Evaluation of the Strong Cities, Strong Communities (SC2) Teams Pilot

Final Report

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List of Acronyms

CDFI	Community Development Financial Institution
CNCS	Corporation for National & Community Service
COPS grant	Community Oriented Policing Services Grant
DOC	Department of Commerce
DOD	Department of Defense
DOE	Department of Energy
DOE-CIO	Department of Energy-Office of the Chief Information Officer
DOJ	Department of Justice
DOL	Department of Labor
DOT	Department of Transportation
DOT-FHWA	Department of Transportation-Federal Highway Administration
ED	Department of Education
EDA	Economic Development Administration
EPA	Environmental Protection Agency
FHA	Federal Housing Administration
FTA	Federal Transit Authority
GSA	General Services Administration
HHS	Department of Health and Human Services
HUD	Housing and Urban Development
MAGNET	Manufacturing Advocacy & Growth Network
MBDA	Minority Business Development Agency
NASA	National Aeronautics and Space Administration
OAT	Opportunity Assessment Team
OSTP	Office of Science and Technology Policy
POC	Point of Contact
RTA	Regional Transit Authority
SBA	Small Business Administration
SC2	Strong Cities, Strong Communities
SC2 Council	White House Council on Strong Cities, Strong Communities
SWAG	Strategic Workforce Alignment Group
TIGER	Transportation Investment Generating Economic Recovery
Treasury	Department of the Treasury
USACE	U.S. Army Corps of Engineers
USDA	Department of Agriculture
VA	Department of Veterans Affairs
WIB	Workforce Investment Board

Executive Summary

Many American communities are facing economic challenges due to restructuring of the national and global economy. These changes have often resulted in the loss of traditional industries and localized jobs, population decline, and increased rates of concentrated poverty. The recent recession exacerbated these trends and created a difficult fiscal and economic reality for many American cities.

In this context, the White House launched the Strong Cities, Strong Communities Initiative (SC2). The SC2 initiative represents a new model of collaboration between federal and local government to improve how the federal government invests in and offers technical assistance to support locally driven economic development and job creation goals. The initiative focuses on changing how federal and local government systems interact, promoting enhanced collaboration and communication among federal agencies, tailoring solutions to local conditions, and increasing the capacity of local leaders and institutions for economic development.

In September 2011, as part of SC2, the White House Domestic Policy Council (DPC) and 14 federal agencies[1] launched a pilot initiative in six U.S. cities: Chester, PA; Cleveland, OH; Detroit, MI; Fresno, CA; Memphis, TN; and New Orleans, LA.[2] At the start of the pilot, federal agencies assigned employees to interagency teams of experts called SC2 teams. Each SC2 team consisted of a team lead and federal employees assigned to work for the city full-time, part-time, or in an advisory capacity. A small number of SC2 team members were deployed to the pilot cities where they worked at or in close proximity to city hall; other SC2 team members were based out of their agency's headquarters in the Washington, DC, area or out of regional or field offices.

On March 15, 2012, the President signed an Executive Order creating the White House Council on Strong Cities, Strong Communities (SC2 Council). The SC2 Council leads the implementation of the various components of the SC2 Initiative, facilitates greater alignment between agencies to ensure communities have access to comprehensive, localized technical assistance and planning resources, and provides policy recommendations to the President and his Administration based on lessons learned through work on the ground in communities.

In 2012, the Department of Health and Human Services contracted with Abt Associates and Mt. Auburn Associates to evaluate the first 18 months of the SC2 pilot. The evaluation focuses on how the pilot was implemented and the factors associated with its success, with success defined as the ability of SC2 teams to assist cities in addressing their priorities for economic revitalization. The evaluation addresses three research questions:

1. How are the activities of the SC2 teams being implemented?

2. How have federal participants experienced SC2?

3. What has been learned that can be used to enhance future program implementation?

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[1]   Since the start of the SC2 Pilot, five additional agencies have begun to participate in SC2 Pilot. In 2014, there are now 19 agencies partnering on SC2 Team implementation.

[2]   In October 2012, after the contract for this evaluation was executed, Youngstown, OH, also became an SC2 site.

The evaluation focuses on SC2 team activities implemented between September 2011 and March 2013.[3] Data for the study was collected through site visits conducted in March and April 2013, and key informant interviews and focus groups conducted in spring and fall 2013. To conduct the analysis, we drew on qualitative data collected through site visits, interviews, and focus groups, as well as background documents about the SC2 teams and the engagement. We also developed case studies that provide detail about the cities' economic challenges and opportunities, their goals for the engagement, and how the pilot was implemented (see Appendix A).

Key Evaluation Findings

The key findings of the evaluation are organized in five topic areas: the implementation of the pilot, factors affecting the SC2 pilot initiative's success, strengths of the SC2 team approach, challenges of the SC2 team approach, and potential improvements to this approach for future program implementation.

Implementation and Accomplishments of the Pilot

Given that the pilot cities faced distinct challenges and had different visions for the future, the implementation of the pilot varied from site to site. Each city also had a unique mix of federal team members and city leadership. In general, SC2 team leads played key roles in setting the direction for the pilot, developing relationships among SC2 team members and between the SC2 team and city stakeholders, problem solving, and managing SC2 team members. City mayors varied in their approaches to the pilot; some were closely involved in setting the vision for the engagement while others preferred that SC2 team members steer the engagement. A critical resource in most cities was a senior city staff person who served as a liaison between city leadership and the SC2 team.

Implementation in each city began with the development of a work plan followed by the assignment of SC2 team members to specific tasks. The cities most able to move quickly from planning to implementation of activities were those with clear visions for the SC2 engagement and a defined set of priorities for the SC2 team members. Cities lacking a clear vision and priorities endured a longer planning phase to identify projects for SC2 team members and city stakeholders with whom SC2 could partner. As implementation proceeded, a valuable feature of the SC2 approach was the flexibility it allowed cities to begin new activities that emerged over time as opportunities arose or as initially planned activities were determined to be infeasible. In this way, the SC2 work plan was considered a "living document."

Overall, our evaluation of the first 18 months of SC2 pilot implementation found that the SC2 team approach can be an effective way to address the priorities of cities facing significant economic challenges. This is particularly true in instances where key players in the engagement—city leaders, SC2 team members, and federal agencies—are committed to the engagement and willing to provide time and resources to identify and overcome obstacles to progress. In the absence of such alignment, activities for SC2 team members were harder to identify, resources harder to come by, and progress delayed. There is

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[3]   Due to the time frame, this study does not include an analysis of the SC2 teams' exit strategy from the pilot cities. It also does not discuss the ways in which the program design was modified in preparation for the second round of SC2 team implementation (in the spring of 2014, SC2 teams deployed in seven second round cities. These seven cities will receive intensive technical assistance from SC2 teams: St. Louis, MO; Gary, IN; Flint, MI; Brownsville, TX; Rockford, IL; Macon, GA; and Rocky Mount, NC). A short summary of these program modifications has been included as an addendum to the Executive Summary.

also early evidence that the SC2 experience can transform the way federal team members do their jobs and potentially alter the way some agencies interact with their city government colleagues.

The efforts of the SC2 teams led to an impressive set of accomplishments during the first 18 months in the pilot cities. In the full report, we highlight 40 accomplishments that pilot stakeholders and the evaluation team considered to be the most significant. These accomplishments range from helping cities solve small, isolated problems or mitigating bureaucratic barriers to developing sustainable collaborations and plans that are expected to benefit the cities long after the SC2 engagement ends. Examples of SC2 accomplishments include providing technical assistance to help one city open its first grocery store, helping another city repurpose federal funds to demolish blighted public housing, and assisting still another city with planning for future development in a transit corridor.

Factors Affecting the Success of SC2 Teams

The evaluation identified a number of factors affecting the success of SC2 teams. These factors are related to four components of the pilot: the role of the cities, the role of federal agencies, the characteristics of the SC2 teams, and how the cities and SC2 teams worked together.

Role of Cities

On the part of the cities, the extent and type of mayoral commitment to the pilot was key to progress. Efforts by mayors in the early stages of the pilot to set a vision for the SC2 team's activities and convey the importance of the engagement to city staff facilitated progress, while a lack of initial planning for SC2 efforts led to delays in implementation. An additional factor affecting success was the underlying capacity of the pilot cities, which varied across the six sites. While all pilot cities faced capacity challenges, those cities with extremely low staff capacity struggled to fully take advantage of what the pilot offered.

Role of Federal Agencies

As with cities, the commitment of federal agencies affected the success of the SC2 pilot. Agency commitment, as measured by (i) the number of agency staff, (ii) amount of staff time dedicated to the pilot, (iii) the number of members embedded in the cities, (iv) the access the SC2 team and city had to senior-level agency officials, and (v) agency leadership's support for SC2's bottom-up approach to assisting cities were each key in addressing cities' priorities. Also key to success was the willingness of agencies to adopt the underlying vision of SC2 as that of a bottom-up approach driven by the priorities of cities, with the federal role being one of flexible assistance to the needs of cities. Embracing this approach was sometimes difficult for regional staff who became SC2 team members because their normal duties called for them to monitor grantees for compliance and performance. Agencies that embraced this new approach tended to have SC2 team members who went above and beyond their traditional roles in assisting cities, which led to new, locally tailored solutions to long-standing problems.

Characteristics of the Federal SC2 Team Members

Several characteristics of SC2 team members were associated with success. SC2 team members with greater experience in their home agency, or greater content expertise, were frequently better able to help cities address their priority areas. In particular, senior staff members played key roles in connecting city stakeholders to high-level federal decision makers in order to resolve long-standing problems or to bypass bureaucratic barriers to progress. Additional SC2 team member characteristics that were important to success were the resourcefulness to identify solutions to challenges facing cities and an entrepreneurial and adaptable approach to the engagement, which was critical given the dynamic nature of low-capacity cities and the lack of direction SC2 teams encountered at times. The ability of SC2 team members to

broker new relationships with city stakeholders, or to repair strained relationships that predated the pilot, was also an important factor affecting SC2's success. Particular to team leads, their ability to work as generalists across various topic areas and with multiple city departments and federal agencies was more valuable to the pilot's success than the leads' content expertise.

How Cities and Federal Teams Worked Together

How cities and SC2 teams worked together affected their ability to make progress addressing city priorities. Two factors were important. First, SC2 teams worked best when the city provided a clear focus for their work. In cities that lacked a clear strategy or had conflicting priorities for SC2's work, team leads, team members, and city staff struggled to identify how best to work together, where to focus their energies, and how to maximize the opportunities for partnership and technical assistance inherent in the approach. Second, SC2 team members on occasion encountered city stakeholders who were unsupportive of the engagement or had tense relationships with other stakeholders. In some cases, team members were not able to overcome these dynamics to address city priorities.

Strengths of the SC2 Team Approach

Our evaluation identified several strengths of the SC2 approach from both the perspective of the pilot cities and of the federal government. From the perspective of pilot cities, strengths include a new way to interact with the federal government, a more direct connection to federal resources, and new or improved relationships with city partners. From the perspective of the federal government, benefits of the approach include new insight into how local governments operate, how to better target resources to local needs, new enthusiasm for cross-agency collaboration, and new professional development opportunities for SC2 team members.

A New Way to Interact

For the pilot cities, the engagement represented a new way to interact with the federal government in which the city directs the federal government in how it can best help address local priorities. Cities valued this bottom-up approach, which contrasted with historical relationships with federal agencies that emphasized grant compliance and federal monitoring. Cities also appreciated that the pilot encouraged federal staff to become involved in day-to-day city operations, thus giving them a clearer picture of the challenges cities face and how they are affected by federal policies.

A More Direct Connection to Resources

City stakeholders also regarded the pilot as a way to facilitate a more direct connection to a range of federal resources and staff. Cities gained a better understanding of federal policies and programs, an increased awareness of federal funding opportunities, and a better understanding of how to more effectively use existing federal funds. The cities also valued the direct access to the subject matter expertise of decision makers in the federal government afforded by the pilot initiative.

New or Improved Relationships with Partners

Cities appreciated the new or improved relationships the pilot cultivated with city partners. Cities established new relationships with federal employees and expect those relationships to serve as resources beyond the end of the pilot. The pilot also helped repair previously strained relationships between city and federal representatives. Additionally, cities benefited from new relationships with local stakeholders (e.g., private, philanthropic, non-profit, state and local government) that SC2 team members helped convene, which are expected to benefit the cities for years to come.

New Federal Insight Into Cities

From the perspective of the federal government, a key strength of the SC2 approach was that it gave agencies new insight into how local governments in distressed cities operate and how to better target resources to their needs. SC2 team members learned how cities manage competing priorities under the strain of limited capacity, how they use federal resources such as programmatic funds and technical assistance, when cities were successful in using resources, and what barriers cities faced when they were unsuccessful. As a result of these new insights, federal agencies were able to more effectively target their efforts to the individual needs of cities' with constrained capacity.

New Federal Cross-Agency Collaboration

Additionally, the SC2 team approach encouraged new cross-agency collaborations that federal agencies and federal employees found valuable. Collaboration allowed SC2 team members to become familiar with other agencies' community development programs as well as make valued connections with staff at other agencies, both professional and personal, that are expected to continue after the pilot ends.

New Professional Development Opportunities

The pilot served as a unique experience for participating federal employees, affording them new insight into economically challenged communities and how an agency's programs and policies impact localities. Additionally, the experience allowed federal employees to attain new skills, such as the ability to work directly with local governments, build partnerships to collaboratively address problems, or take a leadership position within a diverse team of stakeholders.

Challenges to the SC2 Team Approach

We also identified several challenges to the SC2 approach as piloted that impeded progress in addressing city priorities. These challenges are related to a lack of financial resources, the inability of some cities to take full advantage of the resources offered by the pilot, and the misalignment of cities' needs and the assigned team members.

Lack of Financial Resources for the Pilot

From the perspective of federal agencies, the lack of dedicated financial resources for SC2 activities was a key challenge that affected their ability to allocate resources to the pilot. A lack of funding meant that agencies had to reallocate existing resources to cover staff time and travel budgets. As a result, many agencies struggled to dedicate staff to SC2 team assignments and to find sufficient resources to cover the costs of the pilot despite a commitment to do so. Limited resources sometimes resulted in a smaller number of assigned SC2 team members than cities desired and SC2 team members who could spend less time on SC2 activities than cities needed.

The Ability of Cities To Fully Take Advantage of the Pilot

A challenge related to the assessment process is that it did not sufficiently determine which cities were best positioned to engage in and benefit from the pilot. Federal stakeholders noted that the first round of site selection did not adequately differentiate cities that were prepared to benefit from a SC2 team from those that were not as prepared. While all pilot cities faced economic and capacity challenges that could be mitigated by federal attention, some in particular were marked by factors that ultimately hindered the success of the pilot, including very limited staff capacity, a lack of clear vision or priorities for the pilot, or political instability.

Alignment of Cities' Needs and Assignment of SC2 Team Members

Further limiting progress in certain cases was a misalignment between a specific focus area or project in a pilot city and the expertise of the SC2 team members assigned to the city. Cities reported cases in which an SC2 team member came from one program in a federal agency when the city really needed the skills or experience from a different program in the same agency. This led to less progress than otherwise would have been possible.

Areas to Further Explore with the SC2 Approach

From our analysis of the strengths and challenges of the SC2 approach, and factors affecting SC2 team accomplishments, we have identified a number of potential improvements to the approach for three stages of the engagement: before implementation of SC2 team activities, during implementation, and as implementation nears completion.

Opportunities for Improvement Before Implementation of SC2 Activities

City staff may benefit from deeper communication about what to expect as a pilot city, including guidelines as to (i) whom should be involved from the city and (ii) what roles they should play, (iii) what SC2 team members can reasonably be expected to achieve in a city, and (iv) what the limitations of the engagement are. While this information was shared with those directly involved with the SC2pilot, we heard that a broader set of city staff and stakeholders engaged in the pilot may benefit from this information as well. Cities could put systems in place to ensure that pilot guidelines and limitations are shared with this broader group of individuals. Additionally, federal staff could work during the selection process to secure the commitment of mayors and key city leaders to the engagement and be more intentional about involving regional and state stakeholders. They might also complete a leadership audit during the assessment process focused on gauging political dynamics that might limit a city's ability to collaborate internally and partner productively with SC2 team members.

Opportunities for Improvement During Implementation of SC2 Team Activities

As implementation begins, federal agencies could try to ensure that the SC2 teams have sufficient resources, including staff time and travel budgets, to most effectively help cities address their priorities. Additionally, team leads and the SC2 Council might benefit from monitoring the match between city priorities and SC2 team member skills throughout implementation, not just during selection of team members. This emerged as a critical issue given the importance of SC2 members' skills to accomplishing cities' goals, and the fact that city needs and priorities can quickly change as unexpected events occur.

Opportunities for Improvement as Implementation of SC2 Team Activities Nears Completion

As implementation winds down, early communication with cities and SC2 team members about the exit strategy could ensure that both parties are able to plan for the transition and take steps to sustain and build upon SC2 accomplishments and the relationships formed during the engagement. Furthermore, SC2's impact can broaden by sharing the lessons learned from this evaluation and other work by the SC2 Council with federal staff and cities that were not involved in the engagement, coupled with creating ongoing mechanisms to capture and share what is learned during implementation. This sharing may further the pilot's expected long-term outcome of changing how the federal government does business with cities.

Addendum to the Executive Summary: Summary of SC2 Team Post-Study Implementation Changes

In the spring of 2014, a second round of SC2 teams were deployed in seven U.S. cities: St. Louis, MO; Gary, IN; Flint, MI; Brownsville, TX; Rockford, IL; Macon, GA; and Rocky Mount, NC. The SC2 Council and its partner agencies implemented a number of the changes recommended in this report in preparation for this second round of implementation. These changes included:

- Refining the SC2 city application and selection process,

- More clearly defining SC2 team member roles,

- Developing and implementing SC2 team exit strategies, and

- Extending the reach of lessons learned from the SC2 pilot.

The following sub-sections provide short summaries of each these changes.

Refining the Application and Selection Process

The SC2 council, partly in response to the Pilot Study's *Interim Report* findings, modified the way cities were selected to host SC2 teams. In Round 2, the SC2 Council ran a competition to determine the SC2 cities that were selected. Each interested city was asked to submit a written application that outlined the city's priorities for the SC2 engagement and included a letter of support from city leadership (Mayor and/or City Manager). The Council then used a multi-stage selection process to determine the clarity of the city's economic development vision and robustness of their plans, the capacity for implementation, and the buy-in of city leadership, city staff and relevant governmental and non-governmental key stakeholders. As recommended in the Interim Report, the SC2 Council collected all the assessment data in-house instead of asking the cities to provide it.

Council representatives also talked with city applicants regarding who from the city they should involve in implementation, what roles city staff should play in implementation, what the SC2 team members could reasonably be expected to achieve, and what the SC2 team's limitations might be.

More Clearly Defining Member Roles

To recruit and select federal team members for second round locations, the SC2 initiative created position descriptions for team leads and team members. These position descriptions took into account the most important attributes of each role as identified during the SC2 team pilot study. These position descriptions were used to introduce potential federal team members to the roles they might play during implementation.

The SC2 Council also worked to address the challenge of matching team members' skills to the particular needs of the second round cities by implementing an intense selection process for cities. Council members focused on closely matching the skills and expertise of SC2 team members to the needs and priorities cities described in their applications.

Developing and Implementing Team Exit Strategies

Following the timeframe of this study, the SC2 Council worked with each SC2 team to ensure that the Round 1 pilot locations would continue to have access to the technical assistance and other resources offered by the initiative. In particular, each SC2 team confirmed that senior city leadership in current pilot locations had a direct line of communication into the federal government. The hope was that these continued points of contact at the federal regional level and the SC2 Council could be used to identify innovations, best practices, and barriers that could inform federal policy. In addition to these continued lines of communication, alumni cities will have access to the learning platforms and peer-networking opportunities developed by the National Resource Network (NRN). For alumni cities, the SC2 Council will facilitate peer-learning events, like regular conference calls and webcasts, to discuss and share information regarding issues of common interest to municipal and federal leaders.

The SC2 Council will also continue to support alumni SC2 cities by providing access to additional learning opportunities developed in coordination with the NRN. The SC2 Alumni Network aims to provide SC2 cities access to ongoing match-making opportunities that may arise vis-à-vis other technical assistance or pilot initiatives, and provide an opportunity for the SC2 Council to facilitate the connection of SC2 cities to the private sector and philanthropy.

Extending the Reach of Lessons Learned

In the time following the formal evaluation period of this study, there have been a number of examples of embedding lessons learned from SC2's approach across other agencies and cities. For example, other federal place-based initiatives were developed with significant input from the SC2 Council. In particular, Promise Zones incorporated SC2's model and lessons learned into the design of their programs. Among other similarities, each Promise Zone will have a designated federal "Community Liaison" who serves in an inter-agency role much like the SC2 team lead.[4] Additionally, HUD's Community Needs Assessment tool was co-designed by the SC2 Council and HUD's Office of Field Policy and Management as a mechanism for HUD field staff to do a deep-dive assessment of the inter-agency needs of high-priority communities. Finally, the SC2 National Resource Network (the Network) launched in May of 2012 in order to extend support to a larger group of distressed communities. The Network's design was based on lessons learned from SC2's pilot in order to further streamline federal assistance for distressed communities and create opportunities for peer to peer learning.

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[4]   https://www.onecpd.info/promise-zones/

1. Introduction

1.1   Study and Report Overview

Beginning in 2011, the White House Council on Strong Cities, Strong Communities (SC2) implemented a comprehensive pilot initiative designed to partner with local leaders to encourage economic stabilization and recovery in some of the most economically distressed U.S. cities. With this initiative, the Domestic Policy Council (DPC) and 14 federal agencies launched "a new model of federal-local collaboration to improve how the federal government invests in and offers technical assistance to support locally driven economic development and job creation goals, while helping to coordinate funds at the local, state, and federal level."[5] The goals of SC2 are improving the relationship between local and federal government, providing coordination and support among federal programs, partnering for economic growth, enhancing local capacity, and encouraging regional collaboration.[6]

Chapter 1 Highlights
• Beginning in 2011, the White House Council on Strong Cities, Strong Communities (SC2) implemented a comprehensive pilot initiative designed to partner federal agencies with local leaders to encourage economic stabilization and recovery in some of the most economically distressed U.S. cities.
The DPC and senior leadership from participating agencies chose six cities to participate in the pilot: Chester, PA; Cleveland, OH; Detroit, MI; Fresno, CA; Memphis, TN; and New Orleans, LA.
The pilot was organized around SC2 Teams made up of federal government employees from 17 federal agencies. These teams, one per city, partnered with local leaders to further the cities' economic development priorities.
The SC2 pilot was unique among federal initiatives in that:
– It operated in a collaborative, interagency fashion to devise comprehensive, responsive solutions. A small team of federal government employees co-located with local leaders, working closely with city hall and in some cases physically moving to partner cities.
Throughout the engagements, SC2 teams focused their work on five activity areas consistent with the design and goals of the pilot:
– Providing responsive, transactional assistance to address specific problems. Building relationships between local stakeholders and non-SC2 federal employees. Brokering local or regional partnerships. Adding temporary technical capacity. Developing programs and plans.

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[5]   White House Council on Strong Cities, Strong Communities, *Strong Cities, Strong Communities First Annual Report*, April 2013, pp. 6.

[6]   HHS Program Support Center, *Request for Task Order Proposals: Evaluation of the Strong Cities, Strong Communities Pilot Initiative*; Solicitation # 12-233-SOL-00501, pp. 2-3.

One component of SC2 is SC2 teams.[7] SC2 teams are interagency groups of federal employees mandated to partner with cities to meet the goals of the SC2 initiative. The focus of this evaluation is the first round of SC2 teams (referred to henceforth as the SC2 pilot or the pilot), deployed in six cities: Chester, PA; Cleveland, OH; Detroit, MI; Fresno, CA; Memphis, TN; and New Orleans, LA.[8] The SC2 pilot began implementation in September 2011 and finished in September 2013. SC2 teams in the pilot cities provided direct support to city leadership, tailoring technical assistance and planning resources to focus on issues that cities perceived as vital to their economic development.

In 2012, the Department of Health and Human Services (HHS), in partnership with the Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) and the Department of Education (ED), contracted with Abt Associates and Mt. Auburn Associates to evaluate the SC2 pilot.[9] HHS and its study partners asked Abt to investigate three primary research questions:

- How are SC2 teams' activities being implemented?

- How have participants experienced SC2?

- What has been learned that can be used to enhance future program implementation? [10]

The evaluation is designed to provide informative feedback to SC2 staff and to the federal agencies involved in the initiative. The study focuses on the activities implemented between September 2011 and March 2013. Data for the study was collected through site visits conducted in March and April 2013 and key informant interviews and focus groups conducted in spring and fall 2013.

The evaluation was not intended to rigorously evaluate program outcomes, but rather to evaluate how the pilot was implemented and factors associated with its success. We define success as the ability of the SC2 teams to assist pilot cities in addressing their priorities for economic revitalization. Our analysis focused on identifying factors that contributed to or hindered the SC2 teams' effectiveness at addressing pilot cities' priorities for economic revitalization. To conduct the analysis, we drew on the qualitative data collected through site visits, interviews, and focus groups, as well as background documents about the SC2 teams and the engagement.

This report summarizes the results of our research on the pilot. It proceeds as follows:

- The remainder of the introduction provides further discussion of the design of the Strong Cities, Strong Communities Initiative and the evaluation team's data collection methods.

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[7] In addition to the SC2 teams, SC2 includes three additional components: *The Fellowship Program,* in which mid-career professionals are selected to work as fellows in targeted communities; the *Economic Visioning Challenge,* a national grant competition to enable cities to implement innovative economic development strategies; and the *National Resource Network,* a single portal for accessing technical experts available to cities across the country. This evaluation only focuses on the SC2 team component of SC2.

[8] In October 2012, after the contract for this evaluation was executed, Youngstown, OH also became a pilot site.

[9] As this evaluation covers the implementation of the SC2 pilot, activities that occurred prior to implementation, such as city selection and assessment, are not being evaluated directly and are only discussed when they have been identified as impacting the SC2 pilot implementation itself.

[10] Secondary research questions are listed in Appendix B.

- Chapter 2 describes how federal agencies were identified for the pilot, and how pilot cities and team members were selected.

- Chapter 3 outlines the roles of key players in the pilot, how activities were selected, what activities were implemented, and briefly summarizes key accomplishments.

- Chapter 4 presents findings about what fostered and hindered the SC2 teams' ability to address city priorities, including characteristics of the teams, the role of federal agencies, the role of pilot cities, and how SC2 teams and pilot cities worked together.

- Chapter 5 discusses lessons learned from the pilot, including strengths and challenges of the approach, and implications for future rounds of SC2 or other federal programs.

- Chapter 6 summarizes the key observations and findings discussed in this report.

1.2   Program Background

As described in more detail in the SC2 annual report,[11] many American communities are economically distressed due to restructuring of the national and global economy, which has often resulted in localized job loss, population decline, and increased rates of concentrated poverty. These cities are working to rebuild their economies in the aftermath of losing many of their traditional economic drivers over the past four decades. The recent recession exacerbated these trends and created a difficult fiscal and economic reality for many American cities. Budgetary pressures at the local, state, and federal levels only make it more difficult to solve the challenges created by economic decline. With less funding available, cities are forced to perform equal, if not greater, functions to serve the public. As a result, local leaders are now working to respond to the increasing need for services even as they address their government's shrinking staff and budgetary capacity to provide these services and work to revitalize and diversify their economies. Addressing these challenges requires identifying innovative approaches to accomplishing more with less.

In this context, the SC2 initiative was launched to pilot a new model of collaboration between federal and local government to improve how the federal government invests in and offers technical assistance to support locally driven economic development goals. SC2 focuses on changing how federal and local government systems interact, promoting enhanced collaboration and communication among federal agencies, tailoring solutions to local conditions, and increasing the capacity of local leaders and institutions for economic development.

The core elements of the SC2 pilot approach—assigning federal employees from different agencies to work collaboratively in specific communities, providing cities with technical assistance, working to increase the capacity of local communities, and advocating for integrated community solutions—are not new ideas for the federal government. What was unique about the pilot was the way these elements were combined into intensive, community-driven strategies. Federal employees were assigned to a SC2 team in a specific city. In each city, the SC2 team asked city government and local stakeholders how federal agencies could best help address city priorities. The SC2 team then worked in a collaborative, interagency fashion to devise customized, responsive solutions. This contrasts with the typical federal approach in

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[11]   White House Council on Strong Cities, Strong Communities, *Strong Cities, Strong Communities First Annual Report*, April 2013.

which individual agencies work with cities on particular federal programs or to address particular community problems.

Also unique was the small contingent of federal employees who relocated to the pilot cities to work directly with city government, often operating from within city hall. This co-location of federal staff directly connected them to the on-the-ground realities in local communities. It also created new lines of communication between the federal government and the pilot cities and opened the possibility for stronger federal-local partnerships. Finally, because the team members in each city were assigned from different federal agencies, there were potential opportunities to coordinate and align technical assistance and programmatic funding across agencies.

The place-based, integrated, and collaborative SC2 team approach was expected to help cities more effectively tap into existing federal resources and to better position the federal government to collaborate with cities on local issues requiring tailored solutions. Exhibit 1 summarizes the core elements of the SC2 pilot initiative as well as the expected outcomes for the pilot.

