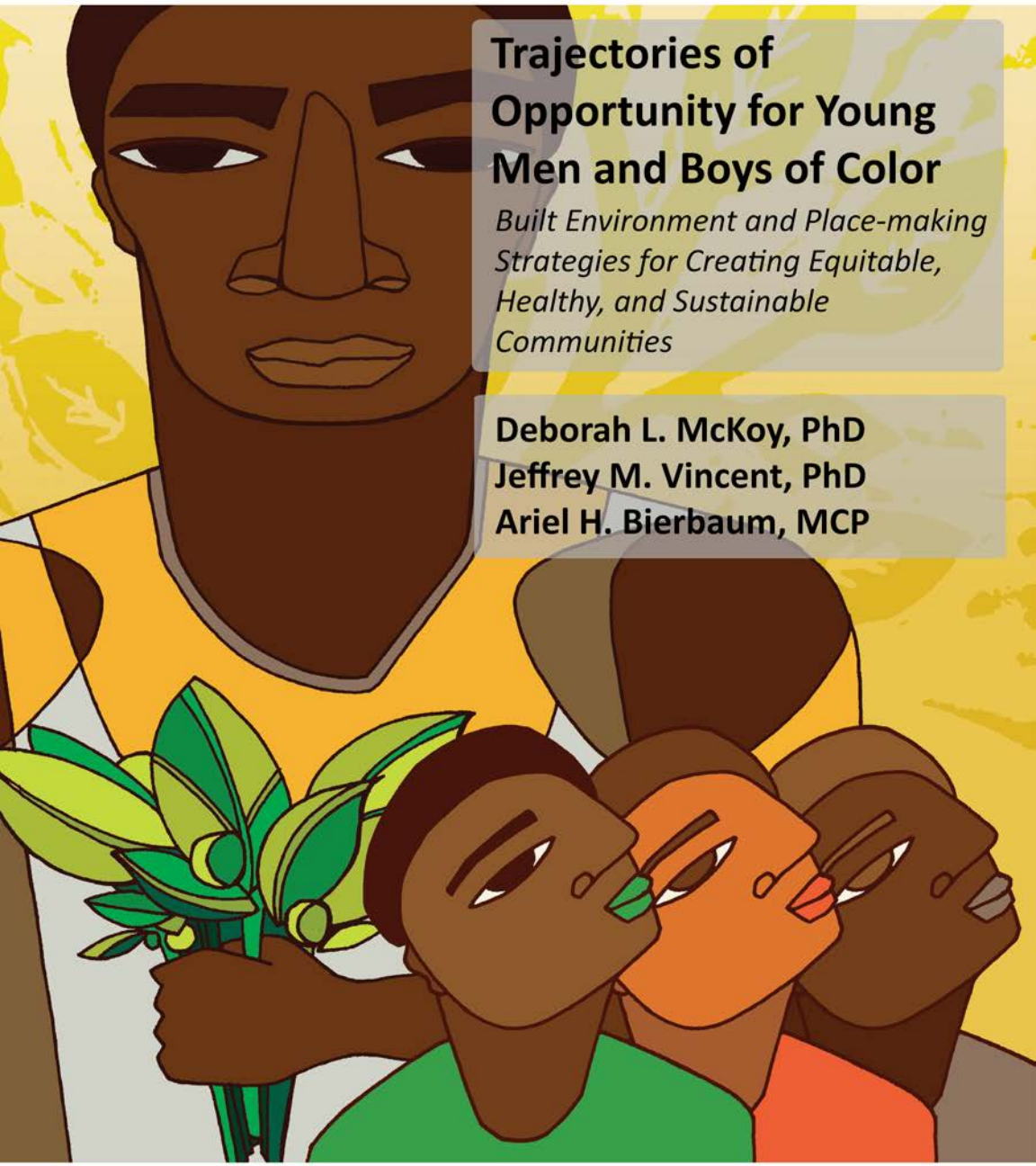
Changing Places

HOW COMMUNITIES WILL IMPROVE THE HEALTH OF BOYS OF COLOR



Trajectories of Opportunity for Young Men and Boys of Color

Built Environment and Place-making Strategies for Creating Equitable, Healthy, and Sustainable Communities

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with a foreword by Robert Phillips

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Cover: The cover image was designed by Oakland, California–based printmaker and digital artist Favianna Rodriguez. Using high-contrast colors and vivid figures, her composites reflect literal and imaginative migration, global community, and interdependence. She has lectured widely on the use of art in civic engagement and the work of bridging community and museum, local and international. Rodriguez is coeditor of *Reproduce and Revolt!* with stencil artist and art critic Josh MacPhee (Soft Skull Press, 2008). An unprecedented contribution to the Creative Commons, this two-hundred-page book contains more than six hundred bold, high-quality black and white illustrations for royalty-free creative use. Rodriguez's artwork also appears in *The Design of Dissent* (Rockport Publishers, 2006), *Peace Signs: The Anti-War Movement Illustrated* (Edition Olms, 2004), and *The Triumph of Our Communities: Four Decades of Mexican Art* (Bilingual Review Press, 2005).

SIXTEEN

TRAJECTORIES OF OPPORTUNITY FOR YOUNG MEN AND BOYS OF COLOR

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Deborah L. McKoy, Jeffrey M. Vincent, and Ariel H. Bierbaum

ABSTRACT

Where we live, work, learn, and play greatly affects everything—from health and safety to education and employment opportunities. The aim of this chapter is twofold: (1) we investigate the ways in which unhealthy environments—and the urban planning and institutional practices that created them—structure disadvantage and undermine the life chances of young men and boys of color; and (2) we describe how innovative city-school initiatives are aligning and leveraging the diverse elements of the built and social environment to create the trajectories of opportunity this group needs and deserves. We begin by drawing lessons from the literature on neighborhood effects, smart growth and regional equity, the growing educational opportunity gap, youth participatory planning, and innovative governance.

We then turn to an investigation of innovative place-making efforts under way in the San Francisco Bay Area, whose actors realize the connection between place characteristics and life outcomes. Through partnership-based redevelopment efforts, these efforts aim to improve the opportunities available to disadvantaged residents, especially young people. The cases look at the revitalization of public-housing communities, the comprehensive redevelopment of a severely distressed neighborhood, the creation of a full-service "center of community life" public school, and youth lifting

themselves up through authentic participation in urban planning and place-making processes. Effective interventions require concerted efforts to create trajectories of opportunity for disadvantaged young people. Place-making strategies can play a key catalytic role. Effective, comprehensive interventions mean aligning and leveraging people, place-making, and policies in new and profound ways. Finally, we present an evidenced-based framework for building healthy, equitable, and sustainable communities for all by establishing trajectories of opportunity for those in most need of them.

> America's metropolitan areas are both very sprawling and very segregated by race and class, a dual pattern that creates what scholars have termed an "uneven geography of opportunity." Understanding and changing that geography is crucial if America is to improve outcomes in education, employment, safety, health and other vital areas over the next generation.
>
> Xavier de Souza Briggs, *Geography of Opportunity,* 14

> History has shown us that differences in educational achievement among groups cannot be addressed by one-dimensional approaches such as pedagogical shifts, desegregation, or accountability. We must first acknowledge not only that there is a gap in educational achievement, both in the United States and abroad, but also that a larger gap in opportunity precedes its manifestation in the educational realm.
>
> Carol DeShano da Silva et al., *Opportunity Gap,* 4

> It is time for a shift to communities intentionally designed to facilitate physical and mental well-being. To effect this change, we need to draw upon the unique ability of humans to plan creatively for healthy communities.
>
> Richard J. Jackson, "Impact of the Built Environment on Health," 1,383

INTRODUCTION

The places in which we live, work, learn, and play have profound affects on many aspects of our lives—from health and safety to education and

employment. Places are defined by who and what occupies them; they are intricate sums of their built, social, political, and economic environments. To understand "the power of places" and how they affect individuals and social communities, we need to discover how they are "planned, designed, built, inhabited, appropriated, celebrated, despoiled and discarded" (Hayden 1995: 15). In other words, we need to understand the powerful act of place-making.

Understanding the place-making process takes on a particular urgency, given the fact that so many of the places where young men and boys of color live are defined by stubborn patterns of racial and economic segregation. These segregated places, lacking what we refer to as "trajectories of opportunity," hinder the life chances of young men and boys of color. Trajectories of opportunity are relevant for any and all low-income and marginalized communities, but they speak especially to the situations of so many young men and boys of color because of their all-too-common persistently poor life outcomes that so many researchers have documented, in this volume and elsewhere (Dellums Commission 2006; Davis, Kilburn, and Schultz 2009).

