Measuring Community Safety in NYC

Marshall Buxton, Abigail Fradkin, antwuan wallace

Design support: Andrew Strong, Odd Research Group
Illustrations: Bridgette Rogers

October 2021

NIS

Contents

Introduction

What does it mean for Black and Brown communities to feel safe and to thrive in New York City? And how might their answers to this question help the City government measure and promote safe and thriving communities? In 2020-2021, the National Innovation Service (NIS) partnered with the Office of Neighborhood Safety (ONS) at the Mayor's Office for Criminal Justice (MOCJ) to answer these questions.

This work is focused on some of the most important questions of our time. The health and economic impacts of the global COVID-19 pandemic, national anti-racist activism, and protests against police violence have heightened public awareness of the historic and systemic racial inequities in our country. Black and Brown communities have disproportionately contracted and died of COVID-19, exacerbating already severe inequities. And the deaths of George Floyd and Breonna Taylor at the hands of the police catalyzed conversations, in white communities and among communities of color, around the role of the police and justice system in creating harm in Black and Brown communities.

In New York City, the rise in violent crime that has coincided with the pandemic has been heavily covered by the media and is one of the key issues at play in the mayoral race. Candidates are divided about the role that the police do and should play in creating safety in communities of color across the city. While some candidates are focused on increasing police presence, others are calling for neighborhood-level investment in economic, health, and other opportunities as the foundation for more robust and sustained community safety.

In that context, ONS subcontracted with NIS, which undertook this initiative to speak directly with the communities most directly affected by violent crime, police violence, and neighborhood disinvestment. In line with ONS, NIS attempted both to learn what communities need to be safe and to build a concrete, actionable framework for understanding where government investments should be directed in order to achieve more sustained community safety.

ONS, which encompasses the Mayor's Action Plan for Neighborhood Safety (MAP) and the Office to Prevent Gun Violence (OPGV), explicitly engages community-level understandings of safety to co-design solutions with residents and deliver a variety of programs and physical space improvements that aim to build safe and resilient communities. ONS's model is grounded in the assertion that community safety is not merely about the absence of crime, but the presence of opportunities that enable community thriving.

As Renita Francois, Executive Director of MAP, put it last year, "Community residents know best what they need to feel safe. The peacekeeping tactics that have been used under the guise of protecting cities have singled out Black and Brown communities as enemies of peace. If we really want to understand how to undo the structural damage that has destabilized communities of color, government must abandon its policymaking from the ivory tower, and come take a seat at the people's table. We are beyond talk. Action is the only viable response."

NIS's research collaboration builds on ONS's work, as well as previous research that NIS conducted, to identify how communities understand safety and thriving, how the conditions of and mechanisms for safety and thriving could be measured over time, and how MAP's work to increase community ownership over government investments could be best evaluated in that context.

This project employed a community-based participatory approach to research, which engaged community partners in the definition and execution of qualitative research. This approach, which seeks to build power through the process of research, is detailed further in the Research Approach section.

Our findings are synthesized into three interrelated components, summarized in the following sections.

Safety and Thriving Themes + Analysis

This section outlines key themes drawn directly from residents' descriptions of safety and thriving, and their understanding of the factors that would increase safety and thriving for their communities.

Residents describe safety as a multidimensional phenomenon, spanning everything from access to housing and employment to internal psychological factors. For residents, psychological safety is grounded in a freedom from fear, as well as the cultivation of community connection and trust. Overwhelmingly, residents emphasize safety as economic, articulating the connection both between ongoing disinvestment and feelings of unsafety and between meeting economic needs and the ability of residents to build secure lives. Finally, residents see sustained community safety as possible only through Black and Brown community ownership and power, and in particular the power to direct government investments.

Residents describe thriving as the extension of safety, in that safety is the foundation upon which thriving communities are built. It is an expression of a community's ability to move beyond economic survival, and sustain that positive progress over time in a way that allows residents to cultivate agency in their own lives. That, in turn, enables the realization of community power, where communities are successful in directing government to meet what they need to thrive.

Community-Driven Safety Indicators

This section lays out indicators derived from our research analysis that best represent measures of material conditions of and mechanisms for increasing safety within the communities

we spoke to. The indicators are grounded in the expertise and priorities of Black and Brown communities affected by concentrated poverty, ongoing disinvestment, and systemic harms (the very communities that ONS is committed to).

These indicators are meant to support ONS and its agency partners in their efforts to move away from crime statistics as a primary indicator of community safety and well-being, towards a more multidimensional understanding. These indicators will be used for the development of the SMART Tool and are meant to support multi-stakeholder data collection, analysis, and communication to inform public policy that equitably meets New York City residents' needs.

The indicators are organized into six domains. The first three are framed through an economic lens, given residents' framing of community safety as a predominantly economic issue. Economic Security speaks to forms of economic insecurity that residents face. Economic Readiness focuses on educational and workforce preparation for economic participation. Local Economy captures the need for local businesses that provide access to valued goods and economic opportunity.

The second three domains encompass the remaining areas that residents identified as important to community safety. Physical Security speaks to residents' need to be protected from physical harm, including the harm that they experience at the hands of the NYPD and other residents. Public Services highlights the service areas identified as important for economically insecure residents, with emphasis on mental health and healthcare. Built Environment focuses on physical spaces and neighborhood conditions, with a focus on quality housing, green spaces, and non-hazardous conditions.

MAP Evaluation Framework

This section outlines what we learned from MAP staff and resident participants about the focus of MAP programming and how people experience MAP, in order to ground a framework for directing and evaluating how MAP does its work.

That framework incorporates the expanded understanding of safety and thriving presented in this report, focusing on the domain of Community Power. The framework looks at the types of activities that MAP engages residents in to build towards community power and the continuum along which community power can be built over time, with a focus on addressing safety priorities.

Those areas of activity are: relationship-strengthening activities (Base Building), skill-building opportunities that increase resident capacity to identify and address problems (Community Capacity), more formal organizing around their priorities and develop solutions (Resident Voice), advocacy on behalf of residents to make connections to services and increase the responsiveness of agencies to resident concerns (Government Accountability). In addition, the framework looks to track the longer-term impacts of MAP's work in terms of increasing resident power to direct government priorities and investments (Exercised Power).

Research Approach

NIS takes a community-based participatory approach to its work. We have invited community stakeholders into our combined research and design process, as a means of better understanding, meeting, and solving for their needs. NIS has sought participation through partnership from a variety of community stakeholders and neighborhood institutions across NYC's five boroughs to co-develop a research approach. This partnership seeks to enable communities who experience and are impacted by government systems to play a more active role in their shape and direction.

The NIS approach to participatory research, through partnership with individual and organizational community stakeholders, is deeply aligned with ONS's orientation to and innovation about how government can work with and within communities. MAP's NeighborhoodStat (NStat) initiative brings together residents, community organizations, and government agencies for collective problem-solving and action, and is emblematic of ONS's work to move decision-making power into the hands of community members.

NIS built on the connections we made to community-based organizations in our prior exploratory research on Safety and Thriving and through the existing community relationships held by ONS to develop research partnerships for this project. Those partners have a variety of different issue area focuses (ranging from from maternal health, to emergency food distribution, and advocacy for gun violence survivors), but all are engaged directly at the neighborhood-level with work related to community safety. We developed research questions with a number of those partners, in order to help tailor our conversations to particular communities.