Exhibit 1: SC2 Team Program Logic Model

Problems		Inputs	Strategy	Short- to Mid-Term Outcomes	Mid- to Long-Term Outcomes

City
• Consistently high poverty
• Consistently high unemployment
• Severe vacancy rates
• High population loss or severe overcrowding
• Economy that has been experiencing synergistic decline
• Fragmented current economic development programs
• Lack of strategic, mutually reinforcing economic development programming tailored to local assets
 	
...which result in...
• limited infrastructure
• shrinking/modest tax base
• reduced government capacity
  — limited skills
  — fewer bodies to do the work
• limited awareness and understanding of opportunities in the local economy
	Federal Government
	• Limited coordination and communication between staff or agencies
	• Varying, sometimes conflicting program requirements
	• Available funds not structured for customized local solutions
	• Limited understanding of cities' perspectives on challenges of utilizing federal resources
	• Federal "red tape" that limits creative solutions
		• Federal staff members of the SC2 teams
		  — Broad representation across all partner agencies (14 at SC2 kick-off)
		  — 1–8 full-time federal staff embedded in local city government (the number was highly variable)
		  — Additional federal staff assigned to the SC2 team part-time
		  — Additional federal staff assigned as advisors—typically senior officials with the ability to "make things happen"
		• Representatives from the mayor's office and key city departments
			• (As designed) Assess the local economic opportunities and constraints with an eye toward developing locally customized economic solutions. Focus SC2 team efforts on designing and implementing these solutions
			• (As implemented) Focus on city priorities (at least use them as a starting place and then negotiate the agenda from there)
			• Bring in federal employees with specific expertise who will act as catalysts—getting things done and building local capacity simultaneously
			• SC2 teams are expected to:
			  — Deliver technical assistance (e.g., solve problems, broker solutions)
			  — Build local capacity (e.g., offer training, teach staff how to apply for grants, complete plans)
			  — Build/facilitate relationships, focusing on regional collaboration (e.g., bring parties into the same room/same conversation, help to restart conversations/relationships that local stakeholders had given up on)
				• Progress on high-priority local projects/programs
				• More effective utilization of existing federal funds
				• Leveraging of additional sources of funds
				• Eliminate federal regulatory or administrative hurdles
				• More alignment between federal and local government
				• Local government with increased short term capacity
				• New relationships/ partnerships/ collaborations created to focus on addressing long-standing urban challenges
				• Federal stakeholders better understand the challenges cities face and identify how federal practices could better respond to needs
					• "New way of doing business" for the federal government
					• Local governments with increased long-term/ sustainable capacity
					• Local economic growth and recovery

1.3   Brief Description of the SC2 Pilot

The SC2 pilot was focused on six cities: Chester, PA; Cleveland, OH; Detroit, MI; Fresno, CA; Memphis, TN; and New Orleans, LA. These cities were selected by members of the DPC and senior leadership from participating agencies. This group used an iterative process that included assessing the cities' relative economic distress (measured by a number of indicators including unemployment, population decline, fiscal distress, and operational capacity), conducting an on-the-ground needs assessment, and ascertaining the cities' level of interest in participating.

Distressed cities interested in working with a SC2 team hosted cross-agency assessment teams in March and April 2011. During these visits, cities discussed ideas about how team members might be able to help them advance their own economic development priorities, and federal staff assessed cities' readiness to participate in this intensive program. Federal staff also began to strategize about the work that might be done by the SC2 team, and the technical skills that team members would therefore need.

1.3.1   Implementation Context

The SC2 pilot was implemented in six cities representing different parts of the country, different economic structures and causes for decline, and different opportunities for revitalization. As Exhibit 2 illustrates, the cities ranged in size from relatively small to large metropolitan areas.

The pilot cities all faced budgetary constraints and staff who were too few in number or stretched too thin to address the challenges before them. As a result, city leadership and staff faced near daily crises with insufficient resources to respond in adequate and timely ways.

While the SC2 pilot was specifically designed to meet the needs of cities operating under these constraints, the constraints created challenges for the pilot. Cities needed to have a minimum amount of capacity to engage in developing and implementing ideas and strategies in collaboration with the SC2 team. Pilot cities also faced specific, local challenges that complicated implementation of the pilot. These challenges included the looming threat of a financial takeover in one city, a change of mayoral leadership early in the implementation process in another city, and long-standing tensions based on prior working relationships between certain federal employees and city staff in several cities.

By contrast, a few cities also had significant assets that the pilot could build upon during implementation. Two cities had received significant resources and technical assistance from the federal government, nonprofit, and philanthropic communities in recent years. Another city had begun planning for the implementation of high-speed rail service.

Challenges and opportunities such as these had implications for the successful implementation of the pilot, which will be discussed in greater detail in subsequent chapters.

Exhibit 2: Priority Areas of SC2 Pilot Cities

Detroit
- Support neighborhood revitalization
- Assist in the planning and development of new local transit efforts
- Promote regional transportation planning
- Bolster public safety through improved utilization of existing resources
- Identify new solutions to infrastructure challenges such as street light functioning

Cleveland
- Greater coordination of the human capital development system
- Support and technical expertise to maintain a viable commercial harbor
- Address obstacles to neighborhood development, housing, and land reuse goals

Chester
- Reduce crime and vacancy
- Reform the delivery of healthcare and education
- Promote neighborhood revitalization
- Create jobs and connect city residents

Fresno
- Address major opportunities for downtown revitalization
- Economic development in the value added food sector and development of an Ag Tech Economic Cluster
- Transportation (high speed rail and bus rapid transit)
- Replicate neighborhood revitalization strategy in additional neighborhoods
- Support local efforts to end chronic homelessness

New Orleans
- Reduce the murder rate and develop overarching criminal justice plan
- Create opportunities for job training and placement in emerging industries
- Promote health care access and coordination of health services
- Develop digital tools to better inform citizens of city programs and plans
- Realize cost savings through co-location of government services
- Promote the development of sustainable communities

Memphis
- Address major challenges of high poverty, population decline, and reduced public sector capacity
- Leverage strengths in history, arts and culture, vibrant health care sector and anchor institutions

Detroit 713,777
Cleveland 396,815
Chester 33,972
Fresno 494,665
New Orleans 343,829
Memphis 646,889

1.3.2   Structure of the SC2 Teams

Once the pilot cities were selected, members of the Domestic Policy Council worked with the participating federal agencies to assemble the SC2 teams. Each pilot city had a SC2 team with a team lead and a small number of federal employees who were deployed to live and work in the chosen city, along with a larger number of federal staff assigned to work on the SC2 team either part-time or as advisors. Team members worked from one of three locations:

- **On site, at or near city hall.** In five of the six pilot cities, a small number of team members, 14 in total, relocated to the city.[12] The on-site members typically worked full-time on SC2 pilot activities and operated from the mayor's office or within a city department. Most SC2 team leads were embedded in their assigned cities aside from two cities where the leads remained based in nearby cities with existing federal offices.

- **Remote, working in a regional or field office**.[13] The percentage of team members located in federal regional or field offices varied by site. Most of these team members had worked in these offices before their SC2 team participation. They generally worked part-time on SC2 activities.

- **Remote, working at department headquarters in the Washington, DC area.** The percentage of team members located in department headquarters varied from site to site. Most Washington, DC-based team members worked on SC2 part-time or in an advisory role.

Within these general parameters, the composition of each team was customized to the needs of the city and federal agencies' pre-existing relationships in each city. Teams varied in terms of the number of team members in each location, the number of individuals working full-time versus part-time on SC2 work, and the agencies represented on the SC2 teams.

1.3.3   SC2 Team Activities

In September 2011, after a kick-off orientation for all of the team members, the SC2 teams began working with their respective cities. In the early stages of the implementation, SC2 teams worked with city partners to identify priority areas for SC2 team attention and developed work plans to guide the implementation. Throughout the engagement, SC2 teams focused their work on five activity areas consistent with the design and goals of the pilot:

- **Providing responsive, transactional assistance to address specific problems,** such as repurposing federal grant funds to be put to better use in a city

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[12]   Fourteen individuals occupying 12 SC2 team positions relocated to pilot cities during the first year of implementation. (One city had three separate individuals sequentially relocate on site to be the SC2 team lead.)

[13]   The category *regional or field office staff* is an aggregation of all federal employees not on site and not based in department headquarters. This is an imperfect categorization because departments, and sometimes agencies within departments, have different regional office structures. Also, some pilot cities are home to regional/field offices, further complicating the categorization. In cases where the regional or field office is located within the city, a team member from that regional or field office would be counted in the *remote, working in a regional or field office* category to differentiate that member from a team member working out of city hall.

- **Building relationships between local stakeholders and state and federal employees,** such as connecting local, state, and federal stakeholders to better coordinate planning for significant transportation projects

- **Brokering local or regional partnerships,** such as the creation of a working group to explore a cluster strategy for economic growth

- **Temporary addition of technical capacity,** such as assisting city departments with time-sensitive, technical tasks

- **Program and plan development,** such as the development of a neighborhood revitalization strategy

As a result of these activities, SC2 teams helped pilot cities achieve a range of accomplishments. In one city, for example, team members were able to determine a way to repurpose a Community Oriented Policing Services grant to retain 120 police officers. In another, team members identified grant funding that allowed a city to advance planning for bringing broadband to its downtown. In still another city, team members helped the city acquire low-cost surplus federal computers that were supplied to local public schools. The accomplishments of the SC2 teams are described more fully in Chapter 3 and in the case studies of each pilot city in Appendix A.

1.4   Study Methodology

To answer the study's research questions, the evaluation team conducted a process study to investigate how the SC2 teams operated and to document the consistencies and variations between sites, framing our analysis within the context of the SC2 pilot programmatic logic model (Exhibit 1).

1.4.1   Data Sources

To answer the study's research questions, we relied on five main sources of data:

- **Existing program documentation.** We reviewed existing program documentation including SC2 site assessments, work plans, and quarterly reports to understand the cities' priority areas, how the implementation was structured in each city, how implementation changed over time, and what was accomplished.

- **SC2 Council team member web survey.** The SC2 Council's team member web survey was conducted during fall 2012. We reviewed the survey responses to document the types of activities team members were working on, to understand the characteristics of team members and how their experiences with SC2 varied based on their assignment characteristics, and to identify elements of the pilot model that might be worth replicating in the future.

- **Key informant interviews.** We conducted in-depth key informant interviews with more than 30 individuals including members of SC2 Council staff, federal agency points of contact (POCs), SC2 team leads, Washington, DC-based team members, and embedded and regional team members who were unavailable when the research team was on site. The interviews explored how the SC2 teams were formed, how the pilot was implemented, perceptions of how well the pilot worked, and lessons that have been learned.

- **Site visits.** We visited each of the six pilot cities to gather on-the-ground information about what the cities had hoped to achieve by participating in the SC2 pilot, whether they were satisfied with what

was accomplished, and what they perceived worked and did not work in the SC2 team approach. We also used the site visits to document the broader landscape of redevelopment activities and partners.

- **Focus groups.** We facilitated focus groups in three of the six pilot cities with federal team members who were able to travel to the city while the study team was on site. We used these focus groups to refine our understanding of what was implemented in each site, including details about capacity building, how the various federal actors worked together, how the federal actors and the local entities collaborated, and what seemed to work well and what did not.

1.4.2   Analytic Methods

To assist with analysis and interpretation of qualitative data, the study team used NVivo 10 software to code the interview and focus group transcripts by topic and theme. Coding was conducted to explore common themes and identify key examples across data sources that help answer the study's research questions. Responses to the team member survey were analyzed in Excel and SAS.

1.4.3   Data Limitations

Study data are limited in several ways. First, the data collected were limited to the first 18 months of the pilot implementation per the requirements of the evaluation; as such, approximately 6 months of the implementation period were not explored and the study does not account for the changes to SC2's model due to lessons learned in the first 18 months. Second, the study team was only able to talk to a subset of the city stakeholders, SC2 leadership, and team members engaged in the pilot.[14] For example, the study team interviewed just under half the team members. Third, the interview and survey data are limited due to being self-reported by those involved in the pilot, though attempts were made to corroborate findings across multiple interviews.

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[14] The scope of the contract for the evaluation did not call for discussions with all stakeholders in the pilot; rather, it called for the selection of a small, purposive sample of stakeholders to take part in discussions to help answer the evaluation's research questions.

2. Preparation for Implementation

This chapter discusses how agencies and pilot cities prepared for implementation and their perspectives on participating in the SC2 pilot. Steps included federal agencies agreeing to participate, the selection of pilot cities, an assessment process to identify pilot cities' challenges and opportunities, and the selection and assignment of team members.

Chapter 2 Highlights
• Federal agency participation in the pilot grew out of meetings between White House staff and an interagency group concerned with supporting distressed cities. Fourteen agencies initially participated (September 2011), with 17 participating by the end of 2013. Agencies participated for a variety of reasons. The pilot presented an opportunity to refine or expand on existing work, further agencies' missions, and strengthen relationships with local governments. Federal staff engaged in the pilot included: team members, who worked directly on city priorities; SC2 team leads, who oversaw team member work and served as liaisons between SC2 teams and city leadership; and agency points of contact, who served as liaisons between their agencies and the team members they deployed. SC2 pilot cities were selected through a multi-step process, including identifying cities with a high level of distress, contacting cities to gauge their level of interest, and then conducting on-site assessments to understand how SC2 teams might be able to help cities advance their economic development priorities. City leaders expected the SC2 pilot to help address a range of barriers to their city's economic development and to improve how their city government worked with the federal government. In most cases team members were selected by senior federal agency staff and assigned to pilot cities based on how their expertise complemented the city's needs.

2.1 Engaging Federal Agencies

One of the first steps in operationalizing the SC2 pilot concept was to assemble a group of federal agencies willing to commit staff and resources to the pilot.[15] The initial group of involved agencies emerged out of an interagency group that began meeting with White House staff to explore how to be more responsive to distressed cities, leading to the formation of SC2. Other agencies became involved in the pilot effort once the basic framework was in place. Some of these agencies participated in the process of helping to select the pilot cities and others were recruited once the types of assistance pilot cities might need became clear.

2.1.1 Federal Agency Commitment to the SC2 Pilot

Given the timing of the SC2 pilot on the heels of the Great Recession, the dedication of federal agency resources to the engagement was threatened by budgetary constraints. For agencies with staff already stretched to deliver existing programs, committing staff to the pilot presented a major challenge. Participating agencies had to adjust work assignments among existing staff to accommodate work on pilot

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[15]   Each agency covered the cost of its own team members and POCs.

activities and had to find internal sources of funding for travel and expenses related to embedding team members in pilot cities.

By September 2011, when SC2 teams were deployed, 14 federal agencies had identified staff to participate as team members. Another three agencies supplied team members after implementation was under way. Exhibit 3 presents the 17 partner agencies and the number of team members they committed to the pilot.

Exhibit 3: Number of SC2 Team Members by Federal Agency

Agency[a]	Number of Team Members
Corporation for National & Community Service	8
Department of Agriculture	2
Department of Commerce	12
Department of Defense[b]	6
Department of Education	9
Department of Energy	5
Department of Health and Human Services	14
Department of Housing and Urban Development	19
Department of Justice	5
Department of Labor	7
Department of the Treasury	3
Department of Transportation	11
Department of Veterans Affairs	2
Environmental Protection Agency	10
General Services Administration	7
National Aeronautics and Space Administration	1
Small Business Administration	7

Source: Counts were compiled using three team member rosters provided to Abt Associates in September 2011, January 2012, and August 2013 (updated in September 2013).

[a] In addition to the agencies listed here, SC2 team membership included Presidential Management Fellows, a representative of the U.S. Interagency Council on Homelessness, team members from the White House Office of Science and Technology Policy, and unspecified interns.

[b] Includes the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers.

In addition to the number of staff committed to the pilot, agencies also varied in the number of team members embedded in pilot cities, the amount of time allotted to staff to work on SC2 team activities, and travel budgets for Washington, DC-based team members to travel to their assigned city. Three factors in particular, each related to agencies' motivations for participating in the pilot, seemed to lead some agencies to a deeper commitment of staff and financial resources:[16]

- **The pilot was a means to refine or expand existing place-based work**. Agencies with a traditional focus on place-based strategies were among those dedicating the most resources to the pilot, including the Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD), the Department of Transportation (DOT), and the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA). Additionally, agencies pursuing place-

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[16]   How the commitment of federal agencies factored into the success of the SC2 teams is discussed in Section 4.2.1.

based strategies in new ways, such as the Department of Energy (DOE) and the Department of Education (ED), were attracted to the pilot and committed substantial numbers of staff.

• **The pilot was a new way to further the agency's mission**. A Small Business Administration (SBA) representative we interviewed saw the pilot as an opportunity to assist cities with existing SBA economic development priorities to expand the tax base and streamline the certification and licensing of new small businesses. A Corporation for National & Community Service representative regarded the pilot as a natural extension of its AmeriCorps Volunteers in Service to America program, which provides technical assistance to local governments and nonprofit organizations in distressed communities.

• **The pilot was a means to build or improve relationships with local governments.** Several agencies, especially those that typically work primarily with *state* governments, hoped the SC2 engagement would build or improve relationships with *local* governments, improving local and federal understanding of how federal programs and policies are implemented at the local level.

2.1.2   Federal Management of the Pilot

The SC2 teams' work was originally overseen by members of the DPC. This responsibility was transitioned to the White House Council on Strong Cities, Strong Communities (SC2 Council) when it was formed in 2012.[17]

The overall structure of the pilot consisted of the SC2 teams, each of which included a team lead and broader membership, the SC2 Council, and participating agencies' points of contact (POC), which acted as liaisons between the SC2 Council, the agencies' team members, and agency leadership. Exhibit 4 displays the organization of the SC2 pilot.

In addition to implementing activities in pilot cities, key actors in the pilot played several roles:

• SC2 team leads were responsible for communicating with the SC2 Council about their team's progress in implementing the SC2 team work plan, about policy or regulatory barriers cities were facing that partner federal agencies might be able to resolve, and for reporting on achievements and lessons learned in pilot cities. SC2 team leads also worked with individual team members to focus their implementation efforts, to facilitate relationships between team members and city stakeholders, and to identify and resolve barriers to progress.

• Individual team members worked with their respective agency POCs to define the scope of their assignment to pilot cities, to secure agency resources for the engagement (such as travel funds or time allocated to the pilot), to report on progress made during the pilot, and, when necessary, to obtain resources for their pilot city above and beyond what the team member could provide without assistance from more senior agency staff (for example, information about a specific policy or an answer to a question that the team member could not address).

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[17]   The SC2 Council works to "facilitate greater alignment between agencies to ensure communities have access to comprehensive, localized technical assistance and planning resources, and provides policy recommendations to the President and his Administration based on lessons learned through work on the ground in communities." White House Council on Strong Cities, Strong Communities, *Strong Cities, Strong Communities First Annual Report*, April 2013, p. 6.

- Each agency designated one or two individuals to serve as a liaison or point of contact between the team members and the broader agency and between the agency and the SC2 Council. The roles of the POCs varied across participating agencies but in general included helping team members define the scope of their assignment and assisting with challenges that arose during implementation. Additionally, some POCs directed team members to additional agency resources required for the implementation, and captured learnings about the pilot from team members to share with the SC2 Council and others at the agency.

Exhibit 4: Organization of the SC2 Pilot
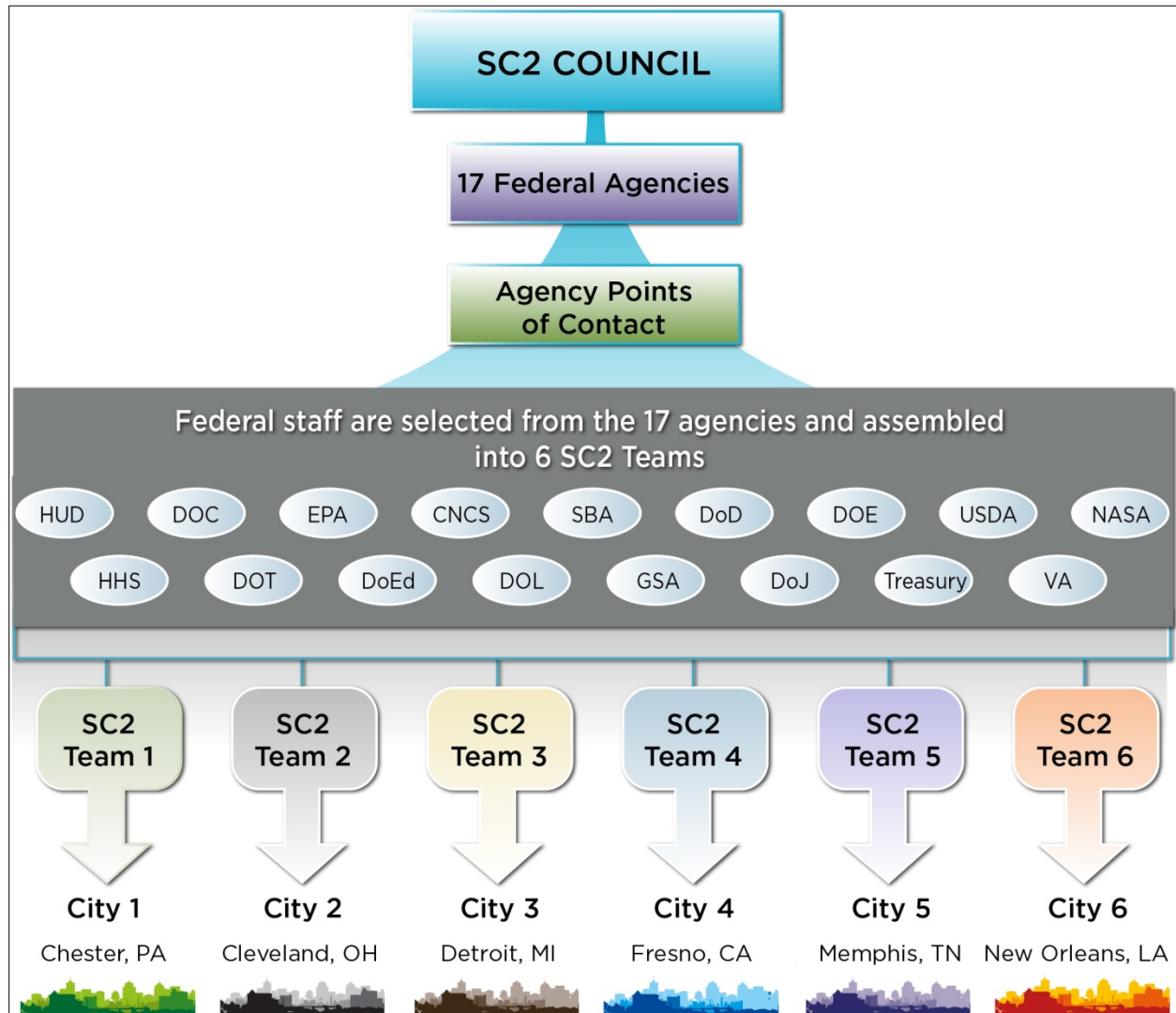
2.2   SC2 Pilot City Selection and Assessment Process

The SC2 pilot cities were selected through a multi-step process. First, staff from federal agencies participating in the SC2 initiative analyzed data from several public datasets to identify cities experiencing significant economic challenges. Based on these data, they created a composite measure of distress using rates of unemployment, population loss, residential vacancy, poverty, and residential overcrowding. Senior staff from participating agencies then contacted the cities identified as most challenged to gauge their level of interest in participating.

For the cities that expressed an interest in participating, federal staff created Opportunity Assessments Teams (OATs) to work with the cities to identify how a SC2 team might help advance its economic development priorities. OATs were made up of individuals from across the federal agencies participating in SC2 at that time.

The OATs visited each city in March and April 2011. During the visit, the OATs met with local stakeholders to assess the city's readiness to participate in the pilot and to hear their ideas about how the city might use a SC2 team. The OAT assessment was designed to answer a series of questions:[18]

- What were the major challenges facing the city and what were its major needs?

- How much need did the city have for a SC2 team?

- How much commitment to the process was expected from the city?

- What capacity gaps at the local level could the SC2 team help the city remedy?

- Was there a good match between the expertise the SC2 team could provide and the needs of the city?

- Did the city have jurisdiction or authority to address its priority areas in concert with the SC2 team?

- How large a SC2 team was needed to assist the city?

- Did the city have relationships with other entities, such as foundations, that could provide assistance similar to that which would be provided by a SC2 team?

- Would a SC2 team be expected to be successful in helping the city address its priority areas?

Following the assessment visit, the OATs developed reports documenting their findings. The reports included recommendations for the work plan and composition of the SC2 team in each site. The reports were then reviewed by DPC staff members and participating agencies for determination of which cities would be good candidates for SC2 teams.

The six cities ultimately chosen to participate in the pilot differed in how they approached the assessment process.

> **Data used in the pilot city selection process:**
>
> - American Community Survey (June 2008 estimates)
> - 2000 Census data
> - Geolytics Neighborhood Change Database
> - Bureau of Labor Statistics Local Area Unemployment Statistics
> - U.S. Postal Service Residential Vacancy Survey

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[18]   These questions are paraphrased from instructions provided to the New Orleans OAT for preparation of the assessment summary report. (These were essentially the same for all agencies)

For one city in particular, the assessment provided an opportunity to proactively educate the OAT about the city's challenges and opportunities. That city's mayor participated in a presentation for the OAT that outlined the city's vision for economic growth, documented what steps the city was already taking to achieve that vision, and articulated the additional help needed from the federal government. That same city, along with one other, used the assessment process to advocate for the agencies it wanted represented in its SC2 team.

2.3   Selection and Placement of SC2 Team Members

During the summer of 2011, following the assessment process and selection of the six pilot cities, the DPC worked with the participating federal agencies to assemble the SC2 teams. Each pilot city had a SC2 team consisting of a team lead and additional federal experts who worked full-time, part-time, or in an advisory role for the engagement. A small number of members were deployed to live and work full-time in the pilot cities, while the remainder worked out of federal headquarters or federal regional offices. Advisory members did not have a dedicated time commitment to the pilot, but rather served as on-call support for the engagement, providing short-term, narrowly tailored assistance. Exhibit 5 below displays the distribution of team members as full-time, part-time, or advisory members.

Exhibit 5: SC2 Team Members by Pilot Time Commitment
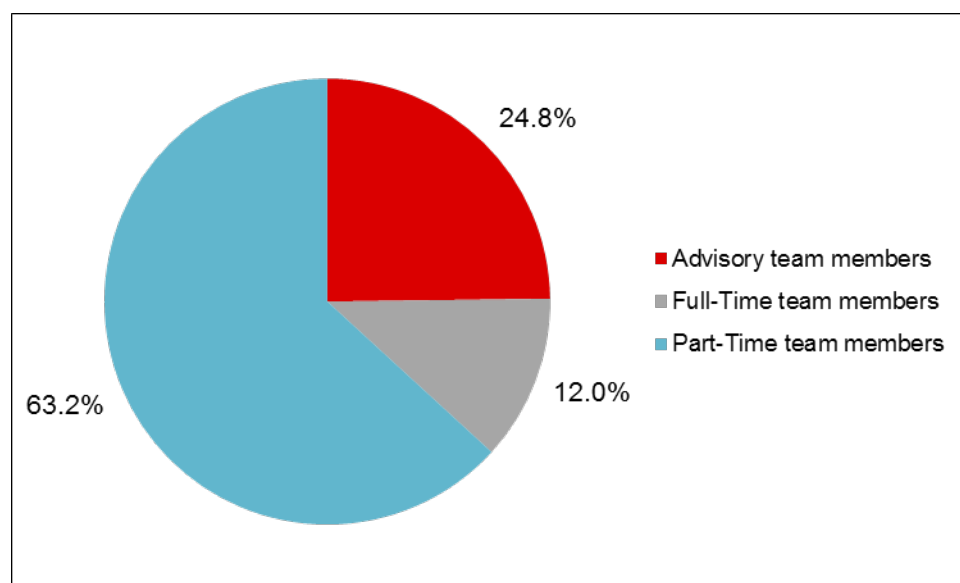
Source: Percentages were calculated using three team member rosters provided to Abt Associates for September 2011, January 2012, and September 2013.

Note: Not included in the denominator of these percentages are 10 members whose data were missing or ambiguous, as well as the Presidential Management Fellows and German Marshall Foundation SC2 Fellows.

Across the six cities, team members had a wide range of experience working for the federal government. According to the web survey, roughly equal numbers of team members were early career (0–4 years of experience), mid-career (5–14 years), and career (15 years or more) federal employees. These members represented 17 different federal agencies. There was wide variation in the number of staff members each department contributed, with several departments standing out as major contributors. These departments were the Departments of Housing and Urban Development, Health and Human Services, Transportation, and Commerce, and the Environmental Protection Agency.

Each agency was responsible for its staff assignments to the SC2 teams. While no overarching guidance was given to agencies about how to select team members, in most cases senior agency staff and agency POCs collaborated to identify potential candidates, who were then offered the opportunity to join a SC2 team. In a few cases, team members actively lobbied agency leadership for the opportunity to participate.

A primary consideration in selecting members was the time the member had available to dedicate to the engagement and, for regionally based team members, the member's proximity to a pilot city. Agencies also consistently attempted to place team members in the different pilot cities based on how well their expertise aligned with the needs of that city as determined during the assessment process. Agencies regarded staff with targeted skill sets or specific knowledge of relevant agency programs or policies as most beneficial to pilot cities.

Other factors were also considered in the selection of team members, though less frequently than staff availability and alignment of staff skills with city needs. For some agencies, local knowledge about a pilot city and its key stakeholders, or experience working with the city or state government, was a key consideration. Also important were a willingness and enthusiasm to be involved in the pilot. One agency representative noted the importance of selecting staff that were comfortable moving beyond their traditional roles in the federal government, in keeping with SC2's emphasis on allowing cities to drive the implementation process. Another regarded the engagement as a means to encourage employee retention by offering the opportunity to staff who regarded it as an attractive option. Along those lines, several team members expressed a personal preference for working in a particular city due to a personal connection there.

Despite agencies' attempts to match team members to pilot cities' needs, the alignment was not always perfect. Cities reported several cases in which the team member came from one program within a federal agency when the city really needed the skills or experience from a different program in the same agency. A factor complicating member placement was that the skills and expertise the cities needed were not always known at the time the teams were being formed and also tended to evolve over time.

2.4   City Perspectives on Participating in the SC2 Pilot

City leaders wanted to participate in the pilot to address a wide range of barriers to their cities' economic development. While the pilot was intended to focus on job creation and economic development, city leaders interpreted this mandate very broadly and prioritized a wide range of issues their cities faced. According to the pilot cities' initial work plans, priorities for the SC2 engagement included the substantive areas of:

- Crime and public safety
- Blight removal
- Workforce development
- Neighborhood and downtown revitalization
- Education
- Infrastructure
- Business development and retention
- Transportation
- Building the capacity of city staff and streamlining local government operations
- Land use planning

- Housing and homelessness
- Energy efficiency, conservation, and sustainability
- Redevelopment and adaptive reuse
- Access to health care

Cities also expressed an interest in improving how they worked with the federal government, including the mitigation of bureaucratic barriers or red tape, more effective use of federal funds, and improved procedures for securing additional federal resources. Beyond specific outcomes cities hoped to accomplish, two cities also expressed the hope that being chosen as a pilot city would draw positive attention to the city and raise its profile, and one city saw it as an opportunity to establish a direct connection to the White House.

