can use to guide the group forward. They appear to be examples of the maxim “go slow to go fast” now that they are effectively leveraging that foundational work into concrete collective action. Other sites integrated SPARCC work into an existing table’s vision and structure or brought together diverse organizations, geographies, and priorities without requiring alignment around a formal, shared purpose or substantive change to existing work. Regardless, table members in all sites seem to have coalesced around promoting equity—survey respondents rated each of their tables as good at promoting diversity, inclusion, and equity in membership, process, and outcomes.

## Essential elements for successful collaboration

**Shared purpose:** Creating common priorities for working together

**Essential people at the table:** Building multi-sector, diverse engagement

**Effective leadership:** Operationalizing the vision

**Adequate structure and support:** Establishing dedicated staffing, appropriate collaborative structure (i.e., decision making, resources)

**Active collaboration:** Operating in the shared interest, trusting relationships, effective communication

**Taking action:** Contributing to systems change

In **Memphis**, the Neighborhood Collaborative for Resilience formed for the SPARCC initiative. The founders built a collaborative table from the North Memphis grassroots by giving privilege to community voices and leadership. The table brings together over 20 separate neighborhoods and facilitates partnership between community residents, government entities, and other organizations in policy, housing, planning, health, and climate.

**Essential people:** For all sites, SPARCC successfully fostered new relationships and collaboration among partners who had never worked together, with more table survey respondents strongly agreeing to this statement in year three than in previous years. For many sites, this included new relationships with partners who brought needed expertise to advance SPARCC work (e.g., health, climate, and capital).

The tables also varied in how they were set up to include and amplify the voices of the communities most affected by their SPARCC work. **All tables indicated they see room for improving how community members are engaged in their table and the SPARCC work.** For the two sites that were newly established, SPARCC provided an opportunity and mandate to build infrastructure for community influence and power. In contrast, when a table already exists with primarily organizational or institutional representation, it can be difficult to determine if and how to engage residents in the table. Half of the tables exclusively leveraged relationships with grassroots organizing or advocacy groups, while the other half have community residents directly participating in table decision-making.

**Effective leadership:** Leadership looks different across the tables and all have implemented effective leadership approaches over time. Individual leaders who put a lot of energy into table development, governance, and vision saw payoffs in how effectively collective work moved forward. Half of the sites have had significant changes in their leadership during SPARCC, which presented some challenges (slowing down work, interrupting momentum, and negatively affecting funded capacity). The table-of-tables model meant decision making and the ability to hold a shared vision were more complex and diffuse. Across the sites, there are some signals that leadership is being distributed beyond the table leaders. Five sites either increased or stayed steady with their agreement that their table *allocates time, resources and expertise to prepare institutional leaders and residents to meaningfully engage with each other*, and all sites either increased or stayed steady with the perception that their table is *actively working to build the capacity of local leaders*.

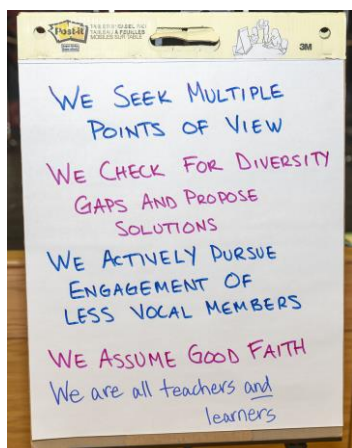
**Infrastructure and resources:** To varying degrees, sites continue to work on the foundations of collaborative functioning, including improving their internal communications, building trust, clarifying decision-making, accountability and roles, and increasing transparency. Three sites reported having key collaborative infrastructure in a good place in the third year of SPARCC—table survey scores related to communications, decision-making, and governance were mostly good. Other sites were actively working on refining their structure given the evolution of the work, suggesting that maintaining collaborative infrastructure requires ongoing attention and support. In terms of resources, there was a consistent

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We have a long way to go in really reaching the communities in authentic engagement, but we're far from the only ones. The fact that we're having these conversations and sharing the message at larger tables is advancing that. We're trying to push for this harder than individual organizations could. That's part of the collective power of Elevated Chicago.

CHICAGO TABLE MEMBER





perception across sites that there were inadequate financial resources to achieve their goals. Tables made different decisions regarding how they invested resources with their partners; these decisions were influenced by the size of the target geography and different philosophies about level and type of collaboration needed.

**Active collaboration:** All tables invested time and resources in relationship development with members and key partners, which was essential for trust building and developing collaborative practices. The generally positive scores in the table member survey for *distributes funds and resources fairly* and *openly dialogues about different points of view* indicate a strong foundation upon which to continue to build trust.

**Taking action:** All sites leveraged this collaborative infrastructure for collective action that is described in more detail in the sections below. Survey respondents in year 3 rated their table's ability to take action generally as good in areas related to having a realistic plan for a SPARCC project, influencing policy and systems change, and promoting racial equity. This is to be expected after three years of implementation.

In addition, **tables have been building relationships beyond their tables and positioning themselves as regional actors.** Given the focus in SPARCC's first three years on establishing these collaborative structures and building systems for community engagement and leadership, as well as working directly with communities on their priorities, there's been limited capacity to also work at the regional level. However, some foundational work occurred in all sites that could be leveraged into broader regional influence in the second phase of SPARCC. Highlights of regional influence can be found in the "Policy" section.

## POWER

Power dynamics affect how a system functions because power drives who has voice within the community, who is included in decision-making, and who has influence on outcomes. By fostering community leadership, SPARCC is striving to change the power dynamics in systems of community development that shape the built environment. The word "community" in SPARCC is intentionally inclusive, but in the context of power emphasizes people of color and low-income communities. The evaluation paid attention to three dimensions of power: 1. who is participating in the regional tables in terms of race, lived experience, and residence; 2. the degree to which community voice is not just heard but applied directly in strategies and decisions; and 3. any new conditions that facilitate community mobilizing and leadership.

**Community leadership and power influenced table priorities and many local and regional decisions and prompted conversations about racial equity with decision makers.**

All sites valued having community resident voice—the perspective of community leaders and residents—shape their strategies and influence decisions. SPARCC contributed to having community resident voices shaping SPARCC strategies and influencing decisions in all sites; although, the ways that this occurred varied. For example, the vast majority of the work in Chicago and Memphis was clearly driven by community resident input from prioritized neighborhoods since these tables were structured with residents as core decision makers. Other sites integrated priorities of community organizing groups or community advisory committees into their SPARCC work. Various SPARCC tables worked directly with community members on advocacy campaigns that have mitigated displacement pressures, for example through preservation and development of affordable housing and renters’ protections.

In **Los Angeles**, ACT LA and LA Thrives influenced the shaping and passage of a progressive transit-oriented communities policy at LA Metro that will push forward housing affordability and economic vitality in transit hubs across LA County.