"Community residents know best what they need to feel safe. The peacekeeping tactics that have been used under the guise of protecting cities have singled out Black and Brown communities as enemies of peace. If we really want to understand how to undo the structural damage that has destabilized communities of color, government must abandon its policymaking from the ivory tower, and come take a seat at the people's table. We are beyond talk. Action is the only viable response."

Renita Francois
Executive Director of MAP

Our ONS and community partners also helped us recruit participants for focus groups and interviews. We focused on Black and Brown residents in neighborhoods with high rates of violent crime, including residents in neighborhoods with MAP and/or OPGV programs and residents in neighborhoods that were not directly engaged with MAP or OPGV. Through our work we engaged residents across 8 sites where MAP and/or OPGV operate. The Center for Court Innovation's Neighborhood Safety Initiative, MAP's partner in facilitating the NStat Resident Stakeholder teams, was instrumental in supporting resident team engagement.

In total, NIS engaged 108 residents and 16 staff across NYC. While most sessions were all ages, we held a number of specific sessions

for teenagers and seniors to get their unique perspectives.

In focus groups and interviews, residents were asked to talk about how they understand the concepts of safety and thriving, and what factors might increase safety and thriving in their communities. Additionally, we worked with our research partners to tailor sessions to their contexts, often adding questions specific to a neighborhood and/or an organization's focus.

All focus groups and interviews were recorded, transcribed, and coded in order to develop key themes drawn directly from residents' descriptions of safety and thriving. We paid special attention to the factors that residents identified as important to increase safety and thriving for their communities. What follows is the synthesis of our conversations with residents, in the form of themes, recommended indicators, and an evaluation framework for MAP.

Partners

MAP Residents Team

- Stapleton
- Van Dyke
- Thompkins
- Boulevard
- Ingersoll

Community-Based Organizations

- Red Hook Initiative
- Radical Health
- Good Shepherds
- 67th Precinct God Squad
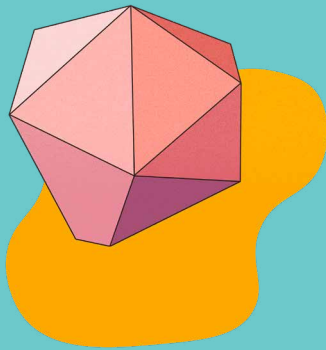- Community Mediation Services
- Gun Violence Survivors Advocacy Council

Our Findings

Our analysis yielded a number of themes about both safety & thriving. The themes are drawn directly from residents' descriptions of safety and thriving, and their understanding of the factors that would increase safety and thriving for their communities.

Safety is ...

1. Safety is a multidimensional phenomenon

Residents clearly described safety as both a state of mind and a condition of their environment, pointing to the psychological and physical ways that safety is experienced. When asked to define safety, it was common for residents to describe external factors, such as hot water, food access, and a good job, alongside internal factors such as freedom from fear and a sense of calm.

There are multiple ways to experience safety and to create safety. Safety involves both physical and psychological experiences, and is therefore dependent on an individual's relationship to their context and the people and resources in it.

> Crime statistics and racial stereotypes of Black and Brown communities perpetuate the myth that members of these communities are inherently unsafe.

External notions of communities and community safety are racist and simplistic.

Residents contrasted their multifaceted understanding of community safety with how government institutions and media portray safety in their communities. Specifically, these external actors depicted Black and Brown communities negatively, as places where poverty and violent crime are the only things happening. These external perceptions play into pervasive racist historical narratives about urban Black and Brown ghettos that cast communities in broad dehumanizing strokes.

For residents, these negative perceptions of their communities are reinforced by high levels of crime which attract negative news media and attention from government actors.

Crime statistics are viewed as major drivers of external perceptions of communities, and are often used to define a community with a single story, as the sole indicator of how safe a place and its people are.

2. Safety is freedom from fear

The racialized stigma that reinforces the idea that Black and Brown neighborhoods as unsafe exists within resident communities as well. Many residents reported feeling actively unsafe and talked about safety as the freedom from fear of harm or "not having to look over your shoulder." Fearing physical harm or harassment from people they don't know, whether it be civilians or police, is a common reality for residents.

Negative press reporting on crime statistics and apps like Citizen, which broadcast active incidents, contribute to an active and present sense of fear. This can translate into socially avoidant behavior, such as avoiding certain blocks where people congregate, not going out at a certain time of night, or avoiding eye-contact and communication with neighbors on the street. This way of engaging with a neighborhood can make residents feel isolated and anxious, for themselves and their families, as it assumes that the people they live around are not worth trusting. Safety is being able to live without this fear and anxiety, and having the freedom to walk down the street with peace of mind.

The stigma that tells residents to fear one another is the same stigma that tells the police to fear residents.

Police fear communities and create fear within them.

The same dynamic was reported in police and resident relationships, where police are understood to carry a racialized stigma about residents as unsafe and frequently approach interactions with residents with fear and anxiety. Residents regularly experience encounters with a police force that is accusatory, invasive, and prejudiced against them. This was relayed in countless instances of police

harassment, unwarranted search and questioning, and citations for small infractions. The fear experienced by residents reflects the reality of living in areas with high rates of violent crime and police violence.

The stigma that tells residents to fear one another is the same stigma that tells the police to fear residents. The difference is that police have the power of a carceral system behind them, which is often used to weaponize that bias and do harm. While some residents' vision for safety included the police who invested in relationship-building with residents and patrolled on foot, for many safety was the presence of a community-led physical security force that excluded police.

3. Safety is community connection

Safety means connectivity, familiarity, and trust. People talked about connectivity as a way they create safety for themselves, and a thing that communities need more of to achieve community-wide safety. Residents experience safety when they know that someone is there to support them, watch their child play on the playground, or just greet them on the street. Familiarity and trust with other residents breeds a sense of community that is grounded in interdependence and mutual aid. The safety people create for themselves becomes something they want to create and share with others, and in that way it becomes community safety.

The safety that is created through community connection can diffuse the fear and stigma that surrounds a neighborhood. A number of residents shared stories about the fear they felt when they moved into the neighborhood for the first time, not knowing the people or environment, but knowing the reputation of the community as unsafe. Through developing relationships to people, that fear was diminished and their sense of safety increased.

Public events that bring people together for fun or pro-social purposes have a major impact on residents' feelings of safety. Residents discussed how instrumental community gatherings are in creating new relationships and destigmatizing neighbors who they might normally avoid. This is a core tenet of the MAP program, which regularly convenes community events for this purpose.

4. Safety is economic

Simply put, residents stated that community safety depends on the community having the material resources necessary to meet their needs. In their eyes, community safety is an issue that stems from economic insecurity and a lack of opportunity to move beyond survival.

Safety is access to well-paying work that provides economic security so that communities can enjoy the quality of life that is afforded to their privileged neighbors. There isn't a possibility of true safety when people still struggle to feed their families, afford housing, and pay for the essential goods and services in their lives. Though community connections can reduce the stigma and build support networks, achieving actual safety cannot happen without a shift in the economic reality of Black and Brown communities. Residents think about safety in distinctly economic terms, in the sense that access to money and financial stability is the problem and the solution to community safety.

Insecurity is a result of systemic disinvestment.

Widespread economic insecurity and the symptomatic violence that stems from it didn't just happen. Residents acknowledge that systems have historically chosen to not invest in or serve Black and Brown communities in the same ways they have served white communities. Frequently, residents would compare white neighborhoods to their own, as a way to talk about how historical investments in white communities created the conditions for prosperous and safe neighborhoods.