While cities welcomed the opportunities made available by participating in the pilot, some cities also expressed concerns about participating. For one city, pride at being chosen as an SC2 city was tempered by embarrassment at being identified as a city that could not address its economic challenges on its own. Two cities expressed concern that SC2 would be yet another top-down initiative in which the federal government dictated what cities needed to do. These two cities, along with a third that feared its selection as a pilot city was a politically motivated decision, were skeptical that the SC2 pilot would actually result in a new type of relationship with the federal government.

Four cities held initial expectations about what could be gained by participating in the pilot that were not consistent with what was allowable within the structure and regulations of the pilot. Two cities expected that the pilot would include additional direct funding for their cities, while another expected the SC2 team to help the city apply for federal grants. Although the pilot did not allow for funding to cities, direct assistance in applying for federal funding, or the relaxing of federal regulations, two cities expected that involvement in the pilot would allow federal agencies to grant waivers, change policies, or provide regulatory flexibility for pilot cities.

3.   SC2 Pilot Implementation

Each SC2 pilot city had a distinct history of growth and decline and faced a unique set of challenges. Cities were at different stages of readiness for change and city leaders and stakeholders varied in their visions for the future. Given this variability, SC2 teams took different approaches to implementing the pilot. Adding to the variability, each pilot city had a unique mix of team members and city leadership. How those partners worked together during the implementation helps explain the level of success the pilot cities achieved. This chapter details the key players in the implementation process, their roles, how activities were selected for the implementation period, how implementation evolved over time, and what was accomplished by the SC2 teams.

Chapter 3 Highlights
• Within the SC2 teams, the team leads took key roles in understanding city priorities, relaying them to the rest of the SC2 team, and shaping the strategy of team members' work. They also helped develop relationships between team members and city stakeholders and solved problems where necessary to advance implementation.
Pilot city mayors provided varying degrees of leadership during the pilot. Two mayors were very active in setting the vision for SC2 team work and providing leadership throughout the implementation. Two others had a less-clear vision for the pilot but were involved in the day-to-day work of the SC2 teams. The final two were supportive of the engagement but mostly uninvolved in its implementation.
In each city, at least one senior city staff served as a liaison between city leadership and the SC2 team.
Communication within the SC2 teams largely revolved around the SC2 team lead, who organized meetings and helped individual members communicate with one another. While SC2 team communication with city staff was initially also funneled through the SC2 team lead, team members tended to develop working relationships with individual city staff over time.
Cities and SC2 teams began their work together by developing a work plan. The amount of time this took varied by how clearly city leadership had identified priorities for the SC2 team before their deployment.
SC2 teams' projects emerged as team members identified opportunities for partnership and came to better understand city priorities. Conversely, projects were sometimes stopped due to a lack of city involvement or enthusiasm, city and team member staff turnover, or lack of project viability.
SC2 teams conducted a wide array of activities in pilot cities. The substantive focus of these activities varied depending on city priorities and the makeup of the SC2 team. SC2 teams achieved many key accomplishments over the course of the evaluation period.
At times, political and logistical challenges hindered SC2 teams' ability to make progress, including limited capacity of city governments, inflexibility on the part of engaged stakeholders, and misalignment of team member expertise with city priorities.

3.1   Key Players and Roles

Key players in the pilot implementation included the SC2 team leads, city leadership, and the team members. Their roles in the implementation are detailed below, followed by a discussion of how they communicated with one another.

3.1.1   Role of the SC2 Team Lead

The role of the SC2 team lead was in many ways the most crucial in the pilot, serving as an ongoing link between the SC2 Council, individual team members, city leaders, and city stakeholders. The SC2 team lead's role was multifaceted and adaptive based on changing circumstances but tended to include the following:

Setting the direction of the pilot and shaping its strategy: Though SC2 team leads in some cases worked on specific implementation activities, their primary responsibility was to facilitate work between individual team members and the pilot cities. SC2 team leads served as the primary point of contact between the city and the broader SC2 team in order to identify city priorities and relay those priorities to team members to begin implementation. SC2 team leads worked closely with mayors or mayors' points of contact in pilot cities to understand city priorities and what the city would contribute as a partner in the implementation. In cities with less mayoral direction in the early stages of implementation, SC2 team leads took on the additional role of strategist, helping cities to understand how the SC2 team could be of assistance to the city.

Relationship development within the SC2 team and in the community: SC2 team leads also took on the role of facilitating relationships necessary for success. This included leads connecting individual team members to city leaders or staff involved in the implementation, or to city stakeholders outside the local government. Additionally, the SC2 team leads sometimes facilitated relationships among multiple team members when cross-agency collaboration was required for an activity and between team members and other federal staff not directly engaged in SC2.

Problem solving: As implementation progressed, SC2 team leads took on the additional role of problem solver to advance implementation. Depending on the specific issue at hand, leads at times took on the role of troubleshooting barriers to progress, helping to mitigate political challenges as they arose, and generally providing support as need be to team members.

SC2 team management: Throughout the implementation, SC2 team leads regularly convened team members in formal and informal ways, tracked the progress being made by the SC2 team, and reported findings from the engagement to the SC2 Council.

3.1.2   Role of City Leadership

City leadership engaged in the pilot included the mayor and key city staff such as a high-level point of contact in a mayor's office and heads of city departments.

Mayor

Pilot city mayors adopted various approaches to the engagement, ranging from being deeply involved to being uninvolved. Interviews with SC2 team leads, team members, and city leaders indicate that there were three types of mayoral approaches to the pilot:

1) **Mayor as vision setter.** In two cities, the mayors were key drivers of the engagement in their respective cities and were closely involved in the early stages of implementation to ensure that team members and city staff understood mayoral priorities for the pilot. These mayors used their leadership position to convey their vision for their city to the SC2 team and to identify specific priority areas for SC2 team attention. As implementation progressed, these mayors became less directly involved in the process, but in their place appointed key city staff to serve as points of contact with the SC2 team.

Doing so ensured the SC2 teams stayed true to the mayors' visions and offered a means by which the mayors' input could easily be obtained when needed.

2) **Mayor as point of contact.** In two other cities, the mayors were regularly involved with the pilot, serving as the primary points of contact for the SC2 teams. In both cases, the cities involved had very limited city staffs, suggesting that mayoral involvement was a necessity as much as a strategic decision. Neither of these mayors had a clear vision for how to maximize the team members' time in the community, which led to delays in implementation for both cities. In the absence of strategic direction, or the delegation of strategic planning responsibilities to a senior city staffer, the SC2 team lead helped to develop the vision for the pilot, proposing ideas to which the mayors readily responded.

3) **Mayor as supporter but not closely involved.** In the final two cities, the mayors were not closely involved with the implementation of the pilot, despite being supportive of their respective city's participation. In one city, the mayor was said to have a positive relationship with the SC2 team lead but little involvement in the direction of the engagement after helping set the initial agenda. In the second city, the mayor was described as being uninvolved in the pilot, not presenting a strategic vision for the SC2 team to meet and delegating responsibilities for the engagement to a key aide. One team member in this city noted that the team was not aware of the mayor's number one priority for the engagement until well into the pilot.

Key City Staff

Each city designated a key point of contact to represent the city to the SC2 team. These individuals were high-level staffers with direct access to the mayor, or as noted above, in two cities the mayor served as the primary point of contact. The SC2 teams worked with these key city staff members to structure the engagement and implement activities. Additionally, several pilot cities had city department leads actively engaged in the pilot.[19] In these cities, the role of department leads was one of partnering with a team member to work toward a shared goal, such as developing a health care access plan, improving a fractured relationship with a local housing authority, or planning for environmental sustainability. City department leads provided guidance to team members, shared information about the local context, and reviewed work conducted by the team members. In some cases, as implementation progressed and the focus of individual team members narrowed, team members increasingly coordinated their work directly with the appropriate city departments and less so with the SC2 team lead and the city's primary point of contact.

3.1.3   Role of SC2 Team Members

The role of team members, at the most basic level, was to help the pilot cities address challenges and opportunities as determined in the assessment process or as they emerged during the course of implementation. As such, the members' roles naturally varied across cities and from one member to another. In some cases, the role of a member was very narrow, such as helping a city upgrade its street lighting infrastructure or assisting a city in gaining access to surplus federal equipment; in other cases team members' roles were much broader, such as helping a city build a coalition of community partners

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[19]   In two pilot cities with very small city staffs, there appears to have been minimal involvement of city department leads or staff.

to improve health outcomes of citizens or assisting with comprehensive downtown revitalization, which included a variety of different tasks over the course of the two-year pilot. Depending on the task at hand, team members assisted cities by answering questions, working through bureaucratic barriers, assembling local stakeholders, identifying funding opportunities, conducting research, building relationships, and exploring creative solutions to long-standing problems.

Although their roles varied across cities, we observed certain patterns in team member roles. Team members who were embedded in city hall were the most likely to engage in planning and program development activities, examples of which included the creation of a strategic plan to enhance the effectiveness of local government in one city and the alignment of two transportation projects in another city. Embedded team members were also most likely to help build relationships between community stakeholders. In one city, team members helped form a partnership of community organizations to advance neighborhood revitalization strategies. In another city, team members helped form a partnership to collaboratively align workforce training and education programs.

In contrast, team members working from remote locations tended to provide more transactional assistance rather than strategic planning or partnership development. Examples of transactional assistance include helping cities navigate federal bureaucracy and connecting cities with needed information.

3.2   SC2 Team Communication

To accomplish their work, SC2 teams engaged in three types of communication: internal SC2 team communication, communication between team members and their respective home agencies, and communication between the SC2 teams and their partner cities. The methods of communication in each city and for each agency varied by what each team felt was most productive, as well as by the resources available to the host city. Nonetheless, general patterns were discernible for each communication type.

3.2.1   Communication Within the SC2 Team

Communication within the SC2 teams typically followed a hub-and-spoke structure, with the SC2 team lead serving as the hub. SC2 team leads communicated frequently with individual team members, either through organized team meetings or as the need arose. Every site had team meetings, but the frequency and formality of meetings varied by site. Among the six SC2 teams, three had weekly calls or emails, one had quarterly in-person meetings, and two rarely met as a group, instead preferring a more informal flow of calls or emails. In cities where SC2 team members met regularly, some members said the meetings helped them stay engaged and focused on city priorities, and fostered an atmosphere of teamwork. However, other team members found the team meetings to be perfunctory, doing little to enhance their work or the SC2 experience.

Over time, formal team communication became less frequent in most cities, for two main reasons. First, as team members gained a clearer understanding of their roles and how to successfully operationalize their work, broader team input became less necessary in most cities. Second, some team members, particularly part-time remote members who were playing minor roles on the teams, became less engaged in the pilot overall.

In places where regular, collaborative team meetings occurred frequently in the beginning of the pilot and gradually became less frequent, a few team members said they missed the meetings and wanted more regular team contact. SC2 team leads also expressed interest in more in-person meetings with their respective teams, as well as with other SC2 team leads and with the Council.

3.2.2   Communication Within Federal Agencies, Across All SC2 Teams

The second form of SC2 team communication was among team members who worked for the same agency in different pilot cities. Only a few agencies had their team members across sites meet formally or regularly. The Department of Justice (DOJ), for instance, had a monthly call, and Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) team members from three cities had regular calls to discuss solutions to problems that had arisen in their pilot work or, sometimes, what their agency could learn from the work they conducted in their pilot cities. These meetings tended to decrease in frequency or stop during the second year of implementation, presumably for reasons similar to those that generated a decline in site-specific team meetings.

3.2.3   SC2 Team Communication Between Team Members and Cities

At the outset of the engagements, SC2 team leads tended to serve as the primary liaison between team members and city representatives. Most cities had a main point of contact to represent the city—either appointed by the mayor or, in some cases, the mayor him/herself—and that person and the SC2 team lead communicated frequently and informally. There were also formal communication structures in most cities, such as weekly, monthly, or quarterly meetings to check in on progress and align goals.

Over time, many individual team members developed relationships with city staff who were engaged in work being conducted by SC2 teams. These members began communicating directly with their city counterparts rather than routing through the SC2 team and city leads. In one city, this informal communication was aided by the fact that both the SC2 team lead and all full-time team members were given desks in city hall, making them readily accessible to city government. Team member-city staff relationship building was facilitated in two other cities by more formal mechanisms—in one city staff and the entire SC2 team met quarterly to discuss their partnered work; in the other team members held weekly office hours, hoping to streamline communication with city staff.

While many one-on-one relationships were formed, local political circumstances and city staff turnover limited one-on-one working relationships between team members and city government officials other than the city's executive in at least two communities.

3.3   Implementation of the SC2 Pilot

The early months of SC2 pilot implementation involved the development and refinement of a work plan in each city, the assignment of specific tasks to team members, and initial work on those assignments. The work plan represented a detailed strategy for how a SC2 team would attempt to address its city's priority areas and needs. Pilot cities took different tacks in selecting specific activities for implementation. These different approaches included holding planning sessions with city and community leaders, meeting one-on-one with city leadership, and refining existing city strategic planning documents.[20] All SC2 teams used findings from the OAT assessments as the starting point for the planning process.

The pilot cities varied in how quickly they were able to move from planning to implementation, ranging from as quickly as three months to as long as six months. The two cities that were able to begin implementing activities most quickly were those whose mayors had clear visions for the engagement and a defined set of priorities for the SC2 team. By contrast, in the three cities where it took six months to

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[20]   The site profiles provide specific details on each site's process for developing their work plan (see Appendix A).

finalize the work plan and begin implementing activities there was no clear prioritized focus for the engagement and a limited sense of what activities team members should undertake. This led to lengthy planning phases in which agenda items were slowly added and refined. Team members noted that delays in some cases were due to not being sure of whom in the city they would and should be working with, which resulted in members feeling their way through that determination.

Some cities sought to balance short-term and long-term strategies. Two of the cities included "quick-win" activities in their work plan—small-scale activities or "low hanging fruit" that could generate early success while complex activities continued to be developed. A quick-win example is the development of a community behavioral health resource guide in one city.

As implementation proceeded, many team members settled into their roles and made progress on the activities assigned to them. There were times, though, when planned activities were found to be infeasible or new opportunities arose that were likely to be more beneficial to the community than the originally planned activities. In one city, for example, a project to notify residents electronically about city land use decisions was dropped when it was determined that the SC2 team could add little value to the project, while an exploration of redevelopment opportunities for a navy base was added.

SC2 teams made decisions during implementation to stop projects for several reasons, including SC2 team or city staff turnover, an inability to get traction on a project due to a lack of city involvement or opposition from a city representative, poor timing, the determination that a project was simply not viable, or a lack of resources to complete a project. In one city, for example, a team member assigned to focus on several health care projects disengaged from the pilot when it was determined that the city did not have a health or human services departments to implement the projects. In another city, criminal justice projects were stopped when the local police chief expressed a lack of support for the work. In another city, a significant workforce development strategy focused on the area around a proposed hospital was dropped when the construction of the hospital was delayed.

Team members also identified new opportunities once they had a better understanding of city needs, reacted to emergent needs, and changed direction when initial opportunities proved infeasible. For example, in one city workforce development strategies were left fairly general in the work plan. This allowed the SC2 team to conduct multiple stakeholder interviews to better define city needs before proposing more specific activities. Ultimately, the SC2 team helped create a multi-partner collaboration to develop strategies for alignment of workforce development efforts. In a second city, a team member stepped in when the city realized it would have to lay off over 100 police officers—the team member found a solution in the repurposing a Community Oriented Policing Services (COPS) grant to retain the officers.

A promising feature of the SC2 approach is its flexibility for adding unplanned activities. The local stakeholders interviewed commonly said that it was impossible to know at the outset exactly how the city would most benefit from the SC2 team. Leaving room in the work plan for emergent opportunities and using an adaptive approach to implementation is therefore needed. SC2 teams and cities seemed to be most successful when they adjusted their plan as opportunities arose, circumstances changed, and planned activities were found to be impossible to implement. In several cities, many key SC2 team accomplishments were unrelated to tasks outlined in the work plan; rather, the accomplishments involved responding to opportunities to address perceived barriers through the collaborative effort of the city and the SC2 team.

3.4   Range of Activities Conducted

SC2 teams conducted a range of activities in keeping with the goals of the SC2 pilot and in response to the priorities of the pilot cities. Activities varied across pilot cities due to the individual priorities of the cities, the makeup of the SC2 teams assigned to each city, and the capacity of the cities to address economic development opportunities and challenges. Notwithstanding this local variation, SC2 team activities generally fell into one or more of five categories, summarized in Exhibit 6.

Exhibit 6: Common Types of SC2 Team Activities

Activity Type	Description
1. Providing responsive, transactional assistance to address specific problems	Team members helped to trouble shoot specific problems by: • Connecting city staff with federal and/or state resources • Identifying where flexibility exists within federal funding and regulations • Helping to short-cut federal red tape • Providing assistance with process • Offering ad-hoc technical assistance
2. Building relationships between local stakeholders and state and federal employees	Team members connected local stakeholders with federal or state representatives to resolve long-standing community problems.
3. Brokering local or regional partnerships	Team members connected individuals from different local or regional entities to align plans or services, share resources, and develop mutually beneficial collaborations.
4. Temporary addition of technical capacity	Team members took on project tasks to help further strategic ideas the city staff did not have time to implement.
5. Program and plan development	Team members took responsibility to develop a program or facilitate/contribute to a planning process

Following are examples for each activity type to provide a sense of the range of activities completed by team members.

1. **Providing responsive, transactional assistance to address specific problems**. Activities included in this category involved team members troubleshooting specific problems at the local level. Team members connected city staff with federal and/or state resources, identified where flexibility exists within federal funding and regulations, helped to short-cut federal red tape, and offered ad-hoc technical assistance. In one city, for example, a team member worked with HUD leadership, city leadership, and the city's Housing Commission to identify a source of funds to demolish a long-vacant public housing complex. Though a long-standing priority of the mayor's, previous attempts to use Community Development Block Grant funds for demolition had been blocked by the city council. The team member identified that the city could apply for emergency HUD funds to support the removal of the blighted property and identified the data that would be needed to prove that demolition was needed to address health and safety risks linked to the abandoned property.

   Additional activities of this type included:

   • Researching HUD policies to find flexibility for a city to utilize Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) funding for land reuse projects

- Organizing a training session for downtown property owners on working with the General Services Administration to encourage more federal agencies to locate in the downtown area

- Working with city officials and representatives from the Federal Aviation Administration to release funds for demolition at the local airport

2. **Building relationships between local stakeholders and state and federal employees.** These activities involved team members connecting local stakeholders with state and federal representatives to resolve long-standing community problems. As an example, team members in one city convened a broad spectrum of state and federal representatives to explore the implications of a planned high-speed rail project. The stakeholders met to discuss the impacts of the route, the interconnectedness of their activities, and how they might best collaborate going forward.

   Additional activities of this type included the following:

   - Initiating discussions between city stakeholders and a representative of the DOE's Clean Cities Program to explore the adoption of clean alternative fuels for the city's fleet vehicles

   - Connecting federal, state, and regional stakeholders to identify ways for city transportation projects to continue without violating historical preservation requirements

   - Coordinating conversations between city stakeholders, the Department of Energy's National Lawrence Livermore Labs, and the Department of Agriculture's Agricultural Research Serve Western Regional Research Center to discuss a potential collaboration to support technology transfer for the development of an agriculture technology cluster in a pilot city

3. **Brokering local or regional partnerships.** For this activity, team members connected individuals from different local or regional entities to align plans or services, share resources, or develop mutually beneficial collaborations. For example, a SC2 team lead in one pilot city facilitated a meeting to determine workforce needs and align curriculum across educational institutions. The meeting convened representatives from the newly created National Additive Manufacturing Innovation Institute, educational institutions in the area that serve high-skilled and mid-skilled workers for the emerging additive manufacturing sector, representatives from the area NASA facility, and a local manufacturing organization.

   Additional activities of this type included the following:

   - Creating a collaborative team of local stakeholders to increase employment among veterans through various approaches, including offering career fairs and establishing a partnership with the United Way

   - Developing a framework for a city's transportation department and a regional passenger rail provider to jointly allocate transportation funding for specialized and para-transit service delivery, and engaging local health sector stakeholders in the initiative

   - Connecting a nonprofit business development corporation with public and private stakeholders in one city to encourage the corporation to locate a new minority business development center there

4. **Temporary addition of technical capacity**. These activities involved team members taking on project tasks to help further strategic ideas the city did not have the time or resources to implement.

One city relied on a team member to conduct a broad survey of community health resources and providers that it would otherwise not have been able to complete due to staffing limitations, thus allowing the city to develop a series of improvements to the provision of community health services.

Additional activities of this type included the following:

- Developing a map of existing and potential infrastructure for a rural broadband system in the region around a city, and securing funding for its development
- Reviewing a city's short-range transit plans and contributing to a report on best practices for local transit agencies
- Exploring housing opportunities for participants in a city's violence intervention program

5. **Program and plan development**. Activities in this category involved team members taking responsibility to develop a program, facilitate a planning process, or contribute to a planning process. As an example, team members in one city assessed the feasibility of expanding the area's value-added food sector through a public market or kitchen incubator, helped develop a related strategic plan, exposed local stakeholders to other innovative food organizations in the region, and identified potential sources of funding for the effort.

Additional activities of this type include the following:

- Assisting a city with strategic planning related to career, technical, and adult education
- Helping a city develop a plan for infill development, including securing technical assistance from the EPA and creating a strategy for engaging a private sector task force
- Working with potential private funding sources to explore the development of an innovation district strategic plan to encourage economic growth in a city

3.5   Summary of Reported Key Accomplishments

While the SC2 teams undertook a vast number of activities, not all activities were completed, and among completed activities only a subset were regarded as key accomplishments by stakeholders interviewed for this study. The evaluation team's discussions with pilot city stakeholders and team members examined what the SC2 teams were able to accomplish during the timeframe of the evaluation—the first 18 months of pilot implementation (September 2011–March 2013). We asked stakeholders to describe what they perceived to be the SC2 teams' key accomplishments in each city, focusing on accomplishments that addressed city priorities. Based on the study team's data collection and analysis, we identified 40 key accomplishments during the evaluation period.

Key accomplishments most commonly arose from activities in which SC2 teams provided responsive, transactional assistance to address specific problems (activity type 1 above). The frequency of these accomplishments appears due to the large number of city priorities that fell into this category, as well as the relative ease with which a team member could address isolated problems simply by tapping into readily available resources or connecting with senior representatives at their home agency. The next most common activity type to lead to key accomplishments was activity type 3, brokering local or regional partnerships, followed by activity type 4, adding temporary technical capacity to city staff. The success of activities that brokered local partnerships may be related to the ability of federal stakeholders to inspire the formation of new partnerships in a way local stakeholders cannot; the success of activities that added

technical capacity is likely due to the significant time team members dedicated to those activities. The activities that less often led to key accomplishments were program and plan development (activity type 5) and building relationships between local stakeholders and state and federal employees (activity type 2). The relatively few accomplishments that arose from these activity types seems due, respectively, to the length of time required for program and plan development to be completed and the small number of city requests for assistance in developing partnerships with state or federal representatives.

In terms of content areas, activities that produced key accomplishments most commonly related to economic and business development, transportation, health, land use, and public safety. The frequency of these accomplishments appears related to the activity types, with most economic and business development and transportation projects involving responsive, transactional assistance. A smaller number of activities related to housing, neighborhood revitalization, and the environment led to key accomplishments. The infrequency of accomplishments in these content areas appears to simply reflect little emphasis on these areas by pilot cities.

Exhibit 7 summarizes the 40 key accomplishments. This is not an exhaustive list of what the SC2 teams achieved, especially given the limited timeframe of the study, but presents those accomplishments that stakeholders most frequently cited during conversations with the evaluation team. For an expanded list of accomplishments, see the Strong Cities, Strong Communities Initiative's First Annual Report. [21]

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[21]   White House Council on Strong Cities, Strong Communities, *Strong Cities, Strong Communities First Annual Report*, April 2013.

Exhibit 7: SC2 Pilot Key Accomplishments

SC2 city	Key Accomplishments as Determined by SC2 Team Members, Pilot City Representatives, and Evaluation Team	Content Area of Accomplishment
Chester	EPA team members established a partnership between city leadership and faculty at Temple University. With the EPA as facilitator, a 15+ member graduate student team worked on regional planning and design projects within the city at no cost, developing a downtown revitalization plan.	Land Use and Revitalization
	A team member from HUD was able to determine how to repurpose grant money to demolish the Chester Arms Hotel building, an immediate safety hazard that had become unstable due to hurricane damage.	Land Use and Revitalization
	A team member from HHS worked with Keystone Mercy Health Plan (a major regional health-care provider) and Widener University to establish the Healthy Chester Coalition, a council of nonprofits and faith-based community institutions whose goal is to coordinate services to meet Chester's health care needs collaboratively and effectively.	Health
	The SC2 team facilitated a new relationship between the city and Widener University. Evidence of this relationship included bringing Widener into the Healthy Chester Coalition, starting discussions between the school district and Widener about Widener's charter school and Chester's education coalition, and helping establish a partnership with the Chester Police Department.	Health
	The SC2 Team helped facilitate an investment by a Philadelphia-based food bank, Philabundance, to open a supermarket-style food bank. The $4.5 million project broke ground in late September 2012 and will provide the first new grocery store in the City in over a decade. Financing from two Community Development Finance Institutions (CDFIs)—the Nonprofit Finance Fund and The Reinvestment Fund (TRF)—was critical to helping Philabundance move forward.	Economic and Business Development
	DOT team members negotiated agreements with regional transit authorities (Southeastern Pennsylvania Transportation Authority/Amtrak) to allow a business to rent out retail space at their Chester station, and began conversations with Amtrak about opening an Amtrak train line to Chester.	Economic and Business Development
	General Services Administration (GSA) team members introduced the city to the GSA's acquisition program, allowing it to acquire new school equipment for Chester schools (including 60 low-cost computers for students) and 4-wheel-drive vehicles for the city.	Community Development

SC2 city	Key Accomplishments as Determined by SC2 Team Members, Pilot City Representatives, and Evaluation Team	Content Area of Accomplishment
Cleveland	Team members convened regional and local government stakeholders to form the Strategic Workforce Alignment Group (SWAG). SWAG developed a set of collaborative actions to improve the alignment of workforce employment, training, and education programs in the region with the needs of employers for skilled workers in key sectors.	Workforce Development
	HUD team members brokered an agreement between the city and DOT-Federal Highway Administration to allow construction work for Cleveland's neighborhood development strategy to continue, developing work-arounds to deed restrictions on city-owned properties.	Land Use and Revitalization
	Team members provided indirect technical support as the city applied for EPA funding to clean up a 5-acre brownfields site called "Dike 14" and incorporate it into the Lake Front Nature Preserve. They also helped gather and address public comments, so that clean-up could commence.	Environment
	Through SC2, NASA and the Manufacturing Advocacy & Growth Network created the Adopt a City program, which awarded nine small and medium-sized manufacturers 400 hours of NASA subject matter assistance and access to $450K in low-interest loans from the City of Cleveland or Cuyahoga County to solve technical challenges.	Economic and Business Development
Detroit	Team members provided indirect technical support as the city applied for $25 million in funding to expand Detroit's public transit by building the "M-1" Woodward Avenue Light Rail line, a streetcar line connecting the Detroit People Mover network with Amtrak's Southeast Michigan Council of Governments' commuter rail.	Transportation
	Team members helped establish a Regional Transit Authority, reviewing the region's transportation planning process, providing advice and expertise on ways to improve it (including how to conduct transit corridor planning studies), and serving as a knowledge base for advocates for Regional Transit Authority legislation.	Transportation
	Team members brought together the city and the Youth Violence Prevention Forum, who had previously not coordinated their efforts. As a result of meetings with the Forum, the city started concentrating its board-up and blight removal efforts in areas where students frequently travel to school, improving the safety of those routes.	Public Safety
	Team members identified a way to repurpose HUD funding in order to demolish Douglass Homes, a dilapidated former public housing project that was a major blight on the city's skyline.	Public Safety

SC2 city	Key Accomplishments as Determined by SC2 Team Members, Pilot City Representatives, and Evaluation Team	Content Area of Accomplishment
	Team members from the Federal Transit Administration (FTA), DOJ, and ED worked with Code for America and the Knight Foundation to launch Text My Bus, a service that provides real-time travel information so that Detroit Department of Transportation passengers will not have to wait at bus stops for long periods, where they might be exposed to crime. Team members identified a way to repurpose funding from another grant for Text My Bus, and identified other sources of funding, to make the project sustainable over the next two years.	Public Safety
	DOJ team members were able to determine a way to repurpose a COPS grant to retain 120 police officers, maintaining public safety as a top priority and preventing layoffs.	Public Safety
Fresno	The FTA and the EPA team members facilitated a conversation with local stakeholders that resulted in the re-routing of Fresno's Bus Rapid Transit line to better align with the location of Fresno's planned high-speed rail stop and its downtown commercial district, fostering economic growth.	Transportation
	The FTA and the EPA team members convened local, state, and federal stakeholders working on various elements related to high-speed rail and downtown revitalization. As a result, the proposed high-speed rail stop was moved to a more strategic location in the downtown commercial district and the city applied for and received a grant to improve a pedestrian mall in the district.	Transportation
	The HUD team member identified the Building Neighborhood Capacity Program grant opportunity for the city and helped assemble the partners needed to submit a successful application. The grant was received and is being used to support the city's expansion of its neighborhood revitalization efforts into two neighborhoods, Southwest and El Dorado Park.	Land Use and Revitalization
	By identifying a funding source, providing indirect technical support, input, and advice throughout the process of the city's grant application, and connecting the city to federal experts on historical preservation, team members helped Fresno secure a $16 million TIGER (Transportation Investment Generating Economic Recovery) grant to advance the city's vision for Fulton Mall, reconstructing the mall's 18-block area and revamping vehicle traffic lanes to increase its businesses' accessibility and visibility.	Land Use and Revitalization

SC2 city	Key Accomplishments as Determined by SC2 Team Members, Pilot City Representatives, and Evaluation Team	Content Area of Accomplishment
	Team members identified grant funding from the Department of Agriculture and IBM Smarter Cities Challenge to substantially advance Fresno's planning for bringing broadband to the downtown area and establishing technology for remote sensors tracking water and pesticide use on farms within Fresno.	Economic and Business Development
	Team members assessed the feasibility of expanding Fresno's value-added food sector (including the development of a downtown "food hub," public market, or "kitchen incubator"), helped to develop the city's plan, exposed them to other Northern California innovative food organizations, and identified potential sources of funding for the effort.	Economic and Business Development
	The SC2 team helped Fresno and community stakeholders align the city's current plan to end homelessness with the new federal Opening Doors policy to end all forms of homelessness through strategic provision of housing, job, and services for homeless individuals.	Housing
Memphis	DOT team members provided indirect technical support as the city successfully applied for a $14.9 million TIGER grant for its Main Street to Main Street Multi-Modal Connector Project, which will improve transportation in downtown Memphis and develop bike and pedestrian trails.	Transportation
	Team members from DOJ coordinated the multiple federal initiatives in Memphis working on youth violence prevention, including Shelby County's Defending Childhood initiative, the work of the National Forum on Youth Violence Prevention, and a federal civil rights investigation on unfair treatment of African American youth.	Public Safety
	Team members helped the city successfully present a case to the GSA chief of staff to have the GSA relax certain building regulations for the city, allowing federal offices to remain in, or move to, downtown Memphis.	Land Use and Revitalization
	HHS team members researched Memphis' current and future health needs, creating "A Profile of the Uninsured in Memphis" and a "Detailed Memphis Health Profile" to prepare the city for an increase in insured Memphians generated by Affordable Care Act in 2014.	Health
	Team members trained city officials and a local community development organization on how to set up and fund a Community Development Financial Institutions Fund (CDFI) to support small businesses, including identifying several relevant Treasury grant programs. As a result, the River City Capital Investment Corporation, a local CDFI, was formed.	Economic and Business Development
	DOT team members cut red tape to finalize the purchase of the American Queen Riverboat as part of an effort to develop the city's tourism industry.	Economic and Business Development

SC2 city	Key Accomplishments as Determined by SC2 Team Members, Pilot City Representatives, and Evaluation Team	Content Area of Accomplishment
	Team members inventoried the city's strategic plans and reports, drafting a narrative around how these initiatives fit together and drafting a communication strategy for getting the word out about the city's development efforts.	Economic and Business Development
	Team members connected Community Lift with the Delta Regional Authority (DRA), leading to a $250,000 DRA grant to bring free broadband access to the South Memphis neighborhood of Frayser.	Economic and Business Development
New Orleans	Team members connected the city with leadership at DOT, which resulted in identifying a mechanism for pooling DOT and HUD grant money to enable the completion of a streetcar project.	Transportation
	Team members connected city officials with experts at HUD and the state to get the city's $52 million soft-second mortgage program off the ground, cutting red tape and solving lingering technical problems that had stymied the effort.	Housing
	Team members sought expert advice from HUD that allowed the city to release disaster relief funds in order to regularly maintain abandoned lots, instead of having to wait to do so only once a year.	Housing
	Team members brought together prison, drug court, city, and state officials to establish and coordinate the implementation of a permanent supportive housing voucher preference program for individuals returning from substance abuse treatment or prison.	Housing
	Team members help the city avoid recapture of $20 million in housing funds by reconciling poorly-kept records and clarifying the status of the funds.	Housing
	Team members identified and convened local stakeholders involved in providing mental health services to create a behavioral health council. The council then worked with the city to draft a comprehensive, regional plan for behavioral health, including a needs assessment and a regional guide to behavioral health resources.	Health
	A team member from DOJ helped identify a successful murder reduction strategy in Milwaukee that became a model for New Orleans, leading to the creation of the Mayor's Strategic Command to Reduce Murder. The Command serves as a means for state and local law enforcement officials to share information and coordinate responses to murders in the city.	Public Safety
	Team members facilitated conversations between city, state, and federal government representatives to extend the time frame for submission of reimbursement claims from community health clinics, avoiding reductions in health services to the community.	Health

3.6   Implementation Challenges

As Exhibit 7 shows, team members made significant gains in helping cities address their priorities in a short amount of time. However, the following challenges at times impeded progress:

1. **Staff turnover.** Some projects were delayed or ended because of a change in staffing or a loss of leadership at either the city or the federal level.