Denver’s accessory dwelling unit (ADU) work described in the “Resources” section was supported and implemented by experienced service providers and community members through the West Denver Community Leadership Committee. In two sites, table members were placed into formal decision-making bodies outside of the SPARCC table, such as the mayoral transition team and senior city leadership in Chicago. Five sites have been invited into regional decision-making meetings and have prompted conversations about racial equity.

**Community resident voices have also shaped capital investments in SPARCC sites,** such as the proposed Inglewood sports facility in LA County, where SPARCC brought new grassroots support and relationships to the “affordable housing before an arena” campaign, and the campaign to more equitably shape Google’s investment in the Bay Area (and specifically San Jose) described in the “Policy” section. Community leadership and power from the sites has also influenced SPARCC’s overarching capital strategy, which is why community land trusts and other community ownership models emerged as areas of interest. The national team is working to understand what is possible under this strategy for SPARCC in its next phase.



**SPARCC tables contributed to new conditions for community members (especially residents) to lead and be involved in transformational efforts in four ways: mechanisms for community input, resources for community power building, new and improved governance structures, and increased individual and organizational capacity, all of which facilitated community mobilizing and leadership.** SPARCC tables made such contributions in all six sites. The extent of these new conditions varied across sites in number and effectiveness. Half of the sites worked on multiple conditions that connected and mutually reinforced each other. As the first three years of SPARCC came to a close, most sites were thinking long term about what needs to be in place to facilitate ongoing community leadership.

The “Resources” section has details on mechanisms established to bring community input into resource allocation, and the “Relationships” section has more information on how governance and leadership structures supported community power. The ways SPARCC built or contributed to changing power dynamics is described below.

**With leadership from sites, SPARCC demonstrated ways to change community power dynamics, particularly through peer learning, table-driven capacity-building strategies, and a core member organization on tables with strong community relationships and leadership development skills.** All sites contributed resources from the operating grants toward increasing community leadership and power more generally, and three sites established grant programs as a strategy to pass through funding to worthy projects. For example, Memphis’s grant program for community leaders funded 23 projects that built capacity and fostered engagement. Four sites implemented strategies that increased individual and organizational capacity for community members—especially residents of color—to be in positions of power over resources and functions. Examples are ACT-LA’s train-the-trainer model helping advocates and community based organizations (CBOs) to bring equity and climate issues into 35 new local community plans, and Atlanta’s Transformation Alliance member Southface, which used a SPARCC capital grant to manifest 60 local people working on eight stormwater infrastructure projects as part of a workforce development program. Many members of the SPARCC national team observed that SPARCC’s investment in peer learning and fostering of a cohort of sites contributed to cross-pollination of ideas between leaders in different cities, which empowered community leaders with new ideas, networks, and moral support.

Several lessons identified by sites provide insight about what helps build community leadership and power:

In **Chicago**, because of the visibility and engagement of Elevated Chicago, several members of its steering committee were recruited for formal leadership positions in Mayor Lori Lightfoot’s administration. As a result, the values of the table became embedded in her administration and gave an avenue for influence. For example, the mayor’s office, Chicago Public Schools, and several city departments adopted the “Community Engagement Principles and Recommendations” published by Elevated Chicago.

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**Our community engagement was facilitated through some of our more truly grassroots locally based organizations, like Georgia Stand Up ... who's been on the ground in these communities, building these relationships, and is kind of activating those networks but also expanding them with our work.**

**ATLANTA TABLE MEMBER**

- » It helps to have an organization that has a long history of community relationships and capacities in leadership development and coalition-building as a core table member.
- » Building relationships and trust takes intentionality and a significant amount of time.
- » When bureaucracy slows down a decision-making process or stops a project, it is useful to have other opportunities already identified so that engaged residents can change direction. It can be challenging to engage residents and community leadership in long-term projects when there are urgent competing priorities. Money for organizers and meetings to explore new areas of work are also important.

**The tension inherent in working both locally and regionally, and effectively engaging residents, are two challenges in SPARCC's design.** Diverse participation in SPARCC locally is crucial for fostering community power. However, there have been some inherent challenges in SPARCC's design, making it hard to define who is needed to participate in the collaborative tables. First, there was an inherent tension between working at both the regional and the local, on-the-ground levels with people who have not typically had access to the power structures that influence community investment. Sites reported that it was hard to do these two things at once, and because of SPARCC's goal of leading with racial equity, it was important to do the local work first. This includes relationship and trust building along with setting up clear and effective collaborative structures and processes to ensure accountability to equity and to avoid perpetuating the status quo. The more local the effort, the easier it can be to figure out whom to engage. All sites drew residents from focus neighborhoods to their tables, to advisory groups, or to community advocacy efforts.

Adequately engaging residents and community members is perceived to be a challenge across the sites. SPARCC was funded as an initiative that emphasized capital deployment and investment, not necessarily community organizing, yet community and resident engagement has been a priority from the beginning. Sites were being responsive to their own contexts, but defining community continues to be complex.

When site leaders were interviewed specifically about the complex issue of power and their experiences,<sup>4</sup> several common themes were raised, including:

- » Explicitly naming and building power is central to advancing racial equity, and it is critical to anchor this work in communities.
- » There are power dynamics at play within the community development sector, such as the concentration of power among funders, which need to be addressed in order to advance the bold, innovative solutions the field desires.
- » Building true community power requires meaningfully supporting community organizing.
- » Collaborative tables that can authentically represent the interests of communities are gaining access to influential conversations on regional development.

<sup>4</sup> A learning brief that provides more detail on these themes will be published in the future by the Federal Reserve Bank of San Francisco.



## POLICY AND PRACTICE

SPARCC targeted policy and practice change at various levels, including at the regional level through the sites' work, which was highly tailored to local priorities, through the SPARCC national level by implementing organizations' internal practices and policies, and by seeking to influence the field of community development more broadly. This work includes formal, written policy changes and more informal practice changes, as well as the foundational work it takes to achieve policy and practice changes.

**All sites contributed to moving local policy priorities and institutional practice changes forward as they related to housing preservation and prevention and mitigation of displacement of long-standing communities of color and low-income communities.** This work included an array of policy engagement, advocacy, and implementation strategies. Most frequently, policy wins occurred in the creation and preservation of affordable housing (including protections for renters), transit related policies and practices, and getting local/regional governments to adopt priorities and values related to community engagement and racial equity.

In **Memphis**, the table contributed to the establishment of the city's first affordable housing trust fund. The fund will serve households earning up to 80% area median income with the possibility of prioritizing projects that target populations facing additional barriers to housing, such as people experiencing homelessness, veterans, and people with disabilities.



