

End of Year Report Team South Bend

Code for America, 2013

THE TEAM

FELLOWS



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CITY PARTNERS



Peter Buttigieg
Mayor



Kathryn Roos
Chief of Staff



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FUNDERS



EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

PROJECTS

The Fellows undertook a number of projects, creating and helping implement tools as well as policy for the City.

CityVoice - a place based call in system for collecting community feedback.

OppCaster - an application that helps local, minority, and women owned businesses learn about contracting opportunities with their cities.

Open Data Policy - an executive order passed by the Mayor making all public data open.

Open Data Portal - a web portal for hosting and sharing the cities public data both internally and with the broader community

CULTURE CHANGE

In addition to their projects the fellows helped foster a culture of innovation and transparency within City government and the community at large.

Hack Michiana - South Bend's Code for America brigade, a community group that promote civic technology.

Code Across America (Event) - a Civic tech hackathon held in February with 80 attendees from the community and City.

Ignite Michiana (Event) - a South Bend event showcasing innovation attended by 400 people. The fellows presented CityVoice.

Open Data Jam (Event) - An event hosted by Hack Michiana to showcase the City's Open Data portal to the community (and play with data!).

RECOMMENDATIONS

Decentralize/Modularize IT Infrastructure - The integrated ERP system (Naviline) is a bottleneck for tech change. Experiment with smaller, loosely coupled pieces.

Data Sharing and Management - Support processes that effectively manage data. Continue to use the open data portal for sharing information within and between City departments. Share data management best practices.

Build Internal Capacity - Use resources to train staff at all levels about best practices for using technology and data. Small investments and informal training, such as skill shares, can yield large benefits in productivity.

Foster Civic Tech Community - Partner with and provide support to the local civic tech community, specifically Hack Michiana and enFocus as well as programs at Notre Dame and IUSB.

SOUTH BEND, IN



POPULATION: **101,00**

HOUSEHOLD INCOME: **\$32,778**

INDUSTRIES: **EDUCATION,
HEALTH-CARE**

AT A GLANCE

South Bend is a city that is in the process of reinventing itself. Once a center for manufacturing and industry, the city experienced significant population declines during the latter half of the 20th Century. The closing of South Bend's Studebaker automotive plant in 1963 was a flashpoint for the process of deindustrialization happening across the industrial midwest. From that time to today, the city's population has fallen from 130,000 to roughly 100,000.

But South Bend is rebuilding itself and forging a new identity built on its own unique strengths. The city is using current assets, such as the University of Notre Dame and Indiana University at South Bend, to re-shape its economy in the information age. Notre Dame, for example, has created a center adjacent to its campus - Innovation Park - for incubating companies coming out of the University.

The City also stands along the trunk lines for fiber optic cable running across the country. This along with ample infrastructure from its industrial past has made it an ideal location for data centers. An historic train station has already been converted to house a major data center as well as offices.

MAYOR'S OFFICE

Mayor Pete Buttigieg was elected in 2011 with an overwhelming majority and became the youngest mayor of a U.S. city with a population over 100,000 people. The Mayor, a Harvard graduate and Rhodes Scholar, wanted to bring innovative practices to the way the City does its work. His office was the primary force that brought the Fellows to South Bend, as well as their primary point of contact throughout the year. Support from the Mayor's Office significantly contributed to the successes the South Bend fellowship team had, from launching their major application CityVoice to crafting and implementing an open data policy.