The impact of historical disinvestment is most visible in the environmental conditions of a neighborhood. Residents describe living in a crumbling infrastructure, where housing is in disrepair, streets are dirty, and parks are inaccessible. A core component of safety is a maintained physical environment with access to sufficient green spaces, well-lit streets, and functional housing.

5. Safety is community power and ownership

Residents feel that a safer community is possible to create if the community can direct institutions on how to do it. Black and Brown communities have been on the receiving end of varied strategies to create safer neighborhoods, predominantly punitive responses to crime. Despite organizing efforts, attempts to direct government resources or hold institutions accountable to the services they are meant to provide is still a major challenge.

Residents understand that government can play an important role in creating safer and more resilient communities through the investments they make in services, programs, and infrastructure. To date, residents have not been sufficiently empowered to direct those investments towards the things that they know they need in their communities. Community power, or the ability for residents to come together to shape governmental investments and hold government accountable to their commitments, is a core part of residents' vision for community safety.

For many residents, community power is only possible if there is an increase in community building and organizing. Specifically, they see value in creating opportunities for community stewardship that build relationships around the improvement of neighborhood conditions. Safety looks like a community that has the economic security and organized capacity to hold government accountable to making the right community investments and to invest directly in the well-being of its community members.

Thriving is ...

1. Thriving is an extention of safety

As a concept, thriving contains many of the same meanings that safety does. Thriving is both a psychological feeling and condition of the external environment. Like safety, thriving was primarily talked about as an economic phenomenon that encompasses everything from job security to neighborhood conditions and accessible services. When asked to describe the resources that would create a thriving community, residents frequently expressed that they were the same things that enable safety.

Safety was often talked about as a core component of thriving. For residents, thriving is not possible without first feeling safe. Safety is a foundation that allows for the ability to thrive and should be considered an indicator of thriving.

2. Thriving is moving beyond economic survival

Where safety requires economic security and meeting the basic needs of a community, thriving is economic growth. Thriving is the realization of economic mobility and wealth generation. For residents, thriving looked like having disposable income and savings, and being able to own assets like a home or car. Thriving is also intergenerational, with families having enough money to support their children and their parents.

3. Thriving is sustained positive progress

Residents often frame thriving as good things persisting over time. Thriving is a prolonged period of peace, prosperity, and growth. Frequently, thriving was expressed

as a feeling of sustained happiness. Residents shared stories about the cycles of mass violence that they lived through in their communities, to contrast with the idea of thriving. For them, thriving means a community that is resilient enough to weather economic and social challenges and remain a peaceful and prosperous place.

For many, thriving can feel like a distant future state that is hard to envision, because the present realities of Black and Brown communities in NYC are far from the socioeconomic conditions that produce long-term thriving.

4. Thriving is having agency in your life

Thriving is having the capabilities and platform to choose how you want to live your life. This freedom of choice is possible because thriving is beyond the stressful state of survival. A person who is thriving is able to set long-term goals and has the stability to dream about what they want in their lives.

This constraint impacts the ability to choose where to live, where to work, where to study, and where to access quality goods and services. Thriving would look like having choice across all aspects of one's life.

5. Thriving is the realization of community power

Like safety, thriving was described as something tied to community power. With safety, residents expressed a need to build and organize community members to direct government investments towards the right ends. Whereas thriving communities were described as having power, adequate representation in government, and a positive relationship with government bodies. Thriving communities don't have issues getting their needs met or holding government actors accountable because they possess the requisite power to do so. We propose community power as a domain worth measuring in the MAP evaluation framework in the next section.

Measuring Safety

Community Power

Built Environment

Public Services

What makes for safe & thriving communities?

SOLD

Economic Security

Physical Security

Economic Readiness

Local Economy

Overview

Indicators for the Domains (Economic Readiness, Economic Security, etc.) in the graphic above are meant to be a reflection of the ways in which the Black and Brown residents that NIS has engaged in this participatory research project spoke about community safety and thriving.

While the indicators themselves were sourced by NIS, the need for them emerged directly from an analysis of focus group and interview data, which surfaced the conditions underlying community safety and thriving. We organized this document to highlight the issues and priorities of residents alongside the indicators.

Domains and Indicators

The first three domains are framed through an economic lens, given residents' framing of community safety as a predominantly economic issue. They propose measures that provide a snapshot of financial health across the personal, household, and community-level. Economic Security contains indicators that largely speak to rates of poverty, job security, and various forms of economic insecurity that residents face. Economic Readiness is a domain that encompasses a range of measures across educational and workforce development systems that are meant to prepare residents for meaningful participation in economic life. Local Economy is a domain that emerged from resident's desire to have resilient local businesses that provide access to valued goods and opportunities for entrepreneurship and wealth generation.

The last four domains are not explicitly economic but encompass the remaining areas that residents identified as important to community safety and thriving. Physical Security contains indicators that speak to residents' need to be protected from physical harm, including the harm that they experience at the hands of the NYPD and other residents. This domain is a combination of data about carceral system involvement and physical violence that underlie a lack of safety, and community-led policing efforts that could contribute to community safety. For residents who are economically insecure, access to services and utilities delivered by the government can be essential. Public Services contains indicators across the service areas that residents identified as important to community safety and thriving, with a particular emphasis on mental health and healthcare. Built Environment pertains to physical spaces and neighborhood conditions, with a particular focus on housing deterioration and access to neighborhoods with ample green spaces and non-hazardous conditions.

A note on racial data:

NIS exclusively engaged communities of color in this project, given the disproportionate levels of violence and insecurity they face in New York City. While some of the below indicators are racially explicit in their construction, each cited data set has racial demographics data that should accompany each indicator. Without the inclusion of race, these indicators will fail to reflect the voices of the Black and Brown residents who informed them and appropriately measure the social conditions that have a significant racial component.

Helpful Definitions

Domain: a domain is a major category that was identified as being an important area that affects safety and thriving. Each domain speaks to issues and priorities that need to be measured by specific indicators.

Resident goal: a summary of the goal of this domain and its relation to safety.

Indicator category: the areas within each domain that were identified to play a role in community safety and thriving.

Resident rationale: the ways in which this category was identified as important by residents.

Indicators: proposed indicators, measurements, and data sets

Economic Security

Resident goal: Communities that have well-paid, stable jobs that provide enough to meet individual and family needs, access to quality housing, food, and healthcare, and agency in their economic future. Residents emphasize economic security as foundational to sustained community safety.

See the **indicator categories** below to see how **indicators** are measured:

+ Poverty

Resident rationale: The experience of poverty is the most common factor underlying a lack of safety in a community. A decrease in poverty should be leading measures of a safe community.

Indicator	Indicator Measurement	Data Source
Poverty rate	Rate calculated using income (inclusive of benefits), city housing expenses, and additional expenditure (see here)	NYC Opportunity Poverty Rate
Near poverty rate	Percent of NY residents with income up to 150% OF NYCgov poverty threshold	NYC Opportunity Near Poverty Rate

+ Job Security

Resident rationale: Community residents face barriers to consistent employment, including discrimination, long commutes, and lack of affordable child care and quality education and training, and they struggle to make ends meet with jobs that are low-paid and do not cover living

expenses. Employment in jobs that are accessible, pay a living wage, and allow for wage and income growth is a key measure of economic security.