2. **City capacity.** Pilot cities faced capacity challenges that limited their ability to make the best use of federal assistance offered by the engagement. These challenges included small city staffs, city staff with insufficient time to allocate to the pilot, and a lack of structure to support certain activities.

3. **Federal difficulty adapting to new roles required by the pilot or moving beyond historical conflicts with cities.** A small number of team members had difficulty either adapting to a role in which the city directed the activities and federal representatives played a supporting role, or moving beyond previous problematic relationships with cities, especially in cases where an agency's historical relationship with the city was one of monitoring and compliance.

4. **Turf battles.** In pilot cities, some city stakeholders did not welcome federal assistance and as a result chose not to interact with the SC2 teams. Similarly, tensions at times existed between regional and Washington, DC-based federal team members, with regional staff regarding the engagement as a critique of their existing approach to working with a city.

5. **Misaligned team member expertise and city priorities.** As noted in Section 2.4, there was not always perfect alignment between the skills of a team member assigned to a city and the skills demanded by the city's priority areas. This lack of alignment led to less effective partnerships than might have been achieved otherwise.

The next chapter further explores how these implementation challenges, as well as other factors, affected the ability of SC2 teams to address city priorities.

4. Factors Affecting Success of SC2 Teams

The SC2 pilot was designed to create new partnerships between the federal government and the pilot cities in order to address city challenges and bring about new opportunities for economic revitalization. In this chapter we discuss factors affecting the ability of SC2 teams to address city priorities from the perspective of these partners, including team members, city stakeholders, the POCs, and the SC2 Council. Specifically, we examine factors related to the role of pilot cities, the role of federal agencies, characteristics of the SC2 teams, and how pilot cities and SC2 teams worked together.

Chapter 4 Highlights
• Characteristics of pilot cities, federal agencies, and team members all affected the extent to which SC2 teams were successful in their pilot work. On the part of the cities, the extent and type of mayoral buy-in to the pilot affected progress. Early work by mayors to set a vision for SC2 team work and get city staff on board facilitated progress, while a lack of initial planning for SC2 team deployment tended to delay meaningful SC2 team engagement. A lack of commitment by the mayor and senior city staff tended to impede it further. Extremely low staff capacity in city government was also a hindrance. Some cities had so little capacity that they could not take full advantage of what the pilot offered. Conversely, some cities came to the pilot with substantial federal and philanthropic resources in place, which allowed those SC2 teams to align their efforts to take maximum advantage of these investments. Federal agency leadership's level of commitment to the pilot affected the number of staff and amount of staff time dedicated to SC2 team activities. Agencies with an emphasis on place-based policies, in particular, provided the most resources to the engagement, including considerable access to agency senior leadership. Although junior and mid-level team members could contribute significantly in certain capacities, team members with more years of experience in their home agency, or greater content expertise, were better able to help cities address their priority areas. Senior staff members in particular were key to connecting city stakeholders to high-level federal decision makers to resolve long-standing problems and to bypass bureaucratic barriers to progress. Team members were also more successful when they acted resourcefully to identify solutions to challenges facing cities and demonstrated an entrepreneurial and adaptable approach to the engagement. The location of team members was often predictive of which tasks they were best able to accomplish. On-site team members (or remote staff with a travel budget) were well positioned to build relationships and convene local stakeholders, while team members at agency headquarters or in regional offices tended to be most successful when providing responsive, transactional assistance. The perception of team members as neutral outsiders and the cache of being linked to a White House initiative aided their ability to develop and improve relationships with stakeholders. SC2 teams worked best when the city provided a clear focus for their work. In cities that lacked a clear strategy or had conflicting priorities for SC2 team work, SC2 team leads, members, and city staff struggled to identify how best to work together, where to focus their energies, and how to maximize the opportunities for partnership and technical assistance inherent in the approach.

4.1   Role of Pilot Cities

The SC2 pilot is, by design, flexible and adaptable to local needs. This program model encourages cities to take the lead in defining the priorities on which SC2 teams focus their efforts. Overwhelmingly, we

heard that the SC2 pilot worked best when city leadership was committed to the partnership and guided the SC2 team toward what they hoped to achieve by participating. Not all pilot cities, though, were capable of devoting the resources required to ensure the success of the engagement. In this section we discuss the importance of mayors to the pilot and how the capacity of cities affected success.

4.1.1   Mayoral Buy-In and Direction

The degree to which the mayor embraced the SC2 team's effort varied across the six pilot cities. The mayors' commitment to the SC2 effort was demonstrated in the extent to which the mayors set the vision for the SC2 teams' work in their communities, how city leadership interacted with the SC2 team lead, and the degree to which the importance of the SC2 partnership was communicated to city department staff.

In our interviews, we heard that certain types of mayoral commitment led to greater progress toward addressing city priorities than others. The most effective SC2 pilot engagements were those in which mayors had a strong appreciation for the value of the SC2 model and a vision for how to use SC2 teams to solve city problems. Effective mayors were either directly involved in planning the SC2 team's activities or ensured their strategic vision was conveyed to the SC2 team for implementation by key city staff. Mayors did not have to be readily accessible to individual team members—but they needed to convey the importance of the SC2 team's work to key city personnel.

The two mayors who took the most initiative in setting the vision for their cities' respective SC2 pilot engagements, for instance, spent a considerable amount of energy early in the intervention making sure the SC2 team's work was integrated with the city's vision for growth (one of them personally delivered an 80-slide PowerPoint to the assessment team when they visited the city) and assigned dedicated staff to coordinate with team members throughout the pilot. This level and type of commitment communicated to city staff that team members were important resources that should be used and assisted, which facilitated SC2 team-city staff collaboration.

In one city, the mayor used the city's pre-existing economic development strategy as the framework to guide how team members might be most useful to the city. The mayor outlined this strategy during the assessment, which allowed SC2 leaders to strategically select team members to help to achieve the city's vision. In the other city, the mayor had a strong sense about how the SC2 team's effort could be instrumental in changing the nature of the relationship between the city and federal government and as a result solve some long-standing challenges or help to jump-start some perceived opportunities. The mayoral intentions for the SC2 pilot in these two cities were quite different—the first mayor focused on local strategies for maximizing upcoming transportation investments, limiting sprawl, and increasing investment in downtown, while the second mayor focused more broadly on coordinating sources of federal funding and getting quicker, clearer answers to programmatic questions. In both cases, however, having a clear vision for the SC2 team work facilitated progress, helping the teams to create effective work plans, staff them with the appropriate team members, and make headway on prioritized areas.

In contrast, two other cities had very committed mayors who set aside a great deal of time to work directly with the SC2 team, but did not see as much progress. Both of these mayors played a much less active role as vision setters, and did not communicate as effectively to city staff the importance of the city's work with the SC2 team. In these cities, SC2 team leads stepped up to coordinate with the mayor and generate a set of priorities for their teams' work. This prolonged planning period necessarily delayed the SC2 team's engagement with the city's priorities, and a lack of effective communication about the

importance of the engagement hindered the integration of SC2 team efforts with those of city staff or local stakeholders.

In the two other cities, the level of commitment from the mayor and senior city staff was more limited. In one case, the SC2 team lead had been on the ground for nearly a year before having a meeting with the mayor. In some other cities, the mayor's level of commitment was not matched by senior departmental managers in city government, and the result was that the SC2 team struggled to make a meaningful contribution. Overall, team members in these cities found it difficult to engage city staff, track city priorities, and move their work plans forward.

4.1.2   Underlying Capacity of Pilot Cities

Pilot cities came to the SC2 pilot with varying levels of capacity that affected their experience and what was accomplished. Distressed cities often lack sufficient financial resources and staff capacity to address the challenges they face. While the pilot offered these cities substantial resources at no cost, some of the cities had so little capacity that, while they were enthusiastic about their involvement in the pilot, they could not take full advantage of what it offered.

We asked city stakeholders and team members to identify challenges they faced related to capacity. In one city with a small staff, the capacity in city hall was described as minimal, with the few staff they had focused on "dealing with fire drills every day." This contributed to a lack of attention to the pilot and led to team members having to work with local nonprofits and organizations rather than the city. In another city it was noted that the city was unable to focus on the pilot or clarify priorities due to its limited staff being stretched too thin and thus unable to devote significant attention to a narrow set of issues. Additionally, the city's financial situation encouraged it to chase numerous grant and funding opportunities with little strategic vision of how to take advantage of those resources. In light of challenges related to low capacity, several team members noted the importance of cities having a minimal amount of capacity in place in order to benefit from the pilot—that a city in effect needs to be able to try to take action on its own and then ask for help from the federal government rather than relying on team members to take on the full burden.

Though faced with challenges, the pilot cities were not without certain advantages that may have aided the SC2 teams in addressing city priorities. Two pilot cities were beneficiaries of significant previous federal investment unrelated to SC2 in the form of funds for constructing a high-speed rail line in one city and a streetcar line in the other. In both cases, this encouraged the SC2 teams to align implementation activities with the planned investment, leading to the alignment of transit plans in one city and transit-corridor planning in the second. A third city was unique among pilot cites due to previous relationships that existed prior to SC2 between city officials and key federal government officials. That city's mayor took part in conversations that U.S. mayors had with President Obama about the formation of SC2; additionally, the mayor and two city department heads had prior working relationships with secretaries of three federal agencies that committed staff to the city's SC2 team and were among those granting high-level access to respond to requests from the city.

4.2   Role of Federal Agencies

Certain characteristics of federal agencies seemed to affect the ability of SC2 teams to address city priorities during the pilot. The most important of these were agency leadership's level of commitment to

the pilot, agencies' collective ability to move beyond traditional approaches to working with localities, and agencies' ability to collaborate.

4.2.1   Federal Agency Leadership's Commitment to the SC2 Pilot

Agency leadership's commitment to the pilot was seen in the number of agency staff and amount of staff time dedicated to the pilot, how many members were embedded in cities (vs. working remotely), the level of access the SC2 team and city had to senior-level agency officials, and the leadership's support for SC2's bottom-up approach to assisting cities. Each of these characteristics was important in addressing cities' priorities.

As noted earlier, agency commitment to the pilot was most evident among agencies with a traditional place-based focus or those with an increasing interest in pursuing place-based strategies. Those agencies in general committed the most staff to the engagement and the highest share of embedded team members and were thus able to provide SC2 team support to more cities and to more projects. Given how important embedded members were to the success of the engagement, due primarily to their ability to build strong relationships with local city stakeholders, those agencies with the most embedded team members were especially valuable to the pilot.

By contrast, agencies that exhibited less commitment to the pilot primarily assigned staff to part-time or advisory positions. While part-time team members certainly made significant contributions to the engagement, especially in terms of providing transactional, responsive assistance to cities, a subset of part-time members described a struggle to manage the expectations of their federal supervisors and colleagues in terms of what they could accomplish in their typical role with their home agency versus what they could accomplish for their assigned pilot city. Many of the part-time team members we talked with described feeling unsure about how to divide their time between their established work and SC2 team activities. In some cases, members described receiving only nominal support for their SC2 pilot participation, with no decrease in their prior workload or active encouragement to spend time on SC2 team activities. For example, two team members assigned to the same city, both from regional offices but different agencies, mentioned that they had been told by their supervisors to continue "business as usual," providing the same services to the city as they had before their SC2 assignment. Not surprisingly, city stakeholders expressed disappointment about the lack of progress made on issues related to both of those particular agencies. A team member in a different city said that he had little time to contribute to the SC2 team because he was overloaded with his responsibilities as head of an agency field office. He added that part-time team members found it more challenging to contribute because they still had to perform their regularly assigned duties and that their performance evaluations did not take the SC2 pilot work into consideration.

SC2 team accomplishments depended not only on the contributions of individual team members, but also on access to senior level agency officials who could answer critical questions and make final decisions for cities. Among the most committed agencies, the secretaries made clear their support for the engagement internally, by communicating its importance to agency staff, or externally, by visiting pilot cities or championing SC2 team accomplishments. By contrast, a team member in an agency that exhibited little commitment to the pilot questioned whether the secretary of her agency even knew the SC2 initiative existed. Team members were keenly aware of their agencies' leadership's support or lack of support for SC2 and the pilot and this awareness appeared to influence how much effort the members invested in the work.

4.2.2   The Ability to Move Beyond Traditional Approaches to Working With Localities

Related to the commitment of agencies to the pilot, agencies varied in the extent to which they either understood or promoted the underlying vision of SC2, that of a bottom-up approach driven by the priorities of cities, with the federal role being one of flexible assistance to accomplish city priorities. Many agencies appear to have enthusiastically adapted to this new approach to assisting cities, regarding it as consistent with their mission, a way to improve their understanding of conditions in localities where they increasingly intend to work, or a learning opportunity for individual team members and the agency as a whole. This appears to have led team members from those agencies to go above and beyond their traditional approach to assisting cities, which allowed for new, locally tailored solutions to long-standing problems to be found.

A small number of team members from certain agencies, though, did not appear to embrace the SC2 approach and struggled to assist the cities or to be effective teammates to other members. This seemed especially problematic for members based in regional offices, due to two factors. First, those team members tended to have a background in compliance and monitoring of federal grants and programs; as such, their work history was one of finding problems, not of proposing creative solutions as SC2 encouraged. Second, due to working in regional offices, these members had personal knowledge of and relationships with their pilot cities that appeared to make it difficult for them to trust the city's intentions regarding reforming their relationship with the federal government. These members were noted by others as having difficulty moving beyond a monitoring stance with the cities and contributing only the bare minimum to the engagement. In one city, the SC2 team lead directly tied the lack of progress on a significant SC2 team project, which was ultimately abandoned, to the unwillingness of a team member from an unsupportive agency to assist.

4.2.3   Federal Agency Collaboration to Address City Priorities

The SC2 approach promoted enhanced collaboration and communication among federal agencies in order to help agencies understand and efficiently address city priorities.

During the pilot, team members in a number of cities were successful in achieving cross-agency collaboration. One example is federal staff members working together to address specific, isolated problems, such as a streetcar expansion project that was hindered by the inability to blend funding from two federal agencies due to conflicting rules. Agencies also collaborated on broader, long-term activities that involved overlapping agency investments, such as the development of a technology cluster to promote economic development in another city. In each of these cases, the agencies involved were able to achieve more for the pilot cities by working in unison than would have been possible working alone.

When this collaboration occurred, team members were able to facilitate sizable progress toward city priorities. In one city, interagency collaborations significantly advanced the city's downtown revitalization efforts. This occurred through the relocation of a bus rapid transit line as well as the location of a high-speed rail station to better align with the city's plans for downtown revitalization. It was also driven by collaboration between EPA, DOT, including DOT-FHWA, SBA, DOE, GSA, and HUD, which helped to advance the city's vision for the redevelopment of its current pedestrian mall in the heart of downtown.

In another city, interagency collaboration between HUD and DOT helped find a solution to a regulatory barrier that prevented the city from intermingling funding from the respective agencies' for a single road project. This barrier created inefficiencies in the deployment of funds and limited the leveraging of the

funds. With the help of the two agencies, the city was able to combine the funds and successfully advance the project.[22]

Notably, three of the most successful collaborations were formed after the work plan was finalized and implementation already under way. These collaborations were formed when team members began communicating with one another on a regular basis and learned about the activities of other members. During these conversations, they began to see opportunities for collaboration. In another case, collaboration occurred when a state stakeholder reached out to the SC2 team and requested the assistance of several agencies. In a final case, a collaborative approach was adopted after a team member from one agency realized that a little-known funding mechanism that existed between two agencies could be adopted by a pilot city.

4.3   SC2 Team Characteristics

In many ways, the team members are the heart of this intervention. Their experience, expertise, intelligence, and relationship networks are the tools by which change is expected to happen. A significant portion of our data collection explored the skills, experience, and pilot activities of SC2 team leads and members. We have identified several characteristics that were regarded as important by participants in the pilot and associated with achieving outcomes. Our findings are summarized below, under the following headings:

- SC2 team members' career experience and content expertise

- Adaptable and resourceful SC2 team leads

- Entrepreneurial and motivated team members

- The ability to broker new and improve strained relationships

- Where team members were located

4.3.1   SC2 Team Members' Career Experience and Content Expertise

SC2 team leads and members represented a wide range of experience in terms of tenure and seniority. According to the SC2 Council's web survey of SC2 team members, 38 percent of team members had less than 5 years of experience with the federal government, while 29 percent had more than 20 years of experience.[23]

When pilot city stakeholders worked with more senior team members, the stakeholders appreciated their specialized expertise. Senior team members brought deep knowledge of federal programs and policies. They also brought access to high-level federal staff at their home agencies who had the authority to make decisions on behalf of the agency or resolve situations in which a city had received conflicting information from various departments or individuals within an agency. With this type of access, team

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[22]   For additional details on these accomplishments as well as a more in-depth discussion of interagency collaboration, see the evaluation team's Ad Hoc Brief, *Interagency Partnerships and Local Partnerships*.

[23]   Eighty-one team members completed some portion of the survey. At this time, the study team does not know how many people were sent the survey, and thus cannot calculate the formal survey response. Between September 2011 and March 2013, 138 federal employees were assigned to a SC2 team at some level.

members gathered needed information efficiently, set up meetings to facilitate decisions, and encouraged their peers and superiors to think creatively about solutions. In one city, a senior team member was critical in assisting the city with evaluating and reconciling years of poorly kept financial records, thus allowing the city to avoid the recapture of nearly $20 million in housing funds.

Extensive federal government experience also appeared to be an asset when the SC2 team lead or team member was called upon to lead complex, multi-stakeholder planning processes. For example, one team member, a senior administrator from the Department of Labor, successfully built a multi-stakeholder planning group to improve the alignment of workforce employment, training, and education programs with the needs of employers for skilled workers. Many stakeholders credited the team member with shepherding the complex process to completion, an endeavor that many thought could not succeed. The member's experience as the administrator of multiple offices within the Department provided her with both managerial skills and experience in building stakeholder collaborations. She was able to foster collaboration and challenge key players to engage and think strategically about the region's workforce development system.

Senior team members also helped cities address bureaucratic barriers, or red tape, that they encountered while applying for federal assistance or implementing federal programs. SC2 teams in each pilot city made significant progress in this area: 8 of the 40 key accomplishments identified in section 3.5 above included the members helping their cities circumvent red tape. These accomplishments were due mostly to the ability of senior team members to quickly obtain definitive answers to specific questions from their home agencies. Seniority and substantial government experience was important to breaking down barriers within the federal government and accessing federal decision makers. With this type of access, team members gathered needed information efficiently, set up meetings to facilitate decisions, and encouraged their peers and superiors to think creatively about solutions.

Although some city stakeholders preferred senior team members to junior members, we observed that seniority and long-standing federal government experience were not important for all SC2 Team work. For example, mid-level staff and staff with fewer years of federal government experience were able to make important contributions by helping to fill capacity gaps, develop programs, build new relationships in the community, and facilitate resolution of the more standard transactional requests from the city. More than a high seniority level, this work required energy, content knowledge, and a willingness to travel or move to the pilot city. One highly effective mid-level team member was complimented for bringing publically available grant opportunities to the attention of city staff, making it "her business to get involved in all things [related to neighborhood development]," and acting as a liaison with other federal partners.

The findings on seniority and experience suggest that the SC2 approach does not necessarily require senior staff to be effective. However, senior staff can play important roles in brokering access to federal decision makers and in leading or facilitating complex planning processes.

4.3.2 Adaptable and Resourceful SC2 Team Leads

SC2 team leads, more so than any other partners in the pilot, were given a role with high levels of both uncertainty and responsibility. SC2 team leads found themselves working in a new environment in which they were required to quickly establish relationships with city stakeholders and federal colleagues. In cities marked by limited capacity and near-daily crises, SC2 team leads were tasked with advancing the work of the team members to address city needs while the SC2 pilot was but one of many priorities

competing for city leaderships' attention. Additionally, in a number of the pilot cites, SC2 team leads faced challenges related to unclear priorities for the engagement, unengaged mayors, and varying degrees of commitment from the federal agencies represented by the team. Such an environment required SC2 team leads to be resourceful in order to keep team members moving forward in addressing city priorities, to overcome barriers to progress, and to help find solutions to long-standing problems.

SC2 team leads accomplished these tasks by being strong leaders, facilitators, managers, and communicators. They did so in a variety of contexts, from city hall to interactions with team members to collaborations with community members. It was critical for SC2 team leads to be able to manage the day-to-day work of team members, engage city leaders about priorities for the SC2 team, understand and work within the local political context, and mobilize other team members and other federal colleagues when needed. More so than other team members, it was important for the leads to be generalists rather than experts, given the need for them to work across numerous topic areas and with city leaders and federal agencies. We found that these work skills, habits, and experiences were generally more important to the success of the SC2 team than either the SC2 team lead's content expertise or the extent to which the lead had pre-existing connections in the pilot city.

From conversations with SC2 pilot stakeholders, we heard that the most effective leads understood the need to respect their city's autonomy and leadership. These leads got to know the culture within city hall, the city's previous development efforts, and the city's motivations for the major initiatives planned. They then used this information to help shape and guide the SC2 team's work. By showing respect and understanding, the lead earned the city's trust, which sometimes translated into team members being given the freedom to conduct work on city priorities with little oversight from city staff members who were already stretched too thin by other demands. SC2 team leads, in effect, were able to build credibility through their actions and the actions of their team members.

As a case in point, one SC2 team worked with a city that went through a political transition in the midst of the pilot, leading to a great deal of uncertainty and a resetting of priorities for the engagement. The ensuing chaos delayed implementation and threatened progress. In response, the SC2 team lead focused on building new relationships to address city priorities, overcoming the city's very limited staff capacity, and bypassing city stakeholders who were unwilling to engage in the pilot. The lead formed a strong working relationship with the new mayor, which helped clarify priority areas and allowed implementation to begin in earnest. Additionally, the lead formed relationships with local consultants hired by the mayor to engage citizens in local government. This created opportunities for the SC2 team to build local collaborations to address education and health access that incorporated community concerns. Finally, the lead worked with the SC2 team to develop partnerships with local anchor institutions that had long been uninvolved in city affairs, creating opportunities for collaboration that are expected to be sustained over time. Faced with barriers to progress, this lead found a way to not only advance city priorities but also to create partnerships between the city and local institutions likely to build city capacity for years to come.

4.3.3   Entrepreneurial and Motivated Team Members

We observed that SC2 team leads and members seemed more likely to further the city's priorities when they were able and willing to work outside of their traditional agency roles and to embrace creative approaches to responding to city needs. As discussed, pilot cities had numerous demands on their time and limited capacity to address needs. This sometimes resulted in them not being able to give sufficient time to the SC2 pilot. In these instances, it was important for team members to be able to identify opportunities with little oversight from the city and make the connections necessary to advance city

priorities. Successful team members were frequently praised for being creative problem solvers and go-getters.

Proactive team members used their experience and knowledge to develop new projects and move stalled projects along with little oversight from their cities. In one city, team members noticed that the city's separate priorities for downtown revitalization and transit improvements were actually closely related, and they encouraged the city to align plans for these priorities into a comprehensive and successful approach. In another, the most successful team members were those who took the initiative in finding work, given limited direction from the city. The HUD team member in that city worked most closely with the independent housing authority, long in HUD receivership, helping it to resolve legacy disputes between the authority and the city. These necessary steps will help pave the way for the authority to return to local control. In a third city, the SC2 team took a dormant city plan to address homelessness and initiated an interagency council on homelessness that the city then took over and managed. In a fourth city, team members identified two opportunities for collaborative efforts in the region—a workforce development initiative and a skilled-manufacturing business development program—and assembled local partners to support each.

Team members' ability to respond flexibly and creatively seemed to vary based on the culture of their home department, agency, and specific job responsibilities. Team members from agencies with more rigid structures for determining work assignments seemed to have a more difficult time working creatively with their cities. As might be expected, team members whose pre-SC2 pilot federal jobs were compliance-related seemed to struggle the most with the needed creative thinking.

4.3.4   The Ability to Broker New and Improve Strained Relationships

A notable finding is the extent to which team members were able to broker new relationships in pilot cites or improve strained relationships.

To establish new relationships, team members tended to use their close association with the mayor's office to make connections and begin conversations with potential partners. Furthermore, team members noted that their ability to develop relationships was easier when potential community partners viewed them as neutral outsiders. This was seen, for example, in the formation of a city-wide partnership to link health care practitioners to more efficiently and cost-effectively provide healthcare. In helping to establish the partnership, the team member reached out to a diverse array of stakeholder organizations with little history of working together or with the city. The end result was a coalition of nearly 50 organizations that continues to meet on a biweekly basis to improve community health care access. Additionally, the members' ability to develop new relationships at times was enhanced by their status as representatives of the federal government and by the cachet attached to being part of a White House initiative. One city department representative noted that a meeting convened by a team member drew more than five times as many attendees as when she had held similar meetings in the past.

In addition to helping form new relationships, team members on several occasions played a key role in repairing existing but strained relationships between pilot city governments and their community partners. Two pilot cities had broken relationships with their local housing authorities; in both cases team members were able to establish new working relationships. In one case, a team member was able to work with the housing authority to remove a barrier to housing individuals experiencing homelessness, resulting in housing for 70 people. In another case, a team member helped repair the relationship between the city and a private sector group that was involved in a transportation initiative. The SC2 team was able to help the

parties reach an agreement on the type of transportation to be implemented and how the project would be financed. By brokering the agreement, the SC2 team enabled the deployment of a stalled $25 million DOT TIGER (Transportation Investment Generating Economic Recovery) grant to help support the effort.

As with forming new relationships, the neutral "outsider" status of team members appeared to aid in repairing relationships. Additionally, the ability of team members to engender the trust of city leadership was important to building and repairing relationships as it allowed the city to feel comfortable with team members working in its stead. For embedded team members especially, a close working relationship with the city and physical presence in city hall helped convey the message that the SC2 pilot was a bottom-up approach, which in turn helped create a dynamic within which improved relationships could flourish.

4.3.5   Where SC2 Team Members Were Located

Team members operated from three types of locations—in pilot cities at or near city hall, from a regional/field office, or from their department headquarters in the Washington, DC, area. We did not find a clear correlation between members' locations and their effectiveness. The relative importance of the location of the team members depended on their individual skill set and the specific activities on which they focused. Embedded team members, though, had an advantage over similarly qualified remote members in that they could more effectively build local relationships and develop plans due to their ability to invest the time and face-to-face communication essential to those activities.

