Expanding Democracy

A Framework for Bolstering Civic Power and Rebuilding Communities

in partnership with

Moses

W.K. Kellogg Foundation

A Partner With Communities Where Children Come First
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Foreword

This report is the result of a planning grant from the W.K. Kellogg Foundation. Between November 2011 and May 2012, a group of Detroit residents committed to the civic engagement of marginalized communities met in Detroit with staff from MOSES and from the Kirwan Institute for the Study of Race and Ethnicity at The Ohio State University. A small group of the Fellows traveled to Los Angeles to experience the Empowerment Congress in Los Angeles in January. Another group of Fellows went to the Gulf Coast in April to meet with social justice and sustainability activists. The result of these meetings and site visits is a conceptual model of engaging traditionally underserved communities in civic activism. This report is intended to complement data and mapping analyses of the region, present and future; it does not include a typical Kirwan opportunity mapping exercise.

The work of the Fellows focused on finding solutions to inequities that can leave minorities, low-income residents, and other traditionally marginalized groups with very few options to make a better life for themselves. The Fellows were concerned with improving civic power -- the ability to influence the policy decisions that impact who has access to good schools, jobs and economic opportunity, adequate healthcare, and safe neighborhoods. If traditionally marginalized groups have few opportunities to impact local policy making, further marginalization can occur, leading to a downward spiral of marginalization and disinvestment in these communities. However, these residents have a myriad of assets that can be used to change these circumstances. This report provides a conceptual model for using these community assets to change the civic engagement landscape so that marginalized citizens can become equal “deciders.”

How We Began

Ponsella Hardaway, the Director of MOSES in Detroit, saw a need to dive deeper into issues of equitable civic empowerment and community marginalization across the Detroit region. With a planning grant from the W.K. Kellogg foundation, she partnered with Jan Urban-Lurain, a trained facilitator, and with the Kirwan Institute, to help focus a small group of local civic activists (termed “Civic Engagement Fellows),” on creating a concept model for equitable civic engagement throughout the region. The Fellows agreed that such a model could help inform the Detroit Works initiative, but that what was needed was a more lasting change in the relationship between decision-makers in the region and residents, particularly in minority and low-income neighborhoods. However, this begged questions such as, “Can a civic engagement plan work without being issue-based?” and “What would that kind of plan look like?”

With that in mind, the group began to conduct site visits, using questions prepared by The Kirwan Institute. A group of Fellows, along with a local public official,
made their first site visit to Los Angeles in January in order to attend the Empowerment Conference, hosted by the Empowerment Congress, a civic empowerment organization in Los Angeles’ Second Commission District. The Fellows were impressed by the structure of the Congress, as well as by the leadership provided by Mark Ridley Thomas. Ridley Thomas emphasized building the leadership skills and knowledge of individual residents who are often left out of regional decisions. In the latter part April, another group of Fellows visited Kirwan’s HUD/SCI Grant partners in Gulfport and Biloxi, MS and exchanged information about building equity, civic empowerment, and transparency into the planning process from the beginning, particularly in communities that are undergoing drastic population changes. In between those two visits, Fellows heard from Ashley Shelton from One Voice Louisiana on the topic of power mapping, attended a Detroit Works Process Leaders meeting for civic engagement, and read several key articles on civic engagement, race and equity.

Meanwhile, Detroit’s civic infrastructure was changing. The city adopted a new charter in January that included a change from at-large representation to district representation for 7 of the 9 seats of City Council. In addition, the city charter creates “Community Advisory Councils” that are designed to bring city officials closer to residents.

Additionally, as the financial situation in Detroit worsened, the city signed a consent agreement with the State of Michigan that included the appointment of a Financial Advisory Board that would oversee financial decisions made by Detroit’s elected officials. These changes forced the Fellows to re-think the very landscape of civic engagement in the region. Fellows also wrestled with questions of scale, regional cooperation, and reaching legitimate power bases.

MOSES, The Kirwan Institute and the Civic Engagement Fellows would like to thank The Kellogg Foundation for their gracious support of this project. We would also like to thank members of the Detroit Works Project, the Empowerment Congress in Los Angeles, the Mississippi Center for Justice, the Gulf Regional Planning Commission, and Steps Coalition for being generous with both their time and their wisdom. We thank Ashley Shelton from One Voice Louisiana for sharing her knowledge and understanding of Power Mapping. We would also like to thank the MSU Detroit Center, the Greater Grace Temple, and the Greater Apostolic Faith Temple for providing meeting space. Finally, we would like to extend special thanks to john a. powell, the Robert D. Haas Chancellor’s Chair in Equity and Inclusion, Haas Diversity Research Center at UC-Berkeley and Director of The Kirwan Institute from 2003 to 2011, for his invaluable insights during his May visit, and Jan Urban-Lurain for her gracious and astute facilitation.
“Many Americans have abandoned the public realm and taken refuge within the safety of private life. That creates a vacuum at the heart of public life that other, non-democratic forces are eager to occupy, especially the power of big money.

This democracy was called into being by ‘We the People’ and only we can call it back to its highest form. But that’s not going to happen until we stop succumbing to the tactics of divide and conquer, reclaim our citizen voices, and reoccupy the public square as people who often disagree but know how to do so with civility. We need to rebuild democracy’s infrastructure.”

Parker J. Palmer, Center for Courage and Renewal
Developing the Model

The civic engagement model created by the Fellows emerged from a facilitated process of social learning. Between November 2011 and May 2012 the Fellows participated in seven facilitated group work sessions, plus site visits to Los Angeles and the Gulfport, Mississippi area. Four Fellows and an official from the Wayne County Executive Office participated in the Empowerment Congress held in Los Angeles in January 2012; and four Fellows and two researchers from Kirwan Institute visited post-Katrina civic engagement efforts in the Gulfport, Mississippi area in April 2012.

The design for the seven work sessions followed the active social learning process of co-learning – a participatory approach based on non-hierarchical relationships, collaboration, trust, full participation, and shared exploration. Taking this approach encouraged and supported the Fellows’ generation of new knowledge and novel strategies. It also facilitated the examination of underlying assumptions and models informing their various current approaches to civic engagement, which was necessary given that different engagement traditions and perspectives needed to come together. Finally, taking this approach supported the Fellows in identifying the underlying core values and norms believed to be essential to successful civic engagement in Detroit and the surrounding region.

The flow and sequence of the work sessions focused first on building a shared basis of understanding about each Fellow’s own definition of and approach to civic engagement, then moved into examining civic engagement approaches used in other areas of the country. From these dialogues and experiences, the group evolved its own collective set of civic engagement principles. Consideration of these guiding principles plus further group dialogue and reflections led to the development of the model design. Facilitation of the work sessions incorporated the group process techniques of open discussion facilitation, particularly reflective listening and the management of divergent perspectives; visual conversation tracking and dialogue mapping; debrief using focused conversation; and written individual reflection and feedback.

The following is a summary of the seven group session agendas and key learnings:

**Session 1 - Initial Perspectives on Civic Engagement**

Each Fellow shared what civic engagement means to them. The perspectives that emerged included: civic leadership or community-driven dialogue; “uneartling invisible capital for the common wealth;” celebrating people as an asset and engage them in discussions on issues that are in the social and public interest; being authentically engaged in building communities/communication; and accountability. The group also
noted civic engagement challenges faced in Southeast Michigan, as well as examples of successful initiatives in and around Detroit.

**Session 2 - Working Towards a Shared Model of Civic Engagement**

Fellows began to raise questions about the scope, design, and purpose of their model. Most questions addressed concerns about civic engagement’s capacity to influence decision-makers and decision-making. Feedback from constituents and Fellows’ own experiences indicated that people feel ignored, left out, abandoned and really want to be authentically part of the process. Ideas emerged in the direction of creating an asset-based, “citizen-led” model built on the value of self-determination.

**Session 3 – Learnings from the LA Community Engagement Leadership Institute**

Fellows who attended this Institute had the following observations about engagement approaches that “work:"

They are built on a platform of “reciprocal accountability.” Residents have someone within the government structure with decision-making authority to listen to them and ask citizens “what are you going to do about it?” Thus turning laments and complaints into promoted and supported action.

Other attributes include: 1) the use of processes that are effective at “holding tension” and balancing tension by making the most vocal residents accountable for finding solutions to challenges and supporting less vocal residents as they find their civic voice.; 2) uses organizing principles to take action and work from multiple directions simultaneously -- i.e. bottom up and inside out as well as top down and outside; and 3) simultaneously tap into and leverage both formal organizations (e.g. government agencies) and informal networks (grassroots-organized groups).

Governance consists of a long-term elected “champion;” with staff on the ground that keeps the elected officials updated. There is a “finger on the pulse of the community;” a leadership team; and multiple policy committees that meet monthly.

**Session 4 – Testing Community Capacity for Collaboration**

Fellows discussed the need to have other organizations in Detroit and Southeast Michigan know about this project and be part of the model conversation. The group also deliberated how to best engage in and leverage the opportunities and challenges emerging from the current district-development process going on in Detroit. A process for conducting for a “Grass tops” Community Conversation emerged from the conversation.
Session 5 – Developing the Civic Engagement Guiding Principles.

Fellows’ reflections on their previous dialogues and their experiences with the Detroit Works project led to the naming of eight civic engagement guiding principles. These principles became the foundational building blocks for the Fellows’ model design.

Session 6 – Further Learnings from Gulfport and john a. powell

Fellows who visited the Gulfport area described a number of similarities in the socioeconomics and demographics of the region and Detroit/SE Michigan, and discussed the learnings from meetings with representatives from a multijurisdictional coalition and a government agency-driven initiative. Professor Powell addressed the question of leverage points in the emerging “terrain of civic engagement” and encouraged the Fellows to analyze the new power players /space emerging in this “wet cement” moment -- and to consider how these trends might impact a model for civic engagement.

Session 7 – Finalizing the Model

Fellows reviewed and provided feedback on the draft essential principles of the Civic Engagement and generated final thinking and recommendations concerning the model design.
Civic Engagement Model

Figure 1.

1. Mobilize
   - Marginalized Residents
   - Community Organizations

2. Convene
   - Community Action Committees
   - Steering Committee
   - Issue Driven Citizen Groups

3. Decide
   - Regional, State & Local Stakeholders
   - District Representatives
Introduction

Diverse Detroit: Opportunities and Challenges for Civic Engagement Today

Detroit, once our nation’s fourth largest city, has experienced the steepest population decline of any major city in America. Detroit’s long-term, systemic challenges are well documented and have become part of the national consciousness. A city long battered by suburban flight, segregation, urban decline and deindustrialization faces new challenges brought by the housing crisis and recession: escalating joblessness, poverty, foreclosures, vacancy and community instability.

In response, Detroit is considering how to remake itself. Changes to the city charter have added new routes for local decision-making, while the Financial Advisory Board has been charged by the state with restoring fiscal health to Detroit. There are significant, on-going philanthropic investments and discussions around how to re-envision Detroit’s future, a process which requires new and collaborative approaches. New ways of thinking about economic growth, food security, environmental health, fiscal sustainability and community development present tremendous opportunities for the City, the region and for all major cities that face similar challenges.

The policy conversation in Detroit has recently focused on strategic municipal shrinkage, complemented by targeted investments in a few of the city’s neighborhoods. However, these policy decisions raise many questions. Who will make these decisions? How will these decisions be made? Who will be included in the decision-making process and who will be left out? Who will have to live with the outcomes of these decisions? How can social equity and the needs of marginalized residents be prioritized in the planning process?

To be successful and sustainable, efforts to reposition Detroit for the future must be grounded in robust civic engagement, with transparency and public access to information. Detroit is a large, diverse community with a myriad of sub-communities, cultures, stakeholders, and ideas, all of which come with different visions for the city’s future. Residents from all socio-economic backgrounds, as well as corporations, and government officials all play a part in the unique tapestry of the city and shape the reality of its inhabitants. Yet many of the city’s most disadvantaged communities lack the civic infrastructure needed to participate fully in the reimagining of Detroit, and traditional planning processes are often inadequate to ensure robust civic engagement in disadvantaged communities. How then might these families and communities weigh in on critical decisions faced by the city today?

The Kirwan Institute and MOSES share an understanding of the importance of talking about race and diversity when we talk about access to opportunity – including
the ability to participate in civic life. Civic life begins in the neighborhood – on the block, after school, at the grocery store. Yet many neighborhoods in Detroit suffer from a history of unjust and harmful neglect and disinvestment. And neighborhood investments matter, particularly for children: fifty years of social science research has demonstrated that racially isolated and economically disadvantaged neighborhoods restrict employment options for young people, contribute to poor health, expose children to crime and violence, and contain some of the poorest performing schools. In short, what we bring to civic life can be affected by what our civic context has brought to us: acknowledgement and engagement, or devaluation and despair.

Unfortunately, decades of racialized disinvestment by way of discriminatory housing and business development, unequal education and infrastructure investment, and neglect of minority and low-income voices has led to a challenging civic landscape for many of Detroit’s struggling neighborhoods. In addition, our new American neighbors have the potential to bring much to our neighborhoods and to our region. Yet impediments to engagement with immigrant communities are significant, including language, literacy and cultural barriers, limited experience with local political processes, fear of political repercussions for interacting with government, and limited time and resources. Similarly, youth engagement is critical to building future civic leaders, yet it takes additional time, resources, and planning. Fellows also noted that residents pursue community engagement through different routes: for some, block groups form a major part of their civic engagement experience; for others, meetings and visioning sessions are the vehicles to community participation. Still others interact directly with city officials or business executives to further their vision of the city. And some have retreated to alternative community building, dropping out of mainstream engagement entirely.