In the **Bay Area**, Google bought public land around the Diridon transit station in San Jose. The Bay Area table secured four resident seats on a coalition steering committee and contributed to research on rent impacts in the surrounding area. The data informed community advocacy efforts and got wide media coverage. Google then committed \$1 billion in housing investments (5,000 would be affordable homes), announcing affordable housing benefits would be included in the public land it bought, and establishing a \$250 million investment fund to support affordable housing. The foundation for this success came from table members' previous work in San Jose educating leaders about displacement, and a grassroots base that was organized and engaged.

For example, in Los Angeles the table has strengthened and leveraged a relationship with LA Metro's leadership resulting in a strengthened organizational equity platform, a Transit Oriented Communities plan that commits LA Metro to activities aimed at achieving housing affordability and economic vitality in transit hubs, new programs for cities in the region, and increasing conversations about housing and equity among board members.

## Sites' policy and practice change work spanned various issues related to displacement

**Policy and practice change progress and wins** **# of sites**

### HOUSING

Leadership and influence for affordable housing generally, including wins of formal plans and commitments for affordable housing near transit in several sites	5
Policies protecting/supporting tenants or homeowners	5
Work that took land and housing out of the speculative market	3

### TRANSIT

Equitable transit-oriented development policies	4
Leadership and influence on transit policy ordinances	3

### GENERAL PLANNING OR DEVELOPMENT POLICIES/PRACTICES

Promoting community-driven investment and development, with some sites working on community ownership	5
Community benefits agreements <sup>5</sup>	4
Involved in/influenced comprehensive planning processes	4
New or improved frameworks for increasing equity benefits and promoting organizational or project accountability	3
Helped bring Government Alliance on Race and Equity (GARE) training to government officials & decision makers	3
Influenced inclusionary zoning policies	2
Influenced arts and culture policies	2

**Tables positioned themselves as regional actors influencing policy and practice change.** A few sites have taken an approach of testing strategies that could be spread more broadly for regional influence on practice or policy change (e.g., the Denver ADU pilot program described in the “Resources” section). Four of the sites have also been successful in dispersing strategies through regional transit agencies, for example, influencing statewide legislation.

<sup>5</sup> A contract signed by community groups and a real estate developer that requires the developer to provide specific amenities and/or mitigations to the local community or neighborhood.

Almost all the sites have also developed critical relationships with and now have access to decision makers and agencies with regional implications. Most sites have engaged in regular efforts to educate policy makers. Atlanta held education events for politicians before the 2018 election, and Denver worked with City of Denver departments, elected leaders, and community-based organizations to influence planning policy in a way that aligns with SPARCC goals.

Three sites have been instrumental in connecting decision makers to the Government Alliance on Race and Equity (GARE): The Bay Area helped get the metropolitan transit commission to fund GARE training for data staff leading analysis for regional housing strategy, the City of Denver joined GARE, and LA Metro contracted with GARE. Four sites have successfully used their influence to push government agencies in their regions to incorporate values and priorities aligned with SPARCC.

In addition to the progress and wins outlined above, **all sites did groundwork to identify systemic root causes of issues, challenges, and potential solutions.** For example, Atlanta developed a formal policy platform and Chicago is creating a policy plan for equity in transit-oriented development with the Office of the Mayor, city departments, the regional planning organization, civic sector leaders, and community-based organizations.

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**We have to do a better job building political will to make change [between mayor, city council and board of supervisors]. Part of it comes from pressure of advocates and organizers. There's an inside/outside issue ... It's building those alliances and educating folks ... It's a critical time to get in there and build support for different and more equitable solutions...not just geographic equity but social and racial equity.**

LOS ANGELES TABLE MEMBER



**All sites used collaborative decision-making regarding where to invest resources on policy work, and then individuals or subsets of table members worked on implementation based on their areas of expertise.** Most sites also supported table members' ability to engage in policy work through training and providing opportunities to learn more and interact with decision makers and people with policy expertise. Sites use various approaches to policy work, adapting based on their relative policy experience, access to policy and decision makers, and table structure. Models include deferring to content expertise, full-table, collaborative decision making, working groups, and partnering with existing institutions.

**Some of the strongest national influence fostered by SPARCC to date may be a greater focus on racial equity within the national team organizations and other organizational changes reflecting SPARCC values.** People from all four national team organizations saw increases in racial equity practices and behaviors such as explicitly naming "racial equity" as an outcome goal in strategic plans and processes, providing anti-racist and anti-bias trainings, embedding the SPARCC frame of racial equity, health, and climate resilience into long-term organizational work, and informing the evolution of other initiatives.

For example:

- » NRDC is focused on institution-wide implementation of the Equity Tool, launched a comprehensive Core Concepts of Equity workshop series for all staff, and established an Office of Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion with a newly created Chief DEI Officer position reporting directly to the president of the organization.
- » Enterprise created a Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion Council to focus on strategies to create a more diverse, equitable, and inclusive organization, including career development opportunities, internal policies, and diversifying leadership. Enterprise also created a work group focused on how to build a stronger community of practice that intentionally advances racial equity through its work across programs, policy advocacy, and capital investments.
- » LIIF named racial equity as a central pillar in its strategic plan and created a Social Justice and Racial Equity Working Group that works across departments to embed equity in both the internal operations of the organization, including recruiting, professional development, vendor spending, and measuring impact, as well as in external-facing initiatives, including policy, programs, and capital investments.
- » The FRBSF hosted a learning community in partnership with Reserve Banks across the system on how to embed racial equity in community development work.

There is also a larger emphasis on incorporating community voice and partnering with communities. Climate resilience became more prominent in organizations' activities. ECP and LIIF are both committed to evolving their practice to better understand how to advance racial equity as it pertains to lending and other programs and practices, and plan to develop surveys or tools inspired by SPARCC to assess equity and impact across their platforms of short- and long-term capital tools. National team members reported more diverse leaders at LIIF and NRDC, and three organizations saw the addition of leadership positions focused on equity, diversity, and inclusion, at least in part because of SPARCC's influence.



## RESOURCES

Another condition essential to systems change is capital resources and SPARCC has a goal of driving capital investment in innovative and in more equitable ways. In addition to operating grants and innovation grants, the SPARCC resources included a portfolio of capital tools, including capital grants, debt financing, and mechanisms for more flexible underwriting and terms. The intention was to have the collaborative tables sponsor projects in the built environment that would be supported by these capital tools, focusing on the development priorities of local community organizations.