In this chapter we describe the ways in which places can contribute to patterns of poor health, economic disadvantage, and the educational inequalities that disproportionately afflict minority and/or low-income communities. We focus in particular on the role of the physical aspects of places—the bricks-and-mortar "built environments" of communities, including buildings, homes, schools, workplaces, parks and recreation areas, commercial areas, and streets.[1] In doing so, we seek to offer a deeper understanding of how places and their built environments contribute to the unique web of disparities and poor life outcomes in which so many disadvantaged young people are caught. We then turn to an investigation of innovative place-making efforts currently under way in the San Francisco Bay Area. These efforts realize the connection between place characteristics and life outcomes, and through partnership-based redevelopment efforts, they aim to improve the opportunities available to disadvantaged residents, especially young people. Effective interventions require concerted efforts to create trajectories of opportunity for disadvantaged young people. Place-making strategies can play a key catalytic role. Effective, comprehensive interventions mean aligning and leveraging people, place-making, and policies in new and profound ways.

We develop this idea by addressing two key questions: (1) How do places and factors of the built environments affect the life chances and well-being of disadvantaged young men and boys of color? (2) How can partnership-

based place-making interventions help create trajectories of opportunity for these young people? To answer these questions, we bring together the current focus among many urban scholars on the "uneven geographies of opportunity" across cities and metropolitan regions with what educational researchers have described as the persistent "opportunity gap" that continues to plague low-income students. We use these two concepts as our theoretical lens to survey the relevant literature on the relationship between the built environments of places, place-making, and these two opportunity concepts. Lessons learned from the literature show how our framework helps us create trajectories of opportunity by aligning and leveraging the complex factors that otherwise form uneven geographies of educational opportunity.

Our focus then turns to three case studies drawn from our action research at the Center for Cities and Schools (CC&S) at the University of California at Berkeley with city-school partnership initiatives in the San Francisco Bay Area. Each of these cases illustrates innovative practices designed to improve the quality of life for residents and the life chances of young people by simultaneously transforming neighborhoods and educational opportunities. We begin in Richmond, California, where the city, the Housing Authority, the school district, a local foundation, and other partners are collaborating on the redevelopment of the local elementary school and an adjacent park, community space, and public housing. We then turn to the far smaller town of Emeryville, where the city and school district leaders have partnered to develop a jointly used facility that will include K–12 schools and city-run health, wellness, recreation, and other activities. In San Francisco the city and Housing Authority have partnered with the school district to transform the city's most distressed public-housing sites into thriving, mixed-income neighborhoods. Although each initiative is unique, all three cases involve formal partnerships between city agencies, school districts, and other partners that invite young people to play important roles in the urban revitalization process. Finally, we take stock of what we have learned from the literature and our case studies and offer recommendations for policy aimed at creating trajectories of opportunity for all residents, including young men and boys of color.

TOWARD A THEORETICAL UNDERSTANDING OF TRAJECTORIES OF OPPORTUNITY

Increasingly, scholars and policymakers alike have described the fundamental challenge to poverty and inequality in today's urban and metro-

politan environments in terms of "opportunity." For most people "opportunity" means having access to quality schools that are safe and staffed by highly qualified teachers, to jobs with advancement possibilities, to essential services and health care, to ample recreation, and to regional mobility. For young men and boys of color, however, life is often defined by a lack of opportunity. Thus we must confront how to afford young men and boys of color access to opportunities by effectively intervening in the unique web of disparities in which they are caught.

Two leading theoretical perspectives on opportunity (and the lack of it) inform this chapter. Urban planning and geography scholars have noted the "uneven geographies of opportunity" experienced by residents in the same city or metropolitan area (Briggs 2005). That is, people living in some neighborhoods have access to services, amenities, and economic prospects, while others live in areas where these are severely lacking. Thus, where one lives either erects barriers or provides clear "paths" to opportunity. In chapter 12 in this volume, coauthors Dolores Acevedo-Garcia, Lindsay E. Rosenfeld, Nancy McArdle, and Theresa L. Osypuk have described in more detail the research findings on these links.

Similarly, educational researchers and reformers have long sought to remedy the persistent educational achievement gap between primarily higher-income, white students and lower-income and minority students. More recently, efforts have turned to identifying the underlying factors of this achievement gap and focused on the gaps in opportunity that result in the widening discrepancy in educational attainment between African American and Latino students on the one hand and their white and Asian peers on the other. The Harvard Education Press marked this important development in the field by putting out a collection of influential studies titled *The Opportunity Gap: Achievement and Inequality in Education* (DeShano da Silva et al. 2007). The volume brings together research that spans more than three decades and helps us understand the history of inequality in education and how educators came to think in terms of an "opportunity gap." When we bring these two bodies of research together, it becomes increasingly clear how low-income and minority students often face a kind of double jeopardy—both their neighborhoods and their schools are defined by an essential lack of opportunity. In effect, many young people find themselves in the crosshairs of an uneven geography of opportunity and an educational opportunity gap. From their point of view the urban landscape appears as uneven geography of educational opportunity.

By working at the intersection of urban planning and educational

research, we have come to think of this complex situation in terms of "trajectories of opportunity." These are pathways for young people that structure success through aligned and accessible resources across education, social supports, and healthy environments. For individuals to realize positive life outcomes, they must have this access to maximize relationships, places, and resources. Trajectories of opportunity are more than the sum of their parts; rather, they require alignment and coherence—connective tissue—created through not only institutional commitment but also through personal relationship building. Together, these things foster positive life trajectories, which are critical for all young people, but particularly so for young men and boys of color who find themselves in otherwise hostile, threatening, and limited environments. These negative environments are the result of deliberate policies, the consequences (intended or otherwise) of which disproportionately negatively impact young men and boys of color. Therefore, attempts to create trajectories of opportunity require integrated and inclusive efforts on the part of city officials and planning professionals, school administrators and teachers, community and business leaders, parents and other adult residents, and (most important) young people themselves.

We use the idea of trajectories of opportunity as a lens to draw lessons from the literature and to analyze three cases of city-school place-making and educational improvement initiatives drawn from our action-oriented research. In this way we hope to better understand how to leverage and align mutually beneficial changes in both realms for comprehensive interventions aimed at creating trajectories of opportunity for young men and boys of color. We use trajectories of opportunity as an organizing concept to discuss our action-oriented research on city-school planning and policy initiatives. Our research aims to articulate ways of transforming difficult life trajectories into trajectories of opportunity. Achieving this profound transformation requires a full understanding of the complex neighborhood and educational landscapes young people and their families encounter as well as a recognition that neighborhoods and schools are intricately related.

As researchers and policymakers, we must take up the point of view of young people and their families and recognize how educational outcomes "do not exist in a vacuum"; rather, they are intricately tied to neighborhood conditions (DeShano da Silva et al. 2007: 4). We understand barriers associated with place and with educational opportunities as core to the patterns of poor life outcomes for disadvantaged individuals. Interventions need to look not only at education, but also at places, their built environments, and place-making strategies to improve them. Leveraging mutually

beneficial changes in both realms, comprehensive interventions will create trajectories of opportunity for young men and boys of color.

MAPPING THE LITERATURE

A growing number of disciplines inform our understanding of the factors that affect the well-being and life trajectories of all individuals, particularly young men and boys of color who live and go to school in low-income and underresourced communities. Since the early 1990s, researchers have increasingly turned their attention to how places and built environment factors have affected quality of life and measurable life outcomes. This growing body of literature broadens our knowledge of the roles that physical and social environments play in affording opportunity for some while erecting barriers for others. From this often disparate research, we are able to draw specific recommendations for better place-making strategies. We provide an overview of what we have come to recognize as the most important lessons to draw from the literature. Our trajectory-of-opportunity lens has focused our attention on two concerns: (1) built-environment factors that are especially relevant to the fate of young people; and (2) the ways that place-making efforts are deliberately being (re)structured to increase equity and opportunity.[2]

The Impact of Neighborhood Characteristics on Life and Health Outcomes

Researchers have long found connections between where people live and their life outcomes. Most notably, a strong correlation has been repeatedly found between residing in a neighborhood of concentrated poverty and poor life outcomes (Crane 1991; Wilson 1990; Yinger 1993). Poverty-concentrated neighborhoods tend to have poor-quality and unhealthy housing, low levels of ongoing public infrastructure investment, and little recent private-sector bricks-and-mortar investment (Orfield 2002; Dreier, Mollenkopf, and Swanstrom 2005). These neighborhoods typically have higher crime rates, poorer-performing schools, and fewer employment opportunities (Turner 2008). Middle- or upper-income families generally do not view these neighborhoods as desirable places in which to live or attend schools (McKoy and Vincent 2008). A growing "neighborhood effects" literature has examined the relationship between socioeconomic status life outcomes and neighborhoods, noting the important life trajectory relationships embedded in where one lives (Ellen and Turner 1997; Jencks and

Mayer 1990; Leventhal and Brooks-Gunn 2000). Socioeconomic status life outcomes are closely tied to race; in general, people of color are more likely than whites to live in neighborhoods that are poor and lack services and amenities. African Americans tend to be the most economically segregated of all groups (Ellen 2008).