Therefore, our plan for civic engagement in Detroit explicitly acknowledges and welcomes the great diversity of individual, family and community life experiences, priorities, needs and perspectives – both among and within Detroit’s vast patchwork of neighborhoods.

The “Wet Cement Moment:” Corporate Power and Transformative Change

This is a monumental time of change in Detroit. A new city charter will lead to a drastically different local government process, several economic initiatives (such as the Woodward Avenue Collaborative) are underway, and the city is experiencing an unprecedented urban reshaping. In these important moments, transformational change has a chance to take hold and become a part of the culture in a new and meaningful way – we are in a “wet cement” moment. However, transformative change requires a

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substantial shift in attitudes and behaviors. For true equity to be realized, the very nature of civic engagement in Detroit must be re-imagined – indeed, the very landscape of civic life must be questioned.

The Civic Engagement Fellows were deeply inspired by an intensive engagement with John Powell. Powell claims in recent work that rather than there being two basic domains in which we make sense of and live our lives, public and private, there are four: corporate, public, private, and non-public/non-private (see Figure 3). Corporations are unlike other private economic actors (like farmers or small business owners) because of their scale and reach, and because they are extended the protections and rights of “personhood,” along with potentially perpetual life, the ability to make unlimited campaign donations, and a limited liability. Powell argues: “corporations today...exercise authority, power and influence that threaten not just democratic accountability...but individual freedom, personal privacy, and civil and human rights.” The expansion of corporate influence threatens the public domain, the traditional sphere of influence for community organizations and non-profits. Non-public/non-private refers to the experience of those who are unable to retreat to the private domain or to participate meaningfully in public or corporate life (homeless individuals, the incarcerated, illegal immigrants, youth). As favorable policies towards corporations have increased their power to influence public policy (see Citizens United v. FEC), the influence of the other spheres, particularly the public sphere, has diminished (see Figure 4). As a result, those who advocate for issues or policies outside of the corporate domain can be marginalized. Powell’s work inspired the Fellows to wrestle with a concept of civic engagement that acknowledges and acts on corporate power, rather than focusing all of our energy on the currently faltering and battered domain of public government.

Our civic engagement model (Figure 1) acknowledges this changed landscape of civic life. It attempts to begin to rebuild the public space at the local level (or, as one Fellow dubbed it, “the SuperLocal,”) by turning social capital into civic power and using that power as a platform to speak equitably to the corporate domain. Meanwhile, equitable civic engagement can contribute to the private domain by connecting private concerns to community issues. The plan intends to energize the non-private/non-public space by deliberately bringing community decision-making into the lives of traditionally marginalized individuals.

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2 Robert D. Haas Chancellor’s Chair in Equity and Inclusion, Haas Diversity Research Center, UC-Berkeley (2012 --); Director, Kirwan Institute, 2003 – 2011.


4 Ibid: 1
Additionally, Fellows explored the idea that in Detroit, people engage in the public sphere in very different ways. There are those who tend to be very active in the established civic engagement structures, those who have both the desire and the resources to be involved civically no matter the circumstances (“active”). These are the people who come to several public meetings, volunteer regularly, and serve on several committees. There are also those who would like to be involved in more of these activities, but because of life circumstances, are unable to be (“casual”). Finally, there are those who deliberately choose to work alternatively to the established engagement processes (“alternative”). These individuals, far from being inactive or unconcerned, feel that they are most effective working outside of the system to highlight challenges and issues, and bring about positive change from an outside perspective.

Current models of engagement tend to only involve those who are actively participating in the accepted framework of civic engagement. This can perpetuate old ideas and transactional relationships that can lead to policies that further marginalize minority and low-income communities. While these transactional civic relationships can function to inform, consult, and placate residents, they can create barriers to inviting residents to be a part of creating a new Detroit. These processes can cause communities to compete with each other for limited resources, instead of working together to find common solutions.

The time has come for a transformational model of civic leadership that turns citizens into deciders (See Figure 2). First, there must be a widespread awareness of the depth and breadth of the civic environment, acknowledging all perspectives within the community, especially those that may not be present at the established civic engagement tables, but are nevertheless important within the community. All stakeholders must be willing to risk well-worn behaviors and old ideas in order to embrace new and sometimes challenging ones. Building the civic capacity of residents, particularly in marginalized communities, must become a region-wide priority that outweighs considerations of efficiency and brevity.

Regional and local stakeholders must be willing to change inequitable, outdated civic processes and experiment to find new engagement techniques that welcome new perspectives from all stakeholders. Additionally, these stakeholders must be willing to confront the inequitable power dynamics that can often leave marginalized residents out of community decision-making, rather than bringing them into the process. Finally, all stakeholders must be willing to hold the tension of the difficult moments that come with transformative change and stay dedicated to the underlying ideas that can bring real change to Detroit’s civic engagement landscape.
Models of the Public Participation Process

The top-down approach

Dangers of This Model
Can perpetuate old ideas and relationships that can lead to policies that further marginalize communities.

Can create barriers to inviting residents to be a part of creating a new Detroit.

Can cause communities to compete with each other for limited resources, instead of working together to find common solutions.

The Transformational Model turns citizens into deciders

Holding Tension
stay dedicated to ideas that bring real change

Taking Risks
embrace new and sometimes challenging ideas

Building Capacity
civic capacity should be a region-wide priority

Changing Processes
welcome new techniques and new perspectives

Power Analysis
bring marginalized citizens into the decision-making process

TRANSFORMATIVE CHANGE
is needed to turn citizens into deciders

CITIZEN LEADERSHIP
All are deciders in the community decision-making process
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Figure 3:
Four Domains of Influence

PUBLIC

- Grassroots, public meetings, churches, block groups
- Youth, diversity, and inclusion
- Advocacy
- Employment, leadership, and the service organizations

NON-PUBLIC/PRIVATE

- Public policy
- Small businesses, activist individuals
- Examples: McDonald’s, Wal-Mart

PRIVATE

- General Motors
- Morgan Chase Bank
- JP Morgan Chase
- Examples: America, McDonald’s, Wal-Mart

CORPORATE

- The influence that corporations exert on public policy
- The influence that individuals and small businesses have
- Examples: Individual activism, small business
Figure 4. Corporations exert dominant influence because of their scale and reach. In addition, they benefit from the non-public/non-private domains.

Influence

Corporations Today Exercise an Overwhelming Amount of

non-public/non-private domains.

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People who are:

- youth
- undocumented
- incarcerated
- homeless

Groups that are:

- non-profits
- community organizations
- government
- farmers
- small business owners
Principles of the Model: Power, Assets, Accountability

The Civic Engagement Fellows developed a set of eight principles to guide the new model for civic engagement, which we grouped into three overarching ones. These principles are aimed at building equitable relationships, utilizing community assets, and implementing meaningful change. Though they speak to distinct challenges, these principles are linked and together, and they underlie the framework of transformative change in civic engagement. We briefly describe each principle below. In the next section, we provide a bulleted list of questions for discussion around each principle. The model we propose offers some concrete ideas and suggestions, but we anticipate that community leaders will develop their own tools and techniques to support each principle.

POWER: Shift the Balance Of Power

The relationship between traditionally empowered (government, corporate, and philanthropic) stakeholders and marginalized residents is often characterized by power dynamics that exclude and disempower residents by removing them from important policy decisions, only informing them after critical decisions have been made on their behalf. Re-thinking this power dynamic challenges everyone to risk the comfort of old roles and ideas, so that marginalized residents can begin to develop equitable partnerships with the economic community, demand fairness and accountability from government officials, and help direct foundation resources towards meaningful change in the community.

ASSETS: Build From Community-Defined Assets and “The SuperLocal”

Despite efforts to the contrary, many community engagement initiatives in Detroit are seen by Fellows as top-down. Fellows felt that many of the important community conversations were held away from authentic community spaces. Moreover, many engagement activities revolve around what marginalized communities lack, rather than their strengths, leading to distrust and disillusionment. This civic engagement model will emphasize the many assets that communities possess, and focus the enormous amount of social capital that exists in minority and low-income neighborhoods, turning it into power at the “SuperLocal” level to create meaningful change.

ACCOUNTABILITY: Implement Reciprocal Accountability and Measure Change

In the Fellows’ view, many community initiatives in Detroit lose support due to an inability deliver on promises and a lack of measurable outcomes, leading to further distrust and fatigue from Detroit residents. Creating clear and measurable steps to
create change, and heeding feedback from stakeholders, can help maintain support for the civic engagement process while keeping the process reflective of community values. Ensuring this type of mutual accountability among stakeholders can help build trust and make sure that resources and decision-making are shared equally.
Shift the Balance of Power

**Build Equitable Relationships**

How can we build an equitable relationship with local & regional elected officials?

How can we build partnerships with local corporate and economic entities?

How can we work to build a more effective relationship with the philanthropic community?

**Confront Implicit Racial and Economic Bias**

How do we identify bias against low-income and minority voices within the civic environment?

How can we encourage more people of color and low income people to participate meaningfully in decisions about their communities?

How can we ensure that regional decisions reflect all values and voices?

**Make Civic Engagement More Inclusive**

How can civic engagement in Detroit, and across the region, include more voices, processes, and perspectives?

How can this engagement model include new residents (i.e. “corporate immigrants” and artists), and help them feel ownership for equitable community success?

What are the different ways that the civic engagement model might engage those outside of the engagement process?

**Foster Transformative Change**

What can we do to move from citizens as informers and consultants to citizens as deciders?

How can we act to hold different perspectives -- and the tension between those perspectives -- positively and effectively?

What are some techniques we can use to help all community stakeholders take the risks necessary to make meaningful change?
Build From Community Defined Assets and the Superlocal

**Develop Resident Leadership**

How can we use civic engagement activities to deepen the leadership capacity of marginalized residents?

How can we take advantage of current energy around housing and health care throughout Southeast Michigan in order to build civic leadership?

How can we bring minority and low-income residents to the decision-making table?

**Lift Up Community-Defined Assets**

How can we use existing community events and facilities to bring more people into the rebuilding Detroit conversation?

What can we do to bring those who are especially marginalized (people who are immigrants, homeless and dislocated, returning citizens, youth, etc.) into the conversation?

Can we create an alternative narrative of our communities that include hidden or marginalized assets?

**Make Community-Based Decisions**

How do we better include “on the ground” organizations into policy conversations?

What can we do to build a locus of decision-making power at the neighborhood and block level?
Implement Reciprocal Accountability and Measure Change

**Build Mutual Trust**

*How do we ensure that local & regional stakeholders invest in civic capacity?*

*How can we create empowering connections between service-oriented groups and policy-oriented groups?*

*How can we create a more accountable relationship with the philanthropic community?*

**Transparency In Decision-Making**

*What can we do to make local & regional planning and budgeting decisions more transparent and responsive to residents?*

*How can we create a more direct relationship between community organizations and the state’s financial advisory board?*

*How can we create open and meaningful communication between marginalized residents and the city’s decision makers within the new charter?*

**Continuous Social Learning**

*What are some ways to make sure our process is reflective of all voices?*

*Can we create a process of continuous improvement based on social learning and rigorous and honest assessments?*

**Meaningful Implementation Strategies**

*How can we make this effort measurable? How can we make these principles operational?*

*How can we coordinate our efforts with other civic engagement activities in the region to create more agency for marginalized residents?*

*How can we make these efforts sustainable?*
Elements of the Model: Mobilize, Convene, Decide

The process model is community-led, starting at the local level and changing the role of civic engagement among people at a very fundamental level — and then letting those changes influence decision-making on a larger scale. This will be achieved by using community resources to create new engagement environments that can hold local officials accountable to the community and allow residents to develop and exercise their civic capacity. Residents will create a platform to speak more powerfully to regional and economic stakeholders by building equity from the grassroots up to the city and regional level. The model acts to mobilize marginalized residents through deep relationship building, convene those members around important issues, and then use existing social capital to decide how to equitably re-build Detroit.

Mobilize
Detroit has a wealth of neighborhood organizations and activities that carry a substantial amount of social capital such as neighborhood associations, community festivals and block groups. However, these resources will not be able to bring transformative change without forming deeper relationships with the people who comprise marginalized communities throughout the region. These relationships can help link individual concerns to larger community issues and focus energy on helping individuals realize their ability to create change in their communities. By taking the civic conversation into more informal spaces and convening activities that build more meaningful relationships, a true sense of the immense social capital present in marginalized communities will be apparent, and civic engagement can become a more prominent part of the lives of marginalized residents.

Convene
As civic engagement efforts become more coordinated and capacity is built, we can convene community members in order to address community matters. The formation of working groups made up of community members and centered on important assets can be a mechanism to move the community from managing circumstances to changing them. After new solutions are identified, these groups can also provide a means of identifying and supporting champions to speak for marginalized residents in city policy-making.