**Capital projects moved forward in all six sites. SPARCC disbursed nearly \$3.4 million across 25 capital projects (including one loan) to historically disinvested communities, supporting local projects that are showing positive benefits and impact.** Projects have demonstrated proof of concept, built momentum, and generated additional funding and support. Several projects started with small grant subsidies but included the potential for replication and expansion with more debt financing. Some of the projects receiving capital grants likely would not have been funded otherwise, due to fewer and more flexible requirements, and have helped pave the way for support from other projects. For example, Transformation Alliance’s Soccer in the Streets program, which funded soccer fields and programming at transit stations in Atlanta, has expanded to additional sites with support from the transit agency and local health systems.

**Together, the national team and sites established structures and processes for ensuring resource investment promoted racial equity and was informed and driven by specific geographic and cultural communities.** At the initiative level, SPARCC developed a tool to evaluate potential capital projects to ensure they are promoting racial and health equity and resilience to climate change. This capital survey tool declares funder or lender priorities and helps to ensure a project’s alignment with SPARCC goals prior to determining financial feasibility. The tool has potential to influence other finance institutions—national team members took the lead on convening other public and private funding entities (e.g., government and community development finance institutions) to share the tool, lessons from its implementation, and opportunities for strengthening its use. Two sites shared the capital tool with local partners or adapted it for their own use.

In addition, four sites established new local practices for soliciting community input on development priorities. For example, Elevated Chicago established a revolving fund with its SPARCC capital grant (\$500,000). The steering committee, which consists of representation from all seven of Elevated Chicago’s

In the **Bay Area**, SPARCC grants and expertise supported a model for community-owned property through the acquisition of four single-family homes in partnership with Oakland’s community land trust. This work saw the first SPARCC project supported by debt financing and brought together residents, lenders, and developers to collaborate in a new way.

In **Denver**, the Accessory Dwelling Unit (ADU) Pilot Program provides moderate and low-income families the opportunity to build wealth by renting out secondary structures built in their backyards. This program addresses equity around economic opportunity and mitigates displacement by offering affordable housing. This program was made possible through a \$250,000 SPARCC grant and a Fannie Mae Sustainable Communities Challenge award in addition to a partnership with the City of Denver.

targeted transit station areas, scrutinized and vetted the proposed projects to determine where to allocate funding.

**Technical assistance and project specific support helped sites move projects from concept through pre-development.** Site table readiness to meaningfully engage in community development decisions was variable, with representatives from half of the sites reporting increased knowledge and confidence as a result of participating in SPARCC capital processes. SPARCC provided myriad support, including “Capital 101” trainings with interested table and community members and one-on-one technical assistance. Direct support from the SPARCC national team was most effective when paired with the expertise of local partners. Key champions at or adjacent to the tables were critical in moving the work forward, including local representatives from national implementing organizations. Local stakeholders helped with assessing the real estate market and political context since displacement pressures varied across the sites (e.g., in “hot markets,” sites struggled with land values going up while they worked to access funding).

**Using SPARCC debt to finance projects at the sites took longer than anticipated due to several challenges.** Initially, there was some confusion about the types of capital available through SPARCC (e.g., grants versus debt financing), and an ongoing tension between communities’ priorities for projects and projects that are feasible to finance with debt resources available from SPARCC. Projects sponsored by sites tended to offer strong community benefits; some were not a good fit for debt financing because they didn’t have ongoing cash flow to repay debt. Other projects were not yet at the point in their development to take on debt. Several of these projects received SPARCC capital grants since they were more flexible. In some cases, the capital grant supported pre-development and planning with the goal of becoming ready to undertake a debt-financed project later.

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Capital grants have changed our ability to acquire property — that feels like a very impactful thing ... It’s been very useful to learn details of housing finance from acquisition onward to understand better where the real interventions points are along that pathway ... what is the low hanging fruit ... what are the pieces in the medium and long term ... what are the pieces that are going to require a fight.

“ ”

I think when we started, [our] capacity to understand what capital loans could be used for and how to talk about it and market it as a table wasn’t there. It took a long time to get a process together. It was confusing; these are loan funds that need to be paid back. It wasn’t grants.

DENVER TABLE MEMBER

**The SPARCC national team continues to learn what sites need to effectively develop and advance projects in alignment with SPARCC goals, and it adapts its support and resources accordingly.** Some of the most promising potential for impact may be in terms of organizational practice changes at the SPARCC national implementing organizations, particularly the community development finance institutions. In SPARCC's first phase, pre-development grantmaking was a critical tool for facilitating the maturation of ideas from residents and community groups. Some sites have called for more innovative approaches to including new forms of investment and lenders that are willing to take on higher levels of perceived risk. Additionally, community ownership models have emerged as a potential strategy for exploration and testing in the second phase of SPARCC.

## MINDSETS

Mindsets include the attitudes, values, and beliefs that guide behaviors of a system's stakeholders and can be some of the most entrenched and intractable aspects of the system's functioning. SPARCC has worked to shift mindsets so that investment and community development decisions are inclusive and embrace racial equity, health, and climate resilience. Evidence that mindsets are shifting toward these values shows up in all other sections of the report, so this section focuses on how SPARCC is integrating racial equity, health, and climate resilience in its strategies.

At the beginning of the SPARCC initiative, the theory of change was based on the equal importance of racial equity, health, and climate resiliency. In response to the SPARCC initiative, many of the tables expanded to include members representing these three perspectives.

In **Atlanta**, the table's health champion engaged local health care systems in the social determinants of health in two new ways: It piloted a referral system to address non-clinical needs of high health care utilizers and built a consensus agenda among 7 regional health systems on affordable housing.

In addition, the Culture Resilience Environment Workforce project integrated climate and cultural resilience through a stormwater management work force development project directed by community priorities. An advisory board of local professionals helped to shape the program and committed to hire trainees.

**Intentionally applying a frame that named and integrated these three concepts (racial equity, health and climate) was new for most sites.** They often found it challenging to give each concept the same amount of weight in all their strategies. Some sites initially felt that the concepts were too theoretical or not actionable, while some found that hosting learning sessions for local partners to explain and bring the concepts together was helpful. Two sites reported the concepts were already embedded in their existing work. In contrast, other sites organized their tables' work groups around the concepts and have specific "champions" leading the work in each area, leading some to create structures to encourage collaboration across silos. Four of the sites have been successful in integrating the three concepts into their policy work. For example, the Atlanta table included racial equity, health, and climate among its policy position paper topics and in Memphis the table is bringing together people from North Memphis with institutional partners to collaborate on issues related to racial equity, health, and climate. For three sites, the integration of these concepts is built into their table structure, workplans and decision making.