Indicator	Indicator Measurement	Data Source
Unemployment rate	Unemployment rate by race / ethnicity	OMB: NYC Seasonally Adjusted Employment Annual* data available from NYC OEO
Living wage	Prevalence of employed individuals making a wage below area self-sufficient or living wage	ACS Table B19051
Income inequality	Annual household income at the 80th and 20th percentile. 80:20 ratio	ACS
Working poor	The percentage of workers ages 25-64 who are "working poor," defined as both (1) working full-time and (2) being below the NYCgov poverty level or at the near poverty level	NYC Opportunity
Income growth	Average annual earned income for full-time wage and salary workers ages 25-64, and real earned income growth over time, by percentile	ACS
Job & wage growth	The net percentage change in jobs and earnings per worker by wage level category	IBO data set

| Commute time | The share of individuals who worked in the last week (excluding those who work at home), by the reported time it usually takes to get from home to work. NIS suggests capturing the percent who spent over 60m commuting. | ACS Table B08012 |

+ Savings

Resident rationale: The ability to save for the future was unavailable for most residents who experience economic hardship. Developing and growing savings and assets is a key measure of economic security and future thriving.

Indicator	Indicator Measurement	Data Source
Retirement security	Median income-to-poverty line ratio of residents aged 65 and older	US Census PUMS 5 year estimates
Savings account utilization	Average savings and retirement account balance	No data set identified. NY Fed collects a Survey of Consumer Expectations at the State Level.

+ Home Security

Resident rationale: Housing is often the biggest expense for residents. Access to affordable, secure housing is a key component of economic security, and homeownership can also contribute to economic security and mobility.

Indicator	Indicator Measurement	Data Source
Housing burden	The share of owner and renter-occupied households that are cost-burdened (spending more than 30 percent of income on housing costs) and severely cost-burdened (more than 50 percent)	ACS

Homeownership	Percent owner-occupied households by race/ethnicity	ACS Table B25008
Evictions	Monthly count of evictions	Dept of Investigation (via ODP)
Affordability of rent stabilized units	Percentages of housing burdened households who have rent stabilized apartments	NY HVCS Survey (2017)
Adult stability	Percentage of adults age 18+ who lived in the same house 1 year ago	ACS Table B07001
Gentrification	Gentrification Measure - see Methodology	ACS for demographic data US2010 Russel Sage & Brown for census geography

+ Food Security

Resident rationale: Many residents experience food insecurity and rely on government and non-profit services for consistent access to food. Increased food security is a key measure of increased economic security.

Indicator	Indicator Measurement	Data Source
Food insecurity rate	Rate of food insecurity by district	Feeding America conducts a rate using census data and a number of other economic measures. See methodology for details

+ Health Security

Resident rationale: Healthcare costs are often prohibitive for residents without jobs that offer insurance. High healthcare costs mean that residents forgo necessary medical care, which can undermine their physical health. Access to consistent healthcare is a key measure of economic security.

Indicator	Indicator Measurement	Data Source
Prohibitive healthcare costs	Estimate of residents who forego medical care and prescriptions due to cost	DOHMH Community Health Survey
Jobs with health insurance	Percentage of the population that has private health insurance through a current or former employer or union	Census PUMS data

Economic Readiness

Resident goal: Communities that are equipped with the quality education and employment preparation needed for residents to succeed in the economy. Residents discussed economic readiness as a driver of economic security, as well as an indicator of the community investment and opportunity necessary to community safety.

See the **indicator categories** below to see how **indicators** are measured:

+ Disconnected Youth

Resident rationale: Youth struggle to access quality education and other extracurricular opportunities that might expose them to academic and professional pathways, and disconnection from those activities can contribute to engagement in activities that undermine community safety.

Indicator	Indicator Measurement	Data Source
Disconnected youth	Number of young people ages 16-24 who are neither working nor in school	Captured by NYC Opportunity Likely based on ACS IPUMS 5 year sample
Chronic absenteeism	Number of students who are absent 10% or more of school days	NYC DOE End-of-Year Attendance and Chronic Absenteeism Data
Drop-out rate	New York City public high school students who had dropped out after four years or six years of instruction.	NYC DOE

+ Educational Quality

Resident rationale: Youth struggle to access quality education and other extracurricular opportunities that might expose them to academic and professional pathways, and disconnection from those activities can contribute to engagement in activities that undermine community safety.

Indicator	Indicator Measurement	Data Source
Overcrowded schools	Percentage of schools in a geography where enrollment exceeds capacity.	NYC DOE
Class size	Average pupil to class size ratio	NYC DOE
School poverty	Economic Need Index - percentage of students facing economic hardship, determined by eligibility for HRA assistance, temporary housing, and census tract poverty rates.	NYC DOE
School representativeness	Representativeness is categorized on a three-point scale, described by CCC as the Degree of Representation: Representative = within 10 percentage points of the district demographic makeup Somewhat Representative = within 20 percentage points of the district demographic makeup Not Representative = more than 20 percentage points outside of the district demographic makeup.	NYC DOE

Indicator	Indicator Measurement	Data Source
College readiness	The percentage of a 9th-grade cohort who, by August after their 4th year in high school, have met CUNY's standards for college readiness in English and mathematics.	NYC DOE
Student perception of quality		NYC DOE Student Perception Survey
Teacher absences	Percent of teachers absent more than 10 days of the school year	Civil Rights Data Collection Methodology on p 16
Teacher experience	Percent of teachers with fewer than 4 years of teaching experience	NYSED - NYS Report Cards Database

+ Educational Attainment

Resident rationale: Educational attainment is crucial to accessing well-paid, stable jobs and continued economic opportunity and is an important measure of economic readiness.

Indicator	Indicator Measurement	Data Source
High school attainment	Percentage of adults 25+ with at least a high school diploma	ACS Table A12001
Post-secondary attainment	Percent of adults 25+ with a post-secondary degree	ACS Table A12002
On-time graduation	Percentage of public school freshmen who graduate within four years.	NYC DOE Graduation Results
NYC DOE post-secondary graduates	Percentage of NYC DOE on-time high school graduates who enrolled and graduated from college with an Associate's or Bachelor's degree within 6 years.	NYC DOE Graduation Results

+ Employment Preparation

Resident rationale: Without pathways to attaining quality employment, residents do not have the foundation necessary to building economic security, and they see a need for increased investment in effective job training and placement programs. Access to those programs is therefore a key measure of economic readiness.

Indicator	Indicator Measurement	Data Source
Career centers	Proximity to career development services	SBS for Workforce1 Centers NYC Opportunity for Jobs Plus Centers HRA for Job Centers
Vocational education programming	Proximity to vocational education courses that are eligible for individual training grants	SBS
Youth workforce preparation	Participation in workforce preparation programming by census block	Summer Youth Employment Program (SYEP) data
Youth afterschool programming	Percent of total available seats for youth vs eligible youth	DYCD for DYCD Programs See this map for a set of programs across agencies

Local Economy

Resident goal: Neighborhood economies that support and sustain locally-owned-and-operated businesses that provide residents with quality goods and services, as well as employment and wealth-building opportunities. A thriving and equitable local economy contributes greatly to resident economic readiness and is an essential component of economic security in a community.

See the **indicator categories** below to see how **indicators** are measured:

+ Community Business Ownership

Resident rationale: Locally owned businesses are pillars for local communities, providing wealth-building opportunities for business owners and employment opportunities for local residents. Community business ownership is a key measure of a local economy that supports economic security.

Indicator	Indicator Measurement	Data Source
Local employers	Number of employer businesses by census block	Census Bureau Survey of Business Owners
Minority-owned businesses	Percent of businesses in a neighborhood that are minority owned	NYC Department of Small Business Services MWBE Directory US Census Bureau Annual Business Survey

+ Community Business Stability

Resident rationale: The stability of locally owned businesses is threatened by poverty and gentrification. Stability of community businesses is a key measure of a local economy that can support sustained economic security for residents.