In general, team members who were located on-site were able to effectively perform activities such as relationship building and program and plan development. Being located on-site seemed to facilitate, or at least not obstruct, these types of activities. On-site members seemed particularly effective at building new connections with and among local stakeholders, for which their physical presence was often necessary. They were also effective at building new relationships between federal agencies and local stakeholders. For instance, team members from HHS in one city were responsible for creating a now permanent council of behavioral health care providers, which worked with the city to undertake a regional needs assessment, draft a comprehensive regional plan for expanding behavioral health resources, and produce a guide to existing local behavioral health resources. Arguably, this kind of task—which involved a great deal of face time and conversations with local stakeholders—was one uniquely available to on-site team members.

Members located at headquarters or regional offices, which we refer to collectively as *remote staff*, were most successful when providing responsive, transactional assistance, connecting cities to federal government employees, and/or linking the city to resources or models. The responsive or transactional assistance they provided was typically content-based and specific to a problem that needed to be solved. These tasks could be accomplished without extensive personal relationships or an intimate understanding of the local government culture and political dynamics. For instance, remote team members from DOT helped a pilot city release funds to purchase a riverboat as part of an effort to expand its tourism industry. This was accomplished through a single, brief visit to the city and several conversations internally at DOT, with very little need for working on-site.

The ability of remote team members to connect their city to federal resources and national models depended on their familiarity with resources in their agency as well as their content knowledge regarding best practices in their fields. This was true, however, for any team member providing transactional assistance, regardless of their geographic location (for instance, the background knowledge needed to

repurpose a COPS (Community Oriented Policing Services) grant in a pilot city to retain 120 officers on the force of the local police department was provided by an on-site team member, not a remote one.)

Remote staff were able to perform well while completing relationship building and program and plan development activities when they had existing positive relationships with local stakeholders. The ability to travel to a pilot city on a regular (or even occasional) basis further increased the potential impact of remote staff. For instance, a remote team member from HUD working with a pilot city was able to broker a relationship between the chief information officer of that city and the chief information officer of another city that was not part of the pilot, which helped the pilot city make significant progress toward developing a "311" site to increase transparency in city government. The HUD team member was also able to develop an operating procedure for implementing a version of HUDStat ("City Stat") into city operations, which involved training for the mayor, the mayor's executive team, and the heads of city departments. All of these achievements were accomplished through regular contact and some travel to the city, which was infrequent but crucial for understanding the local political climate and getting the whole of city government on the same page.

An additional finding about the effects of team members' location was that the performance of regionally based staff was perceived by stakeholders to be affected, sometimes positively but often negatively, by pre-existing relationships. In one city, a regional team member from EPA not only had a long history in the region but also had been previously embedded in city hall for a few years on another executive loan program. These pre-existing relationships gave the team member credibility in the city and knowledge of the issues the city faced. Relationships with regional representatives were more problematic when regional representatives were assigned to issues on which they had previously conflicted with the city. One city worked with a regional agency representative continuing discussions long under way to find a new way to deal with the dredged material from a port. The facilities that were accepting the dredged sediment were soon to reach capacity and the city was looking to the agency for assistance in finding creative solutions in order to maintain a viable port. According to all parties, no progress was made in finding mutually acceptable solutions to this challenge.

4.4   How Pilot Cities and SC2 Teams Worked Together

While the federal government and pilot cities had unique roles in the engagement, how they worked together affected their ability to make progress on addressing city priority areas. We found two factors related to how pilot cities and SC2 teams worked together that affected success: the pilot city having a clear role for team members and interpersonal dynamics between individuals in the engagement that thwarted cooperation and collaboration.

4.4.1   Clear Roles for SC2 Team Members and Overall Focus for SC2 Team Work

In keeping with the importance of direction from mayors noted above, SC2 teams worked best when the city provided a clear focus for their work. The reasons why direction to SC2 teams was not always provided, or the focus of the engagement was not always clear, included the general effects of the city's distress, insufficient preparation by the city for the engagement, and the city's incomplete understanding of federal staff capabilities.

In cities that lacked a clear strategy or had conflicting priorities for SC2 team work, SC2 team leads, members, and city staff struggled to identify how best to work together, where to focus their energies, and how to maximize the opportunities for partnership and technical assistance inherent in the approach. To

make progress, team members in these cities had to be more entrepreneurial in identifying opportunities and appropriate partners. In some cases, in response to slow or blocked progress, team members increasingly sought out community stakeholders outside of city hall to work closely with and keep the engagement on task. While some team members were able to produce significant accomplishments without a clear strategy for the SC2 team, others were more limited in their achievements.

An additional but related point was that cities were not always sure of how best to use individual team members or how to convey to city staff the potential benefits of working with team members, which led to delays and underutilization of team member skills and expertise. The extent to which city staff was prepped to work with the SC2 team seemed to affect their ability to have a clear focus for members. In some of the cities, city staff said that they did not feel sufficiently prepared to engage with team members or to guide their work. (As mentioned above, team members often felt the same way about working with the city.) Only a few cities did an in-depth briefing or training with their department staff about the goals of SC2 and the role of the team members. We heard that there was often little internal communication before the SC2 team's arrival, including at least one instance where key city staff was not notified in advance of the city's participation in SC2 or the timing of the SC2 team's arrival.

Even when city staff was aware of the SC2 team's arrival, they often did not have a strong sense of what the team members' experience, qualifications, and expertise would be. These uncertainties made it very difficult for staff to determine how to best utilize the team members, even when they recognized they could be a very valuable resource. The lack of preparation in some cities slowed the process of developing relationships between the team members and city stakeholders. In addition, some team members were linked to city departments that did not have the capacity to properly engage with them, and both team members and city staff spent time figuring out what team members should be working on rather than focusing on problem solving.

4.4.2   Interpersonal Dynamics

A key strength of the SC2 approach is the placement of federal staff directly in a mayor's office, which gives team members access to decision makers and signals to city staff and stakeholders the importance of the engagement. At the same time, though, such a scenario can place team members in the middle of tense relationships between city stakeholders that predated the engagement. In some cases, SC2 team members were not able to overcome those past dynamics to address city priorities.

While most city staff and stakeholders appeared to welcome the assistance and participation of the SC2 teams, there were cases where individuals seemed reluctant to work with an SC2 team. In two pilot cities, the reluctant stakeholders were the local police commissioners, one of whom did not buy into the engagement in part due to frustration about not learning about the pilot until it was publicly announced by the mayor, and the other of whom was concerned that the team member would try to speak about criminal justice issues on behalf of the city. Importantly, in both cases, the local police department was not under the control of the mayor and thus there was little that could be done to avoid its lack of engagement. In another city, the mayor of a jurisdiction bordering the pilot city was disappointed at not being included in the OAT assessment process and was thus thereafter unwilling to be involved, hurting the SC2 team's ability to address issues that required a regional focus. In yet another city, the unique structure of the local government, in which members of the city council rather than the mayor control certain city departments, thwarted the ability of team members to engage with some departments, presumably due to conflicts between the mayor and council members.

Additional conflicts surfaced between representatives from regional federal offices and the SC2 team. In one case, the regional office regarded the pilot as signaling the office's inability to address local challenges. In other cases, regional team members and city representatives at times struggled to work in a productive fashion due to the regional team member not trusting the city based on past experience.

5. Lessons and Implications

Our discussions with city and federal stakeholders included a focus on identifying lessons learned during the 18-month implementation period that could help shape and enhance future program implementation. Discussants were asked to identify strengths and weaknesses of the SC2 approach for addressing local economic development challenges. Additionally, we sought to identity elements of the SC2 approach that might be replicated in other federal programs and to suggest are for future exploration with similar initiatives. This chapter presents what we learned from our analysis of those discussions as well as our own insights.

Chapter 5 Highlights
• Pilot stakeholders noted several key strengths of the SC2 pilot: – City stakeholders valued the individual efforts of the team members, the direct connection the pilot provided to federal resources, and the formation of new or improved relationships between federal employees and community members and organizations. Federal stakeholders regarded the pilot as valuable for enhancing federal assistance to localities through gaining a deeper understanding of how local governments in distressed cities operate, learning how to better align assistance with cities' needs, and involving mayors more directly in the process. Federal stakeholders valued the chance to collaborate with federal employees from other agencies, as well as the opportunities for professional development the pilot provided. Pilot stakeholders also felt that the SC2 pilot posed several key challenges: – Some cities were frustrated that the pilot did not provide direct financial support or allow for the relaxing of federal regulations affecting the city. – Federal agencies were similarly frustrated that there was no dedicated funding for the pilot, which meant that agencies had to find existing resources to support the pilot. Federal agencies wished the assessment better captured how prepared cities were to benefit from deployment of a SC2 team and better identified local political and capacity challenges that might impede SC2 teams' progress. The evaluation identified several areas for further exploration with the SC2 approach: – A clear definition of the SC2 approach to cities, including information about the structure of the SC2 teams, the expectations team members will have of city staff, and the limitations of the SC2 teams, might improve the overall program design. Modifications to the approach may allow lower-capacity cities to benefit from a SC2 team without being overwhelmed by an influx of federal staff. Enhancing the leadership audit conducted during the pilot assessment process may improve the city selection process, such as identifying ways the SC2 team lead and key team members could use the information collected to better gauge political dynamics that could affect progress and promote the buy-in of mayors, regional, and state stakeholders. Providing funding for SC2 team travel or relocation expenses and dedicated staff time for SC2 team activities and monitoring the match between city priorities and team member skills to identify and correct cases of misalignment may improve the implementation process. Develop a clear exit strategy earlier in the engagement may reduce cities' anxiety about the transition and sustain progress made by the SC2 teams. Several components of the SC2 approach are regarded as replicable by other federal programs, especially in regards to providing technical assistance to localities and using federal staff in regional offices. These components include a bottom-up approach to engaging and working with cities, a focus on place-based strategies, tailoring strategies and technical assistance to local conditions, and conducting assessments of local conditions to gauge readiness for receipt of federal assistance. Additionally, the pilot's use of federal staff based in regional offices to work closely with cities to address city priorities is replicable by other federal programs and activities.

5.1   Strengths of the SC2 Approach

Our analysis identified strengths of the SC2 approach from the perspectives of both the participating cities and the federal government.[24]

5.1.1   Strengths of the SC2 Approach from the Perspective of Cities

Stakeholders in pilot cities described the strengths of the SC2 approach in terms of how it changed their relationship with the federal government and in terms of the outcomes achieved for their cities. They valued the bottom-up approach that replaced the usual federal interactions with cities rooted in compliance and monitoring and encouraged federal staff to get involved in the day-to-day operations of their cities, thus giving involved federal staff a clearer picture of the specific challenges they face and how cities are affected by federal policies.

City stakeholders regarded the pilot as a way to facilitate more direct access to a range of federal resources. They gained a better understanding of federal policies and programs via the pilot and benefitted from increased awareness of federal funding opportunities. They learned how to use existing federal funds more effectively and retained millions of dollars in funds that were at risk of being recaptured by the federal government. The cities also gained more direct access to decision makers in the federal government. City stakeholders noted that they were able to receive quick and definitive answers to questions that they felt would otherwise have taken months or years to be resolved. The ability to bypass bureaucratic barriers and receive assistance in removing or mitigating red tape was especially valued by the cities.

Cities appreciated that the engagement led to new or improved relationships with federal employees and community stakeholders. City stakeholders indicated that participating in the pilot provided the city with new connections to federal employees. They expected that many of these new relationships would continue beyond the pilot and would be a way to partner with federal agencies on local projects, or simply be a conduit for information about federal resources, opportunities, or policies. Cities also valued that team members often were able to help repair existing strained relationships with federal officials, as was seen in several cases where regionally-based federal staff were familiar with cities due to grant oversight responsibilities. Regarding relationships with community stakeholders, cities appreciated the working groups that team members helped form in areas, such as neighborhood revitalization and workforce development. These groups and resulting relationships are expected to benefit the cities for years to come.

5.1.2   Strengths of the Approach from the Perspective of the Federal Government

Similar to the pilot cities, federal agencies and federal employees saw five key strengths in the SC2 approach. Three of the strengths related to ways that the SC2 approach improved federal employees' ability to do their work, providing them with valuable insight into how distressed cities operate, giving them a chance to interact with other federal agencies, and affording them new avenues for professional development. The other two strengths related to features of the SC2 approach that made the federal

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[24]   During stakeholder interviews, we discussed the SC2 approach as consisting of five elements: (1) embedding staff in particular communities, (2) embedding federal employees in particular communities, (3) engaging cities in a partnership, (4) bringing together multiple federal agencies to work more collaboratively in particular communities, and (5) exposing federal agency staff to day-to-day workings of cities. Stakeholders built upon these components based on their own experiences with the SC2 pilot.

assistance provided more effective: the ability to target efforts to cities' individual needs and directly engage the mayor.

Strengths Related to Federal Employee Experiences

Federal employees gained insights into how local governments in distressed cities operate. A key strength of the approach was that it provided federal staff and agencies a clearer picture of what occurs on the ground in communities facing economic challenges and how local governments in those cities operate. This was especially true in the case of embedded team members who, from their proximity to city hall, could witness how cities managed competing priorities under the strain of limited capacity. Through the engagement, many team members gained their first exposure to working directly with localities, experience that was regarded as valuable in helping agencies determine what types of assistance similar cities can benefit from in the future.

The approach's use of team members was seen as creating an environment in which learning could be shared between the cities and federal agencies. Federal employees learned how cities used federal resources, such as programmatic funds and technical assistance, and were able to observe when cities were successful in using resources and what barriers they faced when they were unsuccessful. From the implementation of SC2 team activities, federal employees learned new approaches to assisting distressed cities that they feel can now be extended to other cities. As one team member described it, the SC2 experience taught her that cities often do not even know the right questions to ask federal agencies when they need help, or the appropriate resources to ask for, which leads them to become frustrated and give up; in that regard the SC2 approach has proven to her that federal agencies can do a better job of understanding what a city's needs are and identifying solutions that the city did not even realize were options for them.

Federal employees engaged and collaborated with colleagues from other federal agencies. The SC2 approach was valued for the opportunity it provided team members to engage and collaborate with other federal agencies. This allowed team members to become familiar with other agencies' community development programs as well as make valued connections with staff at other agencies, both professional and personal. Members expressed an expectation that these new relationships would continue even after the end of the pilot. In addition to these overarching benefits, there were two specific instances in which team members saw benefits of federal collaboration for their respective agencies that arose from the SC2 approach. First, stakeholders from two smaller agencies expressed their appreciation for how the SC2 pilot helped raise other agencies' awareness of their work. These individuals anticipated that this increased awareness would lead to future cross-agency collaborations. Second, one team member indicated that the engagement brought about a culture shift in his agency that led to agency staff being more willing to reach out to staff at other agencies, even those at agencies not participating in SC2.

Federal employees had unique professional development opportunities. A final strength of the SC2 approach from the perspective of the federal government is that it provides professional development opportunities to enhance the careers of federal workers involved in the engagement. The pilot served as a new and unique experience for employees through which new knowledge could be acquired about the conditions in distressed communities and how an agency's programs and policies impact localities. Additionally, the experience allowed federal staff to gain new skills, such as the ability to work directly with local governments, build partnerships to collaboratively address problems, or take a leadership position within a diverse team of stakeholders. Additionally, some agencies were appreciative that so

many team members regarded the pilot engagement as positive and motivating and expect the experiences of the team members will promote retention and encourage future professional development.

Features of the SC2 Approach That Made Federal Assistance More Effective

Federal agencies could target their efforts to cities' needs. Just as the pilot cities saw the SC2 approach as a more direct and productive connection to the federal government, federal agencies regarded the SC2 approach as a more direct means of understanding local needs and targeting efforts to address them. This was particularly true for agencies with an existing focus on cities and communities. In these agencies, the pilot was an opportunity to take their existing programs and dig deeper into the specific needs of the community. Team members who relocated to cities gained a holistic perspective on how needs and opportunities fit together rather than having a singular view from a narrow focus. An example of this was a HUD employee who was focused on grant administration before becoming a team member. Once this individual moved to the pilot city, she was able to use her knowledge of HUD's various programs to help the city and HUD collaborate on issues related to neighborhood revitalization, homelessness, and public housing. This was accomplished through a close working relationship with the mayor and by listening to local stakeholders and observing on a daily basis the ways they talked about their priorities and concerns. For agencies without previous connections to cities, the pilot represented a laboratory in which to experiment with providing direct assistance to cities rather than engaging, as they have historically, primarily with state governments that determine how those agencies' resources are allocated to localities.

Federal agencies could work directly with mayors. Team members valued the direct involvement of mayors in the SC2 pilot, which members saw as instrumental in achieving outcomes at the local level. Mayoral involvement is important for conveying to city staff and stakeholders the importance of and their commitment to the engagement, thereby increasing the attention given to pilot activities and promoting a stronger partnership between the city and federal government than would otherwise be achieved. As reported elsewhere in this report, the most successful pilot cities had mayors that made their vision and priorities for the engagement clear and directed city resources to the engagement. Under such conditions, federal resources can more effectively be deployed at the local level and difficult problems can more readily be addressed.

5.2   Challenges of the SC2 Approach

Our analysis of interview data also identified challenges posed by the SC2 approach from the perspective of both the participating cities and the federal government.

5.2.1   Challenges of the SC2 Approach from the Perspective of the Cities

As discussed elsewhere in this report, cities experienced challenges with the pilot related to some team members' skills not aligning well with city priority areas and the inability of some federal staff to move beyond a monitoring role with the city. In our discussions with city and federal stakeholders, two additional challenges were observed specific to the approach's design.

The pilot did not provide financial support or regulatory flexibility. Cities in some cases were frustrated that the engagement did not include financial assistance or grant flexibility that would allow cities to have regulations relaxed. Regarding financial assistance, one city stakeholder noted that it was a challenge to temper the expectations of city staff that funding for the engagement would be directed to the city or that team members would help the city apply for grants; another noted frustration that, while team members were helpful in planning new initiatives, they were unable to offer much help in finding funding

sources to get those initiatives off the ground. Regarding the relaxing of federal regulations, one city in particular was disappointed that its top priority, the relaxing of a requirement that prohibited local hiring preferences, could not be addressed through the engagement. City staff felt that the flexibility they requested was in line with the goals of the pilot and that in order to be successful SC2 teams should be able to drive some of this flexibility. It was suggested that the SC2 approach could be enhanced if experimental regulatory changes could be tested in SC2 cities and then, if successful, shared across the country as a successful new approach.

The pilot did not account for how federal money flows to cities. Cities noted that in some agencies, such as HHS and ED, federal money is directed to cities through state governments, which limits the influence of the federal agency in a city regardless of how committed to the SC2 approach the agency may be. One pilot city drew attention to its status as a "blue city in a red state," meaning that the city was controlled by Democrats while Republicans controlled the state government. As such, regardless of city priorities, in many cases it is the state that makes decisions about how federal dollars are allocated, limiting the ability of the city and federal government to use the pilot to plan and coordinate the use of federal resources.

5.2.2   Challenges of the Approach from the Perspective of the Federal Government

There was a lack of dedicated funding for the pilot. Federal agencies' most common critique of the pilot was the fact that there was no dedicated funding for the engagement. This lack of funding meant that participating agencies had to reallocate existing resources to cover staff time and travel budgets. Many agencies struggled to decide which staff to assign as team members and to find sufficient resources to cover the costs of the pilot. When making these decisions, agencies carefully considered how to balance pilot cities' expected needs with the agency's ongoing staffing needs for other priorities. In the end, limited resources sometimes resulted in a smaller number of assigned team members than cities desired, and also resulted in team members who could spend less time on SC2 team activities than cities needed. The latter result was due to part-time team members often conducting pilot tasks in addition to their existing workload.

The pilot presented challenges for how agencies engage non-pilot cities. For some agencies, an additional challenge that arose was related to how their participation in the pilot would be perceived by cities not in the pilot. Representatives from one agency suggested that they were hesitant to provide too much assistance to a pilot city due to a fear of setting a precedent that a similar amount of assistance could be provided to other cities. Additionally, some agencies noted a dilemma in that the approach designates a select number of cities to receive special attention, while the agency's mission is to help all communities. This can put the agency in the position of appearing to have been less helpful than it could have been before the pilot. Given that all cities, whether facing economic challenges or not, could benefit from additional capacity provided by federal staff and streamlined access to senior agency leadership, the SC2 pilot runs the risk of setting expectations for federal assistance that, given existing resources, federal agencies will be unable to provide.

5.2.3   Challenges to the Assessment Process

While the pilot assessment process was not part of the evaluation, a few stakeholders discussed some of the challenges they experienced related to it. We have included challenges that were identified by more than one person.

The assessment did not fully capture how prepared cities were to benefit from the pilot. Even though all cities facing significant economic challenges are in need of federal assistance, federal stakeholders noted that the first round of site selection did not adequately differentiate cities that were prepared to benefit from a SC2 team from those that were not as prepared. As discussed elsewhere in the report, pilot cities came to the engagement with varying levels of capacity and preparedness that affected the implementation of SC2 team activities. Some cities were marked by very limited staff capacity, which limited their ability to give attention to the pilot. Others did little to articulate a vision or set priorities for the engagement, which led to delays in implementation due to the SC2 team having to take up to six months to determine what the focus of the SC2 team's activities would be. Still other cities saw implementation delayed by political instability or disagreements among city stakeholders about participating in the pilot. Additionally, in some cities there was a mismatch between what a federal agency could provide and whether a city had the structure in place to benefit from it, as was the case in one city that had no infrastructure to support health care initiatives undertaken by the SC2 team.

Preparation for the pilot was burdensome. From the cities' perspective, the assessment was burdensome to prepare for due to the amount of data requested and because, in at least one case, an insufficient amount of time was given before the assessment team arrived. Additionally, the process alienated a few regional and community stakeholders who were not invited to participate in the process. Some cities also noted that the assessment process did not provide enough opportunity for cities to give input on who would be chosen to serve in the city as a team member.

The assessment did not fully capture challenges in the cities that hindered implementation. From the perspective of federal stakeholders, the assessment did not adequately capture critical political and capacity challenges that ultimately hindered implementation of SC2 team activities. Some team members said they wished they had had a better understanding of local political dynamics before their engagements. Additionally, while the assessment process identified challenges facing cities in order to identify areas of expertise that federal employees might contribute to the city, it did not consider the extent to which cities could exercise influence on the challenges identified. This led to the underutilization of team members with expertise in education, criminal justice, and health care, as cities either did not have the structure in place to support their work or mayors did not have control over those areas, limiting what could be accomplished.

5.3   Areas to Further Explore with the SC2 Approach

As a pilot initiative, the SC2 approach is by definition a work in progress. We asked city and federal stakeholders to suggest for the SC2 Council areas where further exploration that could impact the value and effectiveness of city and federal investments. Suggestions fell into three categories: overall program design, the city selection and assessment process, and implementation.

5.3.1   Opportunities for Improving the Overall Program Design

Clearly defining the SC2 approach. At the outset of the SC2 pilot, it was difficult for team members to clearly articulate what this new model was to be. As a result, there was considerable confusion among city stakeholders, team members and their supervisors, and agency leadership about the roles that team members would play, what could be expected of them, and what the city's contributions to the effort should be. There is an opportunity now, at the culmination of the pilot, to more clearly articulate the theory of change behind the SC2 initiative, to develop a logic model that lays out the specific kinds of problems SC2 teams are expected to resolve and the kinds of outcomes it is reasonable to assume they

will achieve. It may be beneficial to clearly articulate the outcomes for the federal government and the inputs and activities needed to accomplish those outcomes. For example, to what extent is the SC2 initiative intended to alter the way the federal government operates across all U.S. cities versus how it operates in the specific cities in which SC2 teams are deployed? Such a logic model could potentially allow more deliberate and informed design of SC2 engagements, from the types of cities selected to the federal employees assigned to the types of activities on which team members work.

Modifying the approach for lower-capacity cities. The SC2 approach, in which a large team of federal employees simultaneously arrive to work with city staff, is best suited to cities with enough capacity to identify and prioritize ways that the team members can be beneficial. The cities must also have the staff capacity to engage with team members, implement some of their ideas, and capitalize on deeper relationships with federal decision makers. The initial pilot revealed ways the SC2 approach could be further modified for the lowest-capacity cities, such as a longer planning period, more support on data collection during the assessment process, and outcome measures that document capacity-building accomplishments (for city government) alongside accomplishments on economic development goals.

5.3.2   Opportunities for Improving the City Selection and Assessment Processes

Ensure cities have sufficient plans in place to justify the investment of federal resources. Having mayoral buy-in and the support of city leaders is critical to the engagement, but it may not be enough to make effective use of the SC2 team's resources. The most successful pilot cities not only had strong city leadership to promote the engagement, they also had well-developed plans for the SC2 teams to follow and build upon. Without a well-defined plan, team members can be underutilized, serving only to troubleshoot problems and field cities' questions, not to conduct strategic development or tailor federal approaches to local conditions as would be expected given their expertise. Future engagements could not only identify activities for team members to focus on but estimate their likelihood of success by examining how the city has attempted to address specific problems in the past and why those attempts failed, exploring what challenges will likely be faced during implementation of an activity, estimating how much time implementation is expected to take (both staff time and total timeframe for a project), securing early commitments from key stakeholders in the city, and assessing the risks associated with the turnover of team members or local stakeholders. From these changes, a more strategic plan could be developed that prepares for contingencies and more clearly identifies opportunities for team members to share their expertise with cities.

Adopt strategies to gauge and promote buy-in of mayors. During the SC2 pilot, mayoral commitment was among the most critical factors for success. As has been detailed throughout, cities varied greatly in how committed mayors were to the engagement. The SC2 approach could incorporate steps to measure and promote mayoral buy-in during the site selection process, perhaps by having cities apply for selection as SC2 cities and proposing how the mayor would guide the engagement.

Add a leadership audit to the assessment process. Given the critical role mayors play in the SC2 approach, it is important to ensure that mayors of selected cities have the full support of the local government and key stakeholders. SC2 leaders may need to give more weight to political dynamics that can affect progress when deciding which cities to select for future rounds of SC2 teams. These dynamics might include the strength of the mayor in a city's governing structure, the timing of elections of a mayor or other city leaders, or the relationship between a mayor and key city departments, such as schools and police. In addition to taking into account political dynamics, decision makers could also consider the

commitment of key city leaders outside of the mayor's office and how this will affect future partnerships between team members and the city.

Develop strategies to include regional and state stakeholders more intentionally. While the pilot approach emphasized including regional and state stakeholders in the engagement, in actuality few pilot activities included them, and one city in particular was frustrated by their SC2 team's lack of a regional approach. State governments are especially important to include in the SC2 approach given that, for many federal agencies, their grants and programs for cities are administered by states. During the assessment process, the OAT could conduct an environmental scan of regional and state stakeholders to potentially include in the SC2 engagement so that team members can begin outreach to identified stakeholders quickly after implementation begins. Furthermore, the OAT could consider how federal agency funding flows to the city in each of the city's priority areas. When agency funding is routed through states or counties, it is important to ensure their commitment to the engagement before assigning team members or to limit the scope of those member's activities so that a lack of state finding will not prevent progress from being made.

5.3.3   Opportunities for Improving Implementation

Monitor the match between city priorities and team member skills throughout implementation. Matching team members to city needs is complicated and best treated as an ongoing activity rather than a one-time event. Beginning the process early, during the work planning phase, and making it iterative with the process of staffing the team could ensure a strong match between the city need and the team member. Where possible, SC2 teams' efforts could focus on activities that could benefit from an understanding of federal funding, programs, or regulations, as those are most likely to benefit from the unique skills and expertise of federal employees. As implementation begins, team member turnover and evolving city needs may call for reviewing team composition and, when appropriate, adding or replacing team members. In addition, a slow rollout of the SC2 team at the outset of implementation may allow for a closer review of city needs and some refinement of the work plan before fully determining the SC2 team resources needed. For example, a strategic assessment of city needs early on, perhaps through an extended planning phase, would allow the team's skills to be more closely tailored to the city's needs and opportunities. This is something that the SC2 team lead can likely facilitate effectively, but it will also require participation and buy-in from the SC2 Council and agency leadership.

Support travel and work time for team members. Team members who received substantial resources and support from their agencies were able to accomplish a lot of work and achieve a variety of outcomes. According to the team members interviewed, the most important types of support were having the time and flexibility to work on SC2 team activities—which for part-time members could mean reassigning some of their existing duties to other staff—and funds to support travel to the city when needed to move a relationship or initiative forward. In cases where agency support was more limited, team members had a harder time finding the time they needed to dedicate to SC2 team activities. Additionally, the SC2 Council might consider documenting and sharing with agencies and part-time team members how high-performing team members in the pilot effectively balanced pilot responsibilities with their existing workload.

Provide clearer communication about the limitations of SC2 teams. Given that some pilot cities, despite repeated instructions to the contrary, had expectations that the SC2 pilot would include federal funding or would allow for the relaxing of federal regulations, SC2 teams could look for additional ways to inform participating cities about what SC2 teams can and cannot do as part of their charge. One idea

might be for cities to put systems in place to ensure that communication about pilot guidelines and limitations are shared with broader city staff and stakeholders engaged in the pilot.

Formalize the sharing of what is learned during implementation. Team members reported that they shared what they learned during implementation with other team members, the SC2 Council, and participating agencies via phone calls between SC2 team leads, point of contact (POC) meetings, and annual reports. However, incorporating lessons learned during the engagement is a longer term process, which was only beginning during the first 18 months of the SC2 engagements. The value of the SC2 engagement is limited when what is learned in one city is not shared with other cities. This is especially true in cases where specific solutions were found that would likely apply to problems in other cities, such as aligning DOT and HUD funding and waiving minimum rents for homeless individuals seeking housing in one pilot city. To help further the pilot's expected long-term outcome of changing the way the federal government does business with cities, POCs and the SC2 Council could develop formal mechanisms to share lessons more broadly with other SC2 cities and non-SC2 cities and across federal agencies.

Clearly communicate an exit strategy to SC2 teams and cities. At the point at which the research team held conversations with team members and city stakeholders, there were concerns about the lack of an exit strategy to end the engagement with a smooth transition of responsibilities back to the city.[25] The fear was that this would threaten to undo progress made during the engagement. One interviewee's suggestion was to develop a phased exit strategy in which one or two team members remain engaged on a consistent basis after the full team has disbanded. Another suggestion was to intentionally shift SC2 team responsibilities to regionally based federal staff.