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**We always had equity in 'e'TOD but people didn't want to hear about it. SPARCC gave us power and permission and stability to lead with racial equity.**

**ATLANTA TABLE MEMBER**

**Sites found that leading with racial equity brought them energy and momentum, attracted new members to their tables, gave them permission to do things in a new or different way, and prompted conversations that pushed their partners to evolve their thinking.** In the first year of SPARCC, some sites advocated that SPARCC leaders shift racial equity to be the primary value to guide all SPARCC's work. Once adopted, this was seen as a positive change by all sites and national team partners alike. Additionally, leading with racial equity has meant the development of tools and policies, and has informed planning processes in four sites. One way this manifested was in Chicago, where the Climate and Culture Resilience project installed community-led art and green infrastructure near Chicago Transit Authority stations located in communities of color, bringing together artists, environmental experts, and residents.



# Top evaluation learning from SPARCC: 2017-2019

This describes lessons learned from the first phase of SPARCC. Each lesson was informed by the synthesis of qualitative data collected through interviews with table members, regional stakeholders external to the table, and national team members, as well as quantitative data from the annual survey of table members. These lessons are based on synthesis of evaluation data and interpretation from the evaluation team and representatives from the national team. Some of these lessons are not unique to SPARCC. Even so, they may provide new ideas for practitioners and funders, validate their experiences, illustrate what is possible, and shine a light on where those in the pursuit of equity on these issues need to go.

## TABLE DEVELOPMENT AND PEER LEARNING

1. **Collaborative leadership takes time and resources to develop, in terms of establishing and building the collaborative table and building the skillset to lead adaptive work.** Influenced by scale of geography and philosophy, tables made different decisions regarding how they invested resources with their partners, and as a result, saw various levels of active involvement from their networks. In the first phase of SPARCC, the initiative was open to a variety of structures for the collaborative tables, believing that organic participation and growth was essential.
2. **The expanded network within and across sites has been one of the most valuable contributions of SPARCC.** The SPARCC tables have developed relationships, particularly through SPARCC's investment in peer learning and grants that supported multiple sites' collaboration on innovative approaches. Such relationships have been valuable within and between sites for actively sharing promising practices, problem solving, and other support.
3. **Sites that invested more time and effort in collaborative tables at the beginning of the initiative saw more payoff in outcomes across most of the key areas of SPARCC (i.e., community power and leadership, capital resource investment, policy and practice change).** This included establishing or refining governance and decision-making structures, expanding partner engagement, hiring strong leaders and support staff, and developing formal mechanisms for community leadership.

## CAPITAL STRATEGY

4. **Shifting the community development paradigm and practice requires slowing down to ensure a strong, collaborative foundation,** particularly in establishing: 1) community-driven decision-making structures with an eye toward racial equity; and 2) mechanisms for authentic community participation and leadership.

5. **SPARCC’s national implementing organizations overestimated how quickly they would be able to deploy SPARCC’s capital resources, learning that what sites wanted was not always possible with SPARCC tools and that some sites needed technical support related to the capital process.** The portfolio of capital tools was not co-designed, which probably contributed to the delay in deployment. A lack of understanding among sites and the national team about what resources were available through SPARCC and how sites could access them, further delayed this work. Key ingredients for success included having a champion with expertise to move the work forward and having potential borrowers connected to the table, as well as ensuring projects are in alignment with communities’ priorities.
6. **SPARCC’s capital survey tool for evaluating potential projects, while still being refined and tested, may be helpful for signaling funder or lender priorities and ensuring a project is a programmatic fit—this is separate from assessing financial feasibility, which is where many prospective SPARCC built-environment projects stalled.** Evaluating potential projects using surveys and tools is not a replacement for the hands-on technical support required to bring a deal to fruition. However, the work and learning related to SPARCC’s capital survey tool seems promising for broadening SPARCC’s influence.

## RACIAL EQUITY AND POWER SHARING

7. **Leading with a racial equity perspective is a SPARCC cornerstone and has yielded positive impacts.** The frame of racial equity sets the site tables apart from other local coalitions and collaboratives. This frame has also brought in new partners, given cover and credibility to anti-racism work, pushed constructive dialogue, and catalyzed strategic changes within all four national team organizations.
8. **Power sharing emerged as a theme during the first couple of years of SPARCC.** The national implementing organizations recognized their approach was often top-down and so began to change their approach to be more flexible and responsive to community priorities. For example, SPARCC tables elevated displacement as a common issue across all sites, amplifying all three SPARCC concepts (racial equity, health, and climate resilience).
9. **SPARCC is elevating gaps and dysfunctions in the field of community development more broadly and providing a unique model for a philanthropic community development initiative.** Instead of applying a uniform intervention across the sites, SPARCC is trying to be flexible in response to what sites are asking for and mindful of community context.

## EVALUATION

10. **Measuring systems change with an equity perspective is complex and adaptive work.** The less specific SPARCC is in defining what it's aiming for, the harder it will be to see impact. But specificity needs to be balanced with an evaluation framework that stretches and adapts to fit the variety of approaches and potential outcomes across sites—sites dedicated to doing what they each can uniquely do: deploy strategies aimed at solutions within their particular community context.

For more information about the SPARCC evaluation, please contact [cche@kp.org](mailto:cche@kp.org).