Decide
Through a steering committee formed from the working groups, marginalized residents can leverage their galvanized social capital and increase awareness through the Citizen Advisory Councils (CAC’s). Buoyed by a strong community-led civic infrastructure, marginalized residents in Detroit will finally have the opportunity to be “community deciders,” to act on equal footing with traditional economic, government, and philanthropic stakeholders. The steering committee will be responsible for identifying
candidates for the city’s CAC’s, who can then support and hold accountable district council representatives. Marginalized residents can then form more equitable relationships with local and regional stakeholders which can in turn help create policies that benefit all Detroiters.
MOBILIZE

Goals

Realize the true civic power of marginalized residents
Connect individual concerns to community issues
Build long-term transformational, relationships between marginalized residents and community organizations
Build capacity among residents to create and champion policies that strengthen their communities
Create a link between service delivery, community pride, and policy leadership in marginalized communities

Actions

Partner with community service resources to create opportunities for civic dialogue and discussion
Use community festivals, block parties, local celebrations, and create other social events to link marginalized residents from different backgrounds and galvanize social capital
Conduct regular, informal, and open-ended small group conversations with marginalized residents about their concerns
Create skill training programs such as civic leadership, policy orientations, and media training in order to bolster the civic capacity

Potential Challenges

Loss of focus
Lack of community enthusiasm and energy
Lack of relevance to marginalized residents
Discord among community groups
CONVENE

Goals

Create a forum where marginalized citizens can explore and discuss policies that affect them

Create opportunities for residents to exercise their civic capacity around subjects of interest

Provide a platform to craft effective, community driven policies

Actions

Create working groups around important assets or subject areas of interest

Create mechanisms to recruit members and to orient them to policy discussions

Partner with other educational, philanthropic, and economic partners in order to deepen policy knowledge and implement strategies

Potential Challenges

Lack of interest

Intimidation among residents

Formation around negative issues

Infighting or discord among residents

Lack of cooperation from outside partners
DECIDE

Goals

Empower marginalized citizens to directly influence policy decisions at the local level
Create accountability between the city council and marginalized communities
Ensure transparency in public policy and decision-making
Respond to minority and low-income perspectives in community policy decisions
Promote equitable and effective partnerships with other stakeholders in Southeast Michigan

Actions

Create a process for choosing volunteers for CAC’s throughout Detroit
Partner with city officials to put marginalized communities in positions of agency
Develop responsive agreements to ensure that the CAC’s reflect all voices in the community
Use local council platform to engage with corporate and economic stakeholders
Work for mutual accountability with philanthropic and educational institutions
Determine accountability protocols for local council representatives

Potential Challenges

Lack of partner cooperation
Lack of accountability
Lack of institutional support
Lack of focus
Competing interests
Corruption
Personalities dominating policy
Separation from community goals
Civic Engagement Model

Figure 1.

MOBILIZE
Marginalized Residents

CONVENE
Community Organizations

Community Action Committees

Steering Committee

Issue Driven Citizen Groups

Regional, State & Local Stakeholders

District Representatives

Expanding Democracy | 2012
Moving from Mobilizing to Deciding... and Back Again

Reciprocal Accountability

This model is marked by the constant presence of reciprocal accountability. In plain terms, reciprocal accountability is about helping each other make contributions to the community that we all care about. On one hand, reciprocal accountability refers to the fact that at each part of the plan, the people involved are responsible not just for acting upon the next group of stakeholders ahead (the ‘forward’ arrows in Figure 6), but to the stakeholders that have helped put them in the position to exercise that power. On the other hand, it can refer to the reality that people cannot work towards shared goals without inclusion, infrastructure, support, information and feedback from stakeholders and elected officials (the ‘reverse’ arrows in Figure 6). For instance, marginalized residents are often called on to approve of and even support fully formed policy proposals, but are often not included in the discussion that moved the policy conversation forward, or able to meaningfully contribute to policy formation. Conversely, public officials have difficulty working for the public good without knowledgeable and engaged citizens who can be counted on to provide support and insight into the issues as hand. In terms of this model, reciprocal accountability can be seen at every level, but is particularly important when moving between the different types of activities (i.e. when moving from convening to deciding). Ultimately, this model wrestles with how community power moves from the individual level to regional decision-making.

Culture to Vision

Through deep relationship building among diverse residents and neighborhoods across the region, we can create a culture of civic engagement that can help build the capacity of residents to engage in policy discussions in a knowledgeable way and activate ‘Superlocal’ social capital. Bringing residents together around pressing topics presents an opportunity for community residents to channel that social capital into action by using their accumulated skills and abilities to create their own visions for how to utilize community assets. These groups can link individual community issues with a broader policy context in a meaningful way. Also, these citizen groups can partner with educational, philanthropic, and religious organizations to gain more knowledge about how policy works. In those groups, community members can begin the process of creating a voice that can speak to the wider region. Working together, community members can turn their concerns and ideas into new and innovative directions for the community.

Vision to Agency
We can take full advantage of existing opportunities to exercise civic power in a manner that transforms the regional playing field, ensuring that low-income and minority residents become equal partners in shaping the destiny of Detroit. Community Advisory Councils can be used to bring about a champion (or champions) at the District Representative level who understands the community’s vision and can engage minorities, low-income residents, and other marginalized residents around his or her policymaking agenda. This will help hold representatives accountable to the visions and values articulated within the community groups. Those representatives in turn have a solid foundation on which to bring issues of inequity and racial marginalization into policy conversations and into conversation with corporate stakeholders.

**Decision-Makers and Citizen Groups**

District Representatives bring the values and ideas from the community into regional policy discussions, as well as introduce policy formed by community members at the subject area group level. The power that comes with the ability to make decisions on behalf of the district then comes with the responsibility of making sure that those decisions align with the vision of the community.

The power on which district representatives can act can be provided by a civic structure based on trust. The CAC’s can act as endorsers of the candidate’s commitment to the community’s vision of itself. However, if trust in these organizations is broken, then the entire system may be called into question and as a result, that power base disappears. CAC’s are not only part of delivering social capital upward to the representative, but are also responsible for choosing candidates with the understanding of community values and the skills to adequately bring them into the policy discussion at a regional level.

Additionally, district representatives will have access to first-hand knowledge of policy movements that will not be available to others in the community. To keep community visions relevant, this information must be shared with the community, and the CAC’s can be a useful vehicle for this work. A process can be developed that will allow CAC’s to pass knowledge about regional policy to community groups, subject area groups, and community members at large, using existing community events and resources. This exchange of knowledge not only keeps everyone informed, but also builds mutual trust throughout the community.

**Citizen Groups and the Community**

One local community leader explained that many of the people that she deals with, young African-American males are uncomfortable going to meetings where city officials are present because they might be perceived as criminals or undesirables, and feared being unfairly ignored because of their unfamiliarity with policy language.
Because of these barriers, many voices in the community go unheard and community initiatives, no matter how well intentioned, often find little sustaining energy at the local level. Therefore, those involved in convening activities must make an extra effort to bring the policy discussion to community members, both geographically and thematically. Legitimacy and usefulness of policy discussions is largely related to how applicable they are to the lives of marginalized citizens. If people see these groups as a vehicle for creating real change in the community, they are more likely to stay involved in capacity building activities. Community organizations can also help link residents with policy groups through events aimed at helping marginalized residents become more comfortable engaging in policy discussions. This will enable residents to make civic engagement and community change a part of their everyday lives in a positive and meaningful way.
Moving Forward

What are the next steps that can be taken in order to create this kind of transformative civic change? This civic engagement model is a framework that can be used by various stakeholders at each level of mobilizing, convening, and deciding. In order to put our ideas to work, we must be prepared to move out of our individual silos (be they based on geography or issue area), and to create new and lasting partnerships.

Incorporating the Voices of the Voiceless

Key to building community support for programs is relating programs to individual residents in a meaningful way. In marginalized communities specifically, residents can be wary of new initiatives after many years of disappointments and broken promises. Going forward, we must first listen and become aware of the real challenges that marginalized residents face, as well as the assets that help create opportunities.

Our current civic engagement environment tends to leave many people out of the engagement process all together. Young people, re-entering citizens, immigrants, the disabled, the homeless and many other residents make up a significant portion of our communities, yet often do not have a significant voice when decisions are made. As we move forward, we must use our transformative framework to adapt civic engagement in terms of participants, locations, language, and processes so that more residents have a meaningful say in the future of their communities. Only then can we begin the work of aligning with those values in a way that proves relevant and is supported by residents eager for transformative change.

Build Local Partnerships That Empower the Public Sphere

Many organizations in Detroit are working to build civic power in Detroit and make the rebuilding of Detroit as participatory as possible. This model aims to provide a common framework for working towards building civic power from the ‘SuperLocal’ public space. Fellows look forward to forming alliances and relationships with existing initiatives, holding open spaces for whoever would like to be involved. Within a shared framework, these empowering initiatives can have the flexibility to work together and individually to help rebalance civic power dynamics through effective community action.

Find Common Ground with Regional Stakeholders

The effects of local policy decisions do not stop at the city limits. Many residents outside of Detroit are marginalized by inequalities in the civic engagement landscape along lines of income, national origin, housing and job status, and gender. Many citizens
in more rural areas have few options to incorporate their values into local and regional policies. In our next steps, we must prioritize the creation of new alliances throughout the region that are based on a mutual understanding of their shared fates.
Civic Power Addendum

Introduction

After completing this report, the planning team invited a national civic engagement consultant to assess our findings. The consultant confirmed that our model effectively expresses an urgent desire to lift up authentic voices for marginalized residents in public policy decisions. However, she also noted that the model did not address how to operationalize civic power, nor did it distinguish between “inside” and “outside” power. She cautioned that that while it is foundational for marginalized residents to stake a claim to voice in public policy decisions at all levels -- from the neighborhood to the region -- stakeholders must also be accountable to those voices.

Community Voice and Community Power

Community voice is the ability for the community to authentically express their values within the realm of public policy. As our report describes, efforts aimed at developing civic voice focus on building relationships among residents, community organizations, and local and regional stakeholders in order to make the connection between individual challenges and the challenges faced by the community at large. The Detroit Fellows attested to the importance of the development of civic voice for marginalized communities – both to assess community assets and challenge, and to establish a neighborhood-led community vision.

However, the strengthening of community voice does not alone bring about increased power for marginalized communities. Local and regional stakeholders still need incentives to work towards policies and processes that include the needs of marginalized communities. Building civic power in public decision making is a crucial part of empowering marginalized communities. In hindsight, the planning team realized building civic power begins with the organized social capital that community voice shapes and elevates, but that this social capital must be brought to bear in particular ways not reflected by our model. Community voice must not only be heard, but taken seriously in public policy.

Inside and Outside Power

The consultant noted that community power is diverse. One useful delineation is that between “inside” and “outside” power. “Inside” power tend to be exercised by community members that are active in more cooperative engagement activities. They are often aimed at extending engagement processes to residents from traditionally marginalized communities. Community organizations that hold inside power strive to put these community members in leadership positions in order to ensure that the
priorities of marginalized communities play an important role in policy initiatives. However, the nature of these relationships makes it difficult for those working inside existing power structures to criticize powerful stakeholders, while still maintaining relationships needed to uplift marginalized communities.

“Outside” power can be an effective complement to inside power. Outside efforts tend to be carried out by community members who work outside of the established public policy system and outside of established relationships. From that vantage point, they can make more overt critiques of the unequal power relationships. This gives marginalized communities another tool in which to address inequality in the public policy. Our consultant also noted that outside power is more likely to be grass-roots based and community supported, giving them greater freedom in their relationship with other stakeholders. These efforts can introduce policies that might not otherwise be considered within the established engagement framework. However, outside power actors may lack access to detailed policy knowledge that inside organizations tend to have. They can also find institutional support less available. This can make it difficult to develop and implement a credible public policy narrative for marginalized communities.

Therefore, both inside and outside power strategies are appropriate and needed when pushing for systemic policy change.

Strategies

After deliberating on this feedback, the planning team came to two important conclusions:

a) Efforts aimed at building civic voice and operationalizing civic power must be clearly delineated. When efforts to find and express civic voice are confused with efforts to build community power, both efforts can become unfocused, and ineffective. Clear planning for expressing civic voice and amplifying civic power are crucial for each to work together effectively.

b) For inside and outside to work together effectively, they must work towards shared goals, yet keep a level of independence. Inside and outside groups can realize their greatest impacts by creating strategic partnerships that capitalize on the strengths of each. Agreement upon a shared narrative strategy for action could help each group attain more goals that they could by themselves. Important to the success of such collaboration is coordinated autonomy, which gives all parties the flexibility to pursue their shared strategies, by using tools and strategies that are suited to their unique strengths. This coordination can help inside and outside groups be more effective in bringing about positive change for marginalized residents.
In order to develop the capacity to exercise civic power in Detroit, the planning team recommends four additional strategies:

- Tracing the History of Civic Power
- Mapping Civic Power in the Community
- Finding Alternative Sources of Community Power
- Establish a Coordinated Action Plan for Inside and Outside Efforts

**Tracing the History of Civic Power**

The ability to see how power has shifted in Detroit can be a useful tool for understanding how some stakeholders exercise undue influence on public policy decisions. This analysis may also revive past successful strategies for helping marginalized communities gain power. Looking at power from a historical perspective can also create a shared understanding of power inequality by connecting today’s power dynamics to the power dynamics that have traditionally existed throughout the Detroit region.

**Mapping Civic Power in the Community**

In order to coordinate efforts that can bolster community power, an accurate accounting of where power is located -- and how power shifts and moves throughout the Detroit region -- could prove useful. A thorough power analysis can reveal new insights that could help inform an effective strategy for organizing and using community power effectively. Power analyses such as SCOPE’s Power Analysis and Net-Mapping can help create a clearer picture of power that can inform a power strategy for marginalized communities.

**Finding Alternative Sources of Community Power**

The consultant also noted that an effective outside strategy is best supported by sources of support that are independent from powerful stakeholders within the community. In Detroit, the Fellows felt that many of the sources of both financial and political support for marginalized communities can be influenced by corporate and government stakeholders. Seeking out these alternative sources of power may also help broaden the base of support for marginalized communities to include less traditional partners.

**Establishing a Coordinated Power Plan**
The first three strategies can add important context to a coordinated plan for groups that hold inside and outside power. Key to this power plan will be a plan for coordinated autonomous action between inside and outside groups. The plan must also include a shared understanding of how current power dynamics have marginalized some communities in Detroit while rewarding others, and how those dynamics have been formed over the city’s history. The coordinated power plan should include strategies for:

**People:** Active and casual participants in public decision-making tend to use established civic processes, while alternative participants tend to use avenues outside of the established system. Understanding how different people engage in public decision making can increase the effectiveness of community engagement strategies. For example, casual residents are vital to keeping community initiatives fresh and are often the holders of community values. Strategies should be developed for active, casual and alternative participants.