5.4   Replication of the SC2 Approach

As a unique federal pilot, the SC2 initiative can offer valuable lessons for existing or future federal programs or activities, especially for federal providers of technical assistance to localities and for federal staff based in regional offices. During data collection, the research team asked team members which components of the approach might be replicated elsewhere in the federal government. Several themes emerged, with most emphasizing improved avenues for federal agencies to learn from and engage localities. While these ideas are not new, our evaluation provides further evidence that the following are promising approaches that could be pursued in the future:

Engaging cities using a bottom-up approach. Team members regarded the bottom-up, grassroots approach to local engagement as a promising component of the approach that could be extended to other federal programs designed to provide technical assistance (TA) to localities. This includes having federal employees, when providing TA, ask localities how they can be of assistance, rather than dictating how they will try to help and then quickly deploying federal resources in response to local stakeholders' responses. Additionally, a successful component of the SC2 engagement that could be replicated is having what was described as a "local face of the federal government," meaning federal representatives who are deeply involved in a local community and readily available to local stakeholders, as it encourages local stakeholders to approach those representatives with requests for assistance.

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[25]   Each city ultimately did develop an exit strategy. Therefore, the concerns noted here were likely resolved before the end of the engagement.

Tailoring strategies and technical assistance to local conditions. Team members valued the SC2 model's flexibility, which allowed them to provide technical assistance that addressed local priorities and needs. Members regarded that characteristic as an additional component of the approach that could be extended to other federal activities. One team member noted that the engagement was the first time in his career he had seen the federal government evaluate whether specific strategies for assisting local communities were actually needed, rather than assuming that assistance of any kind would be useful to all communities. Another noted that local problems are naturally unique due to the local context, blanket approaches cannot work in all areas, and that the value of the SC2 approach is that it encourages federal agencies to highly tailor their approaches to assisting cities.

Conducting assessments to gauge local readiness to benefit from programs. For assistance to be locally tailored, the federal government must successfully ascertain local challenges and opportunities. While the SC2 assessment process was not without problems, it was regarded as a valuable tool in understanding the context of pilot cities and seen as a SC2 component that could be replicated elsewhere in the federal government. Assessments could be valuable to federal grant programs in helping determine which localities could benefit from a program, thus becoming a means for a more efficient use of federal resources.

Coordinating federal efforts around place-based strategies. Team members also saw an opportunity for replication of the SC2 approach's emphasis on coordinating federal place-based activities. More specifically, the approach's strength is that federal coordination takes place with a great deal of relationship building at the local level and engages mayors to help guide federal investment. One SC2 team lead noted that each federal agency involved in his pilot city had investments in that city prior to SC2 but that being on the ground is what allowed team members to gain a comprehensive understanding of those investments and then align them to more efficiently and effectively address city needs. The emphasis on engagement and communication across departments within agencies is another component of the approach that would be useful to replicate in other cross-agency initiatives.

Leveraging regional offices as a means of better connecting federal staff to local governments. Finally, the engagement's use of team members based in regional federal offices was seen as an approach that would benefit other federal programs and activities. Regional staff can help federal agencies understand local conditions and build relationships with local stakeholders that could facilitate streamlined and sustained federal assistance to localities. The Chester SC2 experience offers a promising test of the viability of a regionally driven approach of federal engagement in economically challenged communities. More so than in any other pilot city, the Chester SC2 team consisted of regionally based federal staff members. The team there agreed to continue working in Chester after their official engagement ended, and they said they intended to offer their services to low-capacity communities elsewhere in the Philadelphia region on a limited basis (one day a month) with input from Washington, DC-based POCs. This post-pilot team may merit further evaluation, specifically of its ability to address local needs in comparison to the standard SC2 approach.

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6. Conclusion

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The SC2 pilot represents a new and promising approach to helping cities address economic development challenges and opportunities. It uses targeted technical assistance and collaboration between federal agencies to advance city priorities. Our evaluation, focused on the first 18 months of the pilot, found that the SC2 approach can be an effective means to address the priorities of cities facing significant economic challenges, especially in cases where the key players in the engagement—city leaders, team members, and federal agencies—are similarly focused on steering the engagement and providing time and energy to identifying and overcoming obstacles to progress. In the absence of such alignment, activities for team members are harder to identify, resources harder to come by, and progress delayed. There is also early evidence that the SC2 approach can transform the way team members do their jobs and has the potential to alter the way federal employees interact with their city government colleagues.

The efforts of the SC2 teams led to an impressive set of accomplishments in the pilot cities, 40 of which we have highlighted in the report as the most significant in the eyes of pilot stakeholders and the evaluation team. These accomplishments ranged from helping cities solve small isolated problems or mitigating bureaucratic barriers to developing sustainable collaborations and plans that are expected to benefit the cities long after the end of the SC2 engagement.

Our evaluation also identified a number of strengths of the SC2 approach that suggest its value above and beyond what was accomplished in the pilot cities. For pilot cities, the engagement represented a new means of interacting with the federal government whereby the city directs how the federal government can best help address local priorities. Additionally, cities appreciated new or improved relationships with federal representatives, as well as with local stakeholders. For the federal government, the SC2 approach gave agencies insights into how cities with capacity deficits operate and how better to target resources to their needs. Finally, the federal representatives valued the cross-agency collaboration that the approach promoted and the professional development opportunities it presented to team members.

We identified several challenges to the SC2 approach as piloted. These challenges did not affect all cities and all team members, but were raised in the interviews as common issues that in some cases affected the success of the SC2 team's work. The main challenges were the lack of dedicated financial resources for SC2 team activities, which affected federal agencies' ability to allocate resources to the pilot; an insufficient determination of which cities were best positioned to engage in and benefit from the pilot; misalignment of team members' areas of expertise with the specific areas of focus within cities; and the assignment of team members to activities over which the mayor had no influence, leaving SC2 team members with little ability to effect change.

From our analysis of the strengths and challenges of the SC2 approach, and factors affecting SC2 teams' accomplishments, we have identified a number of opportunities to improve the approach:

Prior to implementation of SC2 team activities, the approach could include a leadership audit as part of the assessment to better gauge local capacity and willingness to engage with a SC2 team, as well as a thorough weighing of potential risks and rewards associated with investing federal resources in low-capacity cities. Cities may also benefit from enhanced communication about what to expect as a pilot city, including who should be involved from the city and what roles they should play, what team members can reasonably be expected to achieve in a city, and what the limitations of the engagement are. During the

commitment phase, federal staff could work to secure the commitment of mayors and key city leaders to the engagement and be more intentional about involving regional and state stakeholders.

As implementation begins, the federal agencies could provide additional resources to team members, including staff time and travel budgets, to help cities address their priorities. Additionally, SC2 team leads and the SC2 Council may benefit from monitoring the match between city priorities and team member skills throughout the implementation, not just during the selection of team members. This emerged as a critical issue given the importance of team members' skill sets to accomplishing cities' goals and the fact that city needs and priorities can change quickly as unexpected events occur.

Finally, **as implementation nears completion**, the SC2 teams could begin early communication with cities and individual team members about an exit strategy for the engagement. This may ease anxiety and ensure that all parties can plan for the transition in a way that will promote sustaining accomplishments and relationships formed during the SC2 pilot. To help further the pilot's expected long-term outcome of changing the way the federal government does business with cities, points of contact and the SC2 Council could promote the spread of valuable lessons learned by SC2 teams and cities. They could do this by adopting more formal strategies to capture and share what was learned during implementation with federal staff and cities that were not involved in the pilot.

These improvements could enhance an approach that has already shown great promise by helping six of America's most challenged cities build the capacity and strategic relationships necessary to achieve sustained economic health.

Appendix A: Site Profiles

This appendix includes case studies for each of the six SC2 pilot cities. These case studies provide detailed insight into the economic challenges of each city, as well as insight into the opportunities and goals for each engagement and the implementation in each pilot city. The case studies are valuable for documenting the variety of contexts in which the pilot was implemented and the range of accomplishments achieved by the SC2 teams.

The case studies summarize the first 18 months of the SC2 pilot, from September 2011 through March 2013, and are organized as follows:

- **Context.** Provides a brief history of the metropolitan area, including trends in employment, population, and economic development, and summarizes each city's priorities for the SC2 intervention.

- **Key Stakeholders.** Gives an overview of the SC2 team, its members and the agencies represented, and reviews involved local government staff and local stakeholder partners.

- **Summary of SC2 Pilot Implementation.** Describes the SC2 pilot kickoff, the process of developing the work plan, how the SC2 team and the city worked together, and finally the key SC2 team activities during the first 18 months of implementation.

- **Conclusion.** Briefly summarizes major accomplishments and assesses the sustainability of the intervention and impacts.

A1.   Site Profile: Chester

Implementation of the SC2 pilot initiative in Chester began in September 2011, after an initial planning and assessment period earlier in the year. The team began with a goal of supporting Chester in addressing eight economic development priorities identified during the assessment phase. These priorities included reducing crime and vacancy, reforming health care delivery and education, promoting neighborhood revitalization, and creating jobs and connecting city residents to jobs. This profile summarizes the first 18 months of the SC2 pilot in Chester, from September 2011 through March 2013. The profile describes the local context, membership of the SC2 team, the local stakeholders the team worked with, how the team worked, and the activities and accomplishments to which the team contributed.

A1.1   Context

Chester is a small city of 34,000 residents located 15 miles south of Philadelphia on the banks of the Delaware River. Once a major manufacturing center, Chester has experienced long-term economic decline beginning in the 1950s. It lost over half of its population between 1950 and 2010. Today the city has high vacancy rates, crime, and poverty, and low rates of educational attainment.

Prior to SC2, Chester embarked on an economic development strategy that attracted several high-profile developments, including Harrah's Casino, a soccer stadium, and a major office building along the waterfront. The city also benefits from its position along a busy transportation corridor and as the home of two long-standing anchor institutions, Widener University and the Crozer-Keystone Medical Center. Nevertheless, Chester has struggled to leverage these assets to the benefit of the community as a whole.

Chester is unique among SC2 pilot cities in that it went through a change in mayoral leadership between the time it was selected for SC2 and the time the SC2 team began working in the city. The new mayor shifted the focus of the community's revitalization strategy from business recruitment to human and social services. While the 2011 election presented new opportunities for Chester, it represented a challenge for the SC2 team in that the city's priorities for the engagement shifted within months of the team's arrival on site. It also led to delays in implementation as the SC2 team established a new working relationship with city leaders. These challenges are discussed in greater detail in Section A1.3 below.

A1.2   Key Stakeholders

Key stakeholders in the SC2 pilot in Chester are the team members, local government staff, and community partners. Each is described below.

A1.2.1 Composition of the SC2 Team

The SC2 team assigned to Chester comprised 12 federal representatives from 10 agencies. The Chester team members were either already regionally based in the Philadelphia area, 15 miles from Chester, or they worked remotely from Washington, DC. No federal staff members were relocated to Chester and embedded locally, and all members were part-time. The choice to have a smaller, less concentrated team working only part-time was made so as not to overwhelm the small staff working for the city. The SC2 team lead fostered camaraderie among the team members through regular communication. Exhibit A1.1 summarizes the federal agencies represented in the SC2 team over the first 18 months of the initiative.

Exhibit A1.1. Federal Agencies Represented in the SC2 Team, First 18 Months

Location	Full-Time	Part-Time
Regional Office (Philadelphia)		DOL, ED, EPA, GSA, HHS, HUD, SBA(3)
Remote		DOJ, DOT, Treasury

A1.2.2 Involved City Staff

The city's economic development director was the pilot point of contact between September 2011 and July 2012. When he transitioned out of his role at the Chester Economic Development Authority into a different city position, Chester's mayor became the primary point of contact for the remainder of the pilot.

Beyond the mayor, team members interacted with the city's health commissioner to help transition Chester's Bureau of Health from being primarily a regulatory body to one focused on health promotion. The team had limited interaction with other city department heads.

The narrow interaction between city staff and team members was driven by two factors. First, Chester has a small city staff that faces capacity shortages, preventing them from higher levels of consistent involvement with the SC2 pilot. Second, the mayor's strong involvement in the initiative led other council members to view the pilot as the sole purview of the mayor rather than a resource for the entire community. This misconception was partly influenced by the unique structure of Chester's city government where the mayor is a member of the five-person city council, and each of the council members, including the mayor, serves as the head of one of five city departments.

A1.2.3 Local Partners

The SC2 team lead encouraged team members to cultivate relationships with community organizations and seek out opportunities to contribute to local needs. This hands-on approach evolved as team members better understood the limits of city staff's ability to dedicate resources to the pilot. The Chester SC2 team worked primarily with five local partners to address the city's priority areas.

- The SC2 team worked with graduate students in the planning department at *Temple University* to develop a downtown revitalization plan for Chester.

- To help Chester build its first grocery store within town limits, the SC2 team worked with Philabundance, a hunger relief organization, to find funding to develop and open the Fare & Square grocery store.

- The SC2 team worked with the city's health commissioner and a local anchor institution, the Crozner-Chester Medical Center, to develop a new approach to promoting community health through the Healthy Chester Coalition.

- A second anchor institution, *Widener University*, engaged with the SC2 team on a number of efforts, including an association of local organizations focused on improving educational opportunities in Chester.

- Finally, the SC2 team worked in partnership with a *community liaison team* on the health- and education-related activities described above. This was a team of consultants hired by Chester's mayor in an attempt to reach citizens long left out of Chester's political mainstream. It conducted community engagement on behalf of the city and served as liaisons between the community and city

government, bringing the perspective of traditionally disenfranchised groups to the attention of city leaders. The SC2 team and the community liaison team worked together to ensure that coalitions that were formed during the pilot incorporated the perspectives of low-income citizens and included representatives from organizations that serve that population in Chester.

A1.3   Summary of Pilot Implementation

The following section begins with a description of the SC2 pilot kickoff and the work plan development process. The narrative then describes how the Chester SC2 team and the city worked together, and finally it summarizes key SC2 team activities during the first 18 months of implementation.

A1.3.1   Developing the Work Plan

Before implementation of the pilot, Chester identified eight focus areas for the SC2 team's efforts.

1. Continuing economic diversification with a focus on retention, attraction, and creation of businesses and industries in the City of Chester

2. Reducing high vacancy rates and exploring opportunities for reuse

3. Reducing and preventing crime

4. Engaging with relevant stakeholders on education reform

5. Engaging with relevant stakeholders on access to health care

6. Supporting neighborhood redevelopment

7. Supporting workforce development to connect Chester residents with job opportunities

8. Supporting city capacity development and identifying support from key local, regional, and state stakeholders.

The first two days of SC2 team activity were dedicated to planning and orienting the SC2 team to the city. The SC2 team later developed a work plan that very closely mirrored the city's eight priority areas. As in most of the pilot cities, Chester identified broad areas for the SC2 team to address—economic development, crime, and education. However, it took some time to develop clarity about the roles of the city and the team members, and the SC2 team was not fully utilized for the first six months due to political turnover and lack of specific direction.

With the inauguration of the new mayor in January 2012, the SC2 team began working with the mayor to identify his priority areas. Three specific projects emerged from this effort: creating a downtown economic development and revitalization plan, securing retail space in the Chester Transportation Center, and attracting a supermarket to the city. Beyond these three projects, the SC2 team developed additional activities organically, with the SC2 team lead adding requests for SC2 team activities to the work plan as he received them from the city or team members.

A1.3.2   Work Approach—Interactions, Communication, and Meetings

The SC2 team lead in Chester regarded his role as that of a facilitator, bringing together team members and city stakeholders involved in the engagement. The lead worked closely with Chester's mayor, who in effect served as the city's point person for the engagement. Given the unique nature of the SC2 engagement in Chester, with no full-time or embedded members, the SC2 team lead adopted

communication strategies to ensure that team members and city stakeholders would be brought together on a regular basis. First, SC2 team meetings were held every Wednesday morning via a conference call, during which team members would provide progress reports on their work, share ideas, and troubleshoot problems. Second, team members, both regional and remote, held weekly "office hours" on Wednesday afternoons in city hall. This time was designated for business and community groups to discuss possible SC2 projects. This helped to build relationships with the city and community, as well as among federal staff members. The office hours were designed to encourage as many regional team members as possible to come to Chester on a regular basis.

A1.3.3 SC2 Team Member Activities

Implementation of the pilot work plan began in earnest in January 2012 with the induction of the new mayor and determination of priority areas for the SC2 pilot. As noted above, under new city leadership Chester identified three specific priority areas: 1) create the economic development plan to revitalize downtown, 2) gain control of the retail space in the Chester Transportation Center, and 3) open a supermarket in Chester. Team members worked on all of these, and took on additional projects where they saw opportunities to contribute or where the city or community identified a need. The following section highlights SC2 team activities that demonstrate key accomplishments and the breadth of important SC2 team activities.

Downtown Economic Development and Revitalization Plan

The SC2 team was able to coordinate a partnership with Temple University's planning school to develop a downtown redevelopment plan. While in the past Chester had been successful in attracting large-scale redevelopment projects, such as a the casino and soccer stadium, these projects were located on the periphery of the city and had no impact on Chester's downtown, which remained blighted and marked by high vacancy rates. The partnership came about due to a connection between the Environmental Protection Agency team member and a former Agency intern who became a student in Temple University's Center for Sustainable Communities program. This student worked with the team member and her professor to coordinate the pro bono services of graduate students to help the city with its plans for improving downtown. As part of their coursework, these students created a comprehensive plan for downtown redevelopment and presented it to the city.

Retail Space in the Chester Transportation Center

The SC2 team also succeeded in gaining control of retail space for the city in the Chester Transportation Center, providing an additional revenue stream for the city. After a dispute over rights to the space, the Department of Transportation and Small Business Administration team members were able to negotiate agreements with Amtrak and the Southeastern Pennsylvania Transportation Authority. The city was then able to rent the retail space in the station, providing revenues to the city.

Food Access

The SC2 team also helped to bring grocery retail to the Chester community by facilitating the efforts of a Philadelphia-based food bank, Philabundance, to provide residents with low-cost, nutritious food. In the longer term, this necessary community resource will reduce impediments to attracting future investment and growth in Chester. Originally envisioned as a supermarket-style food bank, Fare & Square ultimately became the nation's first nonprofit grocery store. The Fare & Square Grocery Store project was financed and built during the first 18 months of the SC2 pilot and opened for business in fall 2013. The Treasury Department team member helped to link a local community development financial institution with the Reinvestment Fund to bring this project to fruition. Other major backers of this project included the

Commonwealth of Pennsylvania, the Delaware Valley Regional Economic Development Fund, the City of Chester, and the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation.

Targeted Technical Assistance

Beyond the activities described above, the SC2 team contributed to additional discrete projects in Chester. One of these was demolishing a dangerous building. The Chester Arms Hotel was compromised in a hurricane and was a danger to city residents, but Chester was not able to use its Community Development Block Grant money to tear it down and did not have other funds available for this purpose. The Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) team member was able to assist by repurposing existing Block Grant funds to make them available for the demolition. After the HUD member brought this information to the city's community planning development director, the SC2 team and the city were able to work together to modify the use of funds within 48 hours.

The health of its residents was a priority for the City of Chester and the Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) team member was able to assist Chester in several health-related initiatives. At the time of the SC2 pilot, the city had recently hired its first health commissioner in five years. The HHS team member oriented this city staff person to her new role by helping define her job responsibilities, introducing her to different agencies and connecting her to formal training through a national fellowship program from the Office of Minority Health.

In addition, the HHS team member helped to establish the Healthy Chester Coalition, a collection of nonprofits and faith-based organizations. He brought together dozens of organizations to work on advancing Chester's health care goals. The coalition is a community forum and a productive working group of 45–60 organizations that meet monthly. It offers opportunities for networking as well as for training and sharing best practices related to nutrition, diabetes, and cardiovascular health. As a result, Chester has started to see a shift in the interactions of local organizations from being competitors to becoming partners sharing best practices. Before the Coalition was created, some groups, like those working on HIV issues, had been working in the community for 20 years without similar organizations even knowing about their work. At the time of the site visit, the group was working on establishing mobile health care trucks so that individuals in low-income neighborhoods could have easier access to health and dental care. The Coalition also provides guidance and education to its member organizations on applying for grants successfully and using resources more effectively. The Director of Government Relations from Widener University co-chairs the Coalition with the HHS team member.

The General Services Administration team member was able to provide assistance on a number of fronts by helping Chester understand how to acquire surplus federal equipment at a greatly reduced price. These purchases included computers for the school system, four-wheel-drive vehicles, and a 30-foot boat for policing the Chester waterfront.

A1.4   Conclusion

The Chester SC2 team was successful in furthering several goals of the SC2 initiative. The team helped Chester address economic development priorities, establish local partnerships, leverage the resources of local anchor institutions, and build a promising new relationship with the federal government.

Initially challenged by the political transition that took place during the pilot and the general lack of capacity of the city's small staff, the SC2 team was ultimately able to make progress by building a

number of coalitions with community institutions and community groups. These coalitions are expected to benefit the city long after the pilot has ended.

Perhaps most importantly, the Chester example showed the value and effectiveness of a regional-based model of federal-local engagement. Being able to visit Chester on a regular basis and interact with other team members was important to the SC2 team in terms of building deeper relationships with Chester and regional stakeholders, as well as for building a strong team spirit among individual members. Through their close working relationship, the members came to see an advantage in continuing their involvement in Chester after the pilot ends and plan to extend that work to other distressed cities in the area.

A2.   Site Profile: Cleveland

Implementation of the SC2 pilot initiative in Cleveland began in September 2011, after an initial planning and assessment period earlier in the year. The team began with a focus on three priorities that emerged in the assessment and planning phase: greater coordination of the human capital development system, support and technical expertise to maintain a viable commercial harbor, and assistance in addressing perceived federal obstacles to neighborhood development, housing, and land reuse goals.

This profile summarizes the first 18 months of the SC2 pilot in Cleveland, from September 2011 through March 2013. It describes the local context, membership of the SC2 team, the local stakeholders the team worked with, how the team worked, and the activities and accomplishments to which the team contributed.

A2.1   Context

Like many cities in the Rust Belt, Cleveland has spent several decades responding to dramatic economic and demographic changes. Suburbanization of the population and job opportunities began in the 1950s, followed by migration of manufacturing to the suburbs as well as to the southern United States. These trends accelerated between 1980 and 2005, when Cleveland lost more than 110,000 manufacturing jobs, about 42.5 percent of its manufacturing employment, drastically changing the landscape and workforce outlook in the city.

Today, Cleveland shows many signs that an urban revitalization is underway: residential vacancy rates in the downtown are at historic lows as a new generation is drawn to the amenities of urban life; the city has experienced growth in the bioscience sector, capitalizing on the research capacity of the city's health care institutions; and the city's and region's remaining industrial base is beginning to embrace advanced manufacturing techniques.

A2.2   Key Stakeholders

Key stakeholders in the SC2 pilot in Cleveland consisted of the team members, local government staff, and community partners. Each is described below.

A2.2.1 Composition of the SC2 Team

At the start of implementation, the SC2 team in Cleveland consisted of two full-time members, including the SC2 team lead who relocated to Cleveland for the initiative, two part-time members already located in Cleveland, four part-time members located in Washington, DC, and one part-time member in the agency regional office. Thus, the on-the-ground SC2 team presence at the start of implementation consisted of four individuals, representing four federal agencies: the Departments of Labor (DOL) and Housing and Urban Development (HUD), the National Aeronautics and Space Administration (NASA),[26] and the

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[26]   NASA's Glenn Research Center is one of 10 NASA research centers across the country. The center researches, designs, develops, and tests innovative technology for aeronautics and spaceflight. It was founded in 1941 and is located near Cleveland Hopkins International Airport. The center, which employs approximately 3,400 scientists, engineers, technicians, and administrative and support personnel considers itself a vital element of the regional economy and is committed to partnering with local businesses.

Environmental Protection Agency (EPA). The five remote team members were from the US Army Corps of Engineers (USACE), the General Services Administration (GSA), the Economic Development Administration (EDA), and the Departments of Education (ED) and Transportation (DOT).

Over time, team membership changed. The first SC2 team lead transitioned off the team in September 2012, as planned. The other Cleveland-based full-time team member assumed leadership of the team. The original SC2 team lead had also represented HUD, so with her departure a regional HUD representative joined the team on a part-time remote basis.

Exhibit A2.1 summarizes the federal agencies represented in the SC2 team over the first 18 months of the initiative.

Exhibit A2.1. Federal Agencies Represented in the SC2 Team, First 18 Months

Location	Full-Time	Part-Time
Cleveland	DOL, HUD (original)	NASA, EPA
Remote		USACE, GSA, EDA, ED, DOT, HUD (replacement)

A2.2.2 Involved City Staff

The SC2 team had one main point of contact within city government, the chief of government affairs. She represented the mayor, providing senior-level involvement with the team and oversight of engaged city staff. Specifically, she represented the mayor in communicating with the department directors about SC2, identifying appropriate city staff to engage with team members, and coordinating with the SC2 team lead and members to advance the mayor's priorities. She led quarterly meetings with the SC2 team where they reviewed the work plan and delivered updates to the team, and she represented the mayor at the SC2 conference. The mayor had limited involvement in implementation.

Team members from HUD, EPA, EDA, and NASA worked with leaders from the city's departments of community development, economic development, and building and housing. The SC2 team lead attended weekly meetings run by the city's chief of regional development and attended by the department chiefs of each of those three departments. Team members' day-to-day interaction was with the department heads, who helped them identify local needs, meet local players and the community, and jointly plan programmatic efforts to achieve the city's goals for the SC2 pilot.

A2.2.3 Local Partners

The SC2 team worked closely with partners outside of city hall as well. This was particularly important in Cleveland given that two of the three priority areas for SC2 team support involved critical public sector leadership outside of city hall. For instance, workforce, one of the three priority areas identified in the initial assessment, is overseen by the Cuyahoga County Workforce Investment Board (WIB). In fact, the full-time SC2 team representative from DOL was located at the WIB. In addition, the Port of Cleveland is managed by the Cleveland-Cuyahoga County Port Authority, an independent public agency, so the SC2 team representative from USACE worked most closely with leadership from the Port Authority.

Team members also worked closely with staff members from local nonprofits and community organizations. These local partners included the Cuyahoga County Land Bank, MAGNET

(Manufacturing and Advocacy Growth Network), the Cleveland Foundation, and Cuyahoga Community College.

In some cases, team members had pre-existing relationships in the community that they leveraged during the engagement. Coordination between the Cuyahoga County Land Bank and the EPA team member is one such example. USACE also continued discussions as part of a continuing relationship with the Port of Cleveland through the SC2 pilot.

Other community partners first engaged with the SC2 team through the assessment or implementation processes. For example, the NASA team member made new contacts through the SC2 team and with the city's economic development director engaged with MAGNET to jointly develop a program to serve area manufacturers. Another example is the way that the DOL team member, in partnership with the WIB, engaged many local partners, such as the National Additive Manufacturing Innovation Institute, Cuyahoga Community College, and Case Western Reserve University, to advance development efforts in workforce employment, training, and education programs.

A2.3   Summary of Pilot Implementation

The following section begins with a description of the SC2 pilot kickoff and the work plan development process. The narrative then describes how the Cleveland SC2 team and the city worked together. The section concludes with a summary of key SC2 team activities during the first 18 months of implementation.

A2.3.1 Developing the Work Plan

Before implementation began in November 2011, the city had identified three key priorities for team member activities: 1) improving coordination between technical education, workforce development, and economic development programs; 2) supporting the Port Authority's efforts to maintain a viable commercial harbor; and 3) navigating federal regulatory processes to efficiently achieve neighborhood development, housing, and land reuse goals. These priorities served as a starting point for the work plan.

The actual work plan was developed collaboratively by team members, city stakeholders, and community partners following the SC2 pilot launch. Stakeholders described the work plan development process as focused on a single large meeting with city, community, and team members in attendance. The meeting was held in late November 2011 during the pilot launch week. All parties were welcome to share their ideas for inclusion in the work plan. The work plan was refined through subsequent individual and small group meetings.

Though some effort was made to prioritize the suggestions, the initial work plan was quite lengthy and included 30 items for the SC2 team and the city to address together. The plan drew on the priorities that emerged in the OAT assessment but it expanded based on new opportunities such as those NASA brought forward. City officials also suggested that the work plan broaden to ensure that there were projects relevant to each team member's area of expertise. Some items included in the work plan were considered low-hanging fruit that could produce easy wins to be addressed immediately, while other items were considered highly complex with no clear path forward or with longer timelines for success. This first work plan was produced and completed in February 2012 and revised in August 2012.

Perceptions of the effectiveness of the work planning process were varied. Some praised the collaborative and inclusive approach, while others felt the outcome of that process was unwieldy and unfocused.

Several participants (both city and federal) described the process as "getting everybody in a room and throwing ideas against the wall to see what sticks."

The Year 2 work plan, completed in late 2012, was more streamlined, Reflecting lessons learned from the first year, the plan included 16 action items (down from the first year's 30) and more clearly identified follow-up responsibilities for both the SC2 team and the city.

A2.3.2 Work Approach—Interactions, Communication, and Meetings

With the initial work plan established, team members worked with their city counterparts and relevant community members on the projects within their areas of expertise. The SC2 team lead played dual roles as coordinator for the team and ambassador for SC2 in the community. She held many internal and external meetings with city leaders, community stakeholders, and other local organizations to introduce the SC2 team to the community, make connections for team members, and help set priorities. She supported team members by facilitating relationships with city staff and other stakeholders, acting as ombudsperson and representing "the Fed" to the city. Upon the departure of the first lead, a second lead stepped in and acted as the main SC2 team point of contact with the city. She also oversaw team members' work, routinely checking in with them via email to monitor progress, and she retained an active role as a regular team member providing substantive expertise related to workforce development.

As mentioned earlier, the city and the SC2 team each had a primary point of contact. These women remained in regular contact through weekly scheduled meetings. The city's contact, the chief of government affairs, served primarily as a logistical point of contact for the SC2 team lead, although she also communicated with the department directors and engaged team members in the mayor's priorities.

Communication between the team members and the city staff took the shape of formal meetings and informal communications. Formally, the SC2 team lead and department heads involved in the SC2 pilot met weekly for "cluster" meetings. These meetings provided SC2 team leadership with additional substantive opportunities for communication in the city. There were also quarterly meetings during Year 2 implementation where team members, city staff, and a Port representative met to review the work plan and deliver progress updates. Remotely based team members attended these quarterly meetings in person when possible but could also participate by phone. The meetings were led by the city point of contact. In between the quarterly meetings, team members and their city or community points of contacts communicated informally and on an unscheduled basis. The two team members who relocated to Cleveland were placed at city hall in the WIB office alongside their city counterparts. This close proximity enabled frequent contact, and the constant and informal communications helped to develop stronger relationships. Other team members did not describe frequent communication but said that the process and frequency of contact was sufficient.