Indicator	Indicator Measurement	Data Source
Job gains in local employer businesses	Local employer job gains/ loses by race and geography	[Bureau of Labor Statistics Employment Dynamics](#)
Employer business revenue	Average annual receipts per firm and growth in receipts per firm.	[US Census Bureau Annual Business Survey](#)
Tenure of local employer businesses	Average tenure of local employer businesses	[US Census Bureau Annual Business Survey](#)

+ Accessibility of Goods & Services

Resident rationale: Residents struggle with the limited number of businesses in their local neighborhood and often have to travel to access quality goods and services. Residents are often forced to choose from unhealthy and low quality options. Availability of all essential goods and services is a key measure of a thriving local economy.

Indicator	Indicator Measurement	Data Source
Access to supermarkets	Supermarket Need Index	DCP develops the [SNI annually](#) using [department of agriculture data](#) and ACS demographics data
Fast food density	Number and density of fast food restaurants	No data set found.
Tobacco store density	Number and density of tobacco outlets	[DCA](#): Active Tobacco Retail License
Availability of local essential businesses in the neighborhood	Number of essential businesses in a ½ mile radius	No data sets identified for pharmacies, laundromats/ dry cleaners, hardware stores

+ Accessibility of Financial Services

Resident rationale: Minority business owners often struggle to access the credit necessary to start and grow their businesses, and residents struggle to access affordable banking products.

Access to affordable banking and credit is a key measure of a thriving local economy.

Indicator	Indicator Measurement	Data Source
Bank/credit union density	number of bank and credit union branches per 10,000 residents	Bank branch data - FDIC Summary of Deposits Credit union branch data - NCUA Population data from ACS
Bank/credit union to nonbank ratio	Ratio of banks/credit unions to check cashers/pawnshops	Bank branch data - FDIC Summary of Deposits Check casher locations - request from NYS DFS Pawnshop locations - DCA "legally operating businesses" table Credit union branch data - NCUA
IDNYC acceptance	Percentage of bank and credit union branches that accept IDNYC as primary ID	ID NYC
Affordable banking products	Percentage of bank and credit union branches offering checking accounts that meet the requirements of New York's basic banking law	Affordable product data - Comptroller Report (2015) Affordable product data at credit unions - OFE report (2018)

Physical Security

Resident goal: Neighborhoods where residents feel protected from physical harm. Most residents see a role for police in that protection, but emphasize a need for community-led policing that can build alternatives to violent policing and foster relationship-and trust-building. A security force that is community directed was described as an approach that could reduce incarceration and violence, and provide safety for the whole community.

See the **indicator categories** below to see how **indicators** are measured:

+ Police Misconduct & Force

Resident rationale: Residents and police fear each other in ways that lead to police misconduct and undermine the safety of residents. Decreased use of force and invasive policing is a key measure of increased safety.

Indicator	Indicator Measurement	Data Source
NYPD misconduct complaints	Misconduct complaints by precinct	CCRB
NYPD misconduct investigations	Percent of complaints investigated by precinct	CCRB
Stop and frisk	number of stops by precinct	NYPD Stop, Question and Frisk Data
Use of force	number of use of force incidents by precinct	NYPD Use of Force Incidents

Police-involved deaths	number of police-involved deaths	Potential Datasets: DOHMH Gun Violence Archive

+ Carceral Involvement

Resident rationale: Residents struggle with the high incarceration rates of family and community members and over-policing of their neighborhoods and schools. Decreased policing of small offenses and decreased incarceration overall are important measures of physical security.

Indicator	Indicator Measurement	Data Source
Criminal summons rate	Monthly rate of criminal summons by age and race	New York Office of Court Administration (see p.26 for methodology)
Imprisonment rate	number of people in state prison by neighborhood tabulation area	Compiled by the Prison Policy Initiative using NY PUMS Data from 2010
Incarceration rate	Percentage incarcerated in jail by zip code	DOC has this data but it isn't included in the public data set
Juvenile arrests	Number of youth (17 and under) arrests	Borough-level data available from NYS DCJS
Juvenile detention rate	Youth admitted to juvenile detention during the calendar year	NYC Administration for Children's Services "Detention Admissions by Home Borough"
School police presence	Number of police officers assigned to schools by precinct	No data set identified

+ Community-Led Policing

Resident rationale: Many residents express a desire for community-led policing, where residents could help determine how policing happened and who patrolled the neighborhood. An expansion of community-led alternatives to existing policing is a measure of an increased sense of physical security.

Indicator	Indicator Measurement	Data Source
Resident satisfaction score	Average score across community satisfaction metrics	No data source found. The NYC Police Reform and Reinvention Collaborative's [report](#) indicates that community feedback on precinct performance will be collected through multiple programs. A metric that aggregates those measures could be meaningful. Additionally, MOCJ is collecting survey data that measures resident police satisfaction, which could be included here.
CMS presence	See note	OPGV
NYPD neighborhood coordination officers	Number of neighborhood coordination officers (NCOs) in a precinct	No data set found
Neighborhood watch presence	Presence of a neighborhood watch or tenant patrol program	No data set found
NYPD Build the Block attendance	Attendance rate of build the block meetings	No data set found
Precinct Commander community alignment	number of precinct commander appointments that are aligned with precinct council recommendations	No data set found. The NYC Police Reform and Reinvention Collaborative's [report](#) indicates that precinct councils will interview and vet NYPD-proposed precinct commanders before they are appointed. Data should be collected on the proportion of precinct commanders that are approved by the majority of the precinct council.

+ Violent Crime

Resident rationale: Minority business owners often struggle to access the credit necessary to start and grow their businesses, and residents struggle to access affordable banking products. Access to affordable banking and credit is a key measure of a thriving local economy.

Indicator	Indicator Measurement	Data Source
Violent Crime Incidents	Monthly rates of complaints for violent offenses (rape and sexual assault, robbery, assault and murder)	NYPD CompStat 2.0
Domestic Violence	Annual complaints of domestic violence	NYPD Domestic Violence Reports

Public Services

Resident goal: Accessible and affordable public services that meet the needs of residents. Public services can provide essential support to communities who are economically insecure, allowing them to build towards longer-term security.

See the **indicator categories** below to see how **indicators** are measured:

+ Mental Health

Resident rationale: Residents indicated that mental health was a major challenge in their communities, given the effects of intergenerational poverty, violence, and incarceration. Mental illness was commonly cited as a cause of violent crime making access to quality and affordable mental health services essential to individual and community safety.

Indicator	Indicator Measurement	Data Source
Presence of mental health services	Number of subsidized mental health programs	No data set identified, though MOCMH has a list of providers and programs by geography.
Presence of substance abuse services	Number of subsidized chemical dependency services	SAMHSA for treatment substance abuse treatment facilities OSAS for a list of subsidized programs and services

Adult mental health status	% of respondents who cite "current depression" or "serious psychological distress"	DOHMH Community Health Survey
Youth mental health status	The percentage of high school-aged youth that reported: [1] feeling "so sad or hopeless almost every day for 2 weeks or more in a row that they stopped doing some usual activities" in the past 12 months [2] Planning or attempting suicide	CDC: High School Youth Risk Behavior Survey
Psychiatric hospitalization rate	Adult Psychiatric Hospitalization Rate	DOHMH calculates using ACS and SPARCS data. MOCJ to request.

+ Healthcare

Resident rationale: Residents struggled to access healthcare services that are affordable, local, and of quality. Access quality healthcare underlies physical and economic security and is therefore a key measure of safety.