**Actions:** Public participation can be used both for finding voice and building power. These activities are often linked together and can overlap. They are nevertheless two different types of activities that require different strategies and support systems. A coordinated power plan must include strategies for both actions.

**Organizations:** Community groups also vary in terms of function and form. Often these groups are divided into “Grassroots” and “Grasstops.” Grasstop organizations tend to be more policy-focused and more closely related with stakeholders. Grassroots organizations tend to be focused on providing services to the community, and organizing community action. Being aware of the strengths and weakness of both groups can help them be effective in creating increased power for marginalized communities.

**The Corporate Domain:** The public sphere is a complex environment; a plan for community power that is multi-layered and comprehensive within the public sphere can be very effective. Additionally, the Detroit Fellows wanted to extend their power into domains and spaces being overtaken by the corporate sphere, yet there was not enough time to devote to fleshing this out. Perhaps the next phase of the Fellows’ work can further develop this concept.

**Conclusion**

The civic environment of Detroit is far more complex than could be covered in this report. However, working to bring about change within the public space requires a robust effort to connect and coordinate efforts among stakeholders throughout the public landscape, in the arenas of both voice and power.
Appendix A: A Literature Review of Municipal Shrinkage Efforts

Social Equity Concerns in City Shrinkage Efforts
A Review of Pertinent Literature

Kip Holley, Research Associate, Kirwan Institute

Introduction

In cities such as Detroit, Buffalo, and Cleveland, planned shrinkage has progressed from an idea to reach almost mandate status. City officials, overwhelmed by budgetary problems, high unemployment, population loss, and urban blight are finding that they must do more with less. However, as leaders begin to implement some of these projects and proposals, issues such as fairness, sensitivity, historic integrity, and economic disparity are becoming more prominent. The following review focuses on social equity in planned shrinkage and other urban reformation efforts.

Much of the literature on social equity within the framework of shrinking cities is recent, and largely takes the form of articles and short papers. The immediacy of the phenomenon of shrinking cities translates into a dearth of in-depth analysis with regards social equity concerns. However, there is enough experience to identify some basic characteristics of city shrinkage and reformation programs that have been undertaken. Much of the literature indicates that social equity is closely tied to changes in these characteristics. The characteristics can be characterized as follows: approach, scale, propensity for demolition-based strategies, scarcity of resources, and extent of population loss. These characteristics are often interrelated, hence the difficulty in determining how they affect social equity individually. The literature, however, conveyed some insight onto the general nature of the effects these variables had on the shrinkage process in low-income neighborhoods.

Approach
In their respective papers, Frank Feuerbach and Laura Wolf-Powers highlight the primary approaches that have been taken in efforts to shrink cities: top-down and bottom-up. A top-down approach is usually conducted by a central agency, such as a city or regional planning office or an organization created to manage the shrinkage process. Power is typically centralized within this organization and is then parceled out to community and individual partners. This approach, according to Feuerbach and others can lead to barriers for marginalized communities to communicate their ideas and concerns to decision makers, leading to probable inequities. Another problem is that those closest to people within the power structure will be able to greatly affect policy while those further out may be powerless to effect any changes. In general, those who are able to be closer to the central power structure of such organizations are economically and politically more well off. In places such as New Orleans and Detroit, this has lead to low-income residents being left out of the process and being disproportionately disenfranchised by shrinkage.

Richard Florida and Roberta Brandes-Gratz compare top-down shrinkage efforts to the urban renewal efforts of the 1950's and 60's and argue that these efforts ignored community voices, limiting the positive outcomes of those efforts. With this in mind, the Detroit Works program has created a pilot program called the Neighborhood Action Strategy, in which 28 communities throughout the city have been chosen for early program initiation. The hope is that the results an evaluation from this smaller process will help guide the larger city-wide process in an effort to avoid the 'pre-programmed' solutions indicative of urban renewal schemes of the past.

Brandes-Gratz and Florida instead favor bottom-up efforts led by community leaders, small groups, or individuals. This type of process would not only save important city structures, but would provide a level of agency for already existing residents that helps guarantee social equity in the shrinkage process. The literature describes successful examples of bottom-up shrinkage efforts in Pittsburgh, Buffalo, and New Orleans, among others.

However, Feuerbach cautioned that using a bottom-up approach had some disadvantages as well. Many community-led initiatives lack the strong networks with institutions and funding sources necessary to make effective changes in blighted neighborhoods. Also, among many government and financial actors, some community organizations are seen as unprofessional and tend to be taken less seriously than more traditional institutional actors. Finally, those involved with bottom-up revitalization programs tend to have little or no knowledge of institutional protocols or procedures, meaning that their ability to build relationships with those in power is diminished and that they are less likely to be supported on a larger scale. Moreover, Charles Buki in his Planetizen Op-Ed on neighborhood stabilization opined that many community development organizations lack the vision to carry out large scale plans, particularly when resources are scarce.
Scale

Some of the literature indicates that bottom-up planning is more suited to small-scale shrinkage projects, where discrete areas of a city are being considered for shrinkage, while the rest of the city remains relatively viable. Revitalization efforts in neighborhoods such as German Village and Greenwich Village, for example, allowed local individuals and small groups to have a larger impact because the area is relatively small and, it is assumed, less complex. Larger shrinkage projects, such as those facing Detroit seem to warrant a more generalized, top-down planning effort. This view is particularly championed by Edward L. Glaeser in his New York Times articles, but is refuted by Roberta Brandes-Gratz and others, who use examples from New York's Upper West Side and Brooklyn as examples of large scale revitalization efforts that were primarily community-led.

There is a general consensus however, that the larger the scale and greater the degree of generalization, the greater the chance that the shrinkage process could become inequitable to existing residents and community partners. Increasing the scale of a shrinkage project can also increase the focus on efficiency and decrease the focus on feedback and evaluation, two central components to ensuring equity among all participants. Schilling's evaluation of Buffalo's shrinkage process revealed that in larger scale projects, the plan for civic engagement must be much more robust and action-oriented, and must be built into the structure of the overall plan, lest the civic engagement become superficial and ineffective.

The Detroit Works Plan mentions a desire for an inclusive process and even includes 28 meetings with citizens from various communities over a series of nine months. However, there is a lack of detailed procedures that would help create an atmosphere conducive to robust engagement. Additionally, the plan will be administered largely from a centralized group of private firms.

Demolition-Based Strategies

Existing research points to a great deal of inequity concerning the overuse of demolition in shrinkage planning, particularly in the urban core of large cities. While the literature uniformly sees over-demolition as a danger, viewpoints vary as to how serious the problem is. Joseph Schilling echoes the sentiments of Glaeser and Richard Moe that some structures have to be demolished because of the low probability of reinvestment and propensity for crime. However, Schilling cautions that decision makers should provide infrastructure for plenty of public input and deliberation upon which sites should be demolished.
Others, such as Brandes-Gratz and Florida argue that demolition is rarely if ever the answer, pointing to past urban renewal and highway placement efforts that destroyed urban neighborhoods as an illustration of the negative effects of demolition and re-building on communities of color. Brandes-Gratz claims that demolition could be a preferred tool because it can be politically and economically beneficial to city officials and demolition contractors (who tend to be politically connected). The strategy of “demolition-land banking-rehabilitation-new development” can be more palatable to city officials who are under pressure to take quick and decisive action to remedy the more complex long-term problems of poverty and lack of opportunity in many inner city neighborhoods. However, this process can be prohibitively expensive and disruptive to the urban fabric of the city. It also tends to lead to development that is more expensive to maintain in the long-term. Newspaper articles from various communities also highlight examples of demolition contractor malfeasance, reinforcing the claims that demolition-based shrinkage strategies may invite corruption into the process, leaving those without political connections voiceless. This corrupting influence can be devastating in shrinkage efforts that are centralized and large in scale because they reinforce mistrust between public officials and traditionally marginalized communities.

Finally, Brandes-Gratz notes that the people who typically control funds for urban reformation, such as financial institutions and federal and state officials are more apt to understand demolition-based strategies, which tend to be singularly focused and streamlined, than regeneration and community building efforts coming from smaller groups, which tend to be much less uniform in nature. This contributes to the phenomenon of greater funding opportunities for demolition plans that tend to be generally less equitable.

**Scarce Resources**

Current articles on shrinking cities often highlight the effects of our current economic conditions on planned shrinkage programs in general and social equity in particular. The general consensus is that scarce resources have the potential to create an imbalance of negative outcomes for lower-income urban residents. The reasons are primarily two-fold. As mentioned earlier, traditional funders tend to be conservative in regards to what they fund, favoring more streamlined plans from known participants, which tends to leave poorer and less connected residents without many avenues to procure resources for redevelopment.

Another reason, highlighted by Charles Buki, is that when community projects are underfunded, it often leads to a ‘triage’ scenario, where officials are left to decide between helping one community over another. This triage effect could be experienced by city officials in shrinking cities when deciding which communities to save and which to leave behind, given their strapped budgets. Considering Detroit's massive size and dwindling budget, this 'triage' effect could prove to be a difficult barrier to city-wide
success. The Detroit Works plan calls for 28 communities to pilot the reforms that come about after the initial planning phase. However, Detroit Works does not allude to a mechanism for replicating these practices elsewhere in the city. This could possibly leave the rest of the cities neglected, particularly if resources for the plan begin to disappear.

Some of the literature calls for a more substantial change in funding around issues of shrinkage and revitalization. For example, Mark Harris, in his Race-Talk blog post “Freddie, Fannie, and Shrinking Cities,” calls for the federal government to support more community lending organizations, as well as alternative financing mechanisms to allow urban neighborhoods to thrive. Jennifer Bradley of the Brookings Institute calls for a priority shift in the planning and economic development fields at the state and federal levels from a focus on growth to a focus on 'ungrowth,' planned strategies for shrinking cities equitably and with an eye on urban revitalization. She claims that inequality and ineffectiveness in shrinkage programs is due to the fact that planning for American cities has traditionally been oriented around continual growth, and that this new planning focus would take a similar commitment.

**Examples of Equitable Planning**

There are many examples of equitable revitalization in shrinking cities; however, the literature prominently mentioned activities in Youngstown, Pittsburgh, and the Toronto Waterfront, which is being revitalized amid shrinking revenues in Toronto. The descriptions of all of these plans emphasize public engagement, community-led activities, and a need for equity. The Plan for The Federal North Neighborhood of Pittsburgh details how a blighted neighborhood that could have been destined for demolition was redeveloped using a number of bottom-up public private partnerships. The Youngstown 2010 Plan admits that some properties will be lost in the process; however, it emphasizes an extensive community vision process, conserving homes and property for lower-income residents, and building on existing assets. All together, the plans and projects provide a great deal of real-world examples for shrinking equitably.

**Best Practices in Civic Engagement**

Considering the enormous changes that the City of Detroit will face in the oncoming years, providing for a robust, interactive, and meaningful civic engagement process will be key to ensuring successful outcome for all stakeholders. The following best practices were gathered from Jason Reece's literature review of civic engagement best practices as well as a review of the Detroit Works process and procedures.

**Do Background Research and Engage in Relationship- Building with Local Partners**

This early phase should also include the development of key community liaisons or stakeholders to help guide engagement with disadvantaged communities throughout
the process. These partners can also act as facilitators with communities. Partners will not only assist in engagement with disadvantaged communities, but also integrate their expertise and activities into the planning activities for the region.

Preliminary research should also serve as an opportunity to interact informally with local leaders and organizations. Assessing various levels of community capital (human, social, political, financial, and built) will help determine levels of community opportunity or disadvantage and should inform engagement approaches. Community history is important and should be recognized in efforts to engage with disadvantaged communities and be assessed with preliminary research. Without understanding and openly addressing these concerns or beliefs, it will remain difficult to produce effective engagement.

Adopt a Participatory and Deliberative Process & Start with Issues of Community Concern

The engagement process should balance both citizen-based and government-based engagement activities. Engagement activities should openly embrace “bottom up” or community-led activities and interactions. Engagement processes should be highly participatory in nature and not viewed as simple information sharing with disadvantaged communities. Community members should feel that their efforts and involvement is appreciated or valued and will potentially impact planning outcomes. Engagement activities should identify, explore, and focus on issues of concern for disadvantaged communities.

Civic engagement should also help build local networks of engaged community members. These local networks can be powerful mechanisms for sharing information, technical skills, and scaling up smaller successful initiatives. Successful engagement must work to expand the web of stakeholders involved in the planning process, from traditional or formal stakeholders to non-traditional or informal groups, such as community networks, civic clubs, parent and education groups, youth organizations, religious leaders and citizens. Consortiums should build extensive local networks for civic engagement, using multiple methods of publicizing activities and types of engagement activities to attract a diverse constituency.

Build Trust: Share Information, Responsibility and Decision Making

Trust is essential to effective civic engagement with traditionally marginalized or excluded communities. Committing resources, commitment to the process, consistency, and cultural competency encourages engagement and also builds good will and trust between communities and planning consortiums.
It is critical for disadvantaged communities to act in more than just an advisory role, but to be actively involved in decision making processes. Public sector entities must also be transparent in sharing information, details on process, goals, and decision making approaches to planning initiatives. Conflict must be dealt with in an open and constructive way, promoting collaborative engagement and avoiding adversarial engagement. Additionally, disagreements and conflicts should be discussed openly but with sensitivity to disadvantaged communities.