October 2019 SPARCC convening in Chicago

# Appendix

- A. SUMMARY OF SPARCC TABLES
- B. LOGIC MODEL
- C. EVALUATION APPROACH
- D. CCHE'S COLLABORATION MODEL

## APPENDIX A: SUMMARY OF SPARCC TABLES (AS OF DECEMBER 2019)

	Denver – Mile High Connects (MHC)	Chicago – Elevated Chicago	Los Angeles – LA SPARCC Collaborative
Key organizations, size of membership	Mile High Connects. 23 member organizations.	Elevated Chicago. 16 member organizations, including community foundation, City of Chicago, CDFIs, think tanks, affordable housing developers, and community-based organizations.	The Alliance for Community Transit-LA, LA Thrives, Long Beach Forward, Social Justice Leadership Institute. 4 organizations.
Geographic focus	West Denver and North Federal Corridor (Westminster/ Adams County)	The ½ mile radius around 7 Chicago Transit Authority stations in neighborhoods located in the NW, W, and S sides of Chicago	LA County; Cities of LA, Inglewood, and Long Beach
Table history <sup>6</sup>	Existing	New	Aligned
Governance structure	Broad partnership of foundations, community nonprofits, and businesses. Two residents on steering committee.	Steering Committee, Operations Committee, three working groups, five community tables, and Leadership Council. Resident engagement through the community tables. 4 Steering Committee members are also community residents.	Network of existing tables. Coordinating committee made up of representatives from 3 coalitions in three main cities & LA Thrives. Residents' priorities brought by community organizing member orgs.
Strategies	<p>Create tangible improvements in the lives of low-income residents and communities of color and revitalize the region's newly transit-rich neighborhoods without displacement of current residents and long-standing neighborhood businesses.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Strengthen meaningful community participation in planning and policy processes by enhancing new and existing community-led collaboratives and supporting community leaders with information and training</li> <li>Collaborate with agency leadership elected officials, and other critical partners to ensure resulting policies reflect equity, health and resilience goals</li> <li>Deploy capital to address identified community needs in target geographies, which will serve as demonstration projects for other development in the region</li> <li>Increase number, leadership capacity, role and influence of resident leaders</li> </ul>	<p>Transform the half-mile radius around transit stations into hubs of opportunity and connection through transit-oriented planning and development to address deeply rooted disparities in racial equity, public health, and cultural and climate resilience.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Build capacity; foster local ownership of land, homes, and businesses, as well as a broader sense of community ownership of public spaces and neighborhood assets; amplify resident power</li> <li>Create walkable and climate resilient spaces, healthy, green affordable housing, community centers, business incubators, and green infrastructure near transit</li> <li>Promote community engagement and community ownership models, adopt a Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion framework; combat displacement with a policy agenda for equitable transit-oriented development (eTOD); and increase access to new and existing capital sources in a way that is responsive to community needs</li> </ul>	<p>Regional approach responding to county-wide transit expansion within the context of a severe and intensifying housing crisis.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Support community organizing and base-building for strong local policies to protect renters and support equitable development without displacement</li> <li>Link local organizing to advocacy of regional agencies such as Conservation Authorities, LA Metro, and county agencies (Parks and Public Health)</li> <li>Expand community engagement to include direct participation in capital projects</li> </ul>
Accomplishment highlights	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Accessory Dwelling Unit (ADU) Pilot Program</li> <li>RTD LiVe Program- discounted transit fare for those who income-qualify</li> <li>Contributions to Blueprint Denver- incorporated equity into citywide land-use and transportation plan</li> <li>Tenant protection legislation expansion</li> <li>Restored a critical bus route</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Passed an amendment to Chicago's TOD Ordinance requiring an equitable policy plan for future development</li> <li>Deployed \$1.5M in grants for workplan creation/implementation</li> <li>Secured a Community Benefits Agreement with developers</li> <li>Infrastructure improvements including art projects, an eco-orchard, storm water management, and walkability projects</li> <li>\$500k for revolving pre-development fund deployed to 5 projects</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>City of LA Community Plan Toolkit &amp; trainings</li> <li>Stronger renter advocate network and local policy wins (i.e. rent control in Inglewood)</li> <li>Publication of anti-displacement policy map</li> <li>Passed LA Metro's Transit-Oriented Communities policy, leading implementation</li> <li>3 development projects combating commercial gentrification</li> </ul>

<sup>6</sup> Table history is categorized as either "Existing"—existing tables that explored how to connect to other sectors or partners, "New"—tables that did not exist before SPARCC, or "Aligned"—multiple tables aligning/coordinating in a networked approach.