Despite increasing evidence that neighborhood conditions play a role in shaping individual outcomes, much remains to be understood. For example, as the researchers Ingrid Gould Ellen and Margery Austin Turner (1997) have noted, the specific causal mechanisms remain unclear, including which neighborhood characteristics affect which outcomes and whether they affect different groups of people differently. Regarding young men and boys of color, this gray area remains a significant gap in the literature. A growing body of research finds a wide variety of health disparities experienced by individuals living in low-income and minority communities. Coauthors Dolores Acevedo-Garcia and Theresa L. Osypuk (2008: 208) have noted that "after taking into account individual-level factors, disadvantaged neighborhood environments (e.g., poverty concentration) have a detrimental effect on health outcomes, including mortality, child and adult physical and mental health, and health behaviors." They further argue that there is a growing need to link neighborhoods and health outcomes to four main issues: (1) neighborhood social relationships and norms; (2) community institutions and services; (3) direct environmental factors (for example, pollution) and indirect environmental factors that may influence health behaviors (such as access to healthy food); and (4) broader structural issues that affect neighborhoods (for example, residential segregation at the metropolitan level).

The built environment as a contributing factor to obesity and poor health has garnered increasing interest among research and health advocates (Jackson 2003; Sallis and Glanz 2006). Rising obesity rates in children in particular (and especially minority and low-income children) are partly due to decreased physical activity (Ewing et al. 2003; Killingsworth and Lamming 2001; Kann et al. 1998). Elements of urban form and the design of communities have been shown to promote or discourage physical activity, a key strategy for combating obesity (Yancey et al. 2007; Gordon-Larson et al. 2006) through walking and bicycling infrastructure, parks, trails, and other public recreational facilities (Frank et al. 2005; Saelens et al. 2003). Although these built-environment resources are effective in reducing obesity, creating them can be challenging, particularly in existing neighborhoods. The researcher Kristen Day (2003) has noted that the promotion of physical activity is frequently put on the back burner because of

the pressing need for better schools, increased job access, affordable housing, and improved safety in low-income neighborhoods. Social factors, including safety concerns and territoriality in the neighborhoods of many young men and boys of color, further inhibit opportunities for physical activity and need to be better understood in relation to built-environment elements (Lopez and Hynes 2006).

The disproportionate occurrences and effects of environmental pollution and obesity in low-income and minority communities have been found to be directly related to the built environment. Poverty-concentrated neighborhoods are more likely to be located near pollution sources (Bullard 1993) and have higher rates of obesity (Day 2003), both of which cause a host of debilitating and chronic health problems, including cancer, asthma, and diabetes. However, like the socioeconomic status–focused neighborhood-effects research, methodological problems limit a full understanding of the root issues that lead to negative life outcomes. It is clear, though, that these health threats that are at least in part a result of the built environment do affect individuals' life outcomes.

As the researcher Howard Frumkin (2002: 209) has written: "There is evidence that several of the specific health threats related to sprawl affect minority populations disproportionately. Air pollution is one example. Poor people and people of color are disproportionately impacted by air pollution for at least two reasons: (1) disproportionate exposure and (2) high prevalence of underlying diseases that increase susceptibility. Members of minority groups are relatively more exposed to air pollutants than whites, independent of income and urbanization. U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) data show that black people and Hispanics are more likely than white people to live in areas that violate air quality standards." In the words of scholar Robert Bullard (2002), poor "people of color and whites do not have the same opportunities to 'vote with their feet' and escape undesirable physical environments."

Research from a variety of perspectives investigating the relationship between where a person lives and socioeconomic status–related outcomes, health, and general life opportunities has found that built environments play important and unique roles in contributing to positive or negative outcomes. The Kirwan Institute for the Study of Race and Ethnicity at Ohio State University sums up the situation this way: "Unfortunately, many citizens are isolated from opportunity by patterns of residential segregation, exclusionary land use policies, sprawl and disinvestment in urban areas. Fifty years of social science research has demonstrated that racially isolated and economically poor neighborhoods restrict employ-

ment options for young people, contribute to poor health, expose children to extremely high rates of crime and violence, and house some of the least-performing schools. Neighborhood racial and economic segregation is segregation from opportunities critical to quality of life, financial stability and social advancement. Isolation and disinvestment threatens not only individuals and their families, but entire communities."[3] Recognizing that the literature has established a causal relationship between neighborhood characteristics and life and health outcomes of residents, we now raise the question of how principled interventions in each area can impact the other.

Smart-Growth and Regional-Equity Movements: A New Framework

Two urban-planning movements—"smart growth" and "regional equity"—have emerged to counter the prevailing land-use and built-environment trends of recent decades that have resulted in rapid, low-density suburban development and urban disinvestment. With an environmentally minded regional land-use planning approach, the smart-growth movement promotes higher-density, mixed-use development, infill development, transit and pedestrian transportation options, and natural resource conservation (Katz 2002). Regional equity advocates push smart growth further by incorporating planning strategies that alleviate the resource and conditional disparities found in different cities and neighborhoods across a metropolitan region (Pastor et al. 2000; Glover-Blackwell 2007; Glover-Blackwell and Treuhaft 2008).

The focus is on improving basic infrastructure, local educational assets, and residential quality of life in marginalized areas. For example, the Kirwan Institute's Opportunity Communities/Housing initiative "advocates affirmatively connecting marginalized populations to regional opportunity structures by improving housing mobility options and providing fair and effective public transportation and for managing sprawling growth, in order to reduce the drain of jobs and resources from existing communities."[4] Both the smart-growth and regional-equity frameworks aim to reduce the negative neighborhood effects on socioeconomic status and health described earlier by linking them to efficient land use, multimodal transportation access, and other sustainable development practices. Both movements emerged from and advanced the sustainability movement that began in earnest in the early 1980s (Katz, Scully, and Bressi 1994; Calthorpe 1993).

Consistent with our opportunity framework, researchers and advocates

in the smart-growth, regional-equity, and public-health fields are finding overlapping agendas and common ground related to educational improvement, sustainable transportation, social inclusion, human health, and efficient and environmentally responsible land use and development (see Great Communities Collaborative 2009; Glover-Blackwell and Treuhaft 2008; Bell and Rubin 2007; Fox and Glover Blackwell 2004; Proscio 2003). The overlapping agendas come from the growing research-based recognition of the interrelationship between various life outcomes (economic, health, educational, and so on) and factors of places and their built environments. Increasingly, the term "sustainable communities" is being used to encompass the variety of elements within these frameworks—linking neighborhoods, health, land use, economy, and environment.

As early as 1993, the President's Council on Sustainable Development defined sustainable communities as "healthy communities where natural and historic resources are preserved, jobs are available, sprawl is contained, neighborhoods are secure, education is lifelong, transportation and health care are accessible, and all citizens have opportunities to improve the quality of their lives" (cited in Srinivasan, O'Fallon, and Dreary 2003: 1,447). More recently, the Obama administration has released grant money for "multi-jurisdictional and multi-sector partnerships" on issues including economic development, land use, transportation, water infrastructure, and workforce development. The goal is to devise locally driven solutions that broaden opportunity for "access to good jobs, quality schools, and safe streets" (Donovan 2009).

These developments include a new focus on the role that built-environment interventions and urban-planning strategies can play in addressing complex social problems. The focus builds from metropolitan policy scholar Bruce Katz's (2005) notion of creating neighborhoods of "choice and connection," using complementary place- and people-based strategies while focusing on non–socioeconomic status quality-of-life indicators (including air quality, health, physical activity, and access to local services and amenities). In other words, interventions invest in the bricks and mortar of the built environment while simultaneously addressing people-based solutions aimed to invest in the human and social capital of residents.