Team members stayed in regular communication with each other. In the first year, the SC2 team lead organized weekly conference calls for team members to update each other. In the second year, lines of communication were more informal and on an as needed basis, with conference calls and emails supplementing the quarterly meetings with the city.

A2.3.3 SC2 Team Member Activities

Implementation of the lengthy work plan began in early 2012. The city and the SC2 Team worked to tackle many of the items, some of which were fairly discrete and transactional and quickly resolved.

Others were large and required multi-year efforts to address. Still others were dropped as parties realized that it would be difficult to gain traction.

In the end, key SC2 Team activities included a large ongoing effort to improve the workforce development system, a focused effort through NASA to support area manufacturing, and dedicated resources from HUD, EPA, and others to tackle a variety of more discrete tasks. The following section describes these key SC2 Team activities.

Coordinating the Workforce Development System

Through a partnership between the DOL team member and the county WIB, the SC2 Team's presence catalyzed a substantial effort to improve the workforce development system in the city and county. Early in her time in Cleveland, the DOL SC2 Team was asked by the WIB to conduct a scan of the local workforce to help the group understand issues of the next economy, the skills mismatch in Cleveland, and priorities to include in a strategic plan for regional workforce development. Based on the SC2 Team's research, the WIB director and WIB chair proposed a larger planning effort to identify strategies for improving the area workforce system. The WIB created the Strategic Workforce Alignment Group (SWAG), bringing together local leaders to identify specific actions that would improve the alignment of workforce employment, training, and education programs with the needs of employers for skilled workers in key sectors. The diverse group of SWAG members met monthly over a six-month period with the leadership, obtaining guidance and support from the DOL team member. The SWAG issued a report with a series of recommendations in early 2013 and the WIB has taken on responsibility for implementation, instituting several subcommittees to move the recommendations forward on multiple fronts.

While the SWAG was the primary undertaking of the DOL team member, she convened two other groups of stakeholders to better coordinate services to specific populations:

- The Cuyahoga County Veterans' Employment Transition Team, a collaborative effort to improve employment results for veterans

- A group that included the National Additive Manufacturing Innovation Institute, MAGNET, Cuyahoga Community College, Case Western Reserve University, and NASA to discuss the workforce needs of the emerging additive manufacturing industry, with a goal of aligning current efforts to prepare workers for the growing field.

Expanding Regional Manufacturing

The SC2 pilot in Cleveland built a new relationship between NASA and local stakeholders. While Cleveland has long been home to a NASA research facility, few connections have been made between NASA's strong engineering talent and the region's extensive base of manufacturers. Through the SC2 team, introductions and partnerships were developed between NASA and MAGNET, an organization devoted to increasing the competitiveness of the area's manufacturing base. One key outcome of this partnership was that NASA developed and led an Adopt a City program, which served as a "technology transfer pilot."

For this pilot, MAGNET identified 10 small- or medium-sized manufacturers that had a product or production problem. NASA then made its engineers available to provide technical assistance on these issues. The city's economic development department made $400,000 available in loans for companies to implement NASA's solutions. Based on the success of the initial round of implementation, plans are being made to implement a second round of Adopt a City.

Targeted Technical Assistance

The SC2 team also provided assistance with discrete tasks in other areas. In particular, city stakeholders looked to the SC2 team for assistance on a number of policies or regulations administered by HUD and EPA that the city considered barriers to achieving its goals related to property vacancy and abandonment. HUD and EPA team members worked with city and community partners to try to mediate these barriers. Examples of this work are described below.

- The Cuyahoga Land Bank worked with the local EPA and HUD team members to modify the EPA's policy on demolition regulations related to asbestos. Although the SC2 team was successful in connecting the Land Bank to EPA, no policy change or flexibility on the regulation was achieved.

- The HUD team member acted at the request of the city to gain more flexibility in using Community Development Block Grant funding and to remove a deed restriction for a land reuse and development project. Through SC2, HUD was able to issue waivers for this purpose and the project moved forward as planned.

Cleveland also looked to USACE for technical assistance in relation to its port. One of the three original SC2 team goals in Cleveland was for the Port Authority and USACE to work cooperatively to address barriers to future dredging of the Cuyahoga River. The city was concerned that by 2014, annual dredging needed to maintain a viable port would be halted since the current locations for depositing the sediment would be exhausted. While the Port Authority had identified new approaches, it needed the support and assistance of USACE to carry out its plan. During the pilot, the Port and USACE did not make progress on identifying or implementing new methods. Stakeholder interviews suggest that little changed in the relationship between USACE and the Port due to the SC2 pilot. Going forward, USACE will continue discussions with the Port regarding alternative solutions.

A2.3   Conclusion

The SC2 pilot in Cleveland demonstrated several of the intended goals of the SC2 initiative, including partnering for economic growth, enhancing local capacity, and encouraging regional collaboration. In the first 18 months of the pilot, the SC2 team established itself as a valued resource for individuals and organizations working in the city by providing expedited responses to questions about federal issues. Team members, the city, and other stakeholders regarded SWAG and Adopt a City as major achievements attributable to SC2. By developing strong partnerships and new opportunities for business growth and sustainability, these achievements appear to be sustainable beyond the pilot and capable of having a long-term impact on the community.

A3.   Site Profile: Detroit

Implementation of the SC2 pilot initiative in Detroit began in September 2011, after an initial planning and assessment period earlier in the year. The team's focus areas included transportation, public safety, neighborhood revitalization, economic and workforce development, and energy. However, given the challenging context in Detroit, SC2 team's goals were actually much broader, including building coordination and alignment across levels of government and sectors considered to be quite fragmented, and establishing quick wins to inspire hope among city residents. The SC2 team also focused on providing capacity to better navigate federal rules and regulations, enabling more efficient use of existing resources for economic revitalization goals.

This profile summarizes the first 18 months of the SC2 pilot in Detroit, from September 2011 through March 2013. The profile describes the local context, membership of the SC2 team, the local stakeholders the team worked with, how the team worked, and the activities and accomplishments to which the team contributed.

A3.1   Context

From the early 1900s, Detroit was poised to secure its reputation as a titan in the automotive manufacturing industry. The sector grew rapidly in Detroit, bringing with it many economic opportunities and advancements, along with a surge in population. The city enjoyed several decades of prosperity until broad trends influencing the decline of American manufacturing reached the Motor City in the 1970s, setting off a long-term depression. Racial tensions and outright riots preceded vast white flight from Detroit, exacerbating population decline. This depression accelerated from 2000 to 2010, when the city population declined by 25 percent to reach a low of 713,777.

At the time of the SC2 assessment, Detroit was experiencing high vacancy rates, low educational achievement, and high unemployment. Detroit also faced the challenge of a shrinking city and tax base, and the looming threat of bankruptcy or the appointment of an emergency financial manager to take over power from the city.

Detroit's abundant challenges meant that the federal attention showered on the city was also abundant. Public leaders attempted to reverse the economic decline of Detroit through many investments and incentives, including some from the Kresge and Ford foundations. Quicken Loans has made significant investments in downtown, over $1 billion in three years, including moving their offices and 7,000 employees to downtown from the suburbs in 2010. The company has invested in an incubator for technology start-ups and fronted funding for a light-rail line through the center of Detroit. Other signs point to a new vitality in midtown, including the city's first Whole Foods, a high-end grocery store.

A3.2   Key Stakeholders

Key stakeholders in the SC2 pilot in Detroit were the team members, local government staff, and community partners. Each is described below.

A3.2.1 Composition of the SC2 Team

The SC2 team comprised 14 federal representatives from 11 agencies. The core team included one member placed full-time on the ground in Detroit and two Washington, DC-based members who spent

more than half their time dedicated to the pilot and traveled to Detroit frequently. The initial assessment closely drove the final composition of the SC2 team, identifying the need for a coordinating team lead and core team members from the Departments of Transportation (DOT) and Housing and Urban Development (HUD). All three of the core members had existing relationships in Detroit. The SC2 team lead was a life-long Detroit resident with two years of experience at the Department of Justice (DOJ) in Washington. The DOT representative was already deeply engaged with the city and region on transportation issues. The HUD SC2 team representative was already engaged in Detroit through work with the Detroit Housing Commission. Exhibit A3.1 summarizes the federal agencies represented in the SC2 team over the first 18 months of the initiative.

Exhibit A3.1. Federal Agencies Represented in the SC2 Team, First 18 Months

Location	Full-Time	Part-Time
Detroit	DOJ	CNS, DOL, DOC, SBA
Remote	DOT, HUD	DOC, GSA, OSTP (2), DOC, DOD, ED

A3.2.2 Involved City Staff

The SC2 team's primary point of contact with the city was the mayor, who was heavily involved in the initiative. The mayor typically communicated directly and frequently with the SC2 team lead but was also in contact with the other two core team members from HUD and DOT.

Additionally, three key city staff in the mayor's office assisted with the SC2 pilot: the group executive of planning and facilities, the project management director, and the director of government affairs. Team members had limited interaction with other city staff in Detroit. By the time of the SC2 engagement, the size of the Detroit city staff had been reduced significantly. As a result, the staff who were present found it difficult to engage with team members on longer-term goals because of the uncertainty surrounding the city government's possible bankruptcy and the threat of an emergency financial manager. Ongoing staff turnover, from the point of the initial Opportunity Assessment Team site visit through the close of the pilot initiative, also hindered relationship building.

A3.2.3 Local and State Partners

The Detroit SC2 pilot was originally intended as a partnership with the City of Detroit and the State of Michigan, although in practice the former relationship was much more prominent. The DOT representative had the most contact with state and regional officials since critical portions of his work required regional political support and state legislative action.

Team members also worked closely with staff members from local nonprofits and community organizations. As was mentioned, lack of capacity in city hall hindered the ability of city staff to work closely with team members. Because of this, core team members, including the lead and DOT and HUD team members, developed relationships with other local nonprofits and organizations. These local partners included the Youth Violence Prevention Forum, Detroit Economic Growth Corporation, Code for America, the Detroit Housing Commission, the Southeast Michigan Council of Governments, and the Kresge Foundation. Team members were able to start and develop relationships with local groups because of their previous experience living or working in Detroit.

A3.3   Summary of Pilot Implementation

The following section begins with a description of the SC2 pilot kickoff and the work plan development process. The narrative then describes how the Detroit SC2 team and the city worked together, and finally it summarizes key SC2 team activities during the first 18 months of implementation.

A3.3.1   Developing the Work Plan

The Detroit SC2 team was deployed on September 12, 2011. During the first week, the SC2 team met with staff from the city and state, as well as representatives from the Skillman and Kresge foundations. The mayor weighed in at that time with his priorities: public safety, public transportation, public lighting, neighborhood blight, and recreation. Team members used those multiple discussions to prioritize areas where the Detroit team could be most helpful. Those key priorities included the pending M-1 light-rail project, public lighting, and guidance regarding Detroit's use of federal grant dollars. A work plan was established at the start of the SC2 pilot, and seven key goals were outlined: government efficiency, transportation, public safety, economic and workforce development, the Detroit Works project, energy, and education. Several projects were identified for each of the seven high-level objectives.

When the SC2 team started implementing the proposed work plan in December 2011, the reality of working in a challenged city became clear. The work plan needed to be flexible, with activities being added or abandoned depending on evolving opportunities, obstacles, and circumstances. The SC2 team faced the additional challenge of not having clear counterparts in the city to work with, as senior management staff left or saw their positions eliminated in cost-cutting efforts. Few of the senior managers engaged during the initial assessment who could have served as champions for SC2 team involvement in the city remained at city hall during implementation.

Capacity was not the only challenge for the SC2 team. The SC2 team struggled to maintain a focus on implementing strategies for long-term economic growth, a primary objective of the SC2 initiative, as the city worked to meet the most basic needs of its residents (regular bus service, working streetlights). With city resources severely limited, all departments felt pressure to focus federal dollars that would otherwise go unused on efforts to address fundamental needs of residents. The philanthropic community was working on a longer-term vision for the city through the Detroit Works initiative, but the planning process was still under way during the majority of the pilot so the SC2 team could not help implement the long-term vision.

A3.3.2   Work Approach—Interactions, Communication, and Meetings

The SC2 team lead was the key point person and local representative for SC2. She funneled updates and communications to the mayor and team members. She worked to convene city officials and to increase coordination among key governmental, philanthropic, and nonprofit actors. She also helped to coordinate team members to respond to emerging needs.

The SC2 team lead was welcomed into the mayor's inner circle and served as an advisor and an extra set of hands on a variety of issues. The mayor and deputy mayor would give directives to the SC2 team lead, who would share them with the rest of the SC2 team. There was also some direct communication with other core team members, but the lead was the primary city liaison. Team members could secure time with key city staff both formally and informally, though the level of interaction was considered fairly limited given the other pressing priorities faced by city management.

The SC2 team held bimonthly meetings, which were especially beneficial in the early stages of implementation to work out processes and a plan. During the meetings, team members would report on their progress. The SC2 team lead saw these meetings as opportunities to keep members engaged despite the group's geographic dispersion and distance from the day-to-day challenges facing their city counterparts. The SC2 team lead, who was a DOJ team member, had regular monthly calls with her home agency and fellow DOJ team members.

A3.3.3 SC2 Team Member Activities

Challenges facing the City of Detroit are, to quote one city staff member, "very, very simple." The city needed staff who understood the city's priorities, which were immediate, urgent, and basic by many standards. In this environment, team members and particularly the SC2 team lead primarily served transactional roles for the city, frequently as an "extra set of hands." Nonetheless the team contributed to several notable accomplishments across a breadth of SC2 team activities, which are highlighted below.

Transportation

Team members who had pre-existing connections to the city had a clear path to continuing or enhancing their role in Detroit. One such member is the DOT SC2 team representative. He was already working extensively in the region trying to help the city meet planning and assessment deadlines associated with a $25 million transportation grant that the city was at risk of losing if those deadlines were not met. As a team member, the DOT representative brokered relationships between the city and the business community to see the M-1 rail project through multiple iterations, ultimately reaching its current form of a streetcar serving a downtown district. The final plan limited the financial liability of the city, supported the goals of the business community, and allowed the $25 million federal grant to be repurposed toward the newly defined transportation goals.

Beyond the M-1 rail project, the DOT representative was able to promote the development of a comprehensive regional transit plan through the creation of a regional transit authority. Southeast Michigan was the largest region in the country without a regional transit authority (RTA). An RTA was considered a necessary step toward creating high-capacity rapid transit in key transportation corridors, coordinating bus transit services through the region, and better integrating public transportation with local and regional land use. The team member provided technical assistance on drafting that legislation and conducted workshops throughout the region on bus rapid transit and on the benefits of an RTA. The bill to establish an RTA was signed into law by the state legislature in January 2013.

Housing and Community Development

The housing and community development sector posed key challenges for Detroit. These included inefficient and incomplete use of funds, poor relations between the city and the public housing agency, and a high volume of abandoned and dilapidated properties.

The HUD team member successfully partnered with the city and the Detroit Housing Commission to identify a source of funds to address the Brewster-Douglass Homes, a massive public housing development, vacant since 2008, which was a highly visible symbol of blight and abandonment as well as a threat to safety and security. While the community was well aware of the need to demolish the structures, annual funding was insufficient to cover the cost of the major project. The HUD team member was persistent in exploring options for funding the demolition and ultimately identified HUD emergency funds as a potential source. The SC2 team representative coordinated data collection with the city and the housing commission to demonstrate the public safety concerns associated with the vacant property. The

housing authority was successful in demonstrating the public safety risks and received emergency funds to support demolition, which started in late 2013.

Public Safety

The SC2 team, through the DOJ team member, helped to align Detroit's blight removal work with priorities of the Youth Violence Prevention Forum. City government was actively working on board-ups and blight removal in neighborhoods across Detroit, but with its own criteria for prioritizing the scarce funds by placing a premium on sites ripe for re-development. At the same time, the Forum had identified specific sites where children traveled to school through derelict areas. Some of these children were responding to the danger by simply skipping school. The SC2 team lead brought together the city's group executive of planning and facilities with leadership from the Youth Violence Prevention Forum to seek opportunities for coordination. As a result, some of the city's demolition funds were redirected to support safer routes to school.

Government Efficiency

In every area, using federal funds already allocated to the city was a priority. Team members helped the city to more effectively use these funds in several instances, which are described below.

- Through the COPS grant the city was able to retain 120 police officers. This helped prevent layoffs and demonstrated that public safety was a priority.

- A new source of funding was identified to demolish the blighted Douglass Homes development (see above).

- Existing funds were repurposed and used to fund Text My Bus.

- In the last instance above, Code for America, which had been working with the city on innovative information technology solutions, identified an opportunity to tap the city's existing data on bus locations to create an application to help riders know when the next bus will arrive at any given bus stop. The application, Text My Bus, is expected to help students arrive at school on time and also support the violence prevention initiative. Working with Code for America, the SC2 team lead and the DOT representative identified a source of funds, two unused grants dating back to 2009 ($1.5 million and $2 million) that could be redirected to make this project sustainable over an approximately two-year period,

Overall, the core team members were able to make inroads on some significant activities while also facilitating daily government capacity. However, some activities were less successfully implemented. For example, while a team member was assigned from the federal Department of Education, that member found no easy entry point for involvement. The Detroit Public Schools were already under the control of an emergency manager and were not under the mayor's authority. This team member ultimately had little involvement in the SC2 pilot.

A3.4   Conclusion

The Detroit SC2 team was able to further the goals of the pilot in a substantive way through its contributions to enhancing local capacity and brokering improved relationships between the city and other community stakeholders. Although its efforts were frequently transactional, the impact was significant for the struggling city, whose most urgent needs were immediate, basic, and simple.

The SC2 team was hampered by the city's lack of advance planning and strategy for the initiative. Work was described as "putting out fires," and team members would have been more successful in some respects if certain conditions and priorities had been identified at the outset for SC2 team projects.

The best legacy of the SC2 pilot in Detroit may be enhanced trust. Trust between the community and the federal government was built through the daily, active engagement and responsiveness of the federal government. Importantly, the pilot helped to foster trust within the Detroit community as well. The challenges of Detroit's years of decline had fractured many relationships in the community. Whether through the DOT representative's effort to improve relationships between the business community and the city on the M-1 rail project or the HUD representative's resolution of legacy tensions between the city and the housing commission, the SC2 team's presence appears to have set the stage for further collaboration as Detroit's crisis environment subsides and a renewed focus on the city's long-term revitalization takes hold.

A4.   Site Profile: Fresno

Implementation of the SC2 pilot initiative in Fresno began in September 2011, after an initial planning and assessment period earlier in the year. The team began with a broad mandate to support Fresno in addressing 10 local priorities identified during the planning process with the city. The priorities focused on addressing Fresno's major opportunities for downtown revitalization, economic development (value-added food sector and development of an Ag Tech Economic Cluster), transportation (high-speed rail and bus rapid transit), neighborhood revitalization, and housing.

This profile summarizes the first 18 months of the SC2 pilot in Memphis, from September 2011 through March 2013. The profile describes the local context, membership of the SC2 team, the local stakeholders the team worked with, how the team worked, and the activities and accomplishments to which the team contributed.

A4.1   Context

Fresno is a Central California city of approximately 500,000. While many objective measures point to the city's distress, including concentrated poverty, structural unemployment, high vacancy rates, and disinvestment in the city's core, Fresno is undeniably a city on the rise. Under the leadership of the mayor, Fresno has identified a vision for its future and is taking important steps to achieve this vision. City staff are focusing their efforts on downtown revitalization, smart growth strategies, and neighborhood revitalization. They have placed a heavy emphasis on regional development and collaboration with the public, private, and philanthropic sectors.

A4.2   Key Stakeholders

Key stakeholders in the SC2 pilot in Fresno were the team members, local government staff, and community partners. Each is described below.

A4.2.1 Composition of the SC2 Team

At the start of implementation, the Fresno SC2 team comprised 18 federal employees representing 12 agencies and departments. The core team members were the full-time SC2 team lead and the two other full-time Fresno-based team members from the Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) and the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA). The SC2 team lead was an EPA employee located in the San Francisco regional office. Though working remotely, the SC2 team lead traveled to Fresno frequently and was considered to be a Fresno-based member by many city staff.

Supporting this core team was a network of regionally based team members. Most of these individuals were able to travel to Fresno on a monthly or quarterly basis, enhancing their ability to collaborate with city staff and fellow team members. The remaining team members worked out of Washington, DC, headquarters and provided support to the local and regionally based team members as needed. Exhibit A4.1 summarizes the federal agencies represented in the SC2 team over the first 18 months of the initiative.

Exhibit A4.1: Federal Agencies Represented in the SC2 Team, First 18 Months

Location	Full-Time	Part-Time
Fresno	HUD, EPA	USDA
Remote	EPA	HHS(3), HUD, MBDA, OSTP, CNCS, DOC(2), GSA, DOE-CIO (2), DOL, DOT, USDA

A4.2.2 Involved City Staff

The city had a core team dedicated to maximizing the SC2 team's contributions. The team was led by Fresno's mayor. She set the vision for the SC2 team's work and then assigned the core members of her cabinet—her chief of staff, deputy chief of staff, and government affairs manager—to work with SC2 team leadership to ensure consistent coordination between the SC2 team's work and the city's goals. These three city staff served as the points of contacts for the city and had weekly calls with the SC2 team lead and the Fresno-based team members.

Other city employees were assigned by the mayor's team to work with team members on particular projects that would further the city's vision and the work plan. In a few instances, Fresno-based team members connected city staff with remotely located team members, helping to maximize the contributions of these remote members. Across the board, team members described city staff as being very capable and willing to work collaboratively with the SC2 team.

A4.2.3 Local and State Partners

The SC2 team worked with local partners, such as Wells Fargo, the Fresno Economic Opportunities Commission, the San Joaquin Valley Regional Broadband Consortium, and the Downtown Fresno Partnership (the downtown Business Improvement District) to help align and connect ongoing local efforts with the mayor's work plan for the SC2 pilot. With these partners, the city and the SC2 team worked on expanding Fresno's value-added food sector, furthering neighborhood revitalization, improving Fresno's broadband access, and revitalizing downtown.

Somewhat uniquely, team members also partnered with staff from California's Strategic Growth Council in the Office of Planning and Research. The Council's deputy director worked closely with the Fresno-based team members to align and maximize SC2 team activities in light of the state's sustainability efforts and high-speed rail activities.

A4.3 Summary of Pilot Implementation

The following section begins with a description of the SC2 pilot kickoff and the work plan development process. The narrative then describes how the Fresno SC2 team and the city worked together, and finally it summarizes key SC2 team activities during the first 18 months of implementation.

A4.3.1 Developing the Work Plan

From the start of the SC2 assessment process, the Fresno mayor and key city staff were involved in shaping the vision for how the initiative would play out in Fresno. Specifically, during the Opportunity Assessment Team site visit, the mayor gave a presentation on the city's needs related to economic development, workforce development, and transportation. The city team then discussed the mayor's vision for addressing these needs, current efforts to further the vision, and the city's highest priorities for

implementation. This briefing helped the Opportunity Assessment Team determine which agencies would be deployed in Fresno as part of the SC2 team.

At the time of deployment, city staff shared additional details about Fresno's short- and long-term economic development plan with the SC2 team. The top priority for the city was to revitalize Fresno's downtown. The mayor believed a key component of this effort was the Fulton Mall, an 18-block pedestrian mall that was once a vibrant gathering place but today is typically devoid of street life. Another priority was to pursue an export-related food manufacturing and processing strategy as a way to leverage the agricultural production outside of downtown Fresno and focus on job opportunities in the value-added food manufacturing and processing industry within the city limits.

The existence of a city plan helped team members identify meaningful ways they could contribute. With the plan in mind, the city and the SC2 team identified priorities and developed the SC2 pilot work plan. The SC2 team lead placed great emphasis on cross-agency collaboration and pushed the team to develop work plan tasks that would require them to act outside their usual job spheres and in collaboration with other team members.

The formal work plan included 10 objectives, each with specific and defined goals or activities. These were downtown revitalization, business development, economic development and innovation, high-speed rail, transportation, land use planning, livable communities/housing, resource management and sustainability, workforce development and adult education, and homelessness.

A4.3.2 Work Approach—Interactions, Communication, and Meetings

The SC2 pilot in Fresno was guided by the Fresno SC2 team lead. He engaged city staff, worked to align SC2 team activities with city needs and to foster interagency collaboration, and connected city staff to federal team members who could provide the specific needed insights or expertise. The SC2 team lead was adept at coordination and leadership, which he attributed to having been involved with or the leader of several other major multi-agency projects. This helped him approach the SC2 team lead role with a balance of confidence and humility, and with the skills he needed to lead effectively.

As noted earlier, the key city staff engaged with the SC2 team were the mayor's chief of staff, her deputy chief of staff, and the city's governmental affairs manager. These individuals met weekly with the SC2 team's core members (the lead and the two full-time Fresno-based members) to strategize about SC2 team activities. The SC2 team and city leadership saw great value in these meetings and made sure that they were consistently held, rescheduling if needed to accommodate shifts in city staff schedules.

The two on-site team members worked out of the mayor's office. This location elevated their credibility and afforded them easy access to the rest of city staff. The team members and the city staff both mentioned that their placement in the mayor's office helped the team members tackle larger and more locally sensitive issues than they may have otherwise been able to take on.

In addition to these structured arrangements, ad hoc meetings between city staff and other, non-core team members were held on site in Fresno as needed. Regionally based team members, including the lead, periodically traveled to the community to touch base with their city counterparts. There was also an on-site convening of the majority of the team members in early April 2012 to discuss and adjust implementation based on the initial six months of city-SC2 team partnership. During this meeting, the SC2 team met with City of Fresno officials as well as internally as a team.

The SC2 team had an internal team check-in call weekly, which was led by the SC2 team lead. During these calls, team members could discuss progress toward work plan implementation. The lead also used his frequent visits to Fresno to coordinate with Fresno-based and regional team members.

A4.3.3 SC2 Team Member Activities

Because the mayor's vision and agenda were so clearly defined from the start, the work plan and implementation activities were structured to further the mayor's short- and long-term vision for Fresno. Many objectives in the work plan aligned with the larger goals of revitalizing downtown Fresno and expanding the value-added food sector. The following section highlights SC2 team activities that demonstrate key accomplishments and the breadth of important SC2 team activities.

Revitalization of Downtown Fresno

The largest project that the SC2 team became involved in was the revitalization of downtown Fresno. Team members were active in efforts to reactivate and revitalize Fulton Mall (an unpopular outdoor pedestrian mall located in the heart of downtown), convene stakeholders to collectively advance efforts to locate a high-speed rail station near downtown, align the bus rapid transit line with key downtown sites, and engage residents in a revitalized community gathering place, Mariposa Plaza.

Fulton Mall. Fulton Mall and the surrounding 18-block street grid is the historic heart of downtown Fresno. Unfortunately, it currently hosts a large number of vacant storefronts and has lost nearly all of its street life. To reenergize this activity center, the city hoped to reopen the mall to traffic and capitalize on the location's potential for multi-modal connectivity (e.g., high-speed rail and bus rapid transit). Progress toward this goal began in November 2011 when the mayor and her team worked with senior Department of Transportation officials to develop a purpose and need statement for the proposed project. The primary barrier to moving forward with the plan was a projected eight-year delay in the completion of the project's environmental review process. The SC2 team worked with the City of Fresno and the California Transportation Department (the entity contracted to do the review) to expedite the review timeline, and the review is now moving very quickly. In addition to working through this identified barrier, the SC2 team helped to advance the vision for Fulton Mall's 18-block area by providing technical assistance and serving as a sounding board for ideas. They also offered guidance on the scoring process for a TIGER (Transportation Investment Generating Economic Recovery) grant, for which the city had applied and not been funded in 2012. As a result of the city's effort and the SC2 team's support, the city revised its initial $16 million TIGER grant application and was awarded funding in 2013.

Coordinating Transportation. A key team member helped to engaged and increase communication between representatives from the Federal Rail Administration, the California High Speed Rail Authority, DOT, and the Federal Transit Authority. This team member spearheaded a multi-day convening of these groups to share information about their respective planning and infrastructure efforts. As a result of this meeting and follow-up conversations and technical assistance, Fresno made progress in locating the high-speed rail station near Fulton Mall. The partnership formed among these groups still exists and is now being led by the California High Speed Rail Authority. Additionally, technical assistance provided by this team member resulted in rerouting the new bus rapid transit line near the central downtown corridor so that it would touch the Fulton Mall and other key downtown sites.

Mariposa Corridor. In support of the city's goal of downtown revitalization and economic development, a team member recommended the city pursue a National Endowment for the Arts Our Town grant to redevelop the Mariposa Plaza Corridor, which would connect the proposed high-speed rail station with

the downtown Fulton pedestrian mall and a planned bus rapid transit station. In July 2013, Fresno was awarded a $150,000 grant from the Endowment to support the Mariposa Plaza Activation Project. The plaza redesign will include public art and cultural events and is expected to serve as a local gathering place, bringing foot traffic, business, and life back to the Fulton Mall.

Expanding the Value-Added Food Sector

In addition to the downtown revitalization efforts, the SC2 team's other primary stream of work was leveraging the existing hub of agricultural activities in the surrounding area to advance Fresno's economy.

- One of the Department of Agriculture's team members served a large role in moving this vision forward. As a heavily involved team member, he helped the city attain funding from an IBM Challenge Grant to advance the connection between technology and agriculture. He pursued broadband in the downtown area and worked on establishing technology for remote sensors for water and pesticide use on agricultural farm locations within Fresno.

- The SC2 team provided technical assistance to the city that contributed to the city's receipt of a $95,000 grant for Investment Assistance from the Economic Development Administration to "expand Fresno's value-added food sector by developing an existing industrial area into a food-processing cluster."

- Local partner Wells Fargo bank received technical assistance from the SC2 team to help fine tune its thinking about how to best support economic development through food systems-related projects. Full-time team members, city staff, and Wells Fargo staff collaborated to create three committees to determine the best way to advance food-system-related economic development work: a public market committee, an urban farm/community garden committee, and a small business/kitchen incubator committee. Team members brought a new energy and attention to the work being done and helped make connections between this work at Wells Fargo and other aligned city efforts.