Downtown South Bend

CITYVOICE

southbendvoices.com

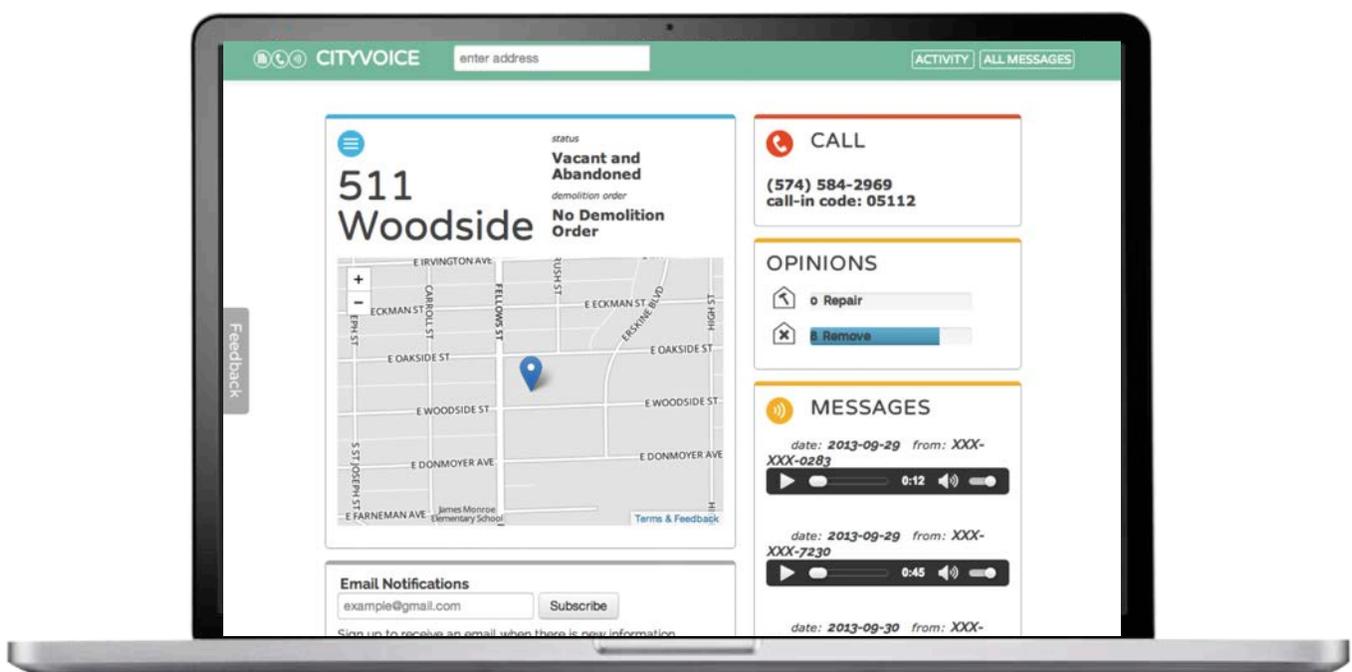
CityVoice is a call-in system for collecting place-based community feedback. It makes giving community feedback quick, easy and accessible and turns that feedback into actionable information. This means using technologies that all residents are comfortable with – telephones – and distilling and directing feedback to appropriate decision makers.

In South Bend, it was used to collect community feedback on vacant and abandoned properties. This feedback is being used to inform the City's decisionmaking process on pursuing demolition or finding avenues to repair a given property, such as giving properties as side lots to neighboring property owners. Beyond the City, it has helped catalyze conversations be-

tween neighbors themselves on this issue of abandoned properties. In addition, the City can now quickly identify concerned neighbors and follow up with actionable information.

Already, other cities have showed interest in reusing CityVoice. In Los Angeles, community organizations are looking to collect information on redeveloping vacant lots as green space. Mexico City is looking to collect community feedback on 250 local markets to make them more competitive.

“I'm a Southeast-side resident and I think it's great that, you know, you're giving people a chance to give feedback...”



PROJECTS

OPPCASTER

southbend.oppcaster.com

Inclusive

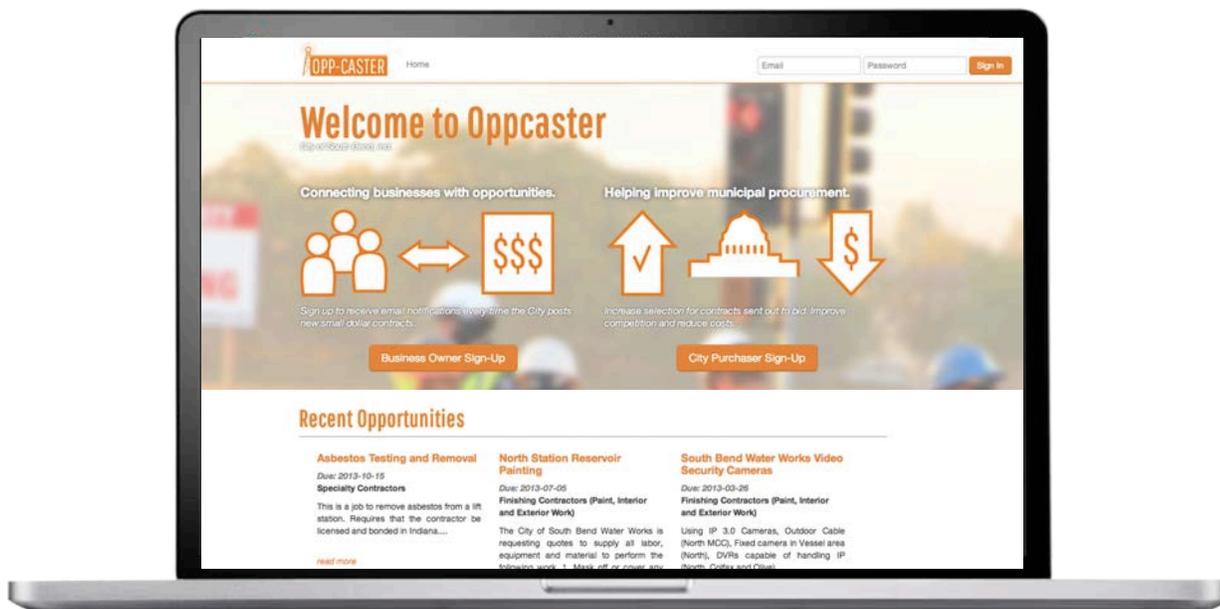
OppCaster is an application that enables vendors to sign up for notifications of opportunities to contract with the City. The project grew out of the City's Diversity Ordinance, which requires the City to make an effort to include minority- and women-owned businesses in City purchasing and document its outcomes. Under current policy, City purchasers contact known vendors to solicit quotes for contracts under \$75k, meaning many businesses were out of the loop. The City is in the process of instituting new procedures whereby all non-emergency contracts will be listed on OppCaster, which will instantly notify all interested vendors of the opportunity.