Indicator	Indicator Measurement	Data Source
Health insurance access	Percentage of residents with health insurance	ACS

Health professional shortage area	A designation given to indicate a shortage of providers. Calculated using the following: 1. Population to provider ratio 2. Percentage of the population below 100% of the Federal Poverty Level 3. Travel time to the nearest source of care 4. HRSA	HRSA
Medically underserved index	The IMU is calculated from four variables, including ratio of primary care physicians per 1,000 population, infant mortality rate, percentage of the population with incomes below the poverty level, and percentage of the population age 65 or over	HRSA
Self reported health status	The number and age-adjusted percentage of adults aged 18 and older that reported their health as excellent, very good, good, fair, or poor.	DOHMH Community Health Survey
Premature mortality rate	Age-adjusted rate of deaths under the age of 65 years per 100,000 people.	DOHMH Birth and Death
Infant mortality rate	Rate of deaths under 1 year of age per 1,000 live births	DOHMH Vital Statistics Data

+ Connectivity

Resident rationale: Particularly during the COVID-19 pandemic, where remote schooling and working were the only option, many residents struggled to participate due to a lack of reliable broadband internet and access to computers. Access to broadband and appropriate technology

is essential to the economic security that comes with engaging in the modern workforce and education system.

Indicator	Indicator Measurement	Data Source
Broadband access	Percentage of households with broadband	ACS, table DP02
Computer access	Percentage of households with a computer of any kind (desktops, laptops, tablets, or smartphones)	ACS, table DP02

+ Transit

Resident rationale: Access to adequate transportation has major implications for people's quality of life. Many residents struggled to access reliable transportation, which served as a barrier to employment, education, and other essential services. This is particularly true for senior residents and those with disabilities, who struggled to come by ADA accessible transit stations. Transit access is a key driver of access to employment and education opportunities, which are essential to economic security.

| Indicator	Indicator Measurement	Data Source
Transit availability	Per capita subway entrances, bus stops	MTA
Transit accessibility	Per capita number of "fully accessible" subway stations	MTA

+ Public Assistance

Resident rationale: Support for basic income, food, housing, and child care needs enables people to sustain themselves, providing short-term physical and economic safety while enabling them to seek to establish longer-term economic security.

Indicator	Indicator Measurement	Data Source
Utilization of public assistance	Percentage of eligible households who receive SNAP or cash public assistance	HRA for SNAP ACS for public assistance

Emergency food recipients	Number of people receiving emergency food	Non-geo data from HRA. No data set identified for CD-level data.
Subsidized housing utilization	Ratio of population who are enrolled to ratio of population who are eligible	NYCHA
Access to child care	Number of subsidized licensed center/family child care slots per 100 low-income children	DOHMH
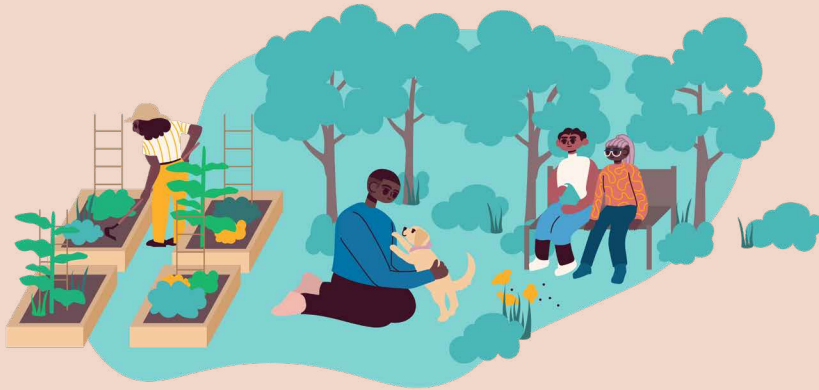
Built Environment

Resident goal: Neighborhood physical spaces that are clean, accessible, functional, and beautiful. Residents describe investment in shared spaces as important to making people feel valued in their community, and well-kept spaces are both indicators of and contributors to economic and physical security.

See the **indicator categories** below to see how **indicators** are measured:

+ Housing Deterioration

Resident rationale: NYCHA residents face crumbling and hazardous infrastructure, including buildings without working doors, elevators, and cameras, apartments with long-overdue repairs, and trash-covered outdoor spaces. Neglected spaces affect how people feel about their communities and can attract crime, making them a key measure of decreased psychological and physical safety.

Indicator	Indicator Measurement	Data Source
Maintenance deficiencies	The percent of households that reported three or more maintenance deficiencies	NYC Housing and Vacancy Survey
Fair to poor housing	Adults who rate their neighborhood housing conditions as fair or poor	NYC Housing and Vacancy Survey

Emergency housing complaints	Number of complaints citing heat and hot water, lead, or other emergency problems in privately owned buildings	HPD
Emergency violations issued	Number of emergency violation repair citations issued by HPD	HPD
NYCHA complaints	Number of maintenance complaints received by NYCHA	No data set identified
Bed bugs	Number of units in a building that are infested with bedbugs	HPD
Rodent presence	Monthly count of failed rodent inspections	DOHMH

+ Environmental Quality

Resident rationale: Poorly-maintained housing and other public infrastructure produce an unpleasant physical environment and adversely affect resident health. Poor environmental quality is a measure of lack of community safety.

Indicator	Indicator Measurement	Data Source
Complaints of dirty conditions	311 service requests labeled "dirty conditions"	311
Park and playground condition	Average score of PIP ratings for safety, structural condition, and cleanliness	DPR PIP

Presence of lead	Lead Levels	[1] DOHMH
	[1] Children Tested for Lead by Age 3	[2] DOHMH
	[2] Children Under 6 yrs with Elevated Blood Lead Levels	[3] DEP
	[3] Lead piping (Lead Service Line Location Coordinates)	[4] ACS
	[4] Lead Paint Indicator - Percent of housing units built pre-1960, as indicator of potential lead paint exposure	
Air quality	Air quality measurement	DOHMH
Proximity to hazardous waste	[1] Count of hazardous waste facilities within 5 km	[1] EPA
	[2] Count of proposed or listed National priorities list - also known as superfund - sites within 5 km	[2] EPA
Water contamination	Monthly water quality score	DEP
Rodent presence	Monthly count of failed rodent inspections	DOHMH

+ Land Use

Resident rationale: Residents highlighted access to gardens and other green spaces as important to their psychological well-being and physical health, making them an indicator of increased safety.

Indicator	Indicator Measurement	Data Source
Green space access	Percent of population who live within 1/2 mile of a park, beach or open space	DoITT

Community garden access	Percent of population who live within 1/2 mile of a community garden	DPR

Community Power

An organized and engaged community who act together through democratic structures to set agendas, shift public narratives, and cultivate relationships of mutual accountability with governmental decision-makers.

As a domain for measurement, community power is significantly more complex than the domains above. Community power is both a catalyst for all of the above safety domains and exercised in distinctly context-dependent ways, varying significantly based on the needs, goals, and relationships of a particular place.

Given that this project seeks to measure safety in NYC, we explore community power in the context of the NYC government's existing safety programming. Residents spoke of community power as a primary driver of community safety, and so we developed an evaluation framework for safety programming with community power as the primary target.

 See the next section for a discussion.

Evaluating Safety Programming

Prior sections outline the myriad ways in which the Black and Brown residents engaged in this project think about safety and thriving. The findings provide a framework to consider the interconnectedness of safety and thriving and the ways in which it can be constructed. The indicator domains described in Measuring Safety pertain to the material resources and experiences that residents raised as essential to community safety. Taken together, they present a more expansive understanding of community safety that incorporates socioeconomic factors, neighborhood conditions, and various data from public systems.