Embrace Robust Civic Engagement: Emphasize Education and Effectiveness over Efficiency

Robust engagement moves away from just soliciting information in a passive way. On the spectrum of engagement, activities should be more targeted toward community involvement, collaboration, and empowerment. Engagement activities should be seen as not only a process to inform decision makers but also as an educational opportunity for the public, enabling them to better understand planning concepts and issues pertaining to sustainability. Engagement processes must not overemphasize efficient participation (numbers of attendees at events) over indicators of empowered or effective participation (the ability of disadvantaged groups to organize or express their needs in the political process).

Set Civic Engagement Goals and Equity Metrics to Be Used in the Planning Process

Work with stakeholders to help define key concepts to be used in the civic engagement process and identify equity metrics, as well as who should be included as disadvantaged populations. Developing common definitions with stakeholders from the community will help avoid oversight which might lead to conflict in the planning process. Equity issues are more likely to be addressed if openly identified early in the planning process. Additionally, administrative processes should be defined clearly, to clarify how disadvantaged communities will contribute as decision makers in the planning process, and to enable clear communication of this process to community members.

Engagement Activities to Support Regional Planning: Collaborative Action & Planning

The National Coalition for Dialogue & Deliberation is a model of Collaborative Action. This model is intended to empower multiple communities to problem solve together in order to address complicated problems and take responsibility for solutions. The process utilizes dialogue and deliberation to generate collaborative action plans which also encourage collaborative activities among diverse stakeholders across a region. Understanding which groups need to be represented, which groups are affected but have traditionally been excluded, and understanding existing power dynamics are
critical issues to address in this process. Study circles and visioning are common facilitation techniques to achieve this goal.

Communications: Framing Communication for Effective Engagement

People use “frames” or schema to understand information in our complex world. These frames are built from experiences, information, and other implicit biases and help guide decision making, especially implicit decision making. Frames can be positive or negative and they way information is “framed” can be very influential in respect to how people respond. Careful framing can assist in producing more conducive engagement around issues of sustainability, regional planning, and equity. Regionalism, smart growth, sustainability, race, and equity are complex issues, which can be difficult to have productive public conversations about. Although these topics may be difficult to broach, they are essential to having honest, inclusive, and productive dialogue.

Technology & Media: Integrate New Media, Mapping and Other Internet Based Methods

Engagement processes should integrate new media technology and data driven indicator systems, while being sensitive to digital divides and digital access barriers for disadvantaged communities. New media technologies allow for new ways to interact and engage with the public. Online tools allow for easier recruiting for engagement activities, more real time and cost effective information dissemination, provide follow up interactions from engagement activities, conduct on-line dialogue between community members, and build better connections among community members who may not be able to attend in face meetings or engagements.

Data-driven community mapping and indicator systems are additional technical tools to help engage with communities on issues of equity and sustainable development. Maps are powerful communication tools. GIS maps using accurate and reliable data can identify critical intervention areas and can reach a large audience through good visualization and representation of community issues. Participatory mapping exercises are promising ways to increase community ownership, participation, and collaborative planning and development initiatives. Participatory mapping projects create problem solving and information gathering opportunities with community members, which also can add value to deliberation. Mechanisms for incorporating the results of the mapping process must be clear and clearly communicated to participants. The process should be community- led and facilitated with technical assistance and support from the public sector agency.

Engaging Through Narratives
In addition to data and other empirical evidence, many people learn through narratives or storytelling. Additionally, new media and other participatory processes facilitate the development of local narratives related to planning, development, equity and sustainability.

Web-based and other interactive tools allow for and stimulate the development of narratives about “place” or community. Creating opportunities for group decision making and community-based learning and development of powerful narratives can inform planning processes as well as engage and educate the community about planning. In addition to participatory mapping technologies and processes, other new media tools, from Facebook, Flicker and Wikipedia to more informal local social networking web sites, can be powerful tools to further expand the engagement process and collect local narratives.

**Logistics: Creating a Welcoming, Interactive and Effective Engagement Process**

Details are critical in successfully implementing engagement activities, from the location, layout, and format of meetings to facilitation techniques. Different types of engagement processes are more appropriate than others, depending on the specific outcomes desired from the engagement. Small group discussions are useful for group learning, sharing experiences, or developing priorities or dialogue. Large group engagements are more suited toward energizing ongoing community dialogue, announcing an initiative, sharing information, or connecting stakeholders. Online or other technology-based engagements allow for detailed information sharing or targeted information sharing with hard to reach audiences, follow up from formal engagement activities, and gathering input from a large sample of residents and stakeholders.

Establishing a set of ground rules for engagement events and setting expectations regarding content and process will increase the likelihood of an effective engagement event. Additionally, be aware of power dynamics within the community that may impact the engagement event. Be attentive to the norms and culture of the community and pay attention to the engagement process to assure that specific individuals or organizations are not dominating the discussion or any group-based decision making processes.

**Robust, Interactive Engagement with Impoverished Communities**

Low-income communities are not monolithic and represent a wide variety of racial and ethnic populations, cultural norms, languages, geographic characteristics, with distinct barriers to opportunity. Engagement with these communities must recognize these distinctions and integrate them into engagement approaches. While engagement should be a universal goal, targeted and tailor-made approaches will be needed to effectively engage with a diverse number of communities. Additionally, low-
income communities may already be engaged through less formal engagement networks, but for active engagement these communities face tremendous barriers which must be understood and addressed in the engagement process.

**Collaborative Engagement with Children and Youth Aimed at Fostering Civic Leadership**

Youth participants must be viewed as valuable participants in the engagement process and be prepared to work in partnership with adults who will listen and respect their opinions. Civic engagement with youth provides an emerging opportunity to add diverse voices to public dialogue. But youth engagement can also be a transformative interaction for youth in disadvantaged communities by providing an empowering educational experience and also nurture crucial relationships with positive peers, mentors, and role models.

Volunteer opportunities, especially those coordinated by trusted community institutions or faith-based organizations can enhance engagement with youth. Youth engagement should allow youth multiple avenues to be informed by planning issues and feel they have a new understanding of community challenges and have influenced planning outcomes.

To effectively engage with disadvantaged youth, allow for a prolonged engagement and time to build trust, and entail an asset-based focus which capitalizes on the aspirations of disadvantaged youth. Youth-produced media and extensive focus on new media and technology can also be successful in encouraging youth engagement. Youth engagement activities should seek to increase civic skills (developing critical thinking skills, cooperation and group problem solving), civic knowledge (understanding relevant issues and how public policy relates to community concerns) and civic efficacy (how to design community initiatives or how to work with policymakers).
Appendix B: Principles and Guidelines for Civic Engagement During Municipal Shrinkage Planning

Envisioning and Rebuilding an Equitable and Vibrant Detroit
Principles to Guide Equity and Robust Civic Engagement in “Shrinking City” Planning

Kip Holley, Christy Rogers and Jason Reece
Opportunity Communities Program

I. Re-frame the “shrinking city” planning process from deficit planning neighborhood triage to one of positive, collaborative, forward-looking planning.

Stakeholders and officials should reframe the process from a deficit-based planning model into one that reflects forward-looking, positive planning. Urban planning history teaches us that the negative aspects of past urban reformation projects such as urban renewal to a planning process based on protecting resources rather than creating a collaborative plan for regenerating and growing resources (cite authors). When only scarce resources are available, planners can “create a triage scenario, leaving officials to decide between helping one community over another.”

When the planning process is framed in this way, it may create a competitive environment among stakeholders, particularly where there are racial or cultural differences. Unfortunately, emphasizing competition between varying groups or neighborhoods tends to actually harden opposition to disadvantaged groups among the public.

We suggest conducting the planning process within an “opportunity frame,” which appeals to the core American belief that everyone should have a chance to achieve their full potential and focuses attention on finding solutions in a collaborative manner. The change in framing can also facilitate a narrative of the current and possible future situation that may draw in participants, rather than forcing them outward to opposite corners. Youngstown's 2010 plan provides a good example of how changing
the process from a disinvestment narrative to one of strategic reinvestment can provide very positive results.

II. Emphasize a collaborative process that empowers participants and builds neighborhood capacity for the long term, rather than a technical and formal exercise.

There is strong evidence for the effectiveness of embracing robust engagement techniques that empower individuals and communities and invites them to become an important part of the decision-making process. Community-led strategies provide a level of agency for already existing residents that would help guarantee social equity in the shrinkage process. Efforts that place the process further away from disadvantaged stakeholders can create an imbalance of power within the process that may marginalize their input. This inequity may lead to further displacement of low-income residents through gentrification and a loss of trust in the process. Cooperative action is essential to the long-term goal of building community leadership, as well as to building a level of goodwill between disadvantaged people and the public and private sector for future projects.

Our research and civic engagement experience indicates that a narrative approach, rather than a technical, data-heavy approach can more effectively engage marginalized communities. A narrative may help people learn and grasp the problems in personal ways that will better illustrate the problem. In addition, the literature recommends connecting various planning focus areas (i.e. transportation, safety, economic development, etc.) in order to illustrate the complexity of the shrinking cities phenomenon in a manner that helps communities realize mutual benefits and address mutual challenges.

In addition to changing the language of the process, cities such as Pittsburgh and Youngstown have instituted more collaborative efforts within their shrinkage and revitalization projects. Pittsburgh's Urban Redevelopment Authority makes a practice out of facilitating partnerships between large organization and community-based organizations in a manner that places most of the responsibility for implementation on the community organizations. This leads to heightened levels of public education and awareness of problems and can help foster cooperation between networks of local groups in disadvantaged neighborhoods.

III. The scale of the shrinkage process in Detroit calls for an unprecedented planning and engagement process. Hence, future initiatives should proceed with a high degree of civic engagement, transparency, and deliberation. In addition, the planning, implementation, and outcomes of the shrinking city initiative in Detroit should be exhaustively documented in order to capture critical lessons learned.
The sheer scale of a shrinkage process such as the one facing Detroit is unprecedented and can lead to problems maintaining social equity by itself. A larger scale process which does not focus on the needs of marginalized communities and does not include robust engagement for these communities increases the likelihood that the shrinkage process could become inequitable to existing residents and community partners. Large urban renewal projects of the 1960's and more recent HOPE VI housing projects revealed a number of inequities that could be traced from a lack of flexibility, transparency and evaluation.

Given the unprecedented scale of the process ahead, there exist no prior examples or best practices to fall back on. This highlights the importance of a deliberative process and a more robust and in-depth evaluation process on an ongoing basis an imperative. Everything from administrative process to the formation of goals and definitions of common terms must be agreed on among all stakeholders. This will help aid in more accurate evaluation that can move the process forward. This means actively engaging with stakeholders to identify key concepts for the process and equity measurements that ensure that traditionally marginalized groups are accounted for in an effective manner.

IV. Recognize the long-term nature of the process and adopt an investment strategy approach that is able to make the best and highest use of the planning, implementation, and observational phases of the process.

A planning process of this scale promises to be long, with far-reaching effects on families, neighborhoods, and the region. It would be to the advantage of all stakeholders to transform the process from a discreet remediation of current conditions to a long-term investment strategy centered around creating new opportunities for traditionally marginalized populations. Much of the current efforts surrounding shrinking cities has thus far centered around traditional economic and real estate development, while slighting issues of social equity and capacity-building in disadvantaged neighborhoods. The demolish and re-build strategy that could profit developers in the short term (versus, say, more complex adaptive reuse and revitalization strategies) may invite more corruption that could leave those without political connections out of the process.

Shifting the focus of the process into a long-term, capacity building investment opportunity allows the process to work on more than one level. This could lead to more positive engagement that could lead to various creative solutions, as well as acting as a starting point for a variety of community initiatives that will allow marginalized groups to develop new skills and create new networks and linkages that could act as a buffer against future negative economic cycles. Robust engagement strategies not only inform public officials, but can help educate traditionally disadvantaged populations in how to
create opportunities and take advantage of the process to create more equitable outcomes.

Lastly, use the scope and scale of the project to promote innovative and equitable sharing of costs and benefits of redevelopment. For example, how might minority construction firms be well positioned to bid on demolition, rehabilitation or infrastructure re-design projects? What jobs could be created in various planning scenarios?
Recommendations for Assuring Robust Civic Engagement and Equity in Detroit’s Shrinking City Planning Effort

Prepared by:
Metropolitan Organizing Strategy Enabling Strength (MOSES) and
The Kirwan Institute for the Study of Race and Ethnicity

Detroit is in the process of considering how to remake itself. After decades of population loss and a declining tax base, there is a serious discussion about if and how to deliberately and strategically shrink the city. This effort is critical to assuring Detroit is a vibrant and healthy community and to assuring a sustainable and equitable future for the city. The spatial dimensions of the city’s declining areas and infrastructure is both costly and inefficient and likely not sustainable. However, this effort will also have disparate impacts on various communities and populations in Detroit, with some communities being poised to flourish and others facing an uncertain future. To assure this process occurs in a way which is equitable and sustainable, the community (especially those who are likely to be most directly impacted) must help drive the planning process and have ownership in its outcomes. The ongoing efforts to reposition Detroit for the future require a planning process which must be grounded in robust civic engagement, with transparency and public access to information if it is going to be successful and sustainable. In addition, the planning process must consider Detroit’s relationship to the region: should this process be a re-imaging of the region in addition to the future of Detroit? Does it make sense to proceed without considering the larger metropolitan area and what the potential consequence of not including Metro-Detroit? What are some of the drawbacks to enlarging the process?