Efficient

In addition to bolstering inclusiveness and transparency, OppCaster saves time and money. City purchasers no longer need to make multiple phone calls to get quotes for a project. By posting contracting opportunities on OppCaster, the City is able to "crowd the room" with vendors, likely lowering costs, since more vendors at the table means lower prices.

Transparent

By posting virtually all purchasing opportunities on a public site the City provides a transparent records of its activities. It also serves as valuable information about the local market for goods and services. This can help small businesses to target their activities more effectively and may promote local economic development by cultivating a broader array of vendors.



PROJECTS

OPEN DATA POLICY

Web applications are not the only tangible things that the Fellows were able to develop. The Fellows also facilitated the creation of an Open Data Policy to ensure that the City's launch of an Open Data Portal would be primed for success in both the short and long terms. The policy has been noted as one of the most progressive in the country, using public records laws as its basis. The Fellows owe a great deal of thanks to the Sunlight Foundation for advising on the language of the policy, as well to the Mayor's Office and the South Bend Legal Department.

“South Bend is joining an elite group of open data pioneers who are using the latest technologies to make public data more accessible and streamline collaboration between internal departments,”

- Kevin Merrit, CEO Socrata

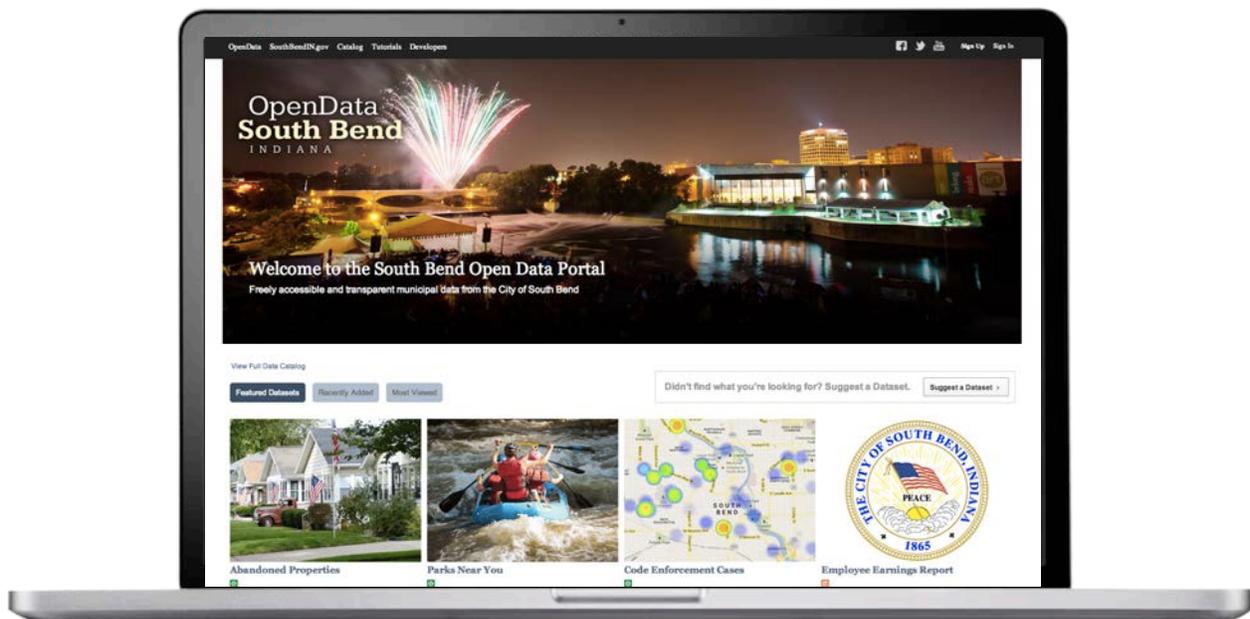
OPEN DATA PORTAL

data.southbendin.gov

One of the first things the South Bend fellows undertook was advising the City on establishing an open data portal, which launched in August.

The portal has already been put to good use. The fellows' CityVoice application integrates real-time data from the portal—something that appeared to be a serious challenge early in the year. In addition, the newly-formed Code for America brigade, Hack Michiana, has been exploring the data, making suggestions for useful data sets, and mashing up and visualizing current data.

Within the City, departments are also excited to be able to compare data that was once siloed across spreadsheets, leading to more efficient processes and better outcomes.





HACK MICHIANA

Code for America Brigade

www.facebook.com/groups/HackMichiana

During South Bend's Code Across America event that the team organized in February, we sparked the idea of starting a Code for America brigade. A number of community members responded positively to the idea. They call themselves Hack Michiana, and despite the relatively small size of South Bend they have developed an active group of civic tech enthusiasts. Every month they hold a well attended monthly meet-up, and as of the writing of this report they have 123 members on their Facebook group.

CODE ACROSS AMERICA

EVENT - February 2013

In February, the Fellows organized a community event and hackathon at Notre Dame's Innovation Park campus as part of Code Across America. Over 80 people turned out from a wide section of the community. Remote Github employees worked alongside grandmothers, using technology to improve their communities. Some of the highlights included standing up a Localwiki for South Bend and creating an app to map stolen trash cans for the Public Works department.