In this section, we discuss the remaining domain of Community Power, which was identified by residents as core to the creation and maintenance of safety and thriving. We think that this domain is best explored in the context of the Mayor's Action Plan for Neighborhood Safety (MAP), which works to increase neighborhood safety and well-being through the mechanisms of community power. While there are certainly many other ways to consider the measurement of Community Power, we believe that doing so through the evaluation of MAP will provide the most expedient means of using available programmatic data to assess the relative power of particular communities working on neighborhood safety in NYC.

Below we lay out what we know about MAP's goals, what we heard from residents and staff about their experiences of MAP, and what we recommend as a framework for the evaluation of MAP that incorporates the expanded understanding of safety and thriving presented in this report.

What is MAP?

MAP is a community-based approach to increasing neighborhood safety at fifteen NYCHA developments across New York City by creating opportunities for residents to identify key issues underlying crime and participate in the decision-making to address these priorities. MAP's vision is to co-create safe and thriving neighborhoods in places impacted by historic disinvestment where residents determine how government best serves their needs and priorities to address root causes of crime and to proactively build safety.

The core strategy of MAP is to enlist residents to identify and to address the factors underlying safety in their communities. They do this primarily through NeighborhoodStat (Nstat), an extensive participatory problem-solving process, where development-specific resident teams engage their communities in the articulation of priorities and the implementation of solutions, in coordination with City agencies and community-based partners. Solutions get turned into projects that are funded by MAP and can differ across developments, ranging from physical space

revitalization to public events and ideas for new programs. For issues that cannot be addressed through local action alone, MAP coordinates a city-wide policy making process that engages City agency leadership to fill resource gaps and co-develop policies that can address neighborhood conditions. Additionally, MAP coordinates access to existing government resources including more than a dozen programs that connect residents to education, mentorship and employment opportunities, and builds relationships between residents and the spaces they live in. MAP is committed to empowering residents by giving them resources to organize and access to influence government systems. Critical elements include: community organizing staffing in government and in community, a vast network of partnerships with community leaders, community organizations, and City agencies, as well as concrete funding, services and additional resources to back up the government pledges and carrying out the work.

MAP is delivered by teams out of the Office for Neighborhood Safety (ONS), the Center for Court Innovation (CCI), Los Sures/Southside United, and Jacob Riis Settlement. Additional community partners include: the Center for Employment Opportunities, Green City Force, Street Corner Resources, Phipps Neighborhoods, New York Peace Institute, Harlem Children's Zone, Myrtle Partnership, United, Institute for Mediation and Conflict Resolution, and Community Mediation Services.

MAP City partners include the New York City Housing Authority, New York City Police Department, Police Athletic League, Department of Sanitation, Department of Parks and Recreation, Human Resources Administration, Department of Health and Mental Hygiene, Department of Youth and Community Development, Department Of Probation, Department for the Aging, and NYC Opportunity.

What did we learn about MAP?

MAP builds community and reduces stigma

At its core, MAP is oriented around building resident relationships to create safer communities. Through public events, NStat meetings, space revitalization projects, and programming, MAP creates opportunities for residents to get to know one another and build relationships. Community building does the work of destigmatizing relationships between residents by establishing familiarity and trust. Space revitalization projects are a form of community building that gives residents an opportunity to improve derelict public spaces that are "hot spots" for crime. Residents report that space design projects can eliminate the stigma surrounding parts of the neighborhood by creating spaces that invite recreation and play, and build connections.

MAP builds platforms for communities to organize

The participatory processes run by resident teams are perceived as incredibly important to changing people's relationships to spaces and one another. They not only do the work of building familiarity and trust, but also provide pathways to space stewardship and civic engagement. MAP engagement coordinators (MECs) and resident team members are often individuals who have a history of community organizing and a desire to make their communities better places. MAP provides them with a platform to amplify the work they're committed to and enroll others in the definition and execution of it.

MAP builds hope around change with government

MAP processes are resident-centered, which counters traditional notions of how the government operates and can contribute to a sense of hope around change. Both staff and residents value the emphasis on resident priority setting, co-design work, and advocacy, and feel that MAP follows through on their commitment to amplifying resident voice. They cite the importance of MAP as an instigator of positive change that can provide pathways for residents to get involved in community initiatives that have the potential to make a difference. By bringing government agencies to the table, MAP provides a more direct and human face to government and exposes residents to the possibility of driving change in government systems. Residents talked about how impactful it is to see a project from inception to completion, even if it is as small as a mural, it builds capacity and faith in the agency of residents.

MAP is social work at the neighborhood level

MECs and Borough Coordinators function like neighborhood social workers, actively identifying resources and helping residents get their needs met. Formally, this happens through NStat, which facilitates deep outreach into communities to identify and prioritize needs and connect residents to resources. Much of this happens more informally beyond the bounds of their actual responsibilities. It is common for staff to get calls or texts from residents at any time of day with a request for assistance. This includes things like accessing a public benefit, filling out a job application, and finding a daycare. Once a need is identified, staff work hard to problem solve, and to coordinate resources and connections with other agencies. For residents, MAP brings government services directly to them and is often letting them know about myriad existing

resources that they could get connected to. Additionally, the way that MAP does outreach is high-touch, which was said to be important to reach residents who might not normally seek services and those who are resistant to believing in the value of a service.

MAP is a tailored approach

MAP's commitment to community-led decision-making is evident in how it is implemented across sites. While there are certain similarities between sites, like NStat and access to programming, the implementation of MAP can look quite different from place to place. In part, this is due to the iterative nature of MAP, which evolves to meet resident priorities both within and across sites. Varied implementation is also a consequence of listening to community needs and meeting them with the array of community organizations, services, and programming that make sense for that place. Staff see this as a strength of MAP, despite the administrative challenges in delivering tailored approaches by site.

Partner accountability is not given

Staff mentioned the significant challenge of holding other agencies accountable to the priorities and needs surfaced through MAP . There were many instances relayed where partner agencies fail to follow up or follow through after receiving input from residents. When this happens, Borough Coordinators and MAP leaders do what they can to call and advocate for residents, but there are limits to what staff can achieve from this position. Staff are desirous of tools and mechanisms to encourage deeper accountability with government partners. There is also an appetite for a form of accountability that doesn't require MAP staff to produce it, instead enabling residents to push agencies directly.

Priorities are left on the table

Additionally, sometimes residents' priorities might not be possible to address within the construct of NStat or MAP, particularly if they require significant policy advocacy at the local or state level. There can be a tension at times between the desire to be community-driven, and the reality that staff are facilitating and administering a program, which structures and constrains what residents can take on.

Staff and participants struggle with the limits to what can be accomplished with the current budgetary and scale limitations of the program, which can often feel like surfacing numerous priorities and being able to act on only a few. Staff and residents expressed a desire to increase resident access to decision-making over government funding beyond MAP and to expand the capacity of MAP to respond to resident priorities.

What do these findings mean for the evaluation of MAP?

The key take-away from this project is that safety is far more than incidents of crime and violence. NIS proposed a handful of domains and indicators for measurement that would better represent the safety of a neighborhood. While this may be a new paradigm for many to associate things like economic security and access to public services as safety, our findings align well with the existing approach of MAP.