Engagement with the public is more than just passive information collecting, but should also seek to empower communities both in guiding the short term planning outcomes but also in building greater civic capacity for long term community health. This expanded and more substantial definition of engagement captures what is often referred to as robust civic engagement. Robust civic engagement goes beyond just traditional engagement activities with the public with a goal of utilizing every engagement opportunity to build long term capacity, organizational leadership and skills in impacted communities that are well-informed and help shape the process. Planning

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5 Prepared by: John Powell, Executive Director of the Haas Diversity Research Center (formerly Director of the Kirwan Institute; Jason Reece, Director of Research at the Kirwan Institute (www.kirwaninstitute.osu.edu) and Ponsella Hardaway, Executive Director of MOSES (www.mosesmi.org)
processes should not just be shaped by policy makers and planning professionals alone. Technical concepts should be “de-mystified” for local communities and planning activities should engage full decision making by local citizens and communities. Robust civic engagement is not traditional public involvement but a longer term effort focused on relationship and community building.

The overarching goal of robust civic engagement should be to build a civic community, one in which civic infrastructure is supported and community capacity is enhanced. This approach requires that impacted communities participate in the design, goal and process of planning, including helping to identify metrics, timetables, and actors. Engagement is an opportunity through our policy and planning efforts to engage the community in ways which not only produce a better planning process and outcomes, but also produce a critical investment in civic capacity for communities. This is critically important for marginalized communities which are likely to be the most impacted with the least amount of effective input and knowledge. These communities often have very little input into the design of civic engagement activities and if they are consulted, it usually occurs after many important design decisions have been made. The design of the process is not insignificant. This does not mean that any one community can totally define or control the process, nor should the process be controlled and designed solely by policymakers.

There are tremendous benefits to be derived from utilizing effective robust civic engagement to guide planning processes, especially planning processes targeting issues of equity. Traditional public engagement approaches, such as public hearings and passive information sharing, can exacerbate existing structural power imbalances and escalate conflict. This often leads to undemocratic decisions that are ripe with conflict and inequitable. Successful engagement activities can help avoid unproductive conflict, while building public will to support sustainable planning solutions and producing democratic decisions that are more equitable. Robust and targeted civic engagement is critical for addressing concerns and needs of disadvantaged communities, giving voice to traditionally voiceless constituencies while producing more informed and innovative ideas or solutions. Successful robust civic engagement also can produce long term benefits, helping produce a civic infrastructure in communities that need to build community capacity to address long term goals of community development, sustainability, and equity.

Although the series of public forums undertaken and planned in Detroit as part of the planning process are a good first step, these activities are not a robust engagement process and this already has led to some concerns and voices of dissent in the community. Some have questioned the transparency of the process, and fears that a

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plan already exists have spread.\textsuperscript{7} Meetings are leaving some participants with more uncertainty and concerns rather than resolving anxieties about the process and outcomes.\textsuperscript{8} Additionally, the engagement process (and the use of electronic clickers for collecting input) seems more like passive information collection than productive community-driven dialogue. As one participant noted in the media: “(There’s no) dialogue. Dialogue’s when you say something, then I say something and we exchange ideas.”\textsuperscript{9} By embracing a more community-driven planning process with significant community dialogue, transparency and engagement, this process can benefit the community, identify more innovative community-driven solutions, and increase the likelihood of successful implementation.

**General Strategies & Recommendations**

The following strategies and recommendations would strengthen the planning process for shrinking Detroit and produce a more robust civic engagement, which is critical to the long term success of this planning process and to the City of Detroit’s future.

**Build Trust by Sharing Responsibility**

Trust and respect are essential to effective civic engagement with traditionally marginalized or excluded communities. Willingness to share power, responsibility, and leadership authority builds trust between the community and official decision makers. Committing resources, a demonstrated commitment to the process, consistency, and cultural competency encourage engagement and also builds good will and trust between communities and planning consortiums.\textsuperscript{10} It is critical for disadvantaged communities to act in more than just an advisory role, but to have the opportunity to be actively involved in decision making processes. Public sector entities must also be transparent in sharing information, including details on process, goals, and decision making approaches to planning initiatives. Tension may arise because of different interests, values, and positions. Conflict must be dealt with in an open and constructive way that promotes collaborative engagement and avoids adversarial engagement.

\textsuperscript{7} MacDonald, Christine (2011). Secrecy an issue in plan to reshape Detroit. The Detroit News. \url{http://detnews.com/article/20110121/METRO01/101210374}

\textsuperscript{8} MacDonald, Christine (2011). Detroiter Discuss Bing’s Consolidation Plan. The Detroit Works Project. \url{http://detroitworksproject.com/2011/01/28/detroiter-discuss-bings-consolidation-plan/}


Additionally, disagreements and conflicts should be discussed openly but with sensitivity to disadvantaged communities. Trust-building also takes time, but the longer that engagement activities and relationship-building occur, the greater the likelihood of trust being developed between consortium representatives and disadvantaged communities.

**Set Civic Engagement Goals and Equity Metrics for the Planning Process**

Work with stakeholders and the community to help define starting key concepts. Define robust civic engagement for the process and equity metrics. Developing common definitions with stakeholders from the community will help avoid oversight which might lead to conflict in the planning process. Social equity metrics must also be integrated into the goals of planning activities; equity issues are more likely to be addressed if openly identified early in the planning process. Ideally, outcome-based goals (e.g. identification of new policies or investments) as well as process-based goals (e.g. identifying types of engagement to occur with each community) should be utilized to ensure equity concerns are integrated into the planning effort. Additionally, administrative processes should be defined clearly to clarify how the public and marginalized communities will contribute as decision makers in the planning process, and to enable clear communication of the process to community members.

**Target Multifaceted Engagement Efforts with Marginalized Communities**

The engagement process should include targeted and multi-faceted engagement activities with marginalized populations. This approach utilizes a variety of techniques to engage these communities, including non-traditional approaches to public engagement, such as utilizing technology, interaction with youth in the communities, and coordination with key stakeholders who serve these communities. In addition, engagement must try to encourage “innovative and collaborative” leadership development and be built upon a process of “purposeful” public deliberation, a process that weighs multiple options and has mechanisms for managing conflict with the goal of creating innovative and creative solutions. One of the most important benefits produced by civic engagement is the ability to build community capacity and civic infrastructure in traditionally neglected marginalized communities. Communities are able to utilize civic engagement to be better organized, identify new solutions, advocate for policy changes, and other benefits. Community development is intricately connected

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to community action and engagement. Community-based decision making and leadership development is enabled by providing technical and research-based information, and facilitating interactions which allow the community to engage, deliberate, and respond.  

**Specific Action Items**

The following specific action items should be considered immediately to bolster the current engagement activities.

- Make it clear to the public that they have power and influence over the outcomes of this process, and that they are partners in driving the plan; this is essential to building a constituency to have ownership in and fight for the planning outcomes identified through this process.
- Utilize this process as an opportunity to launch a deep public education campaign to work with and educate Detroit’s residents on issues of land use and development, in order to promote good planning processes (and build public support for these processes) in the community.
- It is critical to provide resources to the community with technical assistance and consultants to help it understand the process and serve its needs. Some of the needs are likely to shift as information and various options are explored.
- Empower the external civic engagement consultant to be more central to the process; this role is essential because the external consultant is publicly viewed as less influenced by political concerns.
- Integrate smaller group-based dialogue sessions and work groups, in addition to the larger forum convenings (large forum meetings can be intimidating and disempowering too many participants). These small group sessions can deepen their understanding about the questions being posed to the public and create opportunities to speak and learn from others about how they feel concerning these issues. Create a space where attendees can understand each other’s reality and examine their own beliefs in the context of group dialogue.
- Rethink the polling questions being posed to the public. For example, allowing participants to only pick one quality of life measure establishes a “loss” frame with the public. This “loss” frame will provoke fear that essential services and quality of life assets will be lost as part of this process. Work with a communications consultant, skilled in framing productive public

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dialogue, to produce more sensitive and instructive survey and engagement inquiries.

- Include a regional presence on the task force (including Macomb and Oakland County), and fully engage faith leaders from all communities.
- The community should be supported to sponsor charettes as part of the process, with the community driving the focus for charettes. The community will also need support to understand some of the concepts and terminology related to planning and financing, which will be essential to the process. The community will need to have a consultant that can help them understand planning processes, techniques, and concepts, and assist them in building models for different possibilities for the city’s future.

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Appendix D: Civic Engagement Fellows Site Visit Questions

Site Visit Worksheet
Detroit Civic Engagement Fellows

This worksheet is for Civic Engagement Learning and Knowledge Sharing.

Actors

Who was involved in the civic engagement process? Did the process include institutions/organizations? Individuals? Both?

What parties were absolutely necessary in order to begin the process?

Who had to be engaged in the process for it to be successful?

What was the role of immigrants or foreign born citizens in the process? Were they engaged? If so, how and by who? What was the level of their involvement in the process?

Were there any organizations that had to adopt a different mindset for the process to be successful?

How were public officials involved in the process? Which public officials were involved/not involved? When did they become involved? What was the motivation for their involvement? How would you characterize their involvement? Were they held accountable? How so?

Process and Strategy

What was the issue(s) that initiated/drove the civic engagement process?

How would you describe the civic environment in which the engagement process was taking place?

Who led the engagement process? How did that leadership evolve over time?

Was there an explicit strategy (e.g., timeline, actions, funding, promotion, actors), or was it more organic?

What were the strengths of the approach? What were the drawbacks? To the Site Leader: What could have been done differently?

What compromises had to be made in order for the process to be successful? Who made those compromises?

Was there an explicit narrative/framing strategy involved in the process? If so, who initiated the framing? What were some of the key elements of the narrative/frame? How well did it work in promoting the process?
Process and Strategy, cont

Was there a role for placemaking within the process? How was placemaking used? Who initiated the process? Who facilitated the process? Was the placemaking bottom-up or top down? Were there any barriers to placemaking?

What were some key barriers that needed to be overcome during the process? How were they overcome?

What were the reactions of the participants afterwards? Were they expected or unexpected reactions to the process?

Resources

How was the civic engagement funded/resourced? Were the sources of funding active in other ways in the process? How many people were engaged?

Was there a civic engagement “infrastructure” in place that served as a template for the process or did it have to be created?

Media and Messaging

Was there media coverage of the process? How much/little? Did the media coverage hinder or help the process?

Were there any promotional or messaging activities that came out of the process or the group? How was the message delivered? Who was the intended audience? What portions seemed more/less effective? What was the nature of the message from the group?

Values/Vision

What were some key process/issues/strategies, etc. that kept people involved in the engagement process?

How was success defined within the process? Who was involved in defining success? What defined ‘good governance’ as it related to the content of the process?

Lessons for Detroit

How would this type of engagement process work in Detroit? Would it be successful in resolving the issues currently facing the city? Why? Why not?

What are some realities and concepts about Detroit that need to be understood to make civic engagement successful?
Appendix E: Civic Engagement Fellows Bios

Dessa Cosma is the Michigan Program Director for Center for Progressive Leadership, where she is fortunate to meet, engage, train and learn from many Michiganders who care about making their communities more equitable and sustainable. Dessa has been active in many social justice movements, particularly around feminism, LGBTQ rights, and disability. She attended the University of Georgia, and earned bachelor’s degrees in International Relations, Women’s Studies, and Anthropology. Currently, Dessa is getting her Masters of Social Justice from Marygrove College in Detroit, serves on the East Michigan Environmental Action Council board, and blogs for Shetroit.com.

Sandra Turner-Handy is a mother of six and a lifelong Detroiter. She received a BS in Psychology at Wayne State University, a MS in Leadership Development at Grand Canyon University and is a PhD candidate in Education at Grand Canyon University. She is the community outreach Director of the Michigan Environmental Council and serves on the Board of Directors at Detroit Central City Community Health and ClearCorp Detroit. She is the former chief of staff for Hansen Clarke as senator and representative. She is also a part of Zero Waste Detroit, the Anti Idling Task Force, the Environmental Justice Directive Task Force, and the State of the Environmental Task Force, Detroit Trans4M, Process Leader, the Detroit Asthma Alliance, the Detroit Lead Partnership, and the Solid Waste Advisory Group.

Ryan Hertz has served as the Executive Director of South Oakland Shelter since May of 2010. Previously, Ryan was the Executive Director at HOPE Hospitality and Warming Center, Inc. in Pontiac, MI. In his time with HOPE, the agency experienced a remarkable transformation and 144% annual growth in revenues. In 2009, Crain’s Detroit Business recognized Ryan for his community efforts, naming him to their “20 in their 20s” list. Ryan is also Principal of EcoZoic, L3C, a consulting firm specializing in organizational transitions, social enterprise, multi-sector collaboration, process facilitation, and new media applications to achieving social outcomes. Ryan completed his undergraduate degree from Indiana University in Bloomington, Indiana. He achieved his Masters of Social Work degree from Wayne State University, with a focus on community practice and social action. In January, Ryan’s research on human rights violations in Port-au-Prince, Haiti was presented at the Society of Social Work Research annual conference in San Francisco. Currently, Ryan, a resident of Ferndale, is actively involved in several local and global community initiatives. He serves on the Board of Directors for the Greater Detroit Network of Social Innovators, as well as for the Upland Hills Ecological Awareness Center. He is a co-founder of the Water for Huicholes initiative, a social enterprise in partnership with the indigenous community of La Laguna, Jalisco, Mexico. Ryan is also actively involved in the Oakland County Taskforce on Homelessness and Affordable Housing. Please join the Board of Directors and the staff in welcoming Ryan to the SOS family! We are excited about his energy and enthusiasm, as well as his
experiences and passion for serving the homeless population in the Southeast Michigan region.