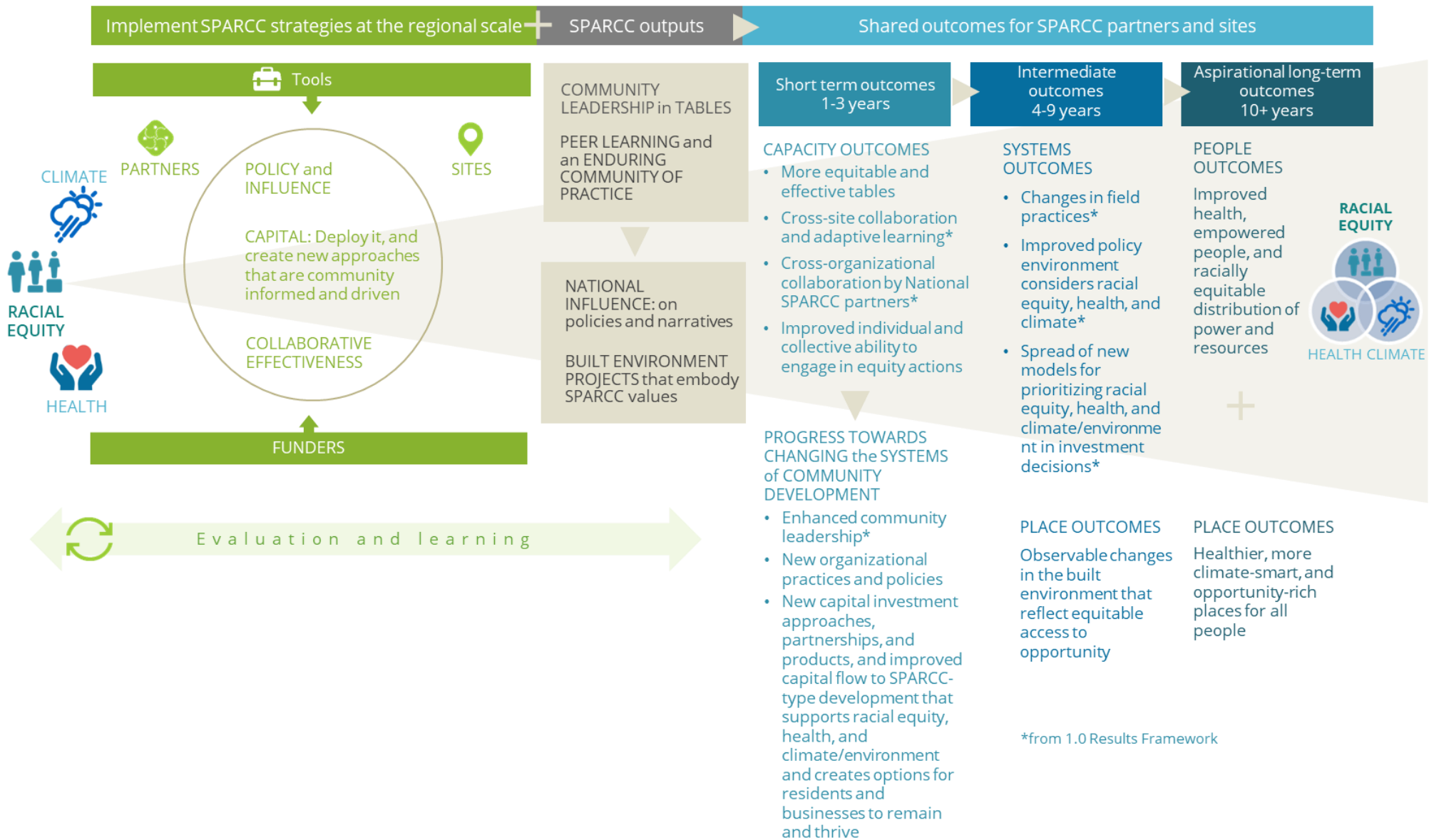


## APPENDIX A: SUMMARY OF SPARCC TABLES (AS OF DECEMBER 2019)

	Atlanta – TransFormation Alliance (TFA)	Memphis: Neighborhood Collaborative for Resilience	San Francisco Bay Area – Bay Area 4 All (BA4A)
Key organizations	Atlanta Regional Commission; Enterprise; Georgia Stand-Up; Partnership for Southern Equity; Southface Energy Institute. 30 member organizations.	Neighborhood Collaborative for Resilience (NCR). North Memphis residents, partnerships with approximately 20 city-wide or regional organizations or institutions.	6 Wins for Social Equity Network; Bay Area Regional Health Inequities Initiative; Great Communities Collaborative/The San Francisco Foundation. 4 member organizations.
Geographic focus	The Lee Street Corridor in city of Atlanta focusing on three MARTA station areas.	North Memphis.	9-county Bay Area region; focused on cities of Oakland, Concord, San Jose and Vallejo.
Table history <sup>6</sup> Governance structure	Existing Director, executive committee, champions. Plans for resident members on the executive committee.	New Community advisory board consisting of approximately 40 North Memphis residents, a steering committee, and three workgroups supported by institutional partnerships. Structure is evolved for the next phase of SPARCC	Aligned Network of existing tables/organizations. Coordinating committee made up of representatives from 4 key member orgs. Residents' priorities brought by community organizing member orgs. Preservation and public lands working groups work semi-independently.
Strategies	<p>Create a “New Atlanta Way” for development that lifts up the voice of residents as decision makers and centers racial equity while working toward positive health and climate impacts.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Move a variety of projects through the capital pipeline, including an eTOD demonstration project and community/recreational facilities</li> <li>• Present the Equity Evaluation Tool to several local funding partners including Invest Atlanta and the Atlanta Beltline Partnership</li> <li>• Integrate creative placemaking into strategies</li> <li>• Move forward affordable housing &amp; transportation policies</li> <li>• Develop a model to increase health care investment in system redesign to meet communities' health needs</li> <li>• Improve and make the TFA a sustainable collaborative</li> <li>• Convene community advisory group</li> <li>• Develop grants program for community projects</li> </ul>	<p>Change policies, practices, and development to improve quality of life in North Memphis and eliminate disparities related to racial equity, climate change, and health.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Promote practices and policies that encourage equitable development</li> <li>• Preserve, protect, and promote healthy neighborhoods</li> <li>• Strengthen capacity of all collaborative members to engage meaningfully and coordinate work</li> <li>• Improve connectivity and mobility of residents in their neighborhoods and across the region</li> </ul>	<p>Create a new sustainable model for community development that prioritizes community voice in decisions regarding preservation of affordable housing and public land disposition. Two high level goals are:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1) Keep low-income, vulnerable residents in transit and job-rich neighborhoods</li> <li>2) Create long-term pathways for protecting communities from the highs and lows of the housing/real estate cycle.</li> </ol> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Identify, finance, and acquire buildings that CBOs and residents prioritize for preservation</li> <li>• Integrate lessons learned from public lands and preservation strategies into regional planning</li> <li>• Support new partners, including hospitals and funders, to use their financial resources and political voice to advance housing affordability</li> </ul>
Accomplishment highlights	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The Transformation Academy (citizen training program) graduated more than 40 citizens (including 12 youth) to engage in community revitalization and transit planning</li> <li>• Distributed \$65k in community grants to nonprofits serving focus geography</li> <li>• Influenced parameters of Invest Atlanta TOD Fund to include better terms to applicants agreeing to equity goals</li> <li>• Four development projects (TOD housing, TOD soccer field, stormwater management work force development, commercial building renovation). Two projects leveraged more funding.</li> <li>• Local health system pilot of referral system for addressing non-clinical needs of high utilizers of health services.</li> <li>• Seven regional health systems consensus on affordable housing agenda</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Established NCR governance structure, infrastructure for resident voice and engagement</li> <li>• Identified community-driven table priorities</li> <li>• Completed a racial equity assessment for Le Bonheur Children's Hospital initiative</li> <li>• Master Home Environmentalist program conducts healthy home inspections. Data collection on home conditions, translating experiences into legislation.</li> <li>• Pre-development for establishing a grocery store, construction of food pantry &amp; nonprofit green grocer, funding 3 lots reserved for low-income seniors in housing development project.</li> <li>• Contributed to establishing city's first Affordable Housing Trust Fund</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Advocacy effort resulted in Google including affordable housing in public land purchased near a transit station</li> <li>• Contributed to increased affordable housing units on the public land next to a transit station in San Jose</li> <li>• Supported new resident-based steering committee in Vallejo working on renter protections and housing preservation through a local land trust</li> <li>• New partnership with Oakland affordable housing developers, community-based organizations, and residents resulted in using three SPARCC capital grants for several home acquisitions with the community land trust.</li> <li>• Influenced regional housing policy work with CASA</li> </ul>

## APPENDIX B: SPARCC LOGIC MODEL

GOAL: Change the way metropolitan regions grow, invest, and build by applying an integrated (racial equity + health + climate) cross-sector approach that benefits low-income communities and communities of color



### EVALUATION GOALS

The Center for Community Health and Evaluation (CCHE) led the evaluation of SPARCC's first three years and will continue through the next phase. The evaluation is funded by the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation. With input from initiative stakeholders, the SPARCC evaluation team defined two goals for the evaluation:

1. Understand and document SPARCC's contributions to systems changes related to community development at the local, regional, and national levels
2. Provide ongoing feedback and lessons learned to SPARCC national team partners and sites on what's working and what can be strengthened

### WHAT IS THE SPARCC EVALUATION?

**Measuring outcomes.** In collaboration with the SPARCC national team, the evaluation team developed an evaluation plan to guide the assessment of SPARCC's progress using case study methodology. The plan balances the need to understand work on the ground at all six sites individually with cross-site investigation to identify progress and lessons from the SPARCC initiative as a whole.

**Facilitating learning.** Throughout the initiative, the evaluation team shared results and provided opportunities for reflection to promote learning, highlight progress and effective strategies, and identify opportunities for improvement or course corrections.

### DATA SOURCES AND ANALYSIS THAT INFORMED THIS REPORT

The evaluation team collected data from multiple sources. This allowed triangulation of information from different sources to understand progress and learning in SPARCC. Data sources that informed this report included:

- » Site visits and interviews with key partners at the six sites, typically twice per year
- » Annual survey of table members at each of the six sites
- » Annual interviews with members of the SPARCC national team
- » Annual grant reports from the sites and national team
- » National team work plans and reports
- » Observations at learning convenings

## APPENDIX C: EVALUATION APPROACH

Data were analyzed at multiple levels: within each site, across six sites, and for the initiative overall by synthesizing data from the national team and sites. CCHE conducted qualitative analysis on qualitative data from interviews and open-ended questions in the survey using a code list derived from the SPARCC logic model categories and learning questions. Coding was supported by Atlas.ti where appropriate. Quantitative survey data were analyzed using descriptive statistics, Stata, and Tableau software. Findings were reviewed in structured team meetings to ensure consistent use of codes, and facilitate team understanding; these also served to add rigor and ensure accurate representation and interpretation of what was observed in the data.