As researchers Sacoby Wilson, Malo Hutson, and Mahasin Mujahid (2008: 214) have noted: "The time is now to challenge communities and cities across the country beset by fragmentation, environmental injustice, and health disparities to use zoning, planning, and community development to preserve urban landscapes, limit the distribution of pathogenic industries, and improve built environment conditions for urban popu-

lations." As the neighborhood-effects literature shows, and the smart-growth and regional-equity frameworks illustrate, tying together previously disconnected issues—such as land use and obesity or housing redevelopment and schools—and bringing together the stakeholders for coordinated action can lead to significant improvements for neighborhoods and individuals.

Uneven Geographies of Educational Opportunity Require More Than One-Dimensional Reform Efforts

The move within the educational literature from looking solely at the "achievement gap" to uncovering factors that create the "opportunity gap" points to three important policy-related reconceptualizations. First, it signals a realization that educators, policymakers, and community members (and not just students) are failing in achieving high-quality educational outcomes (DeShano da Silva et al. 2007: 231). The experience of the prominent educational researcher Michelle Fine and her collaborators found that "we have failed, some would argue refused, to dismantle the structures and guarantees of race and class privilege. A gap—which youth call an *opportunity gap*, not an achievement gap—is sewn into the seams of our national educational fabric" (Fine et al. 2004: 12; emphasis in original). The opportunity gap means that we need to support students in ways that do not assume they are the problem.

This shift in focus also signals that public education is not the panacea for America's woes, as many people believe. Historically, public schools were not only expected to mold citizens, teach practical skills, prepare for adulthood, and instill a capacity for critical thinking, but also overcome the opportunity gap for poor students and more (Miller 1999). It is increasingly clear, however, that gaps in educational opportunity not only mirror, but even widen, gaps in social equity. In some cases high-poverty students and ethnic minority students are twice as likely as low-poverty and majority students to be assigned inexperienced teachers who are new to the profession (Akiba, LeTendre, and Scribner 2007). Even when indicators suggest educational progress, there is reason to remain vigilant. For example, access to high-performing schools does not necessarily lead to higher-education attainment for students from low-income and minority communities (National Center for Education Statistics 1998; Camblin 2003). A closer look at college participation rates also reminds us that hard-won gains in the past do not guarantee continued success in the

future: gains made by black and Hispanic students relative to their white peers in the early seventies were effectively erased and reversed by the turn of the century, a trend that correlates with the decline of Pell Grants and other funding sources (St. John 2002).

Third, the shift from a focus on the achievement gap to that of the opportunity gap signals a recognition that confronting the multiple disadvantages facing many students requires a multidimensional framework and intervention. The retreat from affirmative action in the 1990s (Rendón 1998) and the heavy emphasis on accountability and standardized testing over the past decade has made educators and educational researchers increasingly concerned about the various kinds of barriers that limit access to educational resources and the need to go beyond issues of access to support the development of "winners" (DeShano da Silva et al. 2007: 76). This has proven to be the case when it comes to the relative experience and qualifications of mathematics teachers serving black and Latino students (Flores 2007: 27). The closer researchers look, the more disadvantages appear to multiply and accumulate: limited resources outside of school correlate with the least desirable locations and conditions within schools, while with low expectations and evaluations both occur within and outside of schools (Diamond 2006).

Improving educational outcomes in significant and lasting ways will therefore require more than one-dimensional reform efforts: the "challenge of providing equal opportunity calls for a collective response—the coordinated efforts and action of multiple players in the field of education" (DeShano da Silva et al. 2007: 231). Researchers William Brown and James Jones (2004: 268), for example, have found that students' perceptions of limited opportunity in the wider society were associated with lowered intrinsic motivation for academic work, with "clear implication for policy makers who insist that we 'leave no child behind' [being] that we must narrow the opportunity gap and continue to work to increase the educational, occupational, and social opportunities available to minorities." Like education researcher Sonia Nieto (1994), our work has led us to include students in the dialogue about expanding educational opportunities and "creating a chance to dream." Instead of focusing on their vulnerabilities, we need to focus on their resilience and the critical personal experiences that they bring to their educational settings. In sum, there is every reason to believe that young men and boys of color are not the problem, but an important part of the solution. Therefore, how can these young people play a constructive role in place-making efforts?

Authentic Youth Engagement in Integrated Planning Projects

Community participation in city planning and development efforts has a long history in the literature (Friedman 1987; Arnstein 1969). However, youth participation—especially the involvement of marginalized or disadvantaged youth—has received much less attention. The concept of "maximum feasible participation" was established with the Model Cities Act of 1966 after first appearing as a vague requirement in urban-renewal programs with the Housing Act of 1954. Aimed at ensuring that communities participate in defining interests and values for redevelopment, the process of eliciting and incorporating community input remained poorly understood until urban planner Sherry Arnstein's (1969) "Ladder of Citizen Participation" established participation typologies. The ladder's "rungs" correspond to the extent of citizens' power—that is, their ability to determine planning outcomes. The theory held that participation without some element of power redistribution leads to an empty, frustrating, and marginalizing process for communities.

Adapting Arnstein's ideas, researcher Roger Hart (1992 and 1997) has developed the "Ladder of Young People's Participation" as a tool for thinking about children and youth working with adults in community and environmental development projects. Such participation can be seen as "a process of involving youth in the institutions and the decisions that affect their lives. It includes initiatives to organize groups for social action, plan programs at the community level, and develop community-based services and resources. It is not a form of adult advocacy for local youth or of token representation of youth in the meetings of agencies, but a process through which young people solve problems and plan programs in the community" (Checkoway, Pothukuchi, and Finn 1995: 134).

Hart placed his ladder against the backdrop of "adultist" planning and decision making (Armstrong 1996) in which young people were seen as not having worthwhile voices to positively affect community change and thus were excluded from the planning process. Confronting "adultism" means scrutinizing the way we interact and communicate with young people, especially in community-development strategies. As youth participation proponents and researchers have argued, youth and adults should share in decision-making processes to create authentic and meaningful civic engagement that leads to a greater distribution of power among youth and adult partners (see Hart 1992; Checkoway, Pothukuchi, and Finn 1995; McKoy and Vincent 2007; Driskell 2002).

The rationale for involving young people—particularly those from disadvantaged communities—in community-improvement efforts is multifaceted and complex. We point to three important dimensions of this work. From a city-planning and community-development perspective, greater involvement by a diverse set of stakeholders—including children and youth—ultimately results in better decisions that create better cities (Driskell 2002). Second, from an educational and youth-development perspective, authentic youth participation in planning can be an essential component of project-based learning because the activity has real and direct meaning, relevance, and potential impact on the world rather than being an exercise in hypothetical problem solving (McKoy and Vincent 2007; Archibald and Newmann 1989).

Youth participation supports two key indicators for positive engagement of young men and boys of color: (1) engagement in civil society and community-building activities; and (2) engagement in academic and educational enrichment activities (Davis, Kilburn, and Schultz 2009). When structured appropriately with adequate adult support and authentic access to decision makers, young people's participation can result in a greater sense of belonging to adult communities and long-term access to the "trajectories of participation" that define these communities (Lave and Wenger 1991). Third, from a professional-development perspective, an authentic process shared with young people transforms city-planning and community-development practitioners by changing the way adults view themselves and their work (McKoy and Vincent 2007; Fine et al. 2004).

Partnership-driven Problem Solving

As understanding grows about the interrelated nature of many social and economic challenges, particularly regarding children and youth, cross-sector partnerships of public, private, and nonprofit actors are no longer a radical idea but a practical imperative. Given the multidimensional framework described earlier, in many cases institutional actors are coming together in new ways; in other cases new configurations and systems of governance have been created to ensure multidimensional interventions are realized. These configurations draw actors from beyond government agencies, blur traditional boundaries and responsibilities, suggest more consensus-building roles for formerly static government agencies, and call for new ways to measure and track success (see Innes, Di Vittorio, and Booher 2009; Briggs 2003; Innes and Booher 1999; Chaskin 2001; Stoker 1998).

These types of partnerships are increasingly common in place-making efforts looking to improve built environments and life trajectories. Because attempts to transform the built environment in communities have long relied on processes that harness the public, private, and nonprofit institutions that regulate and invest in bricks and mortar, these new approaches to governance have the potential to play an instrumental role in addressing the uneven geographies of opportunity and the opportunity gap. At the same time, multiagency, cross-sector partnerships prove to be immensely challenging, and researchers have studied these partnerships to understand their governance structures, successes, and failures. In many cases institutional actors are coming together that at best have little history of collaboration and at worst have adversarial relationships.