OPEN DATA JAM

EVENT - September 2013

The Fellows along with Hack Michiana hosted an Open Data Jam following the launch of the Open Data Portal. The event covered how to use the data portal as well as the details of the open data policy that accompanied it. Attendees brainstormed new data sets the City could provide and created visualizations with existing data.



Hack Michiana members at the Open Data Jam

IGNITE MICHIANA

EVENT - November 2013

During the Fellows final trip back they presented one of their applications—CityVoice—to crowd of over 400 in South Bend's historic State Theater. The Ignite event, themed "Innovation and the Good Life," covered a number of topics from South Benders. Topics ranged from revitalizing storefronts using stickers, community changemaking through "guerilla gay bar" night, and repurposing an old school's swimming pool as an independent concert venue.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Decentralize, Modularize IT Infrastructure

- Integrated ERP (Naviline) is a bottleneck for IT change. Making ERP integration a precondition of work is likely to limit the success of future IT projects.
- Experiment with smaller, loosely coupled technical projects.
- When procuring IT, evaluate up-front the feasibility and logistics of transitioning to other vendors/software to avoid vendor lock-in.
- Evaluate the potential interoperability of software being procured (e.g., through data export and API capabilities) Procure technology that isn't reliant on a sole-source vendor for customization or support.
- Open Source projects meet an interoperable criterion particularly well (for example, the City's current use of Drupal as a content management system instead of a proprietary, sole-source solution).

Data Management & Sharing

- Bolster processes that support the effective management of data.
- Expand use of the open data portal for sharing information within and between City departments.
- Encourage knowledge-sharing among data producers and users across departments (e.g., best practices, tips). An e-mail list is a simple way to facilitate this.

Build Internal Capacity

- Use resources to train staff at all levels about best practices fusing technology and data
- Informal brown bag lunches and peer-to-peer skill-shares may be a better path than costly and less applicable formal trainings.
- Project-based training may be most appropriate for many less technical staff (i.e. pick a specific internal process and conduct trainings in skills related to that). For instance, in Code Enforcement, office staff could streamline a number of their processes through simple Excel and Word skills, such as mail merges.

Foster Civic Tech Community

- Maintain and grow open data portal resources, and be responsive to community feedback.
- Strengthen partnerships with and support community organizations such as Hack Michiana and enFocus.
- Maintain official point of contact in the city and communicate regularly with these community groups.
- Engage university students and staff at Notre Dame and IUSB in civic technology partnerships. Look for concrete opportunities and programs to participate in and support.