**Shamyle Maya Nesfield** has over ten years experience developing and designing community based programs and coordinating outreach efforts in New York City and Michigan. A native New Yorker and graduate of New York University in 2001, Shamyle moved to Michigan to complete the Masters in Social Work from the University of Michigan in 2002 where she concentrated in Management and Community Social Systems. Her previous experience includes working as the Program Director for The Ann Arbor Teen Center: The Neutral Zone, and Creator and Director of two grant funded projects based out of Eastern Michigan University. Shamyle has extensive experience in grant writing, program development, and community organizing. In May 2009, she received a Juris Doctorate from Wayne State University, and will eventually pursue a Ph.D. in Social Work/Sociology.

**Dan Pitera** is a political and social activist masquerading as an architect. He is presently the Executive Director of the Detroit Collaborative Design Center at the University Of Detroit Mercy School Of Architecture. He holds the positions that the sustainability and regeneration of any neighborhood lies in the hands of its residents. With this in mind, the Design Center provides not only design services but also it empowers residents to facilitate their own process of neighborhood and building design.

Mr. Pitera was a 2004-2005 Loeb Fellow at Harvard University. He was a finalist for both the 2008-2009 Rafael Vinoly Architects Grants in Architecture and the 2006-2007 James Stirling Memorial Lectures on the City. Under his direction since 2000, the Design Center won the 2011 and 2002 Dedalo Minosse International Prize and was included in the US Pavilion of the 2008 Venice Biennale in Architecture. The Center recently was awarded the 2011 SEED Award and the 2009 Rudy Bruner Award for Urban Design Excellence for the St. Joseph Rebuild Center in New Orleans. The Design Center was the recipient of the NCARB Prize in 2002 and 2009 and was included in the international exhibit/conference ArchiLab in 2001 and 2004 in Orleans, France. Mr. Pitera was a resource member for the 40th and 43rd National Mayor’s Institute for City Design (MICD) and a facilitator for the MICD 25th anniversary in 2011. In 1998, Mr. Pitera was the Hyde Chair of Excellence at the University of Nebraska. He has lectured and taught extensively throughout the North America, South America, and Europe. He likes “fallout shelter” yellow...

**Christanne Sims** is an independent consultant and the Chief Engagement Officer of Urbanize(D), a communications and talent engagement consultancy. Urbanize(D) works with small and medium size businesses and non-profits on their marketing communications and events. The consultancy also helps organizations in their outreach to the millennial generation. She is also the project manager for the Emerging Leaders Roundtable for the BING Institute. This Roundtable is a think/do tank and advisory...
group to the Mayor and City of Detroit that works on initiatives to increase the quality of life for all residents.

Christanne’s background also includes serving as the director for the Detroit Regional Chamber’s young professional organization, Fusion. She also has experience in diversity management consulting, human resources and communications. Christianne has a Bachelor of Arts degree in Marketing and International business from Xavier University in Ohio. She is also a girl’s lacrosse coach at Grosse Pointe North High School, a member of the Belle Isle Women’s Committee and serves Mayor’s Advisory Task Force for the Detroit Works Project. Christianne is a recipient of Alternatives for Girls’ Role Model Award and Crain’s 20 in their 20s Class of 2010. She is a graduate of New Detroit’s Multicultural Leadership Series and has been enrolled in the 2009 Diversity Champion Honor Roll of the Race Relations & Diversity Task Force. She has also been named as one of WWJ’s Emerging Leaders for 2009.

**Charity Hicks** is currently the Coordinator of the Detroit Food Justice Taskforce a collaborative of 10 community based groups in Detroit formed in 2009 to work in the food system and urban agricultural movement to promote a justice centered food system. Her background includes being a Clinical Research Associate- Human Subjects with the Detroit Oral Health Disparities Research Center of the University of Michigan, an 8 year longitudinal health disparity study following over 1,200 African American families in Detroit which started in 2002 and was brought to closure in 2008. As a Clinical Research Associate she has facilitated and trained field listers, interviewers, and data collectors, conducted numerous focus groups, and led data collection operations, and community engagement on health disparities research all around Detroit. She has over 10 years in research, public policy, and community activism in Detroit. She holds an undergraduate degree in Africana Studies, Psychology and Social Science from Eastern Michigan University. Her graduate work is in Medical Anthropology. She has been a founding member of several organizations in Detroit including the Detroit Black Community Food Security Network, an herbalist training group and African Women’s Society. She worked as the Health, Healing and Environmental Justice point person for the United States Social Forum held in Detroit, June 2010, and coordinated the first aid/health response at the weeklong event. She is also the coordinator of the D-Town Annual Harvest Festival every fall from 2007 thru 2011. She has traveled in a delegation representing Detroit to the World Social Forum Dakar 2011, and other countries in Africa. She has worked as a consultant with non profits and small capital entrepreneurs in market studies, communications, research, and strategic planning.

She was an integral person on the team which wrote the City of Detroit Food Security Policy (2008) and the articles for the establishment of the Detroit Food Policy Council (2009). Charity is currently serving with several boards and committee groups in Detroit which include: Detroit Public Schools Health Council, Detroit Black Community Food
Security Network, Detroit Grocery Store Coalition Steering Committee, Detroit Food Policy Council, Peoples Water Board Detroit, and Future’s Taskforce of the Community Development Advocates of Detroit, Great Lakes Bioneers Detroit, and The Green Taskforce Water Sub-committee. She is a Master Gardener through MSU Wayne County Extension (2002) and a member of the Sierra Club and several other environmental/ecological groups. She also has been trained in the New Economy Initiative via The Land Policy Institute of MSU on Place Making and regional economic development. She also writes for the Michigan Citizen Newspaper Fresh Ideas section in the serial column “Food Is Life” since May 2010. She is an alumna of the Center for Whole Communities in Vermont and The Rockwood inaugural group of Upper Midwest Leadership. Due to her significant skills and activism she represents several groups in the People’s Movement Assembly (PMA) in Detroit and serves the grassroots community on the Detroit WORKS Mayors Advisory Taskforce since December 2010.

Danielle Atkinson is the Founding Director of Mothering Justice a nonprofit advocacy organization working on issues of financial stability for mothers. Before that she served as the Field Director for Michigan Voice helping nonprofit organizations do more effective issue advocacy and voter outreach. A native of Florida, Atkinson moved to North Carolina where she attended Pfeiffer University in Misenheimer, NC.

Atkinson graduated in 2003 with two bachelor's degrees in Political Science and Sociology. She returned to her home state to work on The Campaign to Raise Florida's Minimum Wage with ACORN as a Canvass Director and then a Regional Field Director. After the campaign's victory in fall of 2004, Atkinson moved to Michigan to work as a Community Organizer with GLADE, a faith based organizing project in Lansing, Michigan. After the successful completion of the organization’s Literacy Campaign, Danielle left to work as a consultant for such organizations as Florida ACORN, Michigan ACORN and Population Connection. As field organizer for America Votes during the 2006 midterm elections, Atkinson ran GOTV programs in both Muskegon and Saginaw, Michigan.

Heaster Wheeler is a lifelong resident of City of Detroit. He was educated in the Detroit Public Schools, Wayne County Community College, Wayne State University and Clark Atlanta. He also attended Harvard for specialty training.

He is passionate in his commitment to community building and has served as Executive Director of the NAACP - Detroit Branch and Chair of the Detroit Alliance for Fair Banking. He is also a former firefighter, Lansing political staffer and registered lobbyist.

He currently works for Wayne County as Assistant County Executive, serves as co-chair to the Detroit Works Project and is active with the Promise Neighborhoods initiative. He is married to Jennifer and they have 2 children. They attend Fellowship Chapel Church.
Jessica Salinas is the Senior Executive Project Manager for the Wayne County Executive Office. She has worked on special projects for the executive office and with the Asian, Latino, and American Arab communities. Currently, she serves on the Detroit Zoo Authority as well as the Grosse Pointe Downtown Development Authority. She is a resident of Grosse Pointe City.

Vincent M Keenan is a lifelong Detroiter, engaged citizen, and the director of Publius.org, a non-partisan organization founded in 1996 to promoting civic participation and voter education. Vince holds a degree in philosophy from the University of Michigan and is network engineer by training. He was the Senior Computer Systems Specialist for the U of M Dept. of Human Genetics at the dawn of bioinformatics and the completion of the mapping of the human genome. Vince holds the patent for creating the first website that let voters check their polling locations, registration and sample ballots online, and in 2008 authored the federal best practice guidelines for building Voter Information Websites for the U.S. Election Assistance Commission. He’s lived in London, Ann Arbor and Washington DC, but keeps finding his way back home to the Motor City. Currently, he lives in Detroit’s historic Corktown neighborhood with his fiancée Jamie Kaye Walters across the street from a house his great grandfather owned 100 years ago.

Juan Escareno has been organizing for 10 years and is from the Chicago area. Juan likes books on history, philosophy and theology. He also enjoys spending his free time with his growing family.

Andrew Zanituna is a first generation Chaldean who grew up in metro Detroit. Before working at MOSES as an Organizing Intern, Andrew went to Xavier University where he studied chemistry and mathematics. He has also worked for the Christ the King Service Corporation. He plans on applying to medical school and wishes to become more involved with issues facing health care in the Detroit area.
Appendix F: Facilitator Notes from Civic Engagement Fellows Meetings (February 10, 2012 and May 10-11, 2012)

Civic Engagement Fellows
Session 1 Notes
November 14, 2011
Prepared by Jan Urban-Lurain, Session Facilitator

What is civic engagement?
Fellows gave these responses to the question: “What does civic engagement mean to you?”

Meaningful Communication: Conversation, dialogue, stories

  Relational
  Trying to establish meaningful dialogue among people
  1-on-1 conversations (with) depth
  Hear peoples’ stories
  Not “done to” but grows from within

Voice/Empowerment/Participation in Decision-making

  Engaging more voices
  Community organizing
  Have a voice and use it
  People taking responsibility for the process
  If done well, who rises up as a leader should be a process
  If done well, conversation that changes policy
  Coming together on a shared agenda
  Building relationships that empower targeted constituencies
  Building relationships between different groups (with a level of care and trust)
  Making sure regular people/residents are involved in decisions that impact them/their lives
  People directly affected by decisions should have input
  People have a right to have a voice in the future of their neighborhood

Unclear Meaning

  Vague
  Over-used
  Feels like buzz words
  Different from civic participation, which is long-term

New Language/Other Meaning
Prefer civic leadership or community-driven dialogue
“Unearthing invisible capital for the common wealth”
Celebrate people as an asset and engage them in discussions on issues that are in the social and public interest
Being authentically engaged in building communities/communication
Accountability

Our Interest in this Project
Fellows gave the following responses to the question: “What interests me in this project is ...”

Being in relationship with each other; “it takes heart to do the hard work”
Bringing a level of passion to do “it” right
Amplifying voices
  o Want to develop/implement a process that “gives voice” to people in Detroit
  o Hear what “real people” want
Promoting resilience
Addressing the “what” i.e. authentic voice to do...? and coming up with an authentic model
  o Figuring out how we actually “go deeper” and use different methods of organizing to go further
  o Cutting through “faux” engagement
Looking for how to ...
  o Deal with/having examples that demonstrate the value of engagement to the formal decision makers
  o Connect peoples’ interests with the voting process
  o Leverage human and community work to address the generations of collective hatred; move to and restore agency/voice/determinism
  o Define this group; this earth

Engagement Challenges and Successes in SE MI
The following ideas and examples emerged from small group discussions addressing: “What are some civic engagement challenges that you see here in SE Michigan?” “What are some examples of successful engagement work?”
Challenges include...

Being fractured and fragmented
  o Hard to build movement
  o Multiple siloed, fractured conversations
Resistance (fear, ignorance, super-individualism) to change
Civic engagement is something “done to” (not coming from within)
Misdirected investments

Successes include...
“48217” environmental justice initiative. Getting residents to decision-making tables
Community benefits agreement (CBA) process. At least 3 to 4 in process right now. Includes negotiation for tangible benefits and agreement written by community members
Grace Boggs Center. Are able to shift thinking outside the predominant paradigm
Community-based participatory research. Used in four census tracks in Detroit; “reach out and reach in”
Councils by districts.

Other Considerations
Further ideas about the project that emerged during the discussions include:

Consider broadening participation in this group e.g. include economic developers
Work with the tension of allowing enough time to go in-depth into conversation while respecting meeting time limitations and addressing the project agenda/intended outcomes
Name and understanding the underlying assumptions (as well as models and methods) that inform each Fellows’ approach to civic engagement
  o  Look at fact-based and experience-driven models

Session Evaluation Feedback. N=9

1. Satisfaction with today’s session: 10 (2); 9 (3); 8 (3); 7 (1)

What I thought this was is different than it really is. The comprehensive approach is important to the community and myself. Building a process for Detroit is at the heart of building better communication and government.
Very powerful ideas shared that will have a lasting impact on me
Very encouraged; looking forward to seeing how the next meeting flows
Too early on Monday
Great group of people; pros
Meaningful conversation about perspectives
Great facilitation
A good beginning; maybe needs slightly more diversity (in terms of sectors, organizations, etc.) at the table
Very good conversation; excellent group of people
Wonder how we can have some of these deep/intentional conversations that we got started today without running out of time
Very well facilitated
Too much time for the introductory exercises but they were also valuable in the long run
Still need a bit more direction re: the model we are trying to do and how our actions and activities are leading us there
Good meeting and conversations
Enjoyed the conversation but think that some very common conclusions/assumptions went unchallenged. I hope that we will get there in the future- that is what I am interested in

2. **Most Value from Today’s Meeting**

Dialogue on challenges in SE MI and examples of success; also describing the meaning of “civic engagement”
The transformative ideas as well as new processes for having conversations
Discussion
Hearing the perspectives of others and how many of our views are closely aligned
Hearing different perspectives; thoughts on civic engagement; evolving the questions
I really like the idea of what we trying to do. My mind is going crazy (in the good way) with ideas and questions. We have these kind of conversations a lot and I’m excited to see them focused on an outcome that is meaningful and be implemented
Open dialogue and people in the room
Having flexible structure that can be adapted to changing needs
Dialogue with different groups
Great to see everyone

3. **New Information or Considerations (coming out of today’s meeting)**

How do we reflect our communities’ interest in process building? How do we skillfully hold tensions in our work with clarity and honesty?
Merit in the marketplace of ideas
Healing self-hatred with engagement
Interested in studying more on what other areas are doing to make this work work
Keeping who we want to engage in mind and understanding how to talk to communities
A lot to think about; need to keep thinking about how I feel about having “capitalists” in the conversation ... to stretch myself
Civic engagement can be equated to the “voice of the citizen” to understand their needs, wants, desires
What is civic engagement and how to work with this group to make a common definition and plan to implement
Civic Engagement Fellows
Session 2 Notes
December 7, 2011
Prepared by Jan Urban-Lurain, Session Facilitator

Working Towards a Shared Model of Civic Engagement

The Fellows engaged in an open discussion informed by the set of guiding questions listed below (with focus on the questions identified in bold type):

Question Set A:

1. What do you hope to accomplish by creating a new model for civic engagement?

2. What does civic engagement mean to you?

3. What is special about your neighborhood?

4. What can you do tomorrow to make Detroit better?

5. How would you engage and mobilize the people in your neighborhood?

Question Set B:

1. Is it possible to create a template for a general civic engagement model that is not for a specific purpose? (i.e., Can a civic engagement process be developed for a broader, general purpose and not be tied to a specific cause to engage around?)