MAP works with an expansive understanding of community safety that actively solicits residents to define their safety priorities across five areas: Economic Stability; Health and Well-being; Physical Space; Safety and Justice; and Youth Development. These categories are closely aligned with the indicator domains developed by NIS:

NIS Community Indicators	MAP Priority Areas
Economic Security	Economic Stability
Economic Readiness	Youth Development
Public Services	Health & Well-being
Physical Security	Safety & Justice
Built Environment	Physical Space
Local Economy	~Physical space/Economic stability

Given that both NIS and MAP developed these priority areas from participatory community-based processes, it is no surprise that they are similar. While NIS's indicator domains are meant to measure safety in Black and Brown communities, MAP priority areas are used to organize activities that aim to increase community safety in these communities. How then, might the activities of MAP interact with the measurements of safety proposed by NIS?

Building from a theory of change?

For the purposes of evaluation, it is important to articulate how activities or actions intend to create a particular impact. We find it helpful to start with a simple theory of change that outlines the fundamental cause-and-effect relationships of an initiative or system.

"If we [actions], in order to [goals], we expect [impact]."

Based on documentation shared by the MAP team and our conversations with MAP participants, NIS developed the following statement:

If we create a governmental response to neighborhood safety that amplifies resident voice and power, in order to direct investments to address resident safety priorities and provide accountability, we expect to create safe communities where residents can thrive.

From our perspective, this statement provides a scaffold that articulates the core premise of the MAP approach that is unlikely to change: a focus on resident power. This articulation of MAP's theory of change reflects the very clear message that we heard from residents, MAP staff, and MAP leadership: Black and Brown communities are not safe because they don't have power.

Centering community power in the evaluation of MAP

The framework for directing evaluative work we lay out looks at the types of activities that MAP engages residents in to build towards community power and the continuum along which community power can be built over time, with a focus on addressing safety priorities.

Community power is the ability of communities to develop, sustain, and grow an organized base of people who act together through democratic structures to set agendas, shift public narratives, influence who makes

decisions, and cultivate relationships of mutual accountability with decision-makers.[1] The framework for directing evaluative work we lay out looks at the types of activities that MAP engages residents in to build towards community power and the continuum along which community power can be built over time, with a focus on addressing safety priorities.

Community power is the ability of communities to develop, sustain, and grow an organized base of people who act together through democratic structures to set agendas, shift public narratives, influence who makes decisions, and cultivate relationships of mutual accountability with decision-makers.

Specifically, MAP is designed to engage residents in relationship-strengthening activities (Base Building), skill-building opportunities that increase resident capacity to identify and address problems (Community Capacity), and more formally organize around their priorities and develop solutions (Resident Voice). It also advocates on behalf of residents to make connections to services and increase the responsiveness of agencies to resident concerns (Government Accountability).

In addition, MAP staff and residents expressed a desire to lean into power-building, in order to increase agency responsiveness to resident concerns and develop resident capacity to direct government priorities and investments, within the MAP program and beyond (Exercised Power).

Community power enables MAP to do what it does best, respond to the priorities of residents with a mix of custom programming, services, and activities that make sense for a particular community.

Evaluating the impact of tailored programming cross-site is a very complex endeavor that puts more emphasis on the metrics of a particular program or service. Year-to-year the resources and programming delivered by MAP evolve, but the core activity of building community power does not. Community power may lend itself better to cross-site evaluation, particularly if programmatic variance continues to be the norm.

Because MAP aims to build the capacity of residents to increase their power in government processes, any evaluation of MAP should be participatory and center resident voice. Community power is not a simple concept and will necessarily look slightly different across MAP sites.[2] This should be leaned into, as residents spoke passionately about the importance of power to the creation of safety. In addition, NIS believes that certain phenomena explored in previous evaluation work, such as social cohesion and collective efficacy, are better positioned within the context of community power, as components of collective action. Within each category below, we recommend places where residents' perceptions could be engaged to monitor the progress of MAP and direct programmatic improvements.

---

1   Speer, Gupta, Haapanen 2020
2   This is a great memo on community power measurement

Measuring Community Power

Resident goal: An organized and engaged community who act together through democratic structures to set agendas, shift public narratives, and cultivate relationships of mutual accountability with governmental decision-makers.

See the **indicator categories** below to see how **indicators** are measured:

+ Base Building

Resident rationale: Base building describes activities meant to engage and expand participation and strengthen relationships. ***These indicators measure participation across MAP activities that engage residents in participatory processes and events.***

Indicator	Indicator Measurement
Resident footprint	Ratio of residents engaged in MAP activities / the number of residents eligible to participate
Attendance	# of unique participants in MAP activities
Return engagement	Rate of returning participants in MAP activities

+ Community Capacity

Resident rationale: The cultivation and use of knowledge and skills that can contribute to resident capacity to identify and address safety problems. ***These indicators focus on MAP skill-building activities and resident engagement over time.***

Indicator	Indicator Measurement
Capacity building	# of participants in workshops and skill-building opportunities
Policy working group attendance	# of residents who participated in policy working groups
Resident facilitation	# of resident-led public meetings
Resident stakeholder team attendance	Rate of attendance in stakeholder meetings for resident stakeholder members
Resident stakeholder team tenure	Avg tenure of resident stakeholder team members
Resident + staff perceptions of capacity	Measurement of capacity over time. A survey is recommended. See here for potential approaches.
Resident stakeholder team attendance	Do residents feel like they have the skills and knowledge to participate?

+ Government Accountability

Resident rationale: Government responsiveness to individual needs through service connections, as well as to the community-level issues raised by residents. ***These indicators reflect the activities that MAP undertakes to make the government more accountable, as well as the responsiveness of government agencies to the issues that residents raise through MAP.***

Indicator	Indicator Measurement
Agency responsiveness to service connections	% of complaints addressed (by agency)
Progress on resident-identified priorities	% service connections facilitated by MAP that result in enrollment in benefit/assistance (by agency or program) % service connections that result in referral to a program that's a better fit (by agency or program)
Progress on resident-identified priorities	Have the appropriate government agencies taken action in response to the priorities and issues identified (in action plans and other forums)?

Action plans implemented	# of dollars available for resident investment (through grants and contracts)
Investment in resident projects	% of desired policy/need areas where MAP has agency connections
MAP relationship building	Percentage of households with a computer of any kind (desktops, laptops, tablets, or smartphones)
MAP staff perception of agency relationships	Does MAP have the agency relationships necessary to respond to resident needs?
Computer access	Were resident needs addressed through service enrollment? What needs are not being addressed?

+ Exercised Power

Resident rationale: The ability for residents to see their recommendations implemented, and to direct government investments and programmatic and policy decisions. ***These indicators track the longer-term impact of MAP's work in supporting the development of community power.***

Indicator	Indicator Measurement
Resident perception of power within MAP	Do residents have the leadership opportunities they want within MAP programs?
Resident perception of participatory governance impact	What are the impacts of participatory governance on their community?
Resident perception of program influence	What action steps has the government taken to change programs or create new programs based on their priorities and guidance? (Regular tracking.)
	Have programmatic changes been made or new programs created based on their priorities and guidance? (Annual tracking.)
	Programmatic priorities from the conversations we had are laid out in Economic Readiness, Public Services, and Built Environment indicator categories.

Resident perception of policy-making power	What action steps has the government taken to change policy or create new policies based on their priorities and guidance? (Regular tracking.) Have policy changes been made or new policies created based on their priorities and guidance? (Annual tracking.) Shorter-term policy priorities from the conversations we had are laid out in Physical Security and Local Economy indicator categories. Longer-term policy priorities are laid out in the Economic Security indicator category.