

City Innovation Snapshot | Mobile, United States

Overview

- ▶ Mayor: Sandy Stimpson
- ▶ Lead staff on innovation: Terrance Smith
- ▶ Population of municipality: 190,265 (2017)
- ▶ Innovation website: www.iteammobile.org/

Spotlight on Mobile | Inventory of Blighted Structures

Mobile created a comprehensive **inventory of blighted structures** within the municipality by using Instagram as a prototype. With the blight map, **the inventory has enabled the city to laser focus its funds for redevelopment in specific areas** for maximum impact.

Vision and approach to innovation capacity

The city's innovation strategy

Along with 56% of cities surveyed, Mobile does not have an **explicit innovation strategy**.

The city most closely associates innovation capacity with the following terms:

Human-centred design

Big picture re-thinking

Approaches to innovation capacity

Similar to 40% of cities surveyed, Mobile approaches innovation capacity **both** from a **holistic/macro level**, as well as in **specific policy areas**.

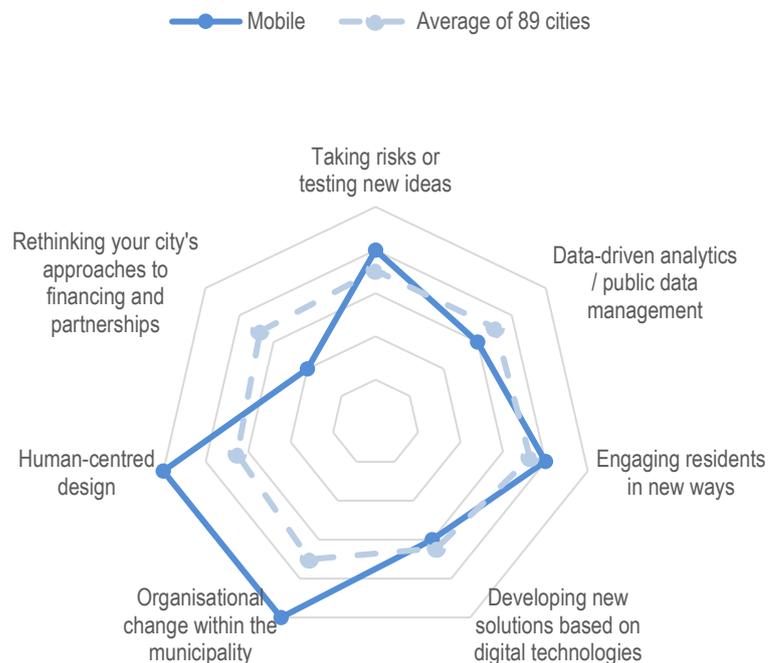
The **top two priority policy areas** for the city's innovation work include:

Blight

Economic development

Most common innovation activities

Mobile's most common innovation activities are **human-centred design** and **facilitating organisational change within the municipal administration**. Its innovation activities also include **taking risks and testing new ideas**; and **engaging residents in new ways**.



Funding for innovation capacity

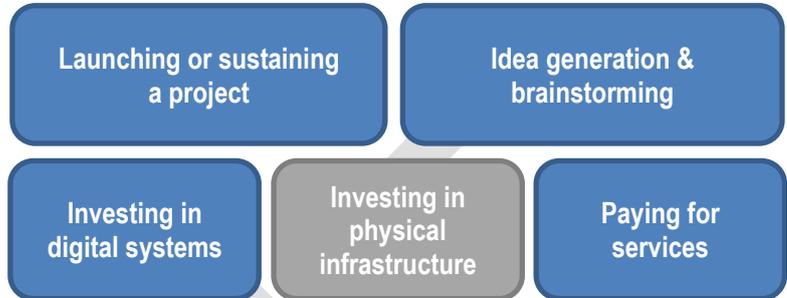
Funding to support innovation capacity

Like 77% of cities surveyed, Mobile has dedicated funding to support innovation capacity, which originates from the following sources:

- ✓ **Municipal budget**
(city council approved funds/operating budget)
- ✓ **External funding**
(philanthropy/non-profit)

Types of activities being funded

Mobile's funding for innovation capacity is generally directed towards **launching or sustaining a project**, and **generating ideas & brainstorming**. These are the two most commonly funded activities among all cities surveyed. Mobile also **invests in digital systems** as well as **paying for services to a third party**.



Organisational structure & staffing



Situated in the Mayor's office, Mobile's dedicated team for innovation consists of **4 staff**. The city recently hired a Data Analyst to balance out human-centred/qualitative approach.

Staff skills and profiles include:

- ✓ **Project manager**
- ✓ **Data scientist**
- ✓ **Designer**
- ✓ **Sociologist**
- ✓ **Communication officer**
- ✓ **Community engagement staff**

Partnerships for innovation & data



Mobile has developed partnerships to promote its innovation capacity with **other public agencies, private firms, not-for-profit organisations, and city residents/resident associations**.

Measuring outcomes

Policy areas that **benefit from sufficient data**, or **lack sufficient data**, to support innovation capacity in the city:



NB: No response provided by the city for the policy areas in grey.

Innovation is **helping the city** to:

- ✓ **Improve service delivery**
- ✓ **Improve internal government operations**
- ✓ **Simplify administrative procedures for firms and residents**

The most **critical success factors** in supporting the city's innovation work:

- ✓ **Dedicated funding**
- ✓ **Focus on measurement**
- ✓ **Dedicated innovation team**
- ✓ **Leadership from Mayor**
- ✓ **Culture of innovation in city**
- ✓ **Engagement with partners**
- ✓ **Support from outside city administration**