2. In creating a new civic engagement model, what types of goals and values do you want to uphold?

3. How will people be included/have a voice in the new model for civic engagement?

4. How will decisions be made as we develop a new model for civic engagement? (e.g., How will we determine what will inform the model? How will the model address the decisions that need to be made regarding whatever the issue is people are engaging around?)

5. Who else needs to be involved in this process?
Discussion Summary

The following responses and ideas emerged from the Fellows’ discussion:

1. **There are a number of questions about the scope, design, and purpose of the model.** Questions from the Fellows include:
   - How will our engagement model create influence on foundations/funding?
   - How will this model have influence in Detroit?
   - How does the model/campaign create critical mass? Bring everyone together?
   - How does the model engage the region (Wayne, Oakland, and Macomb) in addressing racial equity?
   - What result(s) are driving/informing the model?

2. **Civic Engagement (CE) doesn’t currently provide an effective voice.** Feedback from constituents and Fellows own experiences indicate the people feel ignored, left out, abandoned and really want to be authentically part of the process. CE does not work; “it’s a fake process”

3. **Ideas about Effective Engagement.** Based on discussion so far, possible attributes of effective CE include:
   - Changes in the cultural discourse. Eliminates negative/trash talking and self-hatred; brings qualities of resiliency and beauty into the dialogue
   - “Communication, communication, communication”
   - Designing a process that builds from people’s self-interest to improve our community
     - Co-constructs a different “we” space
       - Unearths common ground; answers the question “what factors lead people to see their own interests in the interests of the group of the whole?”
       - Incorporates “self-determination” and affirmation of people on blocks, in neighborhoods and their contribution to public space
       - Builds critical mass
     - Has accountability for results
       - Addresses gaps created by failures in public leadership and includes incentives for officials to be accountable to the public
       - Addresses the question “What are the ends/outcomes we are trying to accomplish?”
       - Achieves short term wins
     - Must “be able to hold tension”
4. **Values and Goals Preferences.** Fellows identified the following preferences in response to the question, “in creating a new civic engagement model, what types of goals and values do you want to uphold?”

- All people are assets to one another (2)
- Self-determination (2)
- Integrity, honesty, and respect of all that may utilize the model and all that may be impacted by the model process
- 360 degree awareness
- Mutually benefit/accountability
- Holds the public, government, and funders accountable to the best interest of the community
- Social return on investment (ROI)
- Politicizing people to be engaged
- Compassion
- Diplomacy
- Organic
- Optimism
- Working across traditional barriers
- Incorporates racial analysis
- Multi-faceted i.e. block, neighborhood, regional relationship building
- Environmental strengths, sustainability, and earth connection
- Goal – To create a Citizen-Led Model. How do the people impact
government-led CE model; how do we influence org-led CE model; how do we create a citizen-led CE model; how do we get the philanthropic community to endorse/support implementation of a citizen-led engagement model?

**Next Steps**

Next steps to be incorporated into the Fellows activities include: 1) creating a work group to organize the May symposium; 2) getting more feedback from our constituency groups; 3) organizing our process for feedback from foundations; doing research on/learning more about previous Detroit models i.e. Citizens District Councils.

**Session Evaluation Feedback. N=10**
Satisfaction with today’s session: 9 (2); 8 (4); 7 (2); 5(1); 4(1)

Much dialogue that was useful in describing community and some of their feelings and ideas (from those that spoke w/community)
Turnout was not as it should be
Facilitation was good. Content was good. This is a tough conversation because there are so many moving parts. It’s hard to evaluate program because we are still defining goals but I think the process is productive and important.
Lively and inspiring conversation but I am still a little bit confused about the group’s agenda and purpose
New attendees added a good flavor to the mix
Session was very useful in many ways and many good points raised; however, still seemed that we were finding what direction to move in
Liked the discussion but want to discuss the model and that is being built. Want to start discussing plans for the model – what elements go into the model?
Conversation needs to be elevated to frame what is civic engagement and different methodologies before we can unpack it. Otherwise it will be framed on DWP and other Detroit-centric models
A lot of discussion; needs more clarity; learning to hold tension in the group
Concerned about focusing too much on how people feel about being disengaged. Understanding the audience is important but selling self-worth or actualization may be beyond what is necessary to engage; it could also be for fear of being left out.

Most Value from Today’s Meeting

Realizing the different stages of involving residents
Values involved in CE
Respectful dialogue about CE models and Detroit’s specific situation. These are fascinating topics and these conversations are helping me further understand how I feel about this – even if I thought I knew! It’s important for me to keep hearing peoples’ experience and thoughts on these complex issues.
People at the table are all inspiring, effective, and potentially allies in future endeavors
The values discussion
Discussion about values was an extremely eye-opening look into the different views on CE
Hearing the different angles and views from group members
Opportunity to unpack this topic and move the conversation forward
Hearing the diverse perspectives. Moving closer to shaping of a model. Start to think about how to “move” people

Diving more deeply into the big questions of a scalable system

**New Information or Considerations (coming out of today’s meeting)**

That people in Detroit are seen in such a negative light

Pushing the envelope on goals of the model allowed us to go deeper

The various opinions around the table re: engaging *more* people vs. engaging those that are involved in getting results. This challenges my values because I am invested in process and doing things right but also want results

This meeting reaffirmed my feelings that the issue of race is critically important to our region’s future and unfortunately overlooked in public dialogue

Importance of getting our internal house organized before trying to involve others

Idea of self-determination on a large scale and how to get there

I’m going to look back in my notes and have other non-community based examples of organizational/feedback models

There is a lot of baggage and we have to off load in order to move this conversation forward

The fact that we need a multi-faceted approach, both bottom up and top down

Newly-revised DWP staffers did not show

I am further away from a non-Detroit specific model (scalability seems trickier) but still willing to try in January

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I am further away from a non-Detroit specific model (scalability seems trickier) but still willing to try in January
Site Visit Debrief: Community Engagement Leadership Institute

Background
LA Site Visit Participants: Baraka; Sandra; Charity; Ponsella. Jessica Pellegrino from the Wayne County Executive Office also attended.
This site visit provided the opportunity to: 1) learn about/from the Los Angeles Empowerment Congress model; 2) engage with other areas active in community engagement (Seattle; Honolulu; Brooklyn Place, Minnesota; Dona Anja County, New Mexico; Brooklyn, New York; and Eau Claire, Wisconsin); and 3) apply tools and knowledge derived from the LA and others to develop strategies applicable to engagement in Detroit/SE Michigan.

Observations from the Participants

Best Practices from Other Areas (For Consideration in Defining Our Model)
- Seattle. Has city department of racial and social justice that reports to the deputy mayor. Works in collaboration with community and neighborhood partners; city employees must receive training and engage with neighborhoods.
- Sections of Chicago and NYC/Brooklyn. Using participatory budget processes.
- LA. Has large field staff that serve as field organizers; elected official (Mark Ridley-Thomas) is advocate for neighborhood participation in government decision-making.

Attributes of Effective Engagement Models. Participants came away from the Institute with the following observations about engagement approaches that “work”:
- They are built on a platform of “reciprocal accountability”. Residents have someone within the government structure/with decision-making authority to listen to them i.e. ask citizens “what are you going to do about it?” and then turn laments and complaints into promoted and supported action.
- Other attributes include: 1) use processes that are effective at “holding tension”; balance tension by turning the loudest voice into leadership; 2)
uses organizing principles to take action and work from multiple
directions simultaneously i.e. bottom up and inside out as well as top
down and outside; and 3) simultaneously tap into and leverage both
formal (e.g. government agencies) and informal networks (grassroots-
organized groups)

Other Observations about the LA Model/Empowerment Congress
- The Congress is organized with a leadership team and multiple i.e. 9 policy committees that meet monthly.
- This model benefits from having a long-term elected champion (Mark Thomas-Ridley) i.e. the Congress has a 20 year history.
  One related issue: having a long-standing charismatic champion may lead some people to putting the elected official “on a pedestal” and treating him/her like a hero (rather than like a catalyst for self-empowerment)
- Having “staff on the ground” keeps the elected officials with a “finger on the pulse of the community”.

Questions to Research/Consider
- How to engage a distrustful residency? Go door-to-door (grassroots door knocking) and ask residents to talk about how disengagement has happened
- How does the Empowerment Congress approach translate (or not) in Detroit’s/SE MI political environment?
- How does Detroit’s move to a district-based council impact/create opportunity for a model like the Empowerment Congress?
Civic Engagement Fellows  
Session 4 Notes  
February 10, 2012  
Prepared by Jan Urban-Lurain, Session Facilitator

**Further Work on Creating the CE Model**

**Revisiting/Revising the CE Model Template**

Kip Holley from Kirwan Institute lead the group in debriefing how to revise/improve the model template used in LA for use during the Mississippi site visit in April. Results of the feedback will be incorporated into the template.

**Further Work on Creating Our CE Model**

**Further Observations/Learning from LA.** The following observations were made by Fellows about civic leadership and governance:

- Civic engagement in LA has been leveraged by both public and philanthropic funds
- The LA leaders’ model is one of a “servant leader.” (You) need people who are willing to be held accountable to drive change.
- “Quality of life” is the underlying need/strategy that drives the public officials’ engagement. Quality of life includes “having the civic space—a contract that works” to both handle issues and facilitate place-making

**Implications for and Questions about the Fellows Model.** The following questions were raised during the discussion:

- What will it take to execute the model we develop?
- Who else do we need to connect with?
- How do we engage with the public officials here in Detroit/SE MI?
- What is the capacity for collaboration among groups involved in civic engagement work?
- Who steps forward and becomes the “face” of the model?

**Engaging with Public Officials.** The group reiterated its commitment to convening a symposium with/for public officials.

- **Engaging with Public Officials Symposium**
  - Date: May 10th or May 11th
  - Purpose: 1) Educating public officials about successful ways to engage with public..."how can you better engage your community?"; 2) shifting the dialogue and bringing public officials together around the topic of civic engagement and “reciprocal accountability”
Possible meeting arrangements:
- Bring in an external keynote speaker and have officials meet with external experts (e.g. John Powell)
- Have officials meet with the Fellows
- Have officials-only session

Work Group: Ponsella and Christiane

Testing Community Capacity for Collaboration. The group discussed the need to have other organizations in Detroit/SE Michigan know about the CE Fellows project and be part of the model conversation. The group also deliberated on how to best engage in and leverage the opportunities/challenges emerging from the current district-development process going on in Detroit. Outcomes that emerged from this conversation include:

- Greater group consensus on “what matters” – relationships before task(s); having/giving voice; having a sense of place and community
- “Grass tops” Community Conversation
  - Date: May 23rd
  - Purpose: 1) To unearth the human capital of the broader civic engagement community; 2) to determine possibilities for moving forward together
  - Possible agenda topics:
    - Stories from the group about “winning” and “not winning”
    - Dialogue on why “it” (engagement) works
    - Exploration of how the “grasstops” can and could work together
    - Sharing and testing
      - Learning from the LA Empowerment Congress: How to leverage “low points” to empower civic engagement
      - Thinking from CE Fellows meetings on “what matters”/a model
      - Exploring opportunities for developing district Community Advisory Councils as vehicles for engagement
    - “Call the question” of convening a continuing civic engagement table

Work Group: TBD
Session Evaluation Feedback. N=7

Satisfaction with today’s session: 10(2); 9 (3); 8 (1); 7 (1)

I thought we really moved far today
The meeting helped expand my view of what civic engagement is and can be
Good discussion; excellent unpacking
Creation of the group vision and next steps went well. I can see what the group is working to do
Meeting was interesting and informative. Would like to nail down specifics like the mission, what the goals are, what civic engagement means, etc.
Good space for important conversation to be had
Wish there was a little more direction laid out so we know where we are going
Excellent facilitation in terms of capturing our ideas and working them together in a succinct way
Glad to see some progress and able to see where we are going

Most Value from Today’s Meeting

To get key messaging and goals laid out on what needs to be accomplished
Determining our direction and discussing what’s important to include in the upcoming pieces
Learning more clearly about what it is the group wants to do
Learning what values are important to the group
Seeing vision starting to develop
Conversation about Detroit’s districts
Concrete plans for “grasstops” discussion