The federal government is currently playing a major role in promoting these types of place-making partnerships. Under the Obama administration both the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) and the U.S. Department of Education are focused on their complementary roles in structuring opportunity for young people and families, particularly in urban schools and neighborhoods. HUD secretary Shaun Donovan (2009) has expressed his commitment to "creating a geography of opportunity for all Americans," while education secretary Arne Duncan (2009) is similarly committed to "closing the opportunity gap more than the achievement gap. . . . Education is the dividing line between the haves and the have-nots." In the words of Secretary Donovan (2009), "Building communities in a more integrated and inclusive way isn't separate from advancing social and economic justice and the promise of America: it's absolutely essential to it."

The lessons we have drawn from the literature sharpen our understanding of how integrated and inclusive approaches to structuring physical and social environments can afford young men and boys of color the means of finding their way through landscapes that otherwise present social, economic, and educational challenges. We call those means trajectories of opportunity. Next we illustrate how such efforts are confronting the uneven geographies of educational opportunity in Bay Area communities.

CASE STUDIES: BUILDING TRAJECTORIES OF OPPORTUNITY WITH AND FOR YOUNG PEOPLE

We turn our attention to three cases of city-school partnership initiatives in the San Francisco Bay Area. Each case not only involves formal partnerships between city agencies and public school districts but, critically, also

involves young people in the urban revitalization process. These initiatives are part of the multiyear action research effort known as the PLUS (Planning and Learning United for Systems Change) Leadership Initiative of the Center for Cities and Schools (CC&S). Through this initiative CC&S partners with more than fifty educational, community, and civic leaders in the region to provide capacity-building assistance to, and documentation of, the development of collaborative, mutually beneficial policies and practices aimed at improving the life trajectories of disadvantaged residents, particularly young people. CC&S provides technical assistance, convenes institutes, and conducts research for these cross-sector partners. As part of these efforts, CC&S also facilitates a Social Enterprise for Learning (SEFL) initiative known as Y-PLAN (Youth—Plan, Learn, Act, Now!). An award-winning program, Y-PLAN engages young people as authentic stakeholders in local community-development projects through their high school curriculum (McKoy and Vincent 2007).

The cases come from three of the Bay Area's most historied cities: Richmond, Emeryville, and Bayview/Hunters Point. In Richmond, NURVE (Nystrom United Revitalization Effort) partners—the City of Richmond, the Richmond Housing Authority, the Bay Area Local Initiatives Support Corporation (LISC), the Richmond Children's Foundation, the West Contra Costa Unified School District, and others—are working to create a safe, diverse, and thriving place in one of the region's poorest communities. The focus is on redevelopment of Nystrom Elementary School and adjacent community space, parks, and public housing. The second case comes from the small, former industrial city of Emeryville, where city and school district leaders have partnered to redevelop an existing secondary school site into the Emeryville Center of Community Life, a jointly used facility that will include K–12 schools and city-run health, wellness, recreation, and other activities. The third case comes from one of the most isolated neighborhoods in San Francisco, Bayview/Hunters Point. Driven by the mayor's Office of Housing and the San Francisco Housing Authority, efforts are underway to transform the city's most distressed public-housing sites into thriving, mixed-income neighborhoods.

In Bayview/Hunters Point the housing agencies are working with the San Francisco Unified School District to ensure that all new housing development, local school renovations, and park and community space redevelopment activities are aligned to improve educational outcomes and increase neighborhood desirability. Together, these cases reveal important lessons about how multiagency, cross-sector partnership-based place-making efforts include innovations in the built environment of distressed

neighborhoods and schools and increase the trajectories of opportunity for young people. They also show us that young people are helping their adult allies bring about these innovations.

Case One: Nystrom Urban Revitalization Effort (NURVE)

"When I first moved here," recalled U.T., a youth council member, "I heard a gunshot every night, like in the movies. . . . I used to think what you see in the movies is fake but it's not."[5] Located in the East Bay, sixteen miles northeast of San Francisco, Richmond is home to about a hundred thousand residents. The city has a rich African American history, with generations of families dedicating their lives to building what was once one of the most important industrial centers in the region. This is especially true of Richmond's Nystrom neighborhood, named after John Nystrom, a nineteenth-century civic leader and member of Richmond's first local school board. The neighborhood became the site of great industrial and economic activity in the early twentieth century because of its proximity to the Kaiser shipyards. The area took on a critical importance during World War II because of its shipbuilding and manufacturing capabilities. Richmond also pioneered the country's first publicly supported childcare center for working mothers, as well as the first HMO.[6]

Since World War II, however, Richmond and Nystrom have faced significant economic challenges. While buttressed by some of the wealthiest communities in the Bay Area, Richmond is now one of the poorest communities.[7] The Santa Fe and Coronado neighborhoods around Nystrom Elementary School are among the most impoverished in Richmond. This distressed area is now home to low-income families, below-average school performance (with a high school graduation rate of only 28 percent), and outdated, unsafe, and underutilized community spaces; it is plagued by violence, drugs, and gang activity.[8]

Launched in 2001, NURVE brought together a dozen institutional stakeholders in an effort spearheaded by Bay Area LISC and the East Bay Community Foundation. NURVE's mission is "to create a safe, diverse and thriving place, where kids walk to quality schools, people of all ages use the parks and community facilities, and a variety of housing options meet the needs of local residents." Partners include the city of Richmond, the Richmond Housing Authority (RHA), the Richmond Children's Foundation (RCF), the West Contra Costa Unified School District (WCCUSD), local neighborhood councils, and residents. Stakeholders from professional planners to community members and young people worked together to

identify urgent issues and needs. Through more than fifteen million dollars in capital building projects, programming and community partnerships, and greater connections among stakeholders, NURVE aims to revitalize the economy and improve quality of life in the area surrounding Nystrom Elementary and the Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. Park. NURVE's guiding theory of change is that "neighborhood change happens at the nexus of people, place, and collaborative practice." For the Nystrom neighborhood, change has not only taken the form of capital improvement projects but also in historic levels of commitment by the city, WCCUSD, and other community partners working together for the good of the entire community.

NURVE emerged from the conviction that changes in the built environment are key to a community's revitalization and transformation. NURVE partners are working to align the planning of four large capital development projects, each driven by a different lead entity. The Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. Park comprises twelve acres of open space at the corner of Harbour Way and Cutting Boulevard. Despite its prominent and well-trafficked location, the park has been underutilized for years. NURVE will transform the space into a vibrant park and neighborhood centerpiece, attracting sports leagues and community programs with amenities including a regulation track, senior area, open space, and equipment. Community feedback and youth-generated recommendations have been included in the plans. This project is fully funded (through a Murray-Hayden urban youth services grant and support from the Parks and Recreation Department, NFL/LISC Grassroots Programs, and the Oakland Raiders), and construction begins in spring 2010. The city is also undertaking intensive streetscape improvements for Harbour Way, incorporating such traffic calming measures as altering lane configurations, paving, and sidewalk upgrades. The city has worked closely with the district to ensure that designs of the park space and the adjacent renovated elementary school are complementary.

Nystrom Elementary School, built in 1942, is outdated and in poor condition. The physical structure of the building does not meet American with Disabilities Act standards, and the school was slated for closure at the end of 2009. Using local bond money, WCCUSD is undertaking a historic renovation of the main building, building a new multipurpose facility, modernizing both wings of the school, and creating new access ways, parking lots, playgrounds, and landscape work. WCCUSD architects worked with the city to reorient the new multipurpose room in the Nystrom neighborhood to maximize joint use by members of the school community and patrons of the park. The Richmond Housing Authority is leading another major capital project, Nystrom Village, which originally provided housing for

workers in the Kaiser shipyards. Currently, the village consists of 102 family units built in 1943. RHA plans to replace these substandard structures with 212 affordable-housing rental units, 150 new senior units, and 39 homeownership units. Based on smart-growth and regional-equity principles, the new Nystrom Village project increases affordable and quality housing that will include both mixed-use and mixed-income development.

The Maritime Center is home to the first publicly supported childcare center in the nation; it is named in the congressional legislation that established this building as part of the Rosie the Riveter National Historic site. Built in 1943, the building will be renovated as part of RHA's Nystrom Redevelopment Project, undertaken in conjunction with the National Parks Service (NPS). The center will not only continue its proud tradition of offering quality childcare; it will also include spaces for community meetings and other activities. Portions of the building are also likely to be leased by the Richmond Children's Foundation for its preschool program and by NPS for its interpretive center.

While capital projects lay the physical foundation of neighborhood revitalization, civic leaders recognize that connecting to and engaging the community is critical to realize and sustain the vision of NURVE: creating a vibrant Nystrom community. Since 2007, Y-PLAN has provided a vehicle to build the capacity of young people to participate in this neighborhood change by bringing together the adult leaders of NURVE and students at Kennedy High School. Throughout this work participating students put great emphasis on race, the history of their changing neighborhood, and the importance of listening to and understanding the needs of young people. Although Richmond in general and the Nystrom neighborhood specifically is increasingly comprised of low-income Latino and new immigrant families, the Y-PLAN project-based learning activities that took place with majority Latino eleventh-grade students in their U.S. history class helped these young planners recognize and appreciate Nystrom's past as a thriving African American industrial community.

In proposals presented to NURVE partners, students called for greater amenities and services for themselves and their families. They articulated the connections between the built environment and the social amenities they need to support their personal and collective aspirations. These young planners proposed new ideas for safe pathways and recreational fields, with a network of "blue light" telephones for quick access to police services. They asked for adult English language classes and job training for their families and bilingual tutoring assistance for their peers. They presented proposals that honored the legacy of their neighborhood as home

to Rosie the Riveter and the first women shipbuilders in World War II; the students also lobbied for the historical preservation of the local public-housing development and the first childcare center in the nation.

Participating adult allies—including the mayor, city council members, the city manager, and others—have adapted their understanding and the vision of the NURVE project priorities and needs accordingly. Residents and families feel more confident that redevelopment will not mean gentrification and displacement. Seeing how such a project can lead to the realization of their vision for the neighborhood, young planners have organized a youth council to continue their involvement in the physical and social transformation of their community. As the executive director of the Richmond Children's Foundation noted: "It is largely the visible role of young people that has kept all parties coming back to the table and accountable to each other."[9] As a result, residents and stakeholder group leaders are motivated to move forward because they agree that the future of the community depends in large measure on supporting the next generation of residents.

To realize its aim, NURVE partners see the improvement of the physical neighborhood as a way to catalyze positive change through reduction in crime, expansion of educational opportunities, increased community capacity, increase in business investment and the tax base, encouragement of workforce development, and promotion of improved health. Ensuring successful implementation of this complex menu of services has required the development of new policies, innovative practices, and tremendous leadership. City and district leaders have been organizing joint meetings, sharing information in new ways, and coordinating their work on a day-to-day level. As in other initiatives of this kind, coordinated and consistent leadership has been a major challenge for NURVE. The Richmond Children's Foundation, with extensive support from the Bay Area LISC, has met this challenge by playing the role of intermediary. This has not been easy, as managing such a range of stakeholders from diverse institutions takes time, patience, and commitment. A new executive director of RCF has restored confidence to the project, in large part through her and her board's recognition of the youth council and the vital role played by young people. Coupled with the work of the city and district, these community institutions have come together to move NURVE forward.

Three key lessons have emerged from the Richmond case. First, formal written codification of the partnership can play a role in moving these types of multiagency, cross-sector partnerships forward. The leading NURVE stakeholders have entered into a partnership memorandum of understand-

ing (MOU) that articulates the shared goals and outlines each agency's core responsibilities to the partnership. In addition, the city and school district have entered into a more specific joint use agreement (JUA) that negotiates the terms for the entities sharing the fields on the nearby school sites. Second, young people can play a pivotal role in increasing community-level engagement in these types of multifaceted redevelopment efforts. Third, "third party" entities can play crucial roles in creating, managing, and sustaining constant communication among the many agency partners and community members. Essential to this role is incorporating the feedback of the many stakeholders into the planning processes, including the formal partnership documents such as the MOU.

Case Two: The Emeryville Center of Community Life

"The collaboration of cities and schools together isn't something that is supported legally," Pat O'Keeffe, Emeryville city manager, has said, "so we've had to look at special legislation in order to facilitate some of the joint aspects of the project." Emeryville is a 1.2-square mile, bustling urban city of about ten thousand residents in the heart of the San Francisco Bay Area, wedged between Berkeley, Oakland, and the bay. The city's population is relatively young, with a median age of 35.2. Sixty-three percent of Emeryville's residents are renters. As in Richmond, Emeryville's economy was originally industrial; today, however, Emeryville is home to many new-economy businesses, including such major corporations as Novartis and Pixar. On any given weekday Emeryville's population more than doubles as nonresidents stream into the city for some twenty thousand jobs. Emeryville has a diverse and evolving landscape; as a result of its growing economy over the past two decades, the city has seen tremendous growth in housing, retail, and community space.

Although Emeryville is relatively small, it faces some big-city challenges. The city boasts tremendous resources as a result of its burgeoning economy, but it suffers from a great divide between the newer, wealthier "loft dwellers" and the longer-standing residents—primarily families of color who tend to be lower-income homeowners, residing on the north and east sides of the city. City leaders, residents, commuters, and students have come to describe this situation as "the two Emeryvilles." The services and amenities that these "two Emeryvilles" require often diverge; in no place is that clearer than in the strategies and offerings of the school district. Emery Unified School District (EUSD) serves about eight hundred students at its two schools: Anna Yates Elementary (grades K–6) and Emery Secondary

School (grades 7–12). Approximately 80 percent of EUSD students qualify for free or reduced-price lunch, indicating that they come from families living in poverty. Although the city is racially diverse, approximately 97 percent of the enrollment in the EUSD are students of color, with 57 percent of students identifying as African American.[10] Recently coming out from under a state takeover for fiscal mismanagement and low academic performance, the EUSD is seeking to make significant improvements to its educational system by becoming a more integral part of planning and visioning Emeryville's growth and revitalization with the city.

The district is improving academically in the process. In 2009 the Board of Education passed a new set of goals for all students in the district, aligning K–12 course content and admission standards to meet the entrance standards of California colleges and universities. In addition to enhancing in-class academic activities, the district partners with local businesses, including Novartis and Pixar, for internships and mentor programs. While the elementary school is experiencing consistent improvement, Emery Secondary School still struggles to meet state standards and adequately prepare students for college matriculation and retention. District leadership has asserted a bold vision that integrating with revitalization of Emeryville can support the academic improvements in the school.

The city and district have come together on a number of initiatives out of a shared commitment to provide comprehensive services to youth in the city. Leaders in Emeryville have a deep understanding of the interwoven strands of physical and social infrastructure. The development of the city's Youth Services Master Plan in 2002 launched a joint city and school district visioning process, laying the foundation for the ongoing planning processes and attendant strategic plans. This effort has produced the vision for the Emeryville Center of Community Life (ECCL), an innovative multipurpose, joint use facility that will house Emeryville's K–12 public schools along with a childcare facility, a recreation center offering both indoor and outdoor activities, an arts center for visual and performing arts, and a forum that will provide community services focused on wellness, health, and other areas. According to project publications, the ECCL "creates a new framework for a 21st-century urban place where we will play, learn, grow, and come together as a community. By offering a variety of educational, recreational, cultural, and social opportunities, as well as services and programs that support lifelong learning and healthy lifestyles, the Center will transform the quality of life of all Emeryville citizens."[11]

Only after the city and district collaboratively laid a clear roadmap of social and recreation services did the idea for the ECCL emerge. The

vision evolved to create the physical infrastructure that could best house and facilitate the social, recreational, and educational services that the city and district provide to all students and families. The school district has recently completed the renovation of the elementary school, and the city has updated its recreation center. The quality of community and school facilities—and the physical landscape of the city as a whole—is of primary importance for many of Emeryville's city and education leaders as they consider how to improve the city's vibrancy and how to boost the life chances and opportunities for residents, students, and their families.

Since 2006, Y-PLAN has engaged more than seventy-five students in the conceptualization and development of the Emeryville Center of Community Life, along with a range of other city and regional planning and revitalization projects. Students gathered the data they needed to identify and define issues that reflect the "two Emeryvilles." City and school leaders now envision a unified and integrated Emeryville that brings diverse residents together by integrating city and district recreation, social, and educational services in common physical spaces. Y-PLAN participants identified top priorities that school and city leaders have been able to implement in the short term—offering nursing and counseling services, healthy cafeteria food, and other youth resources and activities. Beyond specific programming suggestions, city and district leaders discuss how to create an open and welcoming ECCL, local business community, and government culture to address concerns that students had about feeling judged and alienated from these sectors of the "other Emeryville."

The intensive youth participation in the planning and visioning of the ECCL has served to open up city government to a broader cross-section of the community. The mayor and city council members recognized that the first Y-PLAN presentation in city council chambers in 2006 marked a turning point. It was the first time the council chambers room was filled with families of color. Y-PLAN served an important role in opening up formal policymaking processes to an underrepresented constituency of residents and stakeholders.

In addition to providing input on the design of and programming for the ECCL, students advocated for a long-term and sustained voice in the planning and development process. In response, the city and district have restructured several working committees to include youth representation. This transformation mirrors the work city and district leaders have undertaken on joint decision making and governance in general. The City-Schools Committee, made up of all school board and city council mem-

bers, meets monthly and is an operating committee fielding all partnership and joint decision-making issues. A student representative now sits on the City-Schools Committee, selected through an application process managed jointly by school and city stakeholders. The committee is the body that formally adopted the Youth Services Master Plan and all subsequent ECCL conceptual plans and vision statements. In Emeryville the original Youth Services Master Plan laid out roles and responsibilities for city agencies and the school district. The city has a joint use lease agreement to use the district's playing fields and gymnasium space for after-school and evening city-run recreation programs. The superintendent and the city manager now have a weekly meeting to brief each other on activities and to strategize about major collaborative projects.

Beyond improved processes locally, the ECCL has already had statewide implications. In 2009 state legislators passed AB1080, which changes the California education code to allow greater flexibility for cities and districts to "co-house" their programming in one building. Finally, as the planning for the ECCL enters its final phase, city and district leaders are actively researching the types of governance structures necessary to operate and maintain the ECCL. Leaders are discussing developing a constitution-like document to guide the partnership and evolving the current City-Schools Committee and community advisory groups to ensure that the ECCL embodies the spirit of collaboration and seamless service provision in perpetuity.

Three key lessons have emerged from the Emeryville case. First, this case points to the fact that cross-sector, multiagency partnerships are forming new kinds of governance structures as they forge ahead. The City-Schools Committee and the regular meetings between the superintendent and the city manager have ensured project progress, while the Youth Services Master Plan and the joint use agreement provide shared codification of targets and responsibilities. As Emeryville leaders have come to recognize, the governance structure will likely need to evolve over the course of the partnership, particularly when the ECCL opens its doors. Second, the participation of young people has again played a critical role. Similar to NURVE, young people have not only formalized their participation through the youth council and informed the planning processes through their research, but they have also bridged long-standing divisions within the community. Finally, academic improvements must be central, simultaneously pursued goals in revitalization efforts to ensure strong buy-in from schools and the school district. In Emeryville's case this was done in part

through the district stepping up its educational offerings and by the district and city working together to align social-service provisions for students as part of the redevelopment planning.

Case Three: HOPE SF in Bayview/Hunters Point

"We all make these incredible choices about where we're going to live based on schools, transportation, and whatnot," Doug Shoemaker, director of the mayor's Office of Housing has said, "and now we're rediscovering all that as we think about what we need to do in the HOPE SF neighborhoods."[12] Launched in 2007 by Mayor Gavin Newsom and now driven by the mayor's Office of Housing and the San Francisco Housing Authority, HOPE SF represents a unique opportunity to take a systemic approach to educational improvement and housing redevelopment. HOPE SF seeks to transform San Francisco's most distressed public-housing sites into vibrant, thriving communities.

Modeled on the national HOPE VI initiative, HOPE SF is revitalizing eight public-housing developments, transforming blighted neighborhoods into mixed-income developments that include new affordable and market-rate homes as well as parks and other public amenities for residents and neighbors alike. The initiative recognizes that all families need and deserve the opportunity to have safe, high-quality housing and neighborhoods and good educational options for their children. It also recognizes that creating successful mixed-income communities requires collaboration, and to this end city leaders are working alongside educational leaders from the San Francisco Unified School District (SFUSD). Aligned with the citywide commitment of the mayor's team is a bold vision for the SFUSD defined by the superintendent's office. The vision is articulated in a strategic plan to close the achievement gap by closing the opportunity gap that students face across the district but especially in the Bayview/Hunters Point neighborhoods.

The mayor's Office of Housing and SFUSD are working together to ensure that all new housing redevelopment, school renovations, and park/community space development are planned and executed collaboratively. To provide extended educational opportunities for residents, the team has made joint use of HOPE SF local school and community facilities a priority. At Hunters View, the first HOPE SF site, the city and a nonprofit after-school provider have a lease on SFUSD land adjacent to the local elementary school called YouthPark. The HOPE SF team has hired a third party to facilitate a process on how to renew or transform that arrangement to maximize the school and community facilities.

HOPE SF started as a mayoral initiative. The day-to-day work across agencies, and the partnerships between city employees and community members, can be challenging and contentious. At pivotal moments, however, student vision and involvement have brought diverse stakeholders together and have focused participants' attention on systemic improvements for future generations. This was certainly the case in Hunters View, where classes of third- and fourth-grade students from Malcolm X Academy engaged in community mapping and developed visions and design proposals for the HOPE SF revitalization project, presenting their ideas to the development team and city and district leaders. The mayor's Office of Housing subsequently launched a citywide youth engagement strategy for all HOPE SF sites. As the director of policy in the mayor's Office of Housing noted, "Young people of all ages are the key to a vibrant future."[13] In addition to making significant contributions in their neighborhoods and beyond, the work of these young planners was integrated with their core academic work while cultivating stewardship of and personal responsibility for their community.

Although the physical design and layout of each HOPE SF development site is important, so too are the street and transportation connections to the rest of the city and to regional networks. Many of these public-housing communities are physically isolated from educational and employment opportunities. Teams of nationally renowned developers are working on the four HOPE SF sites that are currently in planning or implementation stages; these experts are creating neighborhoods with new housing, open space, quality streets, and paths for pedestrians and bicyclists. Developers will focus on using innovative green-building techniques and on connecting these developments to the broader San Francisco community. HOPE SF partners are also working toward "people-based" interventions, including workforce development, enhanced educational opportunities, and targeted social-service delivery that will work to overcome the opportunity gap that so many communities face. For example, the SFUSD office of 21st-Century Learning offers a range of programs and school site supports from preschool through college. Such programs as Career Technical Education have long-standing partnerships with San Francisco City College and San Francisco State University to facilitate access to higher education. The HOPE SF initiative is creating an internship and jobs pipeline for youth at each of the development sites.

San Francisco's Department of Children, Youth, and Their Families (DCYF) funds the majority of community-based organizations that provide social services and supplemental and enrichment activities within and

apart from schools. Key to this effort is not only the physical revitalization of these neighborhoods, but also the provision of quality services and amenities to support current members of this community and to attract future residents. As part of their funding requirements, DCYF increasingly asks its nonprofit grantees to align their programs and outcomes to SFUSD and school site goals to support academic outcomes of the students they serve. Because research shows the parent engagement in school is a critical factor in student achievement, in Hunters View, for example, the city funds "Parent University," which builds the capacity of parents around issues of early childhood development, childcare, social services, and school readiness.

HOPE SF leaders have prioritized information-sharing with residents. Information about the HOPE SF developments and the other social, recreational, and educational opportunities available is critical for all residents—young and old. Limited access to this information can be one of the greatest barriers to success—in school, work, and community. Recognizing this need, the district has created an interactive Web site for its strategic plan (see http://beyondthetalk.org) that allows parents and community members to post questions and comments, to which staff members respond promptly. The HOPE SF team has also launched a new Web site (http://hope-sf.org/), which provides updated information about specific projects and the initiative as a whole. The Hunters View development team and SFUSD have worked together to leverage opportunities for sharing information. For example, SFUSD now provides information to the public housing Tenants' Association, and likewise, the development team has created FAQ sheets on the project for teachers and parents at the nearby elementary school.

Three key lessons have emerged from the San Francisco case. First, the stated commitment of agency leaders is critical; the commitment of leaders at the highest level in the city and district is a key step to sustained alignment across agencies to meet the ambitious goals of HOPE SF and SFUSD's Strategic Plan. Second, the contributions of the elementary school students to the planning process was done through their classroom work, making it connected to their core academic work while cultivating stewardship of and personal responsibility for their community. Third, the sharing of information across agencies and with community members plays a number of crucial roles, including bolstering agency leadership and staff capacity and increasing opportunities to participate in the planning process and to access services and programs for community residents.

CONCLUSION: FINDINGS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Insights from both the literature and our action-oriented research on local city-school district initiatives help us understand the complex relationship among place-making, people, and policies that conspire to perpetuate the inequitable and too often dire situations that low-income communities of color, and particularly young men and boys of color, face today. Uneven geographies of opportunity and the educational opportunity gap routinely converge and limit individuals' abilities and hinder their efforts to get ahead. Remedying this situation requires concerted efforts to address these inequities in comprehensive, aligned, and practical ways.

We have seen how diverse factors work to undermine isolated efforts to redress the negative impacts of living and learning in the wrong place at the wrong time: despite the best intentions, one-dimensional solutions to complex problems invariably fall short. Neighborhood-effects researchers have focused on understanding the ways in which physical and social environments affect socioeconomic status and life outcomes. Similarly, public-health researchers have looked at how social and built environments influence health outcomes. The smart-growth and regional-equity literature focuses on the impact of the built environment on community development and on the policies and planning practices grounded in environmentalism and social equity that help create these environments.

By focusing on the opportunity gap, educators have signaled an important shift away from dealing with symptoms and toward the underlying causes of the growing educational achievement gap. Youth engagement and participatory planning highlight the contributions that young people can make to collective efforts to plan and build healthy environments for themselves and future generations. The era of partnership-driven, innovative governance has arrived, with a focus on developing policies, institutions, and organizational arrangements that directly affect places and people simultaneously. Bringing these disparate fields together suggests new planning practices to create and structure innovative opportunities for young people so they may navigate the urban and educational terrain in positive and forward-looking ways.

The three case studies illustrate that innovations in neighborhood and school built environments play an integral role and can catalyze the social components of place-making efforts, such as intentional community outreach or investments in workforce development. Whether the initial driver for the local project was investing in massive neighborhood infrastructure

in Richmond, improving youth services in Emeryville, or transforming public housing in San Francisco—city-school initiatives have harnessed the power of place-making. Such initiatives have resulted in coordinated interventions in the physical and social environments. Investments in buildings, education, social services, economic development, and so on that are merely parallel, but not strategically aligned, are not enough to create true trajectories of opportunity for residents and young people. Authentic place-making builds human relations that support the transformation not only of neighborhoods, but also of the ways young people see themselves as actors in their communities, of the manner in which city and school leaders communicate with each other and the public, and of the combined impact of public institutions—all of which results in lasting, systemic change. As the multiyear initiatives described demonstrate, and as the "silo-ed" nature of the scholarship reflects, achieving this level of systemic change is by no means simple. Next we provide an evidence-based framework and a set of recommendations to move toward the systemic change needed to create these robust trajectories of opportunity for those most in need.

TRAJECTORIES OF OPPORTUNITY: A FRAMEWORK FOR ACTION

Creating true trajectories of opportunity requires a concerted effort to align and leverage innovations with respect to place-making, people, and policies. To this end, we recommend three distinct yet mutually reinforcing strategies.

1. *Align innovations in the built environment: Integrate changes in schools, housing, and neighborhoods.* To create trajectories of opportunity, particularly for young men and boys of color, place-making efforts and built-environment innovations can and should play strategic roles. Large capital improvement projects can serve as a catalyst for multiagency, cross-sector partnerships to align the improvement of neighborhoods and schools simultaneously. In Richmond we saw how capital improvement projects have effectively catalyzed collective action for change in ways that have transcended historical divides. In Emeryville we saw how a community divided is being transformed into a community united around facilities especially designed for multiple school and community-serving uses. In San Francisco innovation took the form of connecting distressed neighborhoods to the city's regional geography of opportunity.

Collaborative efforts to transform the physical environment can result in significant changes in the social environment. Distressed communities benefit when they are connected to regional geographies of opportunity.

2. *Harness innovations in educational practice: Engage students and schools in urban planning and place-making.* Place-making strategies that aim to connect community and school improvement should be structured to maximize the authentic participation of young people. Young people can be a vital link between redevelopment institutions and low-income residents. Even students at the elementary-school level can play a significant role in their communities' revitalization efforts, draw attention to the assets and special needs of the present, and envision a brighter future for themselves and their community. In Richmond young planners honored the past while drawing attention to present assets and needs. In Emeryville students not only contributed substantive vision to a physical development project, but they also spurred critical conversation around deeply entrenched race and class divides in their city. In San Francisco, when tensions mounted among institutional stakeholders, children's voices brought people together to diffuse the situation. When youth are invited to be legitimate participants in neighborhood and school redevelopment projects, parents and other adult residents are drawn into the process and therefore in a position to make contributions themselves.
3. *Establish innovations in governance: Cultivate leadership and institutionalize collaborative policymaking practices.* To align place-making efforts to establish robust trajectories of opportunity—and engage young people in the process—multiagency, cross-sector partnership-based planning and governance structures need to be established and institutionalized to address complex, intertwined problems. City-school initiatives can transform a divided community into one united around safe, healthy neighborhoods with access to high-quality educational and community facilities. Formal agreements, leadership at all levels, shared responsibility, systems for internal and external communication are vital components of cross-agency communication. Leaders in Richmond have finalized a memorandum of understanding that includes all institutional stakeholders and outlines roles and responsibilities moving forward. Emeryville is actively investigating the best way to set up collaborative governance of their new ECCL, with a clearly defined

role for community stakeholders and young people. Finally, in San Francisco both the city and the district are seizing the power of digital technology, launching a new HOPE SF Web site and maintaining the interactive "Beyond the Talk" site that allows for both cross-agency and community accountability.

In all three cases leaders are making strides to ensure that vision for change is held from the top leadership of mayors and superintendents to program and school site staff to community residents and young people. Local, regional, and state stakeholders as well as federal agencies have shown an increasing commitment to adopt integrated and inclusive initiatives in response to the inequitable, unhealthy, and unsustainable situations facing many communities today. Young men and boys of color in particular need city and school officials and other community leaders to make the most of this historical moment. Agencies from the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development and the U.S. Department of Education to local municipalities and school boards are demonstrating a willingness to stand shoulder-to-shoulder as never before. Their success will ultimately rest not merely on the commitment expressed, but on the demonstrated transformation of policies and practices that create aligned and coherent place-making interventions and invest in the capacity and support of people and in the vibrancy of the built environments they navigate. Only then will we see systemic change that creates true trajectories of opportunity and structures success for young people—particularly young men and boys of color.

NOTES

1. Researchers Shobha Srinivasan, Liam O'Fallon, and Allen Dreary (2003: 1,446) have defined the built environment as including "our homes, schools, workplaces, parks/recreation areas, business areas and roads. It extends overhead in the form of electric transmission lines, underground in the form of waste disposal sites and subway trains, and across the country in the form of highways. The built environment encompasses all buildings, spaces and products that are created or modified by people. It impacts indoor and outdoor physical environments (for example, climatic conditions and indoor/outdoor air quality), as well as social environments (for example, civic participation, community capacity and investment) and subsequently our health and quality of life."

2. As far as built-environment factors that are especially relevant to the fate of young people, we have in mind the four broad individual outcome domains identified by the RAND Corporation (Davis, Kilburn, and Schultz 2009) (socioeconomic, health, safety, and ready to learn), the components of healthy communities (physical and mental health, community and work, education, and positive engage-

ment), and the "root causes" of the unique combination of disparities impacting young men and boys of color (housing patterns, assets and wealth, access to care, representation in custodial systems, educational achievement, violence and trauma, family and community stability, and employment/income) proposed by the California Endowment's 2009 Boys and Men of Color Initiative.

3. This quotation is from the Kirwan Institute for the Study of Race and Ethnicity, available online at http://kirwaninstitute.org/research/opportunity-communities housing/index.php.

4. Ibid.

5. These NURVE case study details come in part from research conducted by Samir Bolar and J. April Suwalsky, PLUS fellows with the Center for Cities and Schools.

6. See the City of Richmond's "Black History Corner" Web site, at http://www .ci.richmond.ca.us/index.aspx?NID=1137.

7. The median household income is $50,346, and the average household size is 2.81. About a quarter of adults over age twenty-five are high school graduates, while another quarter (combined) hold bachelor's and graduate degrees. Major employers include Chevron U.S.A., Inc., the Permanente Medical Group, and Walmart (U.S. Census Bureau, American Community Survey, 2005–2007).

8. The West Contra Costa Unified School District (WCCUSD) serves a total enrollment of more than thirty thousand students; 62 percent of students qualify for free or reduced-price meals, 84 percent of all enrolled students are of color, and 33 percent of enrolled students are English language learners (ELL). WCCUSD continues to strive to address such issues as staff turnover, poor school performance, and low graduation rates. According to the 2007–08 District Profile, only 2 percent of graduates completed all courses required for California State University or University of California entrance with a grade of C or better (WCCUSD Profile, Ed-Data, FY 2007–08).

9. Interview with the authors, May 13, 2009, Richmond, Calif.

10. This information comes from the California Department of Education Web site, available at http://dq.cde.ca.gov/dataquest.

11. This quotation is from the Emeryville Center of Community Life's Web site (formerly at http://www.emerycenter.org/ but no longer online).

12. Interview with the authors, March 26, 2010, San Francisco, Calif.

13. Ibid.

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