Qualitative analysis of coded data informed a coding memo for each site and the SPARCC national team and fed into site-specific “case studies”— internal Word documents using a common organizational structure for documenting and organizing in-depth information about each site and facilitating cross-site analysis. For site-related data, the team integrated information from other source documents into the case studies as needed, and further synthesized analysis results into a common table template organized by the evaluation domains of interest. Once the six templates were populated, they were discussed with site and national team representatives to ensure accuracy.

The evaluation team then reviewed the data a second time to identify cross-cutting themes and draw conclusions across the cohort of sites. In conjunction, they reviewed national team documents to further understand contributions of the national team’s work and synthesize initiative progress and facilitated discussions with national team members to ensure accuracy and interpret findings.

### LIMITATIONS

The work of SPARCC tables in each site was unique in nature, occurred in complex political and social environments, and encountered unanticipated events both positive and negative. Differences in the table strategies and approaches to community power and leadership varied widely. The evaluation was not attempting to identify findings that can be generalized to place-based and cross-sector work or draw conclusions that value certain types of progress over others. Rather, the evaluation aimed to capture lessons unique to SPARCC, identify promising practices, illustrate what is possible, and point out gaps and opportunities for SPARCC’s next phase and the field overall.

### ABOUT THE EVALUATION TEAM

The evaluation team for SPARCC is led by CCHE, in partnership with Raimi + Associates.

#### **Center for Community Health and Evaluation**

<http://www.cche.org/>

Based in Seattle, CCHE evaluates health-related programs and initiatives throughout the United States, to improve the health of communities. We partner with foundations and health organizations, and take a collaborative approach to evaluation, sharing data and evaluation findings with our clients when it is most helpful for their decision-making. CCHE brings expertise in community-based evaluation, community health and the drivers of health, and cross-sector partnerships.

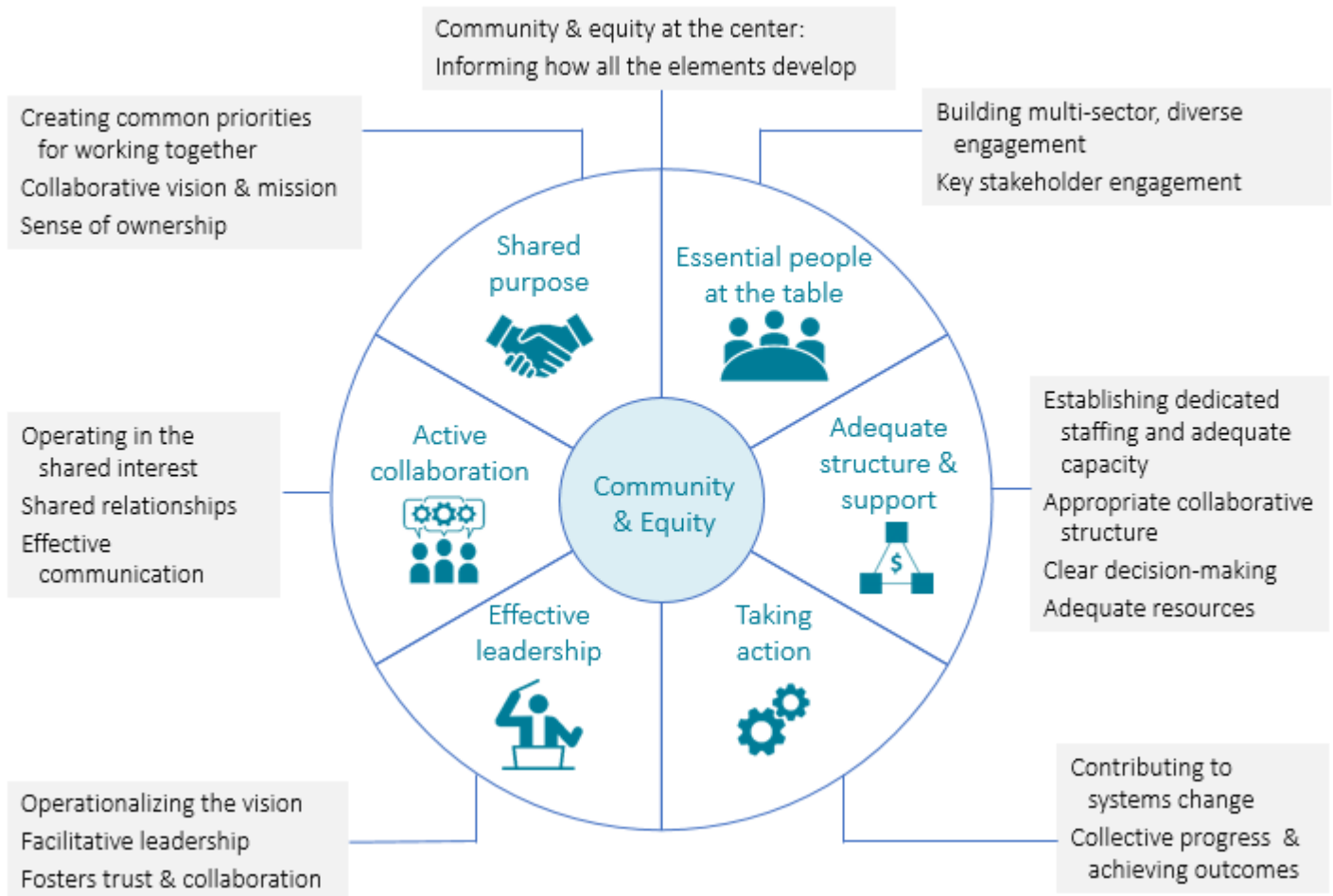
#### **Raimi + Associates**

<https://www.raimiassociates.com/>

R+A is a multidisciplinary planning, policy, design, and research firm with offices in Berkeley, Los Angeles, and Riverside, CA. Our firm's community planning expertise is complemented and informed by our focus on public health, equity, sustainability, and program evaluation.



Essential elements for successful collaboration<sup>7</sup>



<sup>7</sup> Cheadle, A., Rosaschi, M., Burden, D., Ferguson, M., Greaves, B., Houston, L., . . . Maddux-Gonzalez, M. (2019). A Community-Wide Collaboration to Reduce Cardiovascular Disease Risk: The Hearts of Sonoma County Initiative. *Prev Chronic Dis*, 16, E89. doi:10.5888/pcd16.180596