Ad Hoc Technical Assistance

The SC2 team also provided assistance with more discrete tasks in other areas. The SC2 team supported the establishment of a mini-MBA program for local small business owners. In addition, the HUD team member helped the city to access RAD designation (HUD's special designation for housing authorities). The housing authority can now borrow against federally owned housing projects to fund improvements, rather than being forced to allow housing to deteriorate over time because the city otherwise would not be able put more resources into improvements. One team member helped to further Fresno's goals related to neighborhood revitalization by identifying a new grant opportunity, the Building Neighborhood Capacity Program. The member encouraged the city to pursue this grant opportunity and assisted by bringing together more than a dozen public, nonprofit, and philanthropic stakeholders to apply for the grant. The city's application was successful, and Fresno has been able to expand its existing neighborhood revitalization pilot into two additional neighborhoods.

A4.4   Conclusion

The SC2 team in Fresno demonstrated a number of the goals of the SC2 initiative. The SC2 team as a whole helped to move projects at a faster pace than would have happened otherwise and also helped to navigate certain barriers and provide expertise relevant to members' federal agencies. The SC2 team made great gains in encouraging regional collaboration through their work on the transportation networks

and the regional food system. They were also successful in partnering for economic growth through their coordinated efforts to revitalize the Fulton Mall. The team also enhanced local capacity by directing the city to grant opportunities and expediting federal responses to local concerns. Stakeholders in the Fresno pilot agree that one of the primary reasons for its success is the city's strong leadership and clear vision for the future, coupled with the proactive nature of the SC2 team in work planning and coordination throughout the pilot.

A5.   Site Profile: Memphis

Implementation of the SC2 pilot initiative in Memphis began in September 2011, after an initial planning and assessment period earlier in the year. The team began with a broad mandate to support Memphis in addressing 12 economic development priorities identified during the assessment phase. The priorities focused on addressing the city's major challenges—high poverty, population decline, and reduced public sector capacity—while leveraging its strengths in history, arts, and culture, its vibrant health care sector, its several anchor institutions, and its popular and experienced mayor.

This profile summarizes the first 18 months of the SC2 pilot in Memphis, from September 2011 through March 2013. The profile describes the local context, membership of the SC2 team, the local stakeholders the team worked with, how the team worked, and the activities and accomplishments to which the team contributed.

A5.1   Context

The city of Memphis was hit hard by the 2007–2009 recession and is still struggling to recover. The city also faces historic levels of racial and economic disparity. These conditions, in addition to declining municipal revenues, have hindered the city's ability to make inroads into lowering its 20 percent poverty rate and combating the challenges of serving a low-income, under-educated population.

Notwithstanding these challenges, Memphis and its downtown are in the midst of a resurgence. The city is home to a growing number of medical and health care employers, as well as a significant number of anchor institutions, philanthropies, and universities. Memphis is known for its contributions to arts and culture, and city government is also seeking to build upon Memphis's historic and cultural assets. This work is being championed by a talented and enthusiastic mayor who brings connections to key decision makers at the county, regional, and national level.

A5.2   Key Stakeholders

Key stakeholders in the SC2 pilot in Memphis were the team members, local government staff, and community partners. Each is described below.

A5.2.1   Composition of the SC2 Team

At the start of implementation, the SC2 team in Memphis consisted of two full-time members (including the SC2 team lead) who relocated to Memphis for the initiative, three part-time members already located in Memphis, seven part-time members located in Washington, DC, and elsewhere, and seven advisory members, also located in Washington, DC, and elsewhere. Thus, the on-the-ground SC2 team presence at the start of implementation consisted of five individuals, representing three federal agencies: the Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD), the Department of Transportation's (DOT) Federal Aviation Administration (FAA), and the Small Business Administration (SBA). The seven remote team members at the start of the initiative were from the Departments of Justice (DOJ), Health and Human Services (HHS), Labor (DOL), and Treasury; the General Services Administration (GSA); and HUD.

Over time, the SC2 team membership changed substantially. As of July 2012, about 10 months into the initiative, four of the original members, including the SC2 team lead, had transitioned off the team, and

another six members had joined—one full-time and five part-time. By January 2013, the team consisted of 2 full-time members, 12 part-time members, and 4 advisory members. The second full-time SC2 team lead joined the team in January 2013.

Exhibit A5.1 summarizes the federal agencies represented in the SC2 team over the first 18 months of the initiative.

Exhibit A5.1. Federal Agencies Represented in the SC2 Team, First 18 Months

Location	Full-Time	Part-Time
Memphis	HUD, DOT/FAA	DOL, DOT/FAA, HUD, SBA
Remote		DOT-FHWA, HUD, DOJ, HHS, DOL, GSA, Treasury

A5.2.2 Involved City Staff

The SC2 team had three main points of contact within city government. On a day-to-day basis, the key contacts were the city's chief learning officer and deputy chief administrative officer. The SC2 team lead also had direct access to the mayor, particularly at the start of the initiative, and indirectly through the two additional city contacts as needed. Interactions with other city staff, though, were less consistent. The city government department heads were generally less engaged, particularly in the first six months of pilot implementation. Also, the city's use of consultants and subcontractors for developing and implementing city initiatives meant that the SC2 team often worked directly with these consultants rather than with city staff.

A5.2.3 Local Partners

The SC2 team lead also worked closely with a large number of community stakeholders who were enthusiastic about involvement in the SC2 pilot initiative. These partners included Community LIFT, the Greater Memphis Chamber, the mayor's Innovation Delivery Team (funded by Bloomberg Philanthropies), and the Downtown Memphis Commission. The types of activities that these partners engaged in with the SC2 team varied, ranging from joint planning to problem-solving around federal regulations, and included both short- and longer-term engagements. Notably, the local partners typically communicated directly with the SC2 team lead, not the other team members. The SC2 team lead primarily found answers to local questions and connected local partners to federal staff that could help with specific issues.

A5.3   Summary of Pilot Implementation

The following section begins with a description of the SC2 pilot kickoff and the work plan development process. The narrative then describes how the Memphis SC2 team and the city worked together, and finally it summarizes key SC2 team activities during the first 18 months of implementation.

A5.3.1 Developing the Work Plan

The Memphis SC2 team was deployed in September 2011. Upon arrival, a kickoff meeting was held in Memphis with team members, both those located in Memphis and those working remotely. The SC2 team later met with city agencies and community organizations to identify opportunities for SC2 team involvement. The SC2 team first spent time reviewing the 12 priorities identified in the initial assessment. The SC2 team lead reported that there was little specific guidance from either the city or the federal

initiative on where the SC2 team should focus its efforts in Memphis beyond these priority areas. As a result, the team members worked among themselves to translate the priority areas into specific action items to be included in the work plan. In doing so, they consulted with the city's chief learning officer and deputy chief administrative officer and key stakeholders such as the mayor's Innovation Delivery Team.

In November 2011, the SC2 team presented its work plan to the city points of contacts and the mayor for approval. The Memphis work plan was organized into nine categories: government efficiency, relationship with federal government, human capital, transportation, economic development, health, public safety, sustainability, and a set of possible projects. Each of these nine categories had associated sub-goals/action items. The tracking-style work plan allowed the team to keep a record of team members responsible for each task and target accomplishment dates.

As the SC2 team started implementing the November 2011 plan, they found that the list of action items was too broad to be manageable. The SC2 team lead therefore approached the newly elected mayor to narrow down his priorities for the city and provide further input into how SC2 could fit into his vision. In response to this request, and in preparation for his first full mayoral term starting January 1, the mayor formed a Strategic Policy and Planning Team, led by the SC2 team lead.

In late 2011 and early 2012, the SC2 team lead spent a great deal of time reviewing the 42 different plans that the City of Memphis had at the time and culling priorities from across the plans. Together, the SC2 team lead and members of the Strategic Policy and Planning Team settled on four priorities and wrote a vision statement to guide the new term. These priorities were to create safe and vibrant neighborhoods, grow prosperity and opportunity for all, invest in young people, and advance a culture of excellence in government.

After working with the Strategic Policy and Planning Team to hone the four priorities for Memphis, the SC2 team lead elaborated on the vision statement to draft talking points, a communications strategy, and action items and metrics under each priority. The SC2 team lead also helped to write the mayor's "State of the City" speech. The SC2 team then updated its work plan to fit within the four priorities adopted by the mayor for his next term. That work plan then guided the SC2 team's actions for the next six months until the first SC2 team lead transitioned off the project.

A5.3.2 Work Approach—Communication and Meetings

The city and SC2 team each had a primary point of contact, which helped to streamline communication channels. City points of contacts would channel information back and forth between the mayor and the SC2 team lead, and the SC2 team lead would do the same with all team members. These key city staff and the SC2 team lead remained in frequent contact. The SC2 team lead initially had weekly meetings with the mayor (later moving to monthly meetings) and also met more frequently with key city staff. The city drew upon the SC2 team lead as a resource for day-to-day questions and problem-solving and relied on the SC2 team lead to take initiative to direct the activities of the other team members.

The SC2 team lead and full-time team member both had desks in city hall and were always available to city staff. The SC2 team lead worked more closely with the two main points of contacts at city hall and the full range of city and non-city partners. The full-time team member focused on transportation issues and thus spent the most time interacting with staff from the city's engineering division and planning and development department, the Memphis Urban Area Metropolitan Planning Organization, and the Memphis Area Transit Authority.

Within the SC2 team, communication operated as a "hub-and-spoke" system where the SC2 team lead maintained frequent communication with individual members for specific initiatives and the whole team came together for weekly conference calls to discuss their progress against the work plan. Team members described having good access to the SC2 team lead.

A5.3.3 SC2 Team Roles and Activities

The SC2 team's work in Memphis was a combination of carrying out long-term strategic work in certain areas and responding to issues that came up while the SC2 team was on the ground. The SC2 team lead and members were proactive in identifying streams of work to focus on in addition to the key activity areas listed in the work plan. Nearly all of the SC2 team's work was centered at the city level, although control over key policy areas such as education, health care, and transportation resides at the county and state levels. The mayor of Shelby County, in which Memphis is located, was not involved in the assessment process and county government remained somewhat removed from the SC2 pilot. This limited the SC2 team's ability to work on regional strategies and projects and as a result work focused on the issues within the city's jurisdiction.

As mentioned above, one of the most important roles of the SC2 team in Memphis, particularly the SC2 team lead, was providing strategic planning support to the mayor and city government. The SC2 team lead also played an important role interfacing with the mayor's Innovation Team, which was working in Memphis on issues related to youth handgun violence and neighborhood economic vitality.

In addition to this added capacity, city government representatives reported that the SC2 team helped to improve government efficiency and economic development work by helping the city access transportation grants, supporting the development of a system to track city data related to mayoral priority areas, and helping repurpose a disused steamboat for a new commercial business.

- **Transportation.** The Federal Aviation Administration team member supported the city's work to apply for transportation funding. He connected Memphis to the railroad rehabilitation investment fund, which helped it to secure DOT and Economic Development Agency grants for the new rail project. In addition, he helped to write white papers that were produced to support the city's TIGER grant application, a $14.9 million grant for the Memphis Main Street to Main Street Multi-Modal Connector Project. The DOT team member was fully allocated to the SC2 team role and spent a lot of time understanding the full breadth of transportation issues in the city and region. He worked with several transportation entities to understand and gather information. He was developing a complete thesis and recommendations for how to improve the transportation system in this region that was close to completion at the time of the site visit.

- **Youth violence.** The Department of Justice team member coordinated multiple youth violence initiatives in Memphis, including the Defending Childhood Initiative, the National Forum on Youth Violence Prevention, and the Bloomberg innovation grant. Working on the Defending Childhood Initiative and the Forum was part of this team member's regular duties, but being part of the SC2 team allowed her to draw connections to the Bloomberg initiative and increase coordination among all three. While funding for Defending Childhood came through the county and funding for the other two initiatives came through the city, all three initiatives were working in the Frayser community in Memphis, so having a single person to act as a liaison was helpful. This team member's duties also included delivering training and technical assistance to the city in responding to an April 2012 Department of Justice finding that there were serious systematic failures in the juvenile court system.

- **ChoiceStat System**. With the help of an SC2 fellow, the city is working to implement the ChoiceStat program, a management tracking system based on HUDStats that helps to improve government efficiency. The city staff interviewed indicated that technical assistance provided by HUD on the system, including a visit to Memphis from a HUD staff member involved in developing HUDStats, was very valuable in moving this project forward and exemplified the value of the SC2 team. One of the two SC2 fellows in Memphis was dedicated to working on this project.

- **Steamboat**. By helping to make connections between the city and GSA, the SC2 team facilitated the city's purchase of a new steamboat for a venture running multi-day cruises on the Mississippi River. This is a step for the city in continuing to grow local businesses and improve its standing as a cultural draw.

In addition to these initiatives, the SC2 team was able to play more transactional roles in bringing projects to completion on an expedited timeline. For example, the SC2 team helped Memphis's first ever economic intermediary (River City Capital Investment) to get certified as a Community Development Financial Institution through the Department of the Treasury.

The SC2 team also identified a waiver for downtown buildings to enable federal agencies to locate in the city, resolving a contradiction between GSA regulations that mandated certain setbacks from the street and an Executive Order that federal facilities should drive city economic development. The SC2 team worked with the GSA chief of staff to reissue a bid for a new federal facility in Memphis, allowing downtown buildings to compete and bringing attention to possible discrepancies between agency regulations and other federal policies.

Other examples of transactional assistance provided by the SC2 team include helping to obtain expedited federal approval from the Food and Drug Administration to locate a new brewery in Memphis; convening the Aerotropolis Regional Conference to discuss plans for the use of 60 million square feet of industrial space near the airport; and educating partner Memphis Tomorrow about social impact bonds.

A5.4   Conclusion

The SC2 team in Memphis demonstrated several of the intended goals of the SC2 pilot, including improving the relationship between local and federal government, partnering for economic growth, and enhancing local capacity. In the first 18 months of the pilot, the SC2 team established itself as a valued resource for the mayor's staff and for individuals and organizations working in the city on economic development. The team achieved many small-scale "wins" for the city by cutting through federal bureaucracy and assisting with problem solving. The SC2 team lead also made a major contribution in helping to bring the city's numerous strategic plans into alignment with key mayoral priorities.

During the first 18 months of the pilot initiative, the SC2 team in Memphis was not able to make progress in encouraging regional collaboration nor was it able to enhance city government's internal capacity for economic development in a lasting way. The team's effectiveness was limited by the turnover in its membership and the fact that part-time members were challenged to free up sufficient time to work on the initiative. Another challenge to regional coordination was the widespread perception in Memphis that the SC2 pilot was a city initiative and not necessarily one that required participation by the county or state. Nevertheless, the first 18 months of the pilot demonstrated the value of the initiative to the city and laid the groundwork for further accomplishments under the leadership of the second full-time SC2 team lead.

The Memphis SC2 team was exemplary in its ability to navigate the city's complicated and often chaotic bureaucratic system, adding enhanced staff capacity, speeding up timelines, and even helping to set priorities in combining all 42 strategic plans. The SC2 team lead, who acted as a one-stop hotline for any federal question, was widely appreciated for her ombudsman role.

A6.   Site Profile: New Orleans

Implementation of the SC2 pilot initiative in New Orleans began in September 2011, after an initial planning and assessment period earlier in the year. The SC2 team in New Orleans received clear direction from the mayor that his top priorities for the engagement were murder reduction and economic development. He additionally saw great potential for SC2 to facilitate a seamless local-state-federal government approach to identifying and overcoming barriers to economic development and to providing government services to citizens.

This profile summarizes the first 18 months of the SC2 pilot in New Orleans, from September 2011 through March 2013. The profile describes the local context, membership of the SC2 team, the local stakeholders the team worked with, how the team worked, and the activities and accomplishments to which the team contributed.

A6.1   Context

As is the case in all pilot cities, New Orleans faces considerable levels of distress, including high rates of crime, poverty, and blight, and low levels of educational attainment. Unlike other pilot cities, though, New Orleans has been hit by recent natural disasters that dramatically affected its population, housing stock, and infrastructure. The city continues to face challenges related to neighborhood revitalization, growing the economy, and connecting low-income residents to economic opportunities.

Despite these challenges, New Orleans enjoys significant assets that can position the city for economic strength, including its status as a port city and a tourist destination, and home to a robust energy industry. Furthermore, Post-Katrina New Orleans has received significant attention and resources from the federal government and national philanthropy. This has brought funding and energetic people to the city, bolstering the city's internal capacity in ways not experienced by other SC2 pilot cities.

A6.2   Key Stakeholders

Key stakeholders in the SC2 pilot in New Orleans consisted of the team members, local government staff, and community partners. Each is described below.

A6.2.1 Composition of the SC2 Team

Over time, the New Orleans SC2 team comprised 25 representatives from 12 agencies. There were four members full-time on the ground, two detailed from the Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) and two from the Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD), with other team members based in Washington, DC, or in federal offices in the region. While the SC2 team in New Orleans was one of the largest deployed, many of the members were not consistently engaged but rather served as on-call support. Some remote and advisory members, however, played a very active role, as was the case with the Department of Transportation (DOT) and Department of Education (ED) representatives. Exhibit A6.1 summarizes the federal agencies represented in the SC2 team over the first 18 months of the initiative.

Exhibit A6.1. Federal Agencies Represented in the SC2 Team, First 18 Months

Location	Full-Time	Part-Time
New Orleans	HHS, HUD (2)	HHS
Remote	DOJ, DOL	DOC-EDA (2), DOC-ITA, DOC-MBDA, DOE (2), ED (4), EPA, GSA, HHS (2), HUD, SBA, VA (2)

A6.2.2 Involved City Staff

In keeping with the mayor's support for the pilot, he ensured that city staff worked closely with team members. Most significantly, he directed a key contact in his administration, the director of strategic partnerships, to oversee the engagement and represent the mayor's perspective on SC2 team activities. This point person established a close working relationship with the SC2 team lead, ensuring that SC2 team activities were implemented with direct input from and the support of the mayor's office. As further evidence of this support, individual team members in New Orleans were granted access to high-level city staff to implement pilot activities. These included the city's health commissioner; the deputy mayor of facilities infrastructure, and community development; the director of housing and community development; and the director of the mayor's Office of Environmental Affairs.

A6.2.3 Local Partners

In several instances, the New Orleans SC2 team worked with local partners to address city priorities. In one case the SC2 team engaged a professor at Tulane University and local law enforcement officials to establish the mayor's Strategic Command to Reduce Murder, a coalition that adopts innovative approaches to stem the cycle of violence that leads to homicides. In a second case, the city worked closely with local health care providers and public health advocates to develop coalitions and strategic plans to improve access to health care in New Orleans. Third, the SC2 team worked with the local housing authority to remove a barrier to housing for individuals experiencing homelessness.

A6.3   Summary of Pilot Implementation

The following section begins with a description of the SC2 pilot kickoff and the work plan development process. The narrative then describes how the New Orleans SC2 team and the city worked together, and finally it summarizes key SC2 team activities during the first 18 months of implementation.

A6.3.1 Developing the Work Plan

Before deployment, the city identified seven priority areas for the SC2 initiative to focus on: criminal justice, economic development, workforce development, health and human services, information technology, operations, and sustainable communities.[27]

Having already established work groups and goals, the New Orleans SC2 team was primed to begin work promptly upon deployment in September 2011. During the first week of deployment, team members met

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[27]   Two areas, information technology and operations, were ultimately removed from the implementation plan when it was determined that the federal government could not help the city address those specific goals.

for one full day of meetings to develop a comprehensive and shared work plan. The one-day planning session was held with team members and their city counterparts to refine the scope of work for the first three months after the planning session. The team decided to approach their work from two fronts for the first three months, focusing on 1) identifying and achieving opportunities for "quick wins," and 2) developing a work plan for longer-term goals and activities.

A lot of effort went into developing a detailed plan, which outlined the SC2 team's goals and deliverables, the responsibilities of individual team members, deadlines, partnerships and resources, and indicators of success. This plan enabled team members to make contact quickly with local stakeholders to begin their work, and it provided a clear path forward and a means of tracking progress. Over time, the team came to value flexibility in planning, as some of the most ambitious plans set forth at the beginning of the pilot did not come to fruition as anticipated, including economic development plans associated with the new hospital.

A6.3.2 Work Approach—Interactions, Communication, and Meetings

The SC2 team lead in New Orleans facilitated the engagement, taking responsibility for overseeing working groups of team members and city staff established to address each of the city's priority areas. He also worked closely with the city's point of contact for the pilot to incorporate the city's perspective; he engaged external stakeholders to identify additional opportunities; and he connected individual team members to the local and federal resources necessary to conduct their work.

To coordinate SC2 team activities, the lead worked most closely with the city's deputy director of strategic partnerships. Facilitating their collaboration, the SC2 team lead's office during the engagement was located in the mayor's office close to the deputy director's. The SC2 team lead was also invited to attend the mayor's cabinet meetings. The deputy director relayed the mayor's perspective on the engagement to the SC2 team lead, helped team members understand the local context for their work, and introduced team members to local city partners.

To further coordinate SC2 team activities, the SC2 team lead held bi-monthly meetings with team members. Embedded members joined in person while remote members joined by conference call. The meetings were beneficial in exposing members to how their colleagues dealt with problems or challenges and for identifying areas of overlap and opportunities for cross-agency collaboration.

A6.3.3 Activities

The SC2 team spent the first three-and-a-half months executing "quick wins." This strategy helped the team to hit the ground running and make early progress while more long-term activities were in development. Quick wins were defined by the team as projects or activities whose objectives were to address issues that matter to the average citizen, can be completed in three months, and provide evidence of critical SC2 support. Other projects tackled by the SC2 team, such as those addressing murder reduction or workforce development, required more time for planning and had a longer implementation time frame.

Once implementation activities had been identified, team members tended to work one-on-one with individual city staff to conduct their work, with oversight from the SC2 team lead and the city's point of contact. Throughout the pilot, team members remained open to new ideas for implementation not initially included in the work plan, allowing the city to benefit from a flexible federal response to emergent opportunities. Very often these emergent opportunities were related to breaking down federal bureaucratic

barriers or cutting red tape. The key activities undertaken by the New Orleans SC2 team are described below.

Securing Federal Answers to Remove Barriers to Local Progress

In many instances team members had the access to the federal government necessary to expedite responses for the city. This made a huge difference for the city, for example, in accelerating the timeline for implementing a soft second mortgage program. The $52 million, Community Development Block Grant-funded first-time homebuyer program was foundering at the start of the SC2 pilot. The program was designed to provide gap financing to new homebuyers who had received mortgage counseling and were otherwise qualified buyers. However to move forward, the city needed information from HUD about allowable subsidy limits and debt coverage ratios. The team member was able to access and work with a HUD team to provide clear and expedited responses to the city, enabling the city to confidently move forward with its work. In another case, a team member helped the city avoid the loss of $20 million in housing funds. Since 1996, New Orleans had kept poor records on the spending of HUD HOME funding. As a result, the city risked having the federal government recapture past funding and restrict future funding. By working with the team member from HUD, the city was able to reconcile the records and clarify the status of the funding. In doing so, New Orleans avoided the recapture and restriction of the funds..

Improving Coordination of Federal Programs

A similar example of SC2 team intervention is seen in a street car line expansion project that included funding from both HUD and DOT's Federal Highway Administration. New Orleans had secured grants from both agencies for the project but, due to inconsistent policies and regulations (for example, HUD encourages local hiring, DOT prevents it), the funds could not be pooled or leveraged. This meant the two grants would have to be treated as separate entities, leading to an inefficient process involving issuing two RFPs, paying contractors out of two accounts, and reporting to two entities. Through the SC2 pilot the city was able to connect with the Assistant Secretary at DOT, who helped identify a mechanism by which HUD and DOT could coordinate funding (SEP-14).Using this mechanism, the DOT highway funds and HUD disaster funds were pooled and the process streamlined.

Cross-agency collaboration facilitated by the SC2 team also solved a problem with a program that paired housing vouchers from HUD with supportive services funded by HHS. The program's aim was to more seamlessly link people experiencing homelessness eligible for services with HUD housing. The challenge was that the housing authority had a minimum rent of $50, which was enough to keep many individuals from participating. The HUD team member was aware of a hardship policy that allowed the housing authority to waive the $50 requirement. At the time of the evaluation site visit, 70 people had been housed thanks to the waiver. This hardship policy is applicable to housing authorities across the country.

In a third case of federal coordination, team members from the Department of Justice, HHS, and HUD worked collaboratively to expand an existing Permanent Supportive Housing (PSH) voucher preference to new recipients. After Hurricane Katrina, HUD issued PSH vouchers to the State of Louisiana to support vulnerable populations, and both the city and the state wanted to expand eligibility for the vouchers to individuals returning from prison or substance abuse treatment. While expanding the vouchers to include these populations was not a challenge, there was a time limit for distributing vouchers. The challenge, then, was quickly identifying and enrolling individuals who could benefit from the vouchers, a task the city was struggling to complete. To advance the project, the state reached out to the team member from HHS and asked her to engage the team members from DOJ and HUD in the process. Given their

expertise, the three members of the SC2 team were able to quickly convene community partners involved in behavioral health, housing, and criminal justice, and a system was put in place for reaching the targeted populations and helping them to apply for the vouchers.

Providing Additional Capacity to Move Local Initiatives Forward

Some of the SC2 team's work was described as "hands-on." These were typically instances where team members were in great demand because of the time they had available rather than because of specific skills they could offer to the community. Many of these "hands-on" activities helped to expedite critical work.

In one case, the SC2 team collaborated with the city to develop a behavioral health strategic plan. As part of their effort to improve behavioral health care in New Orleans, the city and the SC2 team created a Behavioral Health Resource Guide, a comprehensive listing of substance abuse and mental health care providers and services to help residents easily identify and access care and services for mental health and substance abuse conditions. This work is seen as foundational and lasting.

The SC2 team was also asked to assist the city with a health care access project. The New Orleans health department has faced a lack of quantitative and qualitative data about primary care in the city. A team member conducted interviews with health care leaders and organized a working group to plan for improved health care access. The team member presented data gathered during that process to the city Health Commissioner who used it to help determine where in the city access to health care was insufficient and where to open clinics.

A team member also assisted the city in coordinating a substance abuse reduction strategy. Before the pilot, a community stakeholder had convened a working group to address substance abuse in New Orleans. During the pilot, a team member from HHS became involved with the working group, planned a retreat, and connected the group to the city's health department, other coalitions addressing substance abuse, and the Drug Free Communities grant program. Previously, the city had never had a formal substance abuse prevention plan in place. Due to the collaboration of the working group, the team member, and the city, the health department developed and released a substance abuse plan in 2012.

Developing a Local Collaboration to Address City Priorities

The mayor's top priority for the pilot was reducing the city's high murder rate. A team member from DOJ helped identify a successful murder reduction strategy in Milwaukee that became a model for New Orleans, leading to the creation of the Mayor's Strategic Command to Reduce Murder. The Command serves as a way for state and local law enforcement officials to share information and coordinate activities; it looks closely at each murder that takes place in the city and determines a coordinated response that could help avoid retributive acts in the future. The Command also partners with Tulane University to produce real-time, comprehensive data reports on crime in New Orleans that are used to drive local criminal justice policy. The team member was instrumental in assembling the partners in the Command, which has led to improved relationships in the law enforcement community.

A6.4   Conclusion

Several of the accomplishments in New Orleans are representative of the goals of SC2, including developing sustainable local partnerships to build the city's capacity to address priority areas and removing bureaucratic barriers to progress. The SC2 team also facilitated cross-agency collaboration that helped identify solutions to problems threatening economic growth. The New Orleans pilot experience

shows that when a committed mayor and city staff are connected with federal representatives who have deep knowledge of federal programs and access to high-level decision makers, the city can quickly remove obstacles to the deployment of federal resources and find solutions that benefit local citizens. Importantly, overcoming these obstacles was not a time-intensive process for the team members involved; however, without their involvement the city likely would have struggled for months to solve these problems. The value of this SC2 pilot, then, goes beyond how it benefitted New Orleans by showing how a strategic relationship between a city and the federal government can efficiently remove barriers to progress for any city facing similar barriers.

Appendix B: Research Questions

The evaluation of the SC2 pilot addressed three main research questions. These questions are listed below, along with associated sub-research questions.

Research Question 1: What was implemented?	
1.A.	What barriers to economic development were cities seeking to address?
1.B.	What opportunities were cities trying to capitalize upon?
1.C.	What were the strategies and types of activities planned for addressing the barriers and opportunities?
1.D.	To what extent did SC2 team activities align with the SC2 goals and city priorities?
1.E.	How were SC2 team strategies and activities facilitated or implemented?
1.F.	How did SC2 teams evolve their strategies?
1.G.	What was the nature of the interaction between the SC2 teams and the cities?
Research Question 2: How did participants experience SC2?	
2.A.	What were the benefits and challenges in participating in SC2 from the perspectives of the cities and the federal government?
2.B.	What were the opportunity costs or negative consequences of participating in SC2 from the perspectives of the cities and the federal government?
2.C.	How did members' perceptions of their SC2 team experience vary?
2.D.	According to federal stakeholders, how clear was communication about expectations related to Team members' time?
2.E.	According to federal and local stakeholders, how clear was communication between SC2 teams and the host city government?
2.F.	What were local stakeholders' perceptions about team members' qualifications and contributions?
2.G.	What did people wish they knew at the outset of implementation? As implementation progressed?
Research Question 3: What has been learned that can be used to enhance future program implementation?	
3.A.	What aspects of the SC2 model seemed to foster accomplishments (e.g., embedding staff, providing short-term increase in local capacity, longer-term capacity building, relationship building)?
3.B.	What aspects of the SC2 model appear to be replicable outside of the SC2 Initiative in existing federal grant programs and activities (e.g., embedding staff, providing short-term increase in local capacity, longer-term capacity building, relationship building)?
3.C.	Which barriers to economic development were the SC2 teams most successful in addressing? Why?
3.D.	What more could be done with SC2 from the perspectives of the cities and the federal government?
3.E.	How did staff selection interact with team member effectiveness?
3.F.	What is the value of introducing external federal staff into the existing dynamic between local communities and regional federal staff?
3.G.	Was there a relationship between the expertise of the assessment team lead and/or the SC2 team lead and the types of activities implemented? If so, did this make the SC2 team's more or less effective at achieving the city's goals?
3.H.	Where were state and/or county staff successfully engaged to support SC2 team activities?
3.I.	Were there obstacles to implementation due to conflicts between local and county governments? Between local and state governments?