Government Innovation: Mayors Challenge

BRINGING BOLD IDEAS TO LIFE

INSIGHTS FROM INNOVATORS TAKING PART IN BLOOMBERG PHILANTHROPIES' MAYORS CHALLENGE

Bloomberg Philanthropies

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We would also like to extend a special thanks to the teams in the ten winning Mayors Challenge cities, who shared their stories and insights so generously with us.

· INTRODUCTION ·

The Mayors Challenge encourages cities to generate bold new ideas that solve urban challenges and improve city life — and have the potential to spread.

The competition invites hundreds of cities to define a serious problem and to develop bold, new ideas to solve it. Cities submit an initial application with their best idea.

During the second stage, selected cities advance as finalists and receive coaching and support from experts and peers to strengthen and stretch their ideas. Cities are paired with innovation coaches, given access to global innovation experts and practitioners, and exposed to innovation methods to improve their ideas. The collaborative process is designed to make each city's idea stronger, better and ready for implementation. Finalists compete to win millions of dollars to bring their bold idea to life and join a global innovation network for ongoing inspiration and support.

In 2013, five cities in the United States became winners, with Providence, Rhode Island securing the grand prize. In 2014, five cities in Europe became winners, with Barcelona, Spain securing the grand prize. This year, five cities from Latin America and the Caribbean will join their ranks.

This report provides an update on the implementation of each winning idea — and draws important lessons that may be useful to city practitioners elsewhere looking to bring bold ideas to life.

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IF YOU ONLY DO ONE THING

We asked the winning cities what one piece of advice they'd give city governments setting out to implement a big idea.

Here's what they told us...

ATHENS
GREECE

"Open your doors. Regular drop-ins and meet-and-greets build bridges and grow trust. They create opportunities for people to come together informally to share their ideas and experiences."

BARCELONA
SPAIN

"Build a broad base of support that crosses party lines right up front. Don't wait until things go wrong or big changes happen. Politics can be disruptive, but the more support you have, the more protected your idea will be."

CHICAGO
ILLINOIS, USA

"Invest in full-time project leadership to maintain the pace of implementation. Your idea is too important to fit around other competing responsibilities."

HOUSTON
TEXAS, USA

"Get absolute clarity. In large-scale, multi-year projects, it is essential to get clarity not only on the ultimate project vision, but also on the path for arriving at that vision. This will enable the project leadership to move confidently through decision-making processes and avoid delays."

KIRKLEES
UK

"Tell people about your idea from the very beginning. A longer term communications strategy is vital but while you get there, keep people's curiosity and interest alive with news and updates, even when it feels to you like not much is happening."

PHILADELPHIA
PENNSYLVANIA, USA

"Find a senior leader who is willing to stick their neck out for your idea and make others fall in line. You need support and cover to get things done, especially when things don't go entirely to plan."

PROVIDENCE
RHODE ISLAND, USA

"Support your team and make them feel they are part of something special. From making materials look great and providing good quality equipment to celebrating accomplishments of the team and individuals, let them know how much you value their contribution."

SANTA MONICA
CALIFORNIA, USA

"Make it easy to do things differently. Telling people to introduce big changes into their way of working will often fail, whereas an offer of resources and support that help people do their work better is harder to refuse."

STOCKHOLM
SWEDEN

"Let others see how passionately you believe in your idea. Speak with conviction and knowledge and it will draw others to you and open up new opportunities."

WARSAW
POLAND

"Engage citizens and users in the design of your project early. This will help to avoid costly and time consuming redesigns by ensuring that early iterations reflect the real needs and preferences of your target population. It will also help grow the long-term demand for your product."

THE PROJECT IN NUMBERS

Athens has a population of **666,046**

Only **13 percent** of Greek citizens say they trust public institutions

0.1%

Volunteering contributes to **less than 0.1 percent** of Greece's GDP

2000

synAthina has already identified and featured **more than 2,000** activities from community groups

WHO TO CONTACT

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CONNECTING CITIZENS TO IMPROVE AND UPDATE THE CITY

ATHENS SYNATHINA

THE BIG IDEA

synAthina connects citizens who have good ideas to the people and organizations that can make them a reality. It harnesses the creative thinking of citizens, and the momentum of their ideas, to change city government for the better.

WHY IS THIS IMPORTANT?

Austerity measures and Greece's economic crisis significantly reduced the operational capacity of Athens' city government. At the same time, citizens began uniting and working together to improve their neighborhoods. These community activities sprang up quickly across Athens, but were disconnected from each other and from potential supporters. There was also no way for the city government to engage with these activities, which carried on alongside its own social services. synAthina taps into the potential of this newly active civil society and capitalizes on the ideas and energy in communities to drive change in City Hall.

HOW DOES IT WORK?

At the heart of synAthina is a website that engages members of the community in problem-solving and reform. Individual citizens and groups can submit activities, as well as ideas on how to improve their city. Citizens who submit ideas are then connected to the relevant government representatives, non-governmental organizations, and private businesses that can help make their ideas a reality. If outdated regulations are needlessly prohibiting the advancement of good ideas, or if it is an idea that has the potential to scale throughout the City, the synAthina project team works with partners in City Hall to reform outdated practices and spread good ideas.

THE IMPLEMENTATION TIMELINE

HOW IS THE IDEA BEING BROUGHT TO LIFE?

2014

SYNATHINA LAUNCHES

After winning the Challenge, the synAthina website launched to map community activities. It also created a co-working space for community groups to perform their activities for free.

2015

UP AND RUNNING!

By early 2015, the concept was fully up and running. Following an outreach campaign to community groups, the website was flooded with more than 600 new activities.

2015

PRIORITIZED IDEAS

The synAthina team began connecting community groups to the relevant government representatives, non-governmental organizations, and private businesses to help implement their ideas.

2015

DEMONSTRATED IMPACT

synAthina gained popularity through an event discussing the future of Kypseli Market, a neglected building in central Athens. synAthina led an open forum for community members to design creative uses for the building. The event resulted in a business plan for the building that was then used to solicit bids to operate and maintain the building.

2016

ADDRESSED MAYOR'S KEY PRIORITIES

synAthina partnered with Athens' Vice Mayor of Cleaning to launch an anti-graffiti campaign supported by banks, businesses and civic groups. The City provided the cleaning supplies and volunteers committed to cleaning and maintaining the streets where they live and work. Unlike previous efforts, the streets have remained free of graffiti — in the past, buildings were retagged within days, if not hours, and the City could not keep up.

2016

AUTOMATED CONNECTIONS

synAthina's new website launched with even more activities to connect with — more than 2,000 community projects were active on the site at relaunch. The new website makes it even easier for projects to connect with each other, with private sponsors, and with city officials.

MOVING FORWARD

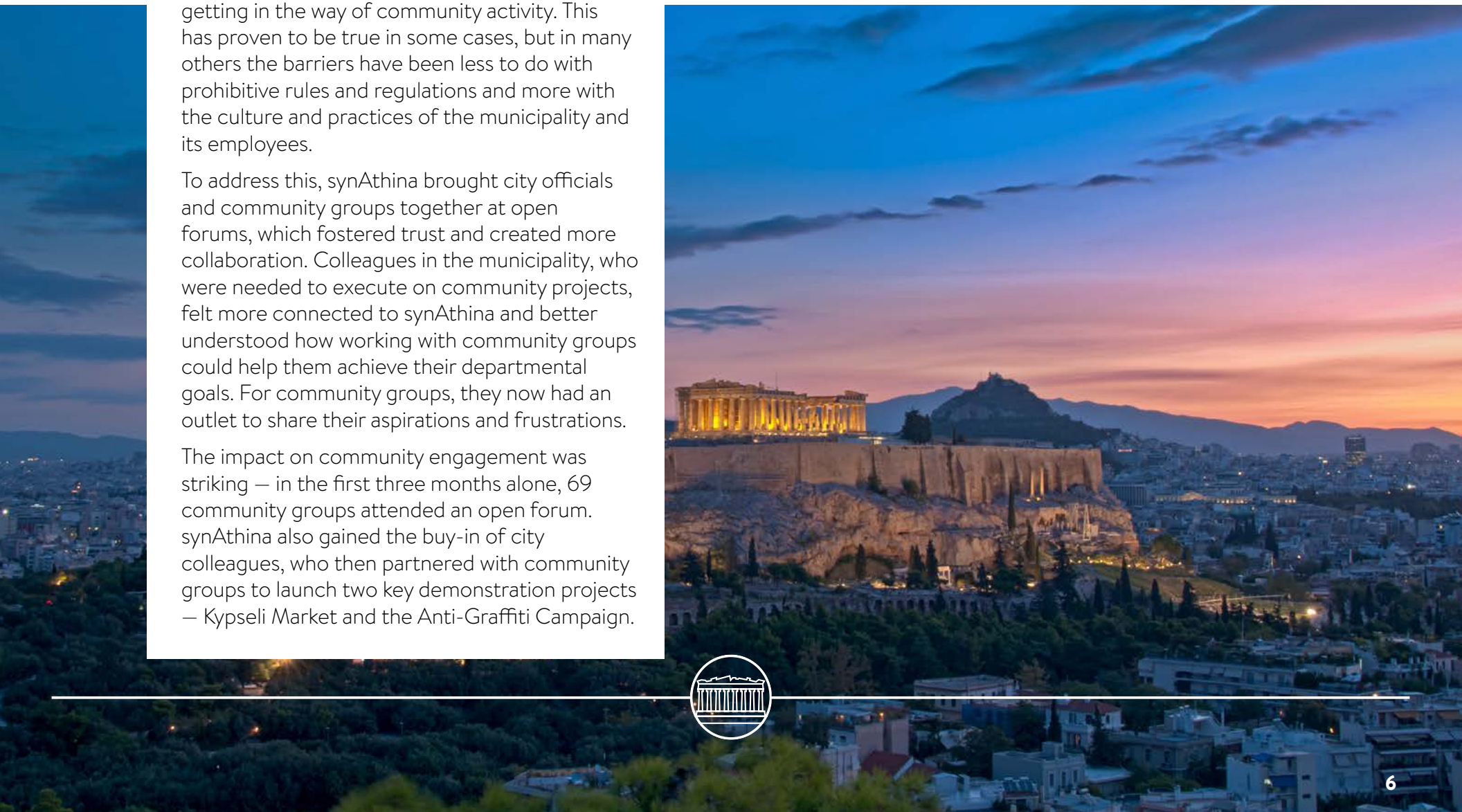
synAthina has demonstrated its value for citizens and government alike. Armed with a new website that makes it easier to connect groups to one another and to the municipality, synAthina will deepen and expand its impact, including running open calls for ideas on the Mayor's key issue areas.

THINGS WE WISH WE HAD KNOWN AT THE BEGINNING...

The team was surprised to learn just how important culture change is and how difficult it is to achieve. At the start, the team had thought they would be able to easily identify and remove government rules and regulations that were getting in the way of community activity. This has proven to be true in some cases, but in many others the barriers have been less to do with prohibitive rules and regulations and more with the culture and practices of the municipality and its employees.

To address this, synAthina brought city officials and community groups together at open forums, which fostered trust and created more collaboration. Colleagues in the municipality, who were needed to execute on community projects, felt more connected to synAthina and better understood how working with community groups could help them achieve their departmental goals. For community groups, they now had an outlet to share their aspirations and frustrations.

The impact on community engagement was striking — in the first three months alone, 69 community groups attended an open forum. synAthina also gained the buy-in of city colleagues, who then partnered with community groups to launch two key demonstration projects — Kypseli Market and the Anti-Graffiti Campaign.



THE PROJECT IN NUMBERS

1.6 million people live in Barcelona

One in five Barcelona citizens are aged **65 or over**, of whom 88,000 live alone

Older people who are lonely are **59 percent more** likely to suffer mental or physical health problems

WHO TO CONTACT

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FIGHTING ELDERLY LONELINESS

BARCELONA VINCLES

THE BIG IDEA

Vincles is an on and offline service that fights loneliness in old age by building social and support networks.

WHY IS THIS IMPORTANT?

18 percent of older people only talk to friends and family once a week and the loneliness they experience can spiral into depression and poor physical health. The world's aging population leaves society facing a loneliness epidemic that is straining health and social care services.

HOW DOES IT WORK?

Vincles provides an older person with a tablet computer loaded with the Vincles app. The app has two elements. The first connects the individual with friends, family, neighbors and care givers, and provides a platform for the network members to coordinate the care of the elderly person.

The second element is a social network that puts older people in touch with each other. Vincles suggests activities for older people who might prefer meeting in person, over a coffee or a game, or chatting online.

THE IMPLEMENTATION TIMELINE

HOW IS THE IDEA BEING BROUGHT TO LIFE?

2014

ISSUED OPEN CHALLENGE

The City of Barcelona ran an open challenge to identify new solutions to elderly isolation, a growing problem in the City. The idea was developed over time into the concept that would win the Mayors Challenge.

2015

DEVELOPED PROTOTYPE

After winning the Mayors Challenge, Vincles developed the first prototype of the app with design input from elderly end-users. From there, it launched a successful pilot with 20 users.

2015

ALIGNED WITH NEW MAYOR

In May of 2015, Barcelona elected a new mayor, Ada Colau. As with any transition, there was a pause while the team aligned itself with the new administration's goals. Through meeting regularly with the new administration leadership, the team was able to understand and adapt to the priorities of the new administration. Specifically, Mayor Colau wanted to see Vincles facilitating more in-person interactions between older people as peers and greater participation in civic life, in addition to more strongly connecting people to their existing friends and families.

2015

REFINED APP AND USER JOURNEY

Using the feedback from the first pilot, the team worked with human-centered design firms to refine the layout of the app and make it more user-friendly. The team also worked with designers to map and specify the user journey from enrollment, to training, to ongoing support. A local university was also brought in to develop a plan to evaluate the program's impact on loneliness and a second university advised the team on the user criteria for inclusion in the program.

2016

CREATED ROLL-OUT PLAN

The new administration created a management and oversight committee with representatives from the Department of Social Rights, the IT Department and City Council. This oversight committee selected target neighborhoods for the next phase of the work that aligned with the Mayor's priorities.

2016

SOLICITED PARTNERS, UPDATED APP (AGAIN)

The team created the service model and worked closely with their colleagues in the legal and finance departments to prepare a detailed specification for a partner organization to implement the service. The 'service model' refers to how users will be recruited, enrolled, trained, monitored and supported. The team also began working with a local technology provider and elderly end users to build and test the next version of the app.

2016

SELECTED PARTNER

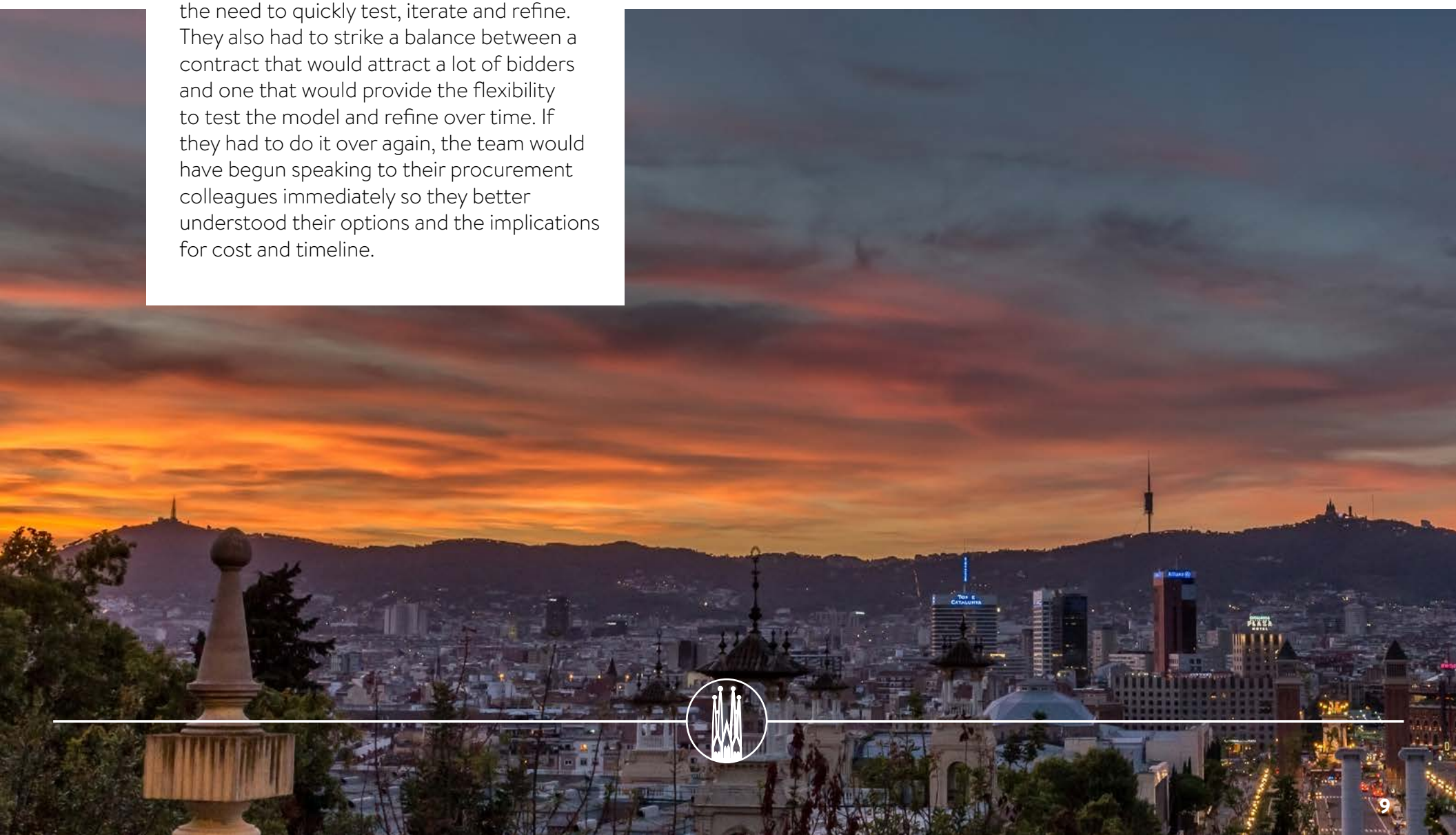
In July, eight companies submitted proposals to implement the Vincles service. The proposals were evaluated based on quality and cost and a partner was selected.

MOVING FORWARD

The City will expand Vincles to two districts by the end of 2016 and move toward city-wide coverage in 2017. The team will evaluate and learn quickly from this next phase of work, which will inform its plans to scale across the City. The team will continue to refine the latest version of the app and test different models of delivery in order to reach scale.

THINGS WE WISH WE HAD KNOWN AT THE BEGINNING...

Procuring an untested idea created a lot of challenge. For example, the team struggled to balance the desire to fully understand the provider market and potential costs against the need to quickly test, iterate and refine. They also had to strike a balance between a contract that would attract a lot of bidders and one that would provide the flexibility to test the model and refine over time. If they had to do it over again, the team would have begun speaking to their procurement colleagues immediately so they better understood their options and the implications for cost and timeline.



THE PROJECT IN NUMBERS

Chicago has a population of **3 million**

The Chicago government collects **7 million units of data** every day, on everything from traffic patterns to weather to the location of libraries, schools, sidewalks, and public parks

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CHICAGO SMARTDATA PLATFORM

THE BIG IDEA

The SmartData Platform is the world's first open-source predictive analytics tool that enables government to use big data to confront a wide range of urban challenges — from rat infestations and foodborne illness to childhood lead poisoning.

WHY IS THIS IMPORTANT?

City governments make decisions that impact citizen life every day. How can we protect children from danger? How can we safeguard our citizens' health? How can we keep animal populations under control? As urban populations grow and demand for public services increases, governments need to find new ways to make the best and most efficient decisions. Cities routinely collect millions of units of data — around 7 million units a day in the City of Chicago. But this is rarely used to inform decision-making and until recently was a largely untapped source of intelligence.

HOW DOES IT WORK?

The SmartData Platform team works with city departments to collect and analyze the data at their disposal. The team's data scientists use advanced analytics and machine learning to uncover many new ways of tackling the big issues faced by city governments. Based on this analysis, the team produces a detailed plan of action, which they work with departments to implement. Implementation of data-driven approaches has achieved results — the rodent baiting process is now 20 percent more efficient, and restaurant inspectors now find dangerous violations 7 days sooner than before.

THE IMPLEMENTATION TIMELINE

HOW IS THE IDEA BEING BROUGHT TO LIFE?

2013

IDENTIFIED PARTNERS

After winning the Mayors Challenge, the team brought in additional resources in the form of pro bono agreements with corporations and civic tech organizations, as well as university partnerships, to develop the complex data modelling and analytical software that sits behind the SmartData Platform.

2014

IDENTIFIED POTENTIAL PROJECTS

The project leadership conducted meetings and planning sessions with commissioners and cross-departmental teams to identify over 100 potential projects that the SmartData Platform could support. Detailed follow up conversations with departments identified the operational areas that would most benefit from data-driven models.

2014

CONDUCTED FIRST ANALYSIS ON RATS

The team selected rat infestations as the first area to tackle because the public health benefit is significant and experimentation would not face an organized opposition — there is no rat stakeholder group. This analysis used data from the City's 311 system and resulted in a 20 percent improvement in efficiency in finding rodent infestations.

2015

EXPANDED TO RESTAURANT INSPECTIONS

Next, the team began work on a restaurant inspections prediction model to prioritize inspections where there was greatest risk of foodborne illness. The model uses both city and other public data sources and resulted in finding health hazards 7 days sooner.

2015

DOCUMENTED WORK

To aid eventual replication, the team created a public repository of source code for data models along with explanatory documentation. This also allowed other data scientists to suggest improvements to the models.

2015

EXPANDED TO OTHER ISSUE AREAS

The team began working on a number of city challenges including elevator inspections and lead exposure in young children.

2016

SHARED DATA VISUALIZATION TOOL

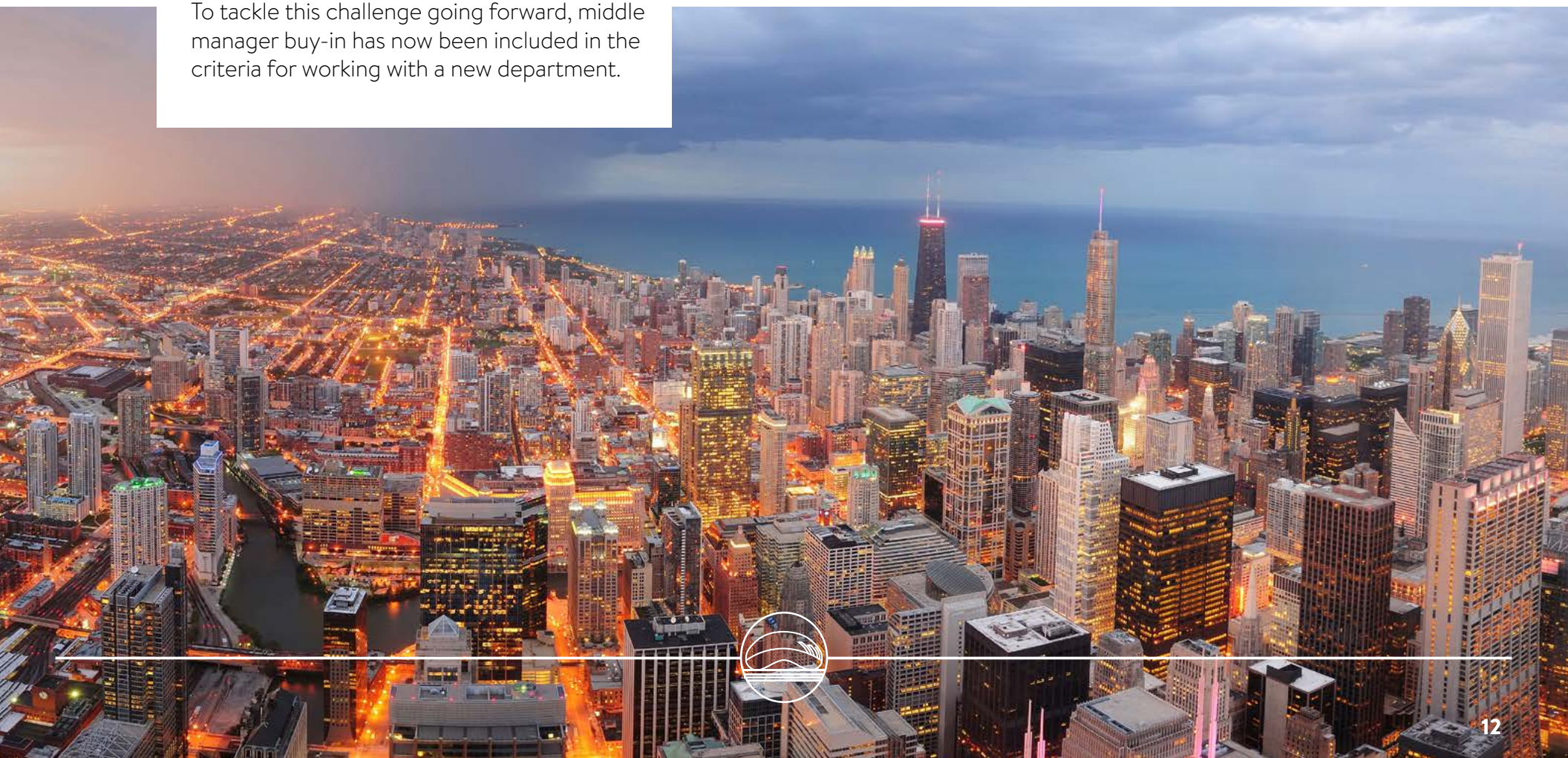
The launch of OpenGrid, a web and mobile app for making open data accessible to the public and other cities, made it easy to navigate and visualize the City's open data. The source code was shared so other cities can replicate this tool.

MOVING FORWARD

Chicago is now evaluating the results of the elevator inspections and lead exposure pilots and is launching new pilots to combat the sale of black market cigarettes, to prevent West Nile Virus, and to improve environmental health outcomes. The team is also working with university partners to finish developing the software that sits behind the platform so that it can be used by non-data scientists to anticipate and solve problems. Chicago has received dozens of inquiries from cities interested in replicating their work and the restaurant inspections work has already spread to other cities. All software developed for this project is open-source and publicly available.

THINGS WE WISH WE HAD KNOWN AT THE BEGINNING...

The biggest surprise and biggest challenge was the importance of middle managers. Without their buy-in, the project wouldn't have moved forward. At first, some departments didn't understand the technology or its purpose. This made them cautious. Other middle managers were resistant because they felt that the platform undermined their decision-making authority. To tackle this challenge going forward, middle manager buy-in has now been included in the criteria for working with a new department.



THE PROJECT IN NUMBERS

Houston has a population of **2,196,000**

It's the 4th largest city in the USA, generating **435,000 tons** of waste annually

The One Bin project aimed to increase the City's recycling rate from 16 percent to **75 percent** over three years

The cost of the One Bin recycling plant was projected to be in excess of **$100 million**

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A LEAPFROG APPROACH TO RECYCLING

HOUSTON
ONE BIN FOR ALL

THE BIG IDEA

One Bin planned to dramatically increase recycling by relying on technology, rather than people, to do the sorting.

WHY IS THIS IMPORTANT?

Across the United States, recycling rates have become stagnant and greater numbers of cities are finding single stream recycling unaffordable. The U.S. national average for recycling is 35 percent; Houston only recycles 16 percent of household waste.

HOW DOES IT WORK?

With One Bin, all residential trash and recycling would have been placed into one bin, which would have been processed automatically with cutting edge technologies to sort trash, separating out the products that could be monetized. The cost of the plant was to be funded through a public-private partnership where the provider would construct and operate the plant, financed with a processing fee, the commodity value of some of the materials, and the future cash value of consumer products manufactured onsite from waste materials. The City of Houston wouldn't have had any capital outlay and no equity position in the enterprise.

THE IMPLEMENTATION TIMELINE

HOW IS THE IDEA BEING BROUGHT TO LIFE?

2013

PRIORITIZED RECYCLING

The Mayor established recycling as an important priority and commissioned a non-profit advisory firm to research innovative potential solutions. In partnership with the City, the non-profit undertook extensive research to understand the range of technologies available for recycling and sorting facilities. This included both domestic and international site visits, literature reviews, data analysis, and interviews with other cities, experts, non-profits, environmental groups and companies. Out of this process, the idea for One Bin was born, with the goal to drastically decrease the amount of waste sent to landfills.

2013

ANALYZED WASTE

After winning the Mayors Challenge, the team began by conducting a waste characterization study which analyzed Houston's waste streams and volume.

2013

SOLICITED BIDS

The City began a public two-stage selection process for the processing plant.

2014

REVIEWED BIDS

After an analysis of initial bids, the team created a sophisticated financial model template to uniformly evaluate financial proposals. Bidders resubmitted using the financial template.

2014

CHOSE PROVIDER

The team chose a potential provider and negotiation of the financial transaction began.

2015

NEGOTIATED

Negotiations became increasingly challenging due to the complexity of the financial agreement and the number of different subcontractors involved. Changing market conditions for recycled materials meant that the resale value of recyclables had drastically decreased since the beginning of the project, making the financial viability of the deal less certain.

2015

PROJECT STALLED

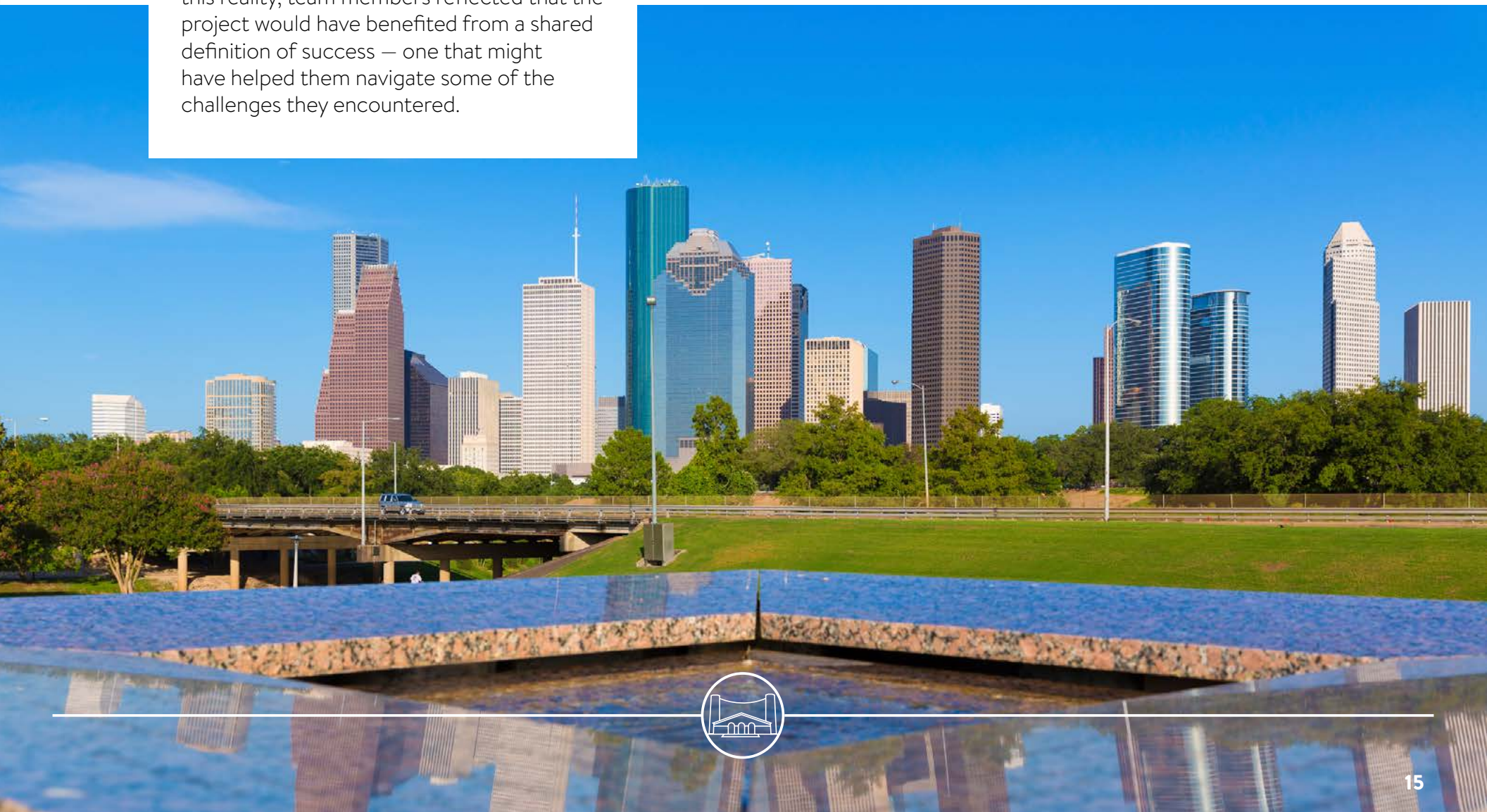
In the Mayor's final months in office, it became clear that the contract would not be completed by the end of the Mayor's term.

MOVING FORWARD

The newly-elected mayor, Sylvester Turner, is committed to developing citywide recycling solutions and is now considering whether One Bin is part of that solution.

THINGS WE WISH WE HAD KNOWN AT THE BEGINNING...

The One Bin idea was the most complex idea ever to win the Mayors Challenge, due to the multivariate business model, long time frame for project implementation and impact, and vocal special interests. Given this reality, team members reflected that the project would have benefited from a shared definition of success — one that might have helped them navigate some of the challenges they encountered.



THE PROJECT IN NUMBERS

431,020 people live in Kirklees

In the UK, the average car sits unused for **23 hours a day** and a power drill is used for an estimated **12 to 13 minutes** over its entire lifetime

The UK sharing economy is worth **$0.5 billion** (2014). The global sharing economy is worth **$15 billion** (2014), but is expected to reach **$335 billion** by 2025, worth **$15 billion** (£9 billion) in revenues to the UK alone

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TRANSFORMING COMMUNITIES THROUGH THE POWER OF SHARING

KIRKLEES COUNCIL
COMOODLE

THE BIG IDEA

Comoodle helps communities do more by sharing municipal and community assets: stuff, space and skills.

WHY IS THIS IMPORTANT?

Financial pressures have squeezed both community groups and government departments, and many can no longer afford to be as active as they want to be. Sharing underused stuff, space and skills helps everyone do more with less.

HOW DOES IT WORK?

The resources owned by municipal governments are often underused and could be put to much better use in support of community action. Comoodle is a digital platform that makes sharing municipal, community and private assets ("stuff, space and skills") simple, whether it's a vehicle, an activity space, or someone with skills to share. The Comoodle team acts as the facilitator of these trades, handling any red tape relating to insurance or safety regulations. After use for an agreed period, the community group returns the resource to the lender to be shared again.

THE IMPLEMENTATION TIMELINE

HOW IS THE IDEA BEING BROUGHT TO LIFE?

2014

CONCEPT DEVELOPED

Constricting budgets led the Council to conduct a strategic planning process to identify new ways to do more with less. The political leadership saw the sharing economy as an opportunity and one way to deliver that change. The concept was developed and refined through the Mayors Challenge.

2015

CONVENED STAKEHOLDERS

After winning the Mayors Challenge, the team began engaging with internal and external stakeholders to build a community of support around Comoodle. The team organized a full day visioning session with a wide range of stakeholders, who gathered to think about the stuff, space and skills they might offer up to others.

2015

LAUNCHED EARLY PROTOTYPES

The team launched early prototypes that delivered positive results. In particular, the team had success in lending vans from the Council's fleet of vehicles. Others proved more difficult to get off the ground. The prototypes were evaluated by the University of Huddersfield to inform further rollout.

2015

CONDUCTED OUTREACH

The team conducted a user survey and learned that they needed to get more information about the project out. The team developed a communications campaign to grow interest and identify new opportunities to test the concept.

2016

LAUNCHED MORE PROTOTYPES

The team ran a second round of more targeted prototypes focused on lending sports equipment, different forms of transport and storage. They showed greatest success when there were a combination of factors: a good inventory of assets that can be requested; a strong understanding of Comoodle as an exchange mechanism; and existing community activity that can be bolstered by Comoodle.

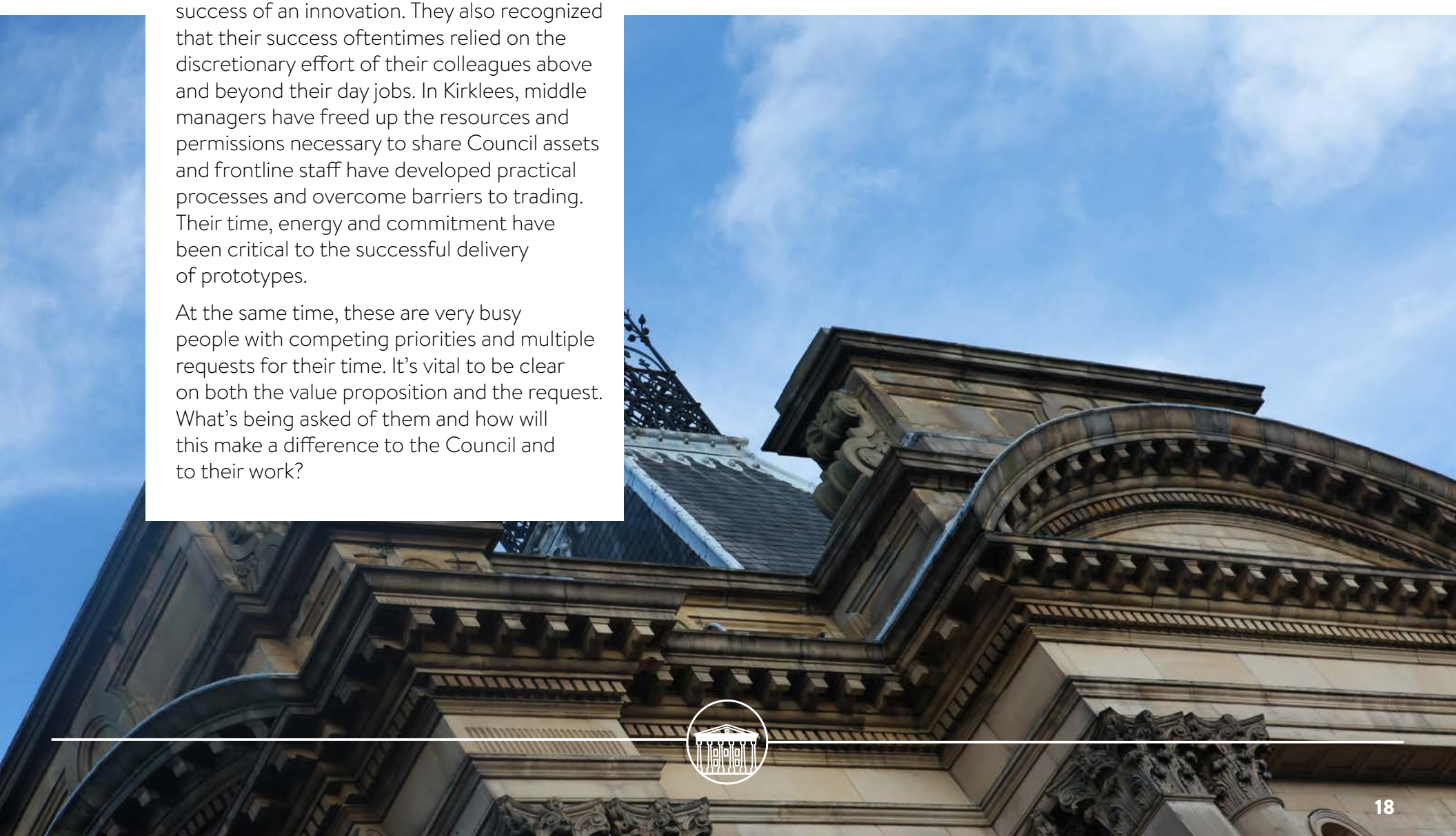
MOVING FORWARD

A new website informed by demand and prototypes will be launched in the Fall of 2016. In the meantime, Comoodle trades are continuing to increase and the team is constantly evaluating trades to understand how to best facilitate the exchanges, and to assess the value for all participants.

THINGS WE WISH WE HAD KNOWN AT THE BEGINNING...

Much like Chicago, Kirklees found that while it is important to have the support of senior leaders, the buy-in of middle managers and frontline staff is just as important to the success of an innovation. They also recognized that their success oftentimes relied on the discretionary effort of their colleagues above and beyond their day jobs. In Kirklees, middle managers have freed up the resources and permissions necessary to share Council assets and frontline staff have developed practical processes and overcome barriers to trading. Their time, energy and commitment have been critical to the successful delivery of prototypes.

At the same time, these are very busy people with competing priorities and multiple requests for their time. It's vital to be clear on both the value proposition and the request. What's being asked of them and how will this make a difference to the Council and to their work?



THE PROJECT IN NUMBERS

Philadelphia's population is **1.5 million** people

137 applications to the FastFWD program were received from around the world

Nine pilot projects were contracted; two have already been taken to scale

WHO TO CONTACT

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USING PROBLEM-BASED PROCUREMENT TO GENERATE NEW SOLUTIONS

PHILADELPHIA FASTFWD

THE BIG IDEA

FastFWD turned Philadelphia's problems into the next creative business opportunity for entrepreneurs from around the world - all while improving the City's process for pilot procurement.

WHY IS THIS IMPORTANT?

Despite the challenges faced by government agencies, innovative solutions are hard to secure because procurement processes are slow, complex, and prescriptive. As a consequence, bright social innovators take their ideas to the private sector instead, the same handful of companies rehash old solutions in response to bids, and government lags behind in adopting new ideas.

HOW DOES IT WORK?

Philadelphia chose problems it needed to tackle, and FastFWD found the right social entrepreneurs to solve it. FastFWD opened up the City's challenges to proposals far beyond the usual vendors. Chosen entrepreneurs were connected to city staff and specialist coaches, who helped them develop their ideas into sustainable solutions.

FastFWD's role was to act as a business accelerator, getting great ideas up and running. It also created a streamlined pilot procurement process, and made it available to other departments interested in pilot projects.

THE IMPLEMENTATION TIMELINE

HOW IS THE IDEA BEING BROUGHT TO LIFE?

2013

ESTABLISHED PARTNERSHIPS

After winning the Mayors Challenge, the team established partnerships with Wharton Business School to provide market analysis and with GoodCompany Ventures to provide start-up coaching to FastFWD participants.

2013

SELECTED ISSUE AREA

Wharton conducted a market study to analyze what social problems were ripe for entrepreneurs to tackle. FastFWD selected public safety as the issue area and created materials that framed the business opportunity for entrepreneurs (e.g., local governments nationally spend $152 billion on public safety each year).

2013

CONDUCTED OUTREACH

The team launched a major outreach program to engage entrepreneurs. They promoted the program in outlets frequented by entrepreneurs, rather than using insular traditional city channels. They also set up a procurement reform working group to develop new guidelines for pilots and to streamline legal documents.

2014

LAUNCHED ACCELERATOR

FastFWD delivered its first business accelerator. City procurement exercises usually receive a handful of applications; FastFWD's received 88 new ideas on how to address public safety. Ten businesses were enrolled in the initial 12-week program.

2014

SELECTED PILOTS

At the conclusion of the accelerator program entrepreneurs pitched their pilot projects to city departments. Selected pilots were paid for by the Mayors Challenge grant with the understanding that, if successful, pilot projects would expand to full contracts paid for by the City.

2015

FUNDED EXPANSIONS

Two successful enterprises from the first accelerator were funded as pilots and then expanded at full cost to the City. These were Jail Education Solutions, which aimed to improve community stability and public safety by working with prisoners, and Textizen, which reached out to citizens who were disconnected from online public engagement.

2015

RAN SECOND ACCELERATOR

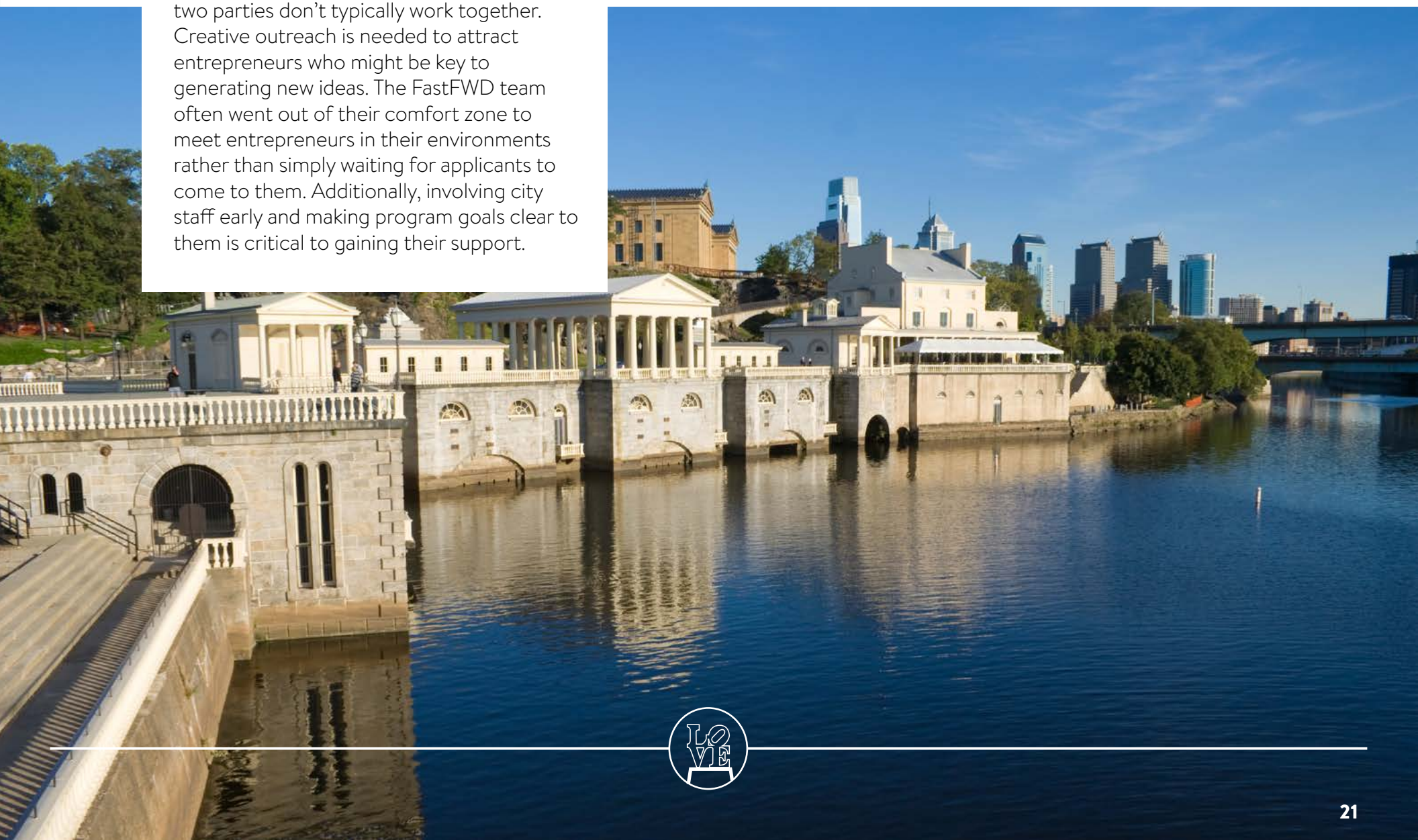
GoodCompany delivered the second business accelerator, receiving 55 applications, of which nine companies were selected to participate. Four companies were selected for pilot projects, which are currently underway.

MOVING FORWARD

FastFWD opened the door to a new way of commissioning public services. This new way of thinking resulted in a new partnership with CityMart, a social enterprise that uses challenges to help cities buy services. CityMart is working with Philadelphia to conduct five challenges and train city staff to use creative methods to find new solutions to urban problems.

THINGS WE WISH WE HAD KNOWN AT THE BEGINNING...

The team learned that intentionally connecting entrepreneurs and city government is challenging because the two parties don't typically work together. Creative outreach is needed to attract entrepreneurs who might be key to generating new ideas. The FastFWD team often went out of their comfort zone to meet entrepreneurs in their environments rather than simply waiting for applicants to come to them. Additionally, involving city staff early and making program goals clear to them is critical to gaining their support.



THE PROJECT IN NUMBERS

Providence has a population of **177,994**

Lower income children hear **30 million fewer** words by their fourth birthday than higher income peers, resulting in a language development gap

For healthy development, children need to be exposed to about **15,000** words a day

50%

50 percent of children enter the Providence Talks program hearing less than half the words needed for healthy brain development

WHO TO CONTACT

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CLOSING THE ACHIEVEMENT GAP, FAMILY BY FAMILY

PROVIDENCE
PROVIDENCE TALKS

THE BIG IDEA

Providence Talks is an early childhood program that puts parents at the heart of their child's cognitive development. It helps disadvantaged children close the achievement gap by increasing parent-child interactions at a critical age.

WHY IS THIS IMPORTANT?

By the time they are four, children in low-income households have heard 30 million fewer words than their wealthier peers. Research shows that this has a negative impact on long-term educational attainment, health outcomes, economic prospects and future family stability.

HOW DOES IT WORK?

A family is given a "word pedometer," a piece of technology that counts the number of words and conversations that children are exposed to in the home. They are also visited twice monthly by a coach who helps parents to understand the importance of words to early childhood brain development and monitor their own progress, while offering tips for improvement.

THE IMPLEMENTATION TIMELINE

HOW IS THE IDEA BEING BROUGHT TO LIFE?

2013

CONCEPTUALIZED IDEA

The idea for Providence Talks came from then mayor, Angel Taveras, who had a strong interest in early education and wanted to do something to address Providence's chronic achievement gap. The team was aware of a new LENA Research Foundation technology and conceptualized the Providence Talks model to leverage the technology for citywide impact.

2013

ESTABLISHED PARTNERSHIPS

After winning the Mayors Challenge, the team established partnerships with LENA, which developed the 'word pedometer', and Brown University, a research partner that provided early feedback on the curriculum and training.

2014

TESTED EARLY PROTOTYPE

The team developed a rapid prototype for how parent coaching would be delivered. They then identified key partners already serving the target population and tested the parent coaching and gathered feedback. After making adjustments to the parent coaching, they launched a small pilot of 150 families which tested use of the technology and the coaching program together.

2014

PROGRAM PAUSED

Mayor Taveras entered the governor's race, and the program paused in the final months of the mayoral election to wait to see if the next mayor would support the idea.

2015

ALIGNED WITH NEW MAYOR

The newly-elected mayor, Jorge Elorza, decided to build on Taveras' idea and make the project his own by connecting it to his education agenda.

2015

RELAUNCHED WITH NEW LEADERSHIP

Elorza hired new project leadership that took stock of what was and wasn't working. They found that some delivery organizations weren't dedicating enough resources to the program. As a result, they developed a funding model to support dedicated full time positions at each provider and shifted to a results-based contracting model. This enabled increased capacity and greater accountability.

2015

COMPLETED PILOT

Under new leadership, the team completed the pilot of the coaching model, which reached 170 families. After completing initial coaching sessions, those families who started out at the lowest levels increased the words spoken in the home by 50 percent, moving from an average of 8,000 words per day to an average of 12,500 words per day.

2015

UPDATED MODEL

The team made iterative improvements to the model based on learning from the pilot, with feedback from end-users, home visitors, and the Brown University evaluation team.

2016

EXPANDED REACH

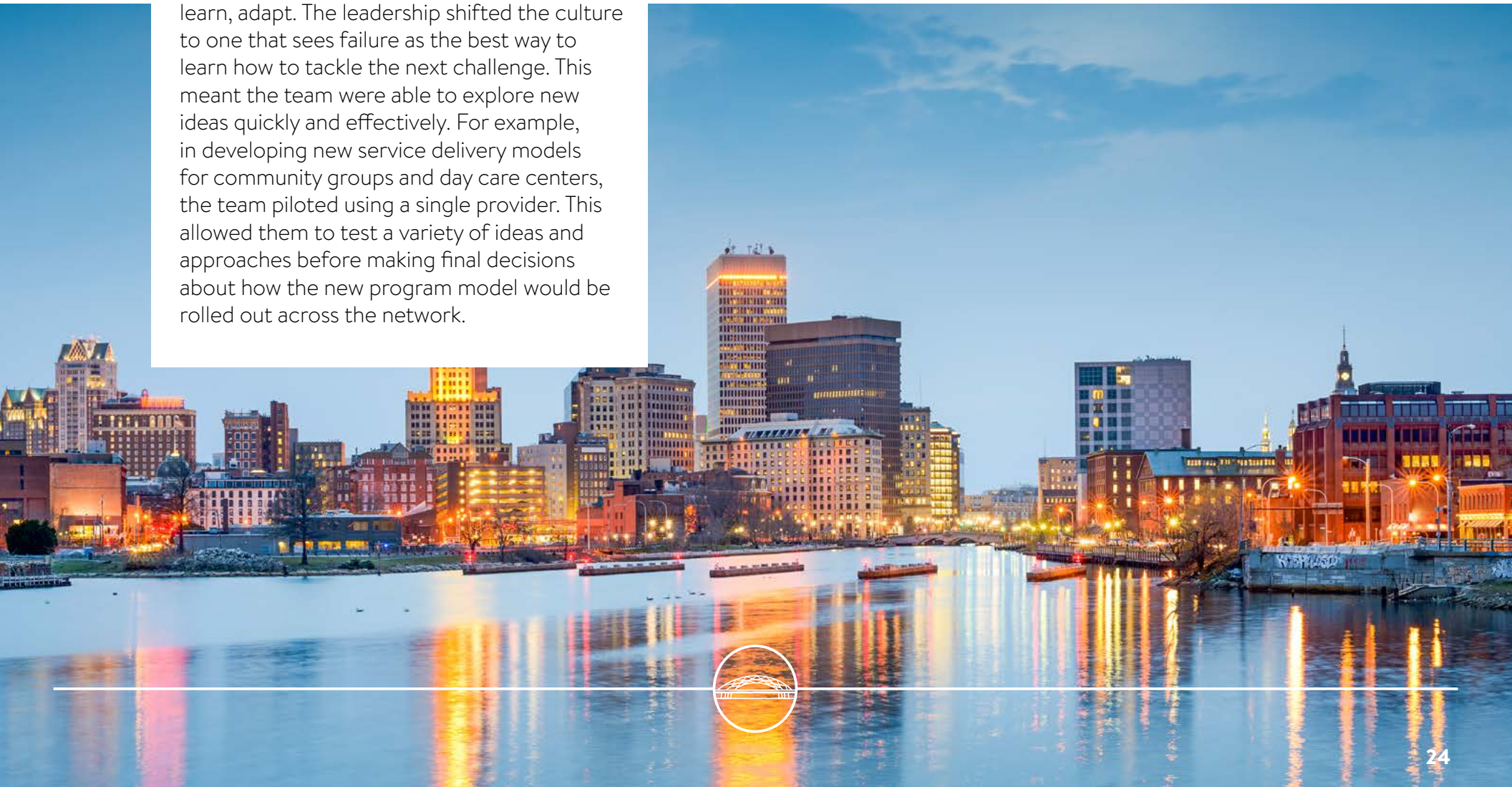
The team is rapidly expanding the program to reach 2,500 children by 2017 and is continuing to iterate and refine the program model to reach more children and achieve cost efficiency at scale. This includes piloting a group model and a professional caregiver model. The team is also working with Brown University to conduct an evaluation of program outcomes using comparison cities.

MOVING FORWARD

Many cities have expressed interest in Providence Talks. Consistent with the replication goals of the Mayors Challenge, Providence Talks will continue to share materials that other cities can use to develop local programs. These efforts will increase as the program reaches greater scale and there is more evidence of impact.

THINGS WE WISH WE HAD KNOWN AT THE BEGINNING...

The team came to appreciate the value of prototyping and piloting as opposed to lengthy and arduous planning. At the start, progress was slow because of the team's perfectionism. They didn't want to do anything without it being 100 percent right. The new leadership brought a new philosophy: test, learn, adapt. The leadership shifted the culture to one that sees failure as the best way to learn how to tackle the next challenge. This meant the team were able to explore new ideas quickly and effectively. For example, in developing new service delivery models for community groups and day care centers, the team piloted using a single provider. This allowed them to test a variety of ideas and approaches before making final decisions about how the new program model would be rolled out across the network.



THE PROJECT IN NUMBERS

Santa Monica's population is **92,000**

The first Wellbeing Survey was **launched in September 2014**, in English and Spanish

2,200 responses

2,200 Santa Monica residents responded to the survey over four weeks, nearly four times the number of previous responses to Santa Monica resident surveys

WHO TO CONTACT

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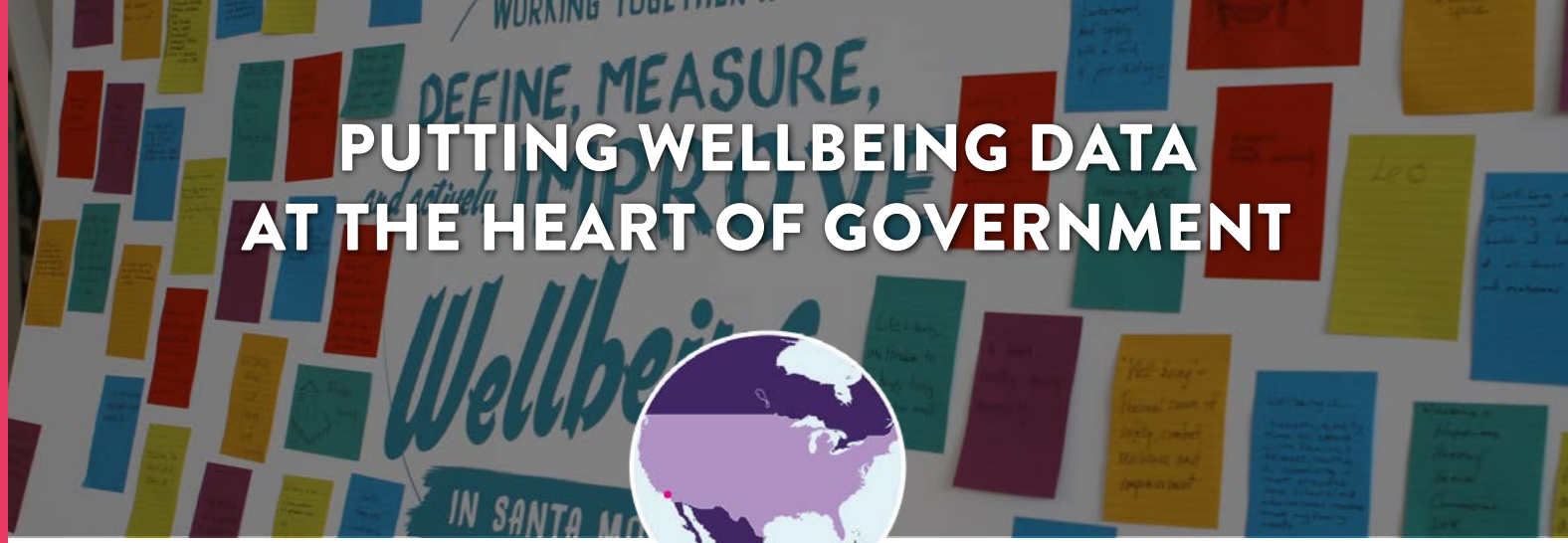


PUTTING WELLBEING DATA AT THE HEART OF GOVERNMENT

SANTA MONICA
THE WELLBEING PROJECT

THE BIG IDEA

Cities around the world are increasingly recognizing that true progress takes into account the wellbeing of people, but managing and improving wellbeing first requires accurate measures. Santa Monica has devised a ground-breaking metric that puts wellbeing at the forefront of decision-making.

WHY IS THIS IMPORTANT?

Typical measures of government progress, like GDP, reduce people's lives to numbers that don't reflect their fulfillment, happiness or quality of life. Santa Monica's approach measures government against the things that really matter in the lives of its residents: health, community, place, learning, economic opportunity and overall outlook.

HOW DOES IT WORK?

Santa Monica's Wellbeing Project has four elements – define, measure, act, repeat. The team began by defining the most locally relevant aspects of wellbeing. They then measured community wellbeing with data collected from three sources: a citywide Wellbeing Survey, city-held data sets and social media footprints. Finally, they are acting on the results of their findings to reallocate city resources and identify new programs to address areas with gaps in measured wellbeing. The Index helps decision makers target key problem areas and track the impact of their policies on resident wellbeing.

THE IMPLEMENTATION TIMELINE

HOW IS THE IDEA BEING BROUGHT TO LIFE?

2013

FOCUSED ON WELLBEING

A series of tragedies among Santa Monica's younger population led to a call from the public for the government to change its way of thinking. Rather than reacting to problems, people called for leadership that would enhance wellbeing. This shift in mind-set inspired the concept of a Wellbeing Index.

2014

CREATED PARTNERSHIPS

After winning the Mayors Challenge, the team created a working group to determine the factors that make up wellbeing and partnered with the Rand Corporation to help guide the design of The Wellbeing Index.

2014

CONVENED EXPERTS

Recognizing a growing body of research related to wellbeing, the team convened an expert panel of academics and policy-makers to shape the research methodology and implementation of the index, culminating in the first extensive city-wide survey of wellbeing.

2015

DEVELOPED INDEX

The City and its partners used the survey data, paired with administrative data and social media data, to develop The Wellbeing Index, the first individual and city-wide measure of wellbeing, which maps indicators of wellbeing down to neighborhood level. An online, interactive platform gives city staff and the public access to the information.

2015

RELEASED FINDINGS

Officials presented the findings at a community-wide meeting with a call to action for government and community groups alike to use the findings. The Wellbeing Index brought to light previously unknown areas for improvement. For example, it revealed that Santa Monica's seniors had the highest wellbeing levels, that one third of all residents are stressed all or most of the time, and that fruit and vegetable consumption was less than half the national average.

2015

UPDATED POLICY, CREATED NEW PROGRAMS

The City incorporated findings from The Wellbeing Index within months of their release. These findings galvanized the creation of new initiatives which are being pursued in areas such as civic engagement, transportation, access to healthy food, and more. The development of The Wellbeing Index also led to a shift in the City's data culture. The Index was instrumental in the City Manager's decision to hire a new Chief Data Officer and to move towards performance metrics and data-driven decision making city-wide.

2016

EMBEDDED WELLBEING IN CITY DEPARTMENTS

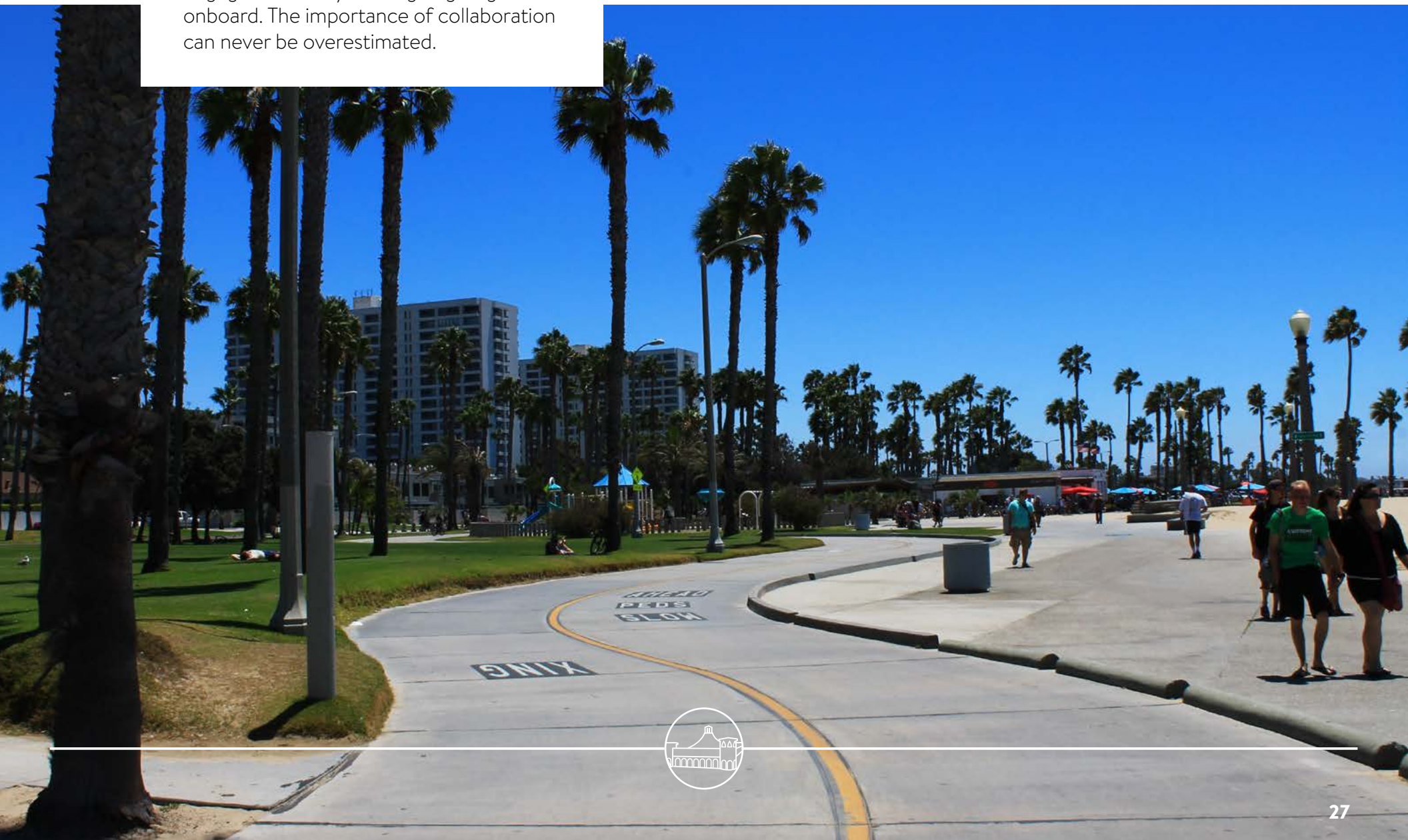
In response to requests from departments to better understand how they could use data to drive decision making, the team convened the City's first ever data hack, bringing together 35 analysts from 17 departments to learn best practices identified in the development of The Wellbeing Index. To facilitate data literacy, the City IT department built an internal site with easily accessible wellbeing data for city staff to use. To further the goal of collective impact, the City held a Wellbeing Incubator, which brought together 75 community stakeholders to co-create solutions to a selection of issues uncovered by The Wellbeing Index.

MOVING FORWARD

The Wellbeing Index data will be refreshed every two years, allowing the City to measure the impact of past initiatives and design new ones. All data from The Wellbeing Project has been made available via the City's open data platforms to encourage exploration of the data and additional analysis. To date, the team has received inquiries from 35 cities, expressing interest in replicating The Wellbeing Project, and more than 100 inquiries from non-profits and research entities interested in learning more about the project. In addition, the City will begin a parallel wellbeing project aimed at measuring the wellbeing of the City government work force, and is developing neighborhood oriented wellbeing contests to spur greater community engagement with the challenges identified by The Wellbeing Index.

THINGS WE WISH WE HAD KNOWN AT THE BEGINNING...

The team learned that you need to have a clear understanding of who you need to engage and how you are going to get them onboard. The importance of collaboration can never be overestimated.



ENGAGING CITIZENS IN THE FIGHT AGAINST CLIMATE CHANGE

STOCKHOLM

STOCKHOLM BIOCHAR PROJECT

THE PROJECT IN NUMBERS

Stockholm's population is **900,000**

8 out of 10 Stockholm citizens want to do more to fight climate change

+30%

Use of biochar in the Swedish climate improves plant growth by **up to 30 percent**

Stockholm is one of the few global cities that has made the ambitious commitment to become **fossil fuel free by 2040** and **carbon neutral by 2045**

WHO TO CONTACT

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Project Manager

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THE BIG IDEA

The Stockholm Biochar Project engages citizens in the fight against climate change by converting their garden waste into biochar. Biochar has multiple benefits – the biochar production process traps carbon that would otherwise be released into the atmosphere as carbon dioxide and produces heat that can be used as energy. When used in plant beds and fields, it improves the soil structure, storing nutrients that lead to better plant growth.

WHY IS THIS IMPORTANT?

Cities are major contributors to climate change. Although they cover less than 2 percent of the Earth's surface, they produce more than 60 percent of global carbon dioxide emissions. Stockholm aims to become fossil fuel free by 2040, and the biochar project will be the first city initiative to directly involve citizens in meeting this target.

HOW DOES IT WORK?

Stockholm collects plant waste from residents and recycles it into biochar using a newly acquired biochar plant, which is about the size of a shipping container and will be installed at an existing waste management site. This biochar is then returned to citizens for use in gardens and allotments, and distributed to green sites around the City.

THE IMPLEMENTATION TIMELINE

HOW IS THE IDEA BEING BROUGHT TO LIFE?

2014

FORMED BIOCHAR PROJECT

Björn Embrén, a tree officer from the City's traffic administration department, has used biochar on Stockholm's trees for six years, resulting in dramatic improvements in tree health and rates of growth. Björn talked avidly about his work to colleagues in other city departments. Soon a small group of enthusiasts from across City Hall had teamed up with Björn to form the Stockholm Biochar Project and apply for the Mayors Challenge.

2015

ALIGNED WITH NEW ADMINISTRATION

Soon after winning the Mayors Challenge, a new mayor was elected. The team worked hard to reengage the City's political leadership and pushed for biochar to be on the meeting agendas of department heads and politicians. The team found an important advocate in the City's Vice Mayor for the Environment, Katarina Luhr.

2015

IDENTIFIED PLANT LOCATION

With the Mayor and Vice Mayor's support, the team commissioned a feasibility study and a location search for the first biochar plant. The team identified several potential sites and evaluated them for suitability.

2015

APPLIED FOR PERMITS

After selecting a site, the team applied for environmental and building permits. By the middle of the year, they had started the work necessary to purchase a plant.

2016

ADDED CAPACITY TO TEAM

Engaging citizens in the fight against climate change is central to the project's ambition. The team of four engineers realized they needed a different set of skills in which they had no experience. They brought in a consultant to work on a communications and engagement strategy and have also drawn directly upon the communications team in Stockholm's Waste Water Company to bolster their efforts.

2016

SECURED PERMITS AND PURCHASED PLANT

By the middle of 2016, the team had obtained the necessary permits, signed the contract with the maker of the biochar plant, and began preparing the site that will house the biochar plant.

2016

FIRST PLANT INSTALLED

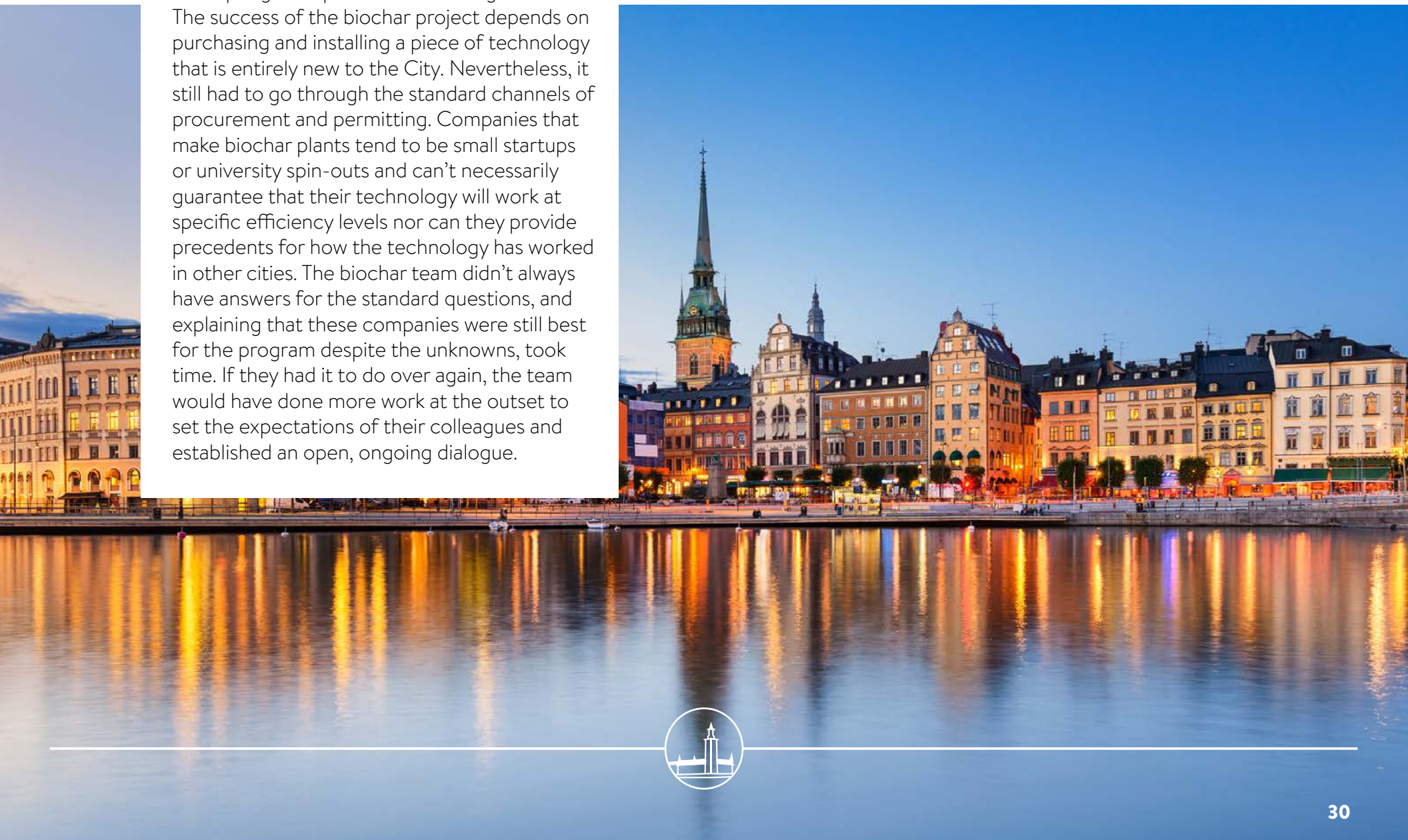
At the time this report went to press, Stockholm was preparing to open the first biochar plant at the recycling centre at AVC Tradgard.

MOVING FORWARD

If the pilot works, the team will move towards city-wide coverage with two further biochar plants in 2017 and up to five biochar plants in 2018.

THINGS WE WISH WE HAD KNOWN AT THE BEGINNING...

The team learned the importance of communicating early and often when attempting to implement something innovative. The success of the biochar project depends on purchasing and installing a piece of technology that is entirely new to the City. Nevertheless, it still had to go through the standard channels of procurement and permitting. Companies that make biochar plants tend to be small startups or university spin-outs and can't necessarily guarantee that their technology will work at specific efficiency levels nor can they provide precedents for how the technology has worked in other cities. The biochar team didn't always have answers for the standard questions, and explaining that these companies were still best for the program despite the unknowns, took time. If they had it to do over again, the team would have done more work at the outset to set the expectations of their colleagues and established an open, ongoing dialogue.



THE PROJECT IN NUMBERS

Two million people live in Warsaw

40,000 live with a visual impairment

More than 80 percent of visually impaired people in Warsaw said they felt dependent on others for everyday activities

Five pilots implemented by 2016 with the cooperation of two NGOs, experts from the Polish Blind Association and up to **50 testers** from the blind and visually impaired community

WHO TO CONTACT

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UNLOCKING INDEPENDENCE FOR BLIND AND VISUALLY IMPAIRED PEOPLE

WARSAW
VIRTUAL WARSAW

THE BIG IDEA

Virtual Warsaw will make the City more accessible to blind and visually impaired people by installing thousands of beacons that communicate directly with smartphones.

WHY IS THIS IMPORTANT?

Forty thousand of Warsaw's two million residents live with a visual impairment, making it harder for them to navigate freely around the City without significant training (between 60 and 90 hours according to a recent survey) and social support. Very little of the City's core services or cultural infrastructure are currently adapted to meet their needs.

HOW DOES IT WORK?

A blind or visually impaired person downloads the Virtual Warsaw app to their smartphone. The app provides navigation prompts and easy access to key information such as bus times and opening hours, supporting them to move independently around the City.

THE IMPLEMENTATION TIMELINE

HOW IS THE IDEA BEING BROUGHT TO LIFE?

2014

CONCEPTUALIZED IDEA

The team learned of a visually-impaired man who had tried to use the ticket-based queuing system in Warsaw's municipal offices. The man ended up waiting for hours because he had no way of knowing when it was his turn. This story inspired the team to create the idea for Virtual Warsaw, which was further developed through the Mayors Challenge.

2014

PROTOTYPED TECHNOLOGY

During the Mayors Challenge competition, the team created a prototype of the app and tested the beacon technology to confirm that the concept could work.

2015

LAUNCHED PILOTS

Based on feedback from user testing, the team developed a next version of the app and launched the first pilot in the City's public administration building. Ten visually impaired testers and three experts from the Polish Blind Association provided feedback on the functionality and reliability.

2015

EXPANDED TESTING

Three further pilots were conducted with a larger group of testers on a City bus line, in a museum, and in the City center.

2016

REFINED APP

The team worked with the app developer to refine the design and functionality based on user feedback. Initially, the team had imagined that the navigation component of Virtual Warsaw would look and feel like a regular GPS – "turn right in 20 yards … take 10 steps forward … you have reached the lift." Instead, through engaging with users, they found that blind and visually impaired people prefer navigation prompts that help them orientate themselves, without being highly directive; for example, "you are passing the medical center."

MOVING FORWARD

With feedback from the first four pilots, the team will begin the city-wide rollout in a specific area of the City that contains a high density of services for the blind and visually impaired community, including the Polish Blind Association headquarters and a specialist medical center. This will provide a large number of visually impaired people with an opportunity to learn how to use the app, which will in turn provide the team with a regular flow of feedback to inform implementation in other parts of the City.

THINGS WE WISH WE HAD KNOWN AT THE BEGINNING...

The team learned that the best way to really understand the needs, frustrations and aspirations of citizens is to work alongside them to develop a solution. Engaging citizens and service users in the design of Virtual Warsaw meant they were able to avoid costly and time consuming redesigns and ensured that later iterations reflected the real needs and preferences of visually impaired people. The team also believe engaging users will help stimulate long-term demand for Virtual Warsaw.

SO WHAT DOES THIS ALL ADD UP TO?

AND WHAT MIGHT IT MEAN FOR OTHER CITIES?

The winners of the Mayors Challenge work in very different contexts and implement a wide range of ideas, yet there are striking similarities in the challenges they have faced and the strategies they've used to overcome them.

To conclude *Bringing Bold Ideas to Life*, we take a look across the cities' experiences to offer five insights for city practitioners everywhere seeking to implement a bold new idea. For each insight we pose some questions for practitioners to consider in applying these insights to their own work.

1. PLAYING POLITICS

The bigger and bolder an idea, the more senior political support is needed.

Unfortunately, such support can also be unpredictable. Mayors and deputies change, priorities shift, and immediate concerns often take precedence.

Keeping abreast of the political agenda and being clear about how your idea contributes to the success of that agenda is essential to securing ongoing support. Building relationships with and winning the confidence of trusted advisors can be helpful too.

QUESTIONS TO CONSIDER

WHAT ARE THE BIG POLITICAL STORIES IN YOUR CONTEXT AND HOW DOES YOUR IDEA FIT?

WHO ARE THE PEOPLE YOU NEED TO CONVINCE OF THE VALUE OF YOUR IDEA, TO INSURE AGAINST POLITICAL INSTABILITY?

2. SUPPORT CAN COME FROM ANYWHERE

A bold new idea has the potential to attract interest from unexpected people and places. Design companies and tech start-ups hope to test and showcase their new products at scale. Businesses hoping to reach new customers want to be part of public events, and new data and insight are compelling for researchers in universities and business schools.

Of course, the kudos that comes with high-level political connections can be attractive to other senior leaders as well.

These interests can be converted into valuable practical support in the form of advice and advocacy, introductions and connections to new people, and resources — sponsorship, funding, materials, etc.

QUESTIONS TO CONSIDER

WHAT OPPORTUNITIES MIGHT DRAW IN EXCITING PEOPLE AND ORGANIZATIONS, BRINGING EXTRA CAPACITY?

WHAT GAPS DO YOU HAVE IN SKILLS, KNOWLEDGE, IDEAS AND RESOURCES THAT CONNECTING TO OTHERS MIGHT HELP YOU TO FILL?

HOW WILL YOU STAY OPEN TO OPPORTUNITIES TO MAKE UNEXPECTED CONNECTIONS WHILE MAINTAINING FOCUS ON IMPLEMENTATION?

3. MANAGING INTERNAL AFFAIRS

Middle managers are important 'internal' stakeholders and their support is critical to successful implementation of bold new ideas.

Ideas that lack middle managers' support face unhelpful competition for time and resources, so it's critical to make sure managers are on board and on message. Show middle managers how your idea will help them to achieve their goals.

QUESTIONS TO CONSIDER

WHO ARE THE MIDDLE MANAGERS OF OTHER DEPARTMENTS WHO CONTROL RESOURCES YOU MIGHT NEED TO ACCESS?

WHO ARE THE MIDDLE MANAGERS MOST LIKELY TO INFLUENCE SENIOR LEADERS?

HOW CAN YOU DEMONSTRATE THE WAYS IN WHICH YOUR IDEA HELPS THESE MIDDLE MANAGERS MEET THEIR TARGETS AND ADDRESS THEIR PRIORITIES?

4. THE RIGHT TEAM FOR THE JOB

A team that comes together to develop a new idea may not be the right team to lead implementation; your requirements will change over time. Teams need to grow and diversify as the work progresses.

You need passionate and visionary leaders working alongside people who know how to make things work and get stuff done. Either quality on its own is not enough for successful implementation.

QUESTIONS TO CONSIDER

WHO ON YOUR TEAM IS RESPONSIBLE FOR THE BIG PICTURE AND VISION?

WHAT KNOWLEDGE AND SKILLS DO YOU NEED ON YOUR TEAM? DO THESE EXIST IN THE POOL OF PEOPLE YOU COULD NATURALLY DRAW UPON, OR DO YOU NEED TO LOOK FURTHER AFIELD?

WHAT ARE THE TRANSITION AND REVIEW POINTS THAT MIGHT MEAN YOU NEED TO MAKE CHANGES TO YOUR TEAM?

5. KEEPING EYES ON THE PRIZE

Progress requires relentless focus to ensure plans are clear and delivery is on schedule. However, merely meeting milestones does not generate and sustain the necessary energy and motivation to keep going.

To sustain strength and energy, it is necessary to keep connecting stakeholders to a powerful and compelling vision for the change you want to see in the world.

It's that powerful narrative — not the process for achieving your milestones — that inspires the best in everyone and keeps them fighting to bring the idea to life.

QUESTIONS TO CONSIDER

HOW WOULD MEMBERS OF YOUR TEAM DESCRIBE THEIR CONTRIBUTION TO IMPROVING PEOPLE'S LIVES?

HOW MANY PEOPLE KNOW YOUR PLAN FOR IMPLEMENTATION AND HOW EACH OF THE STAGES MOVES YOU CLOSER TO YOUR GOAL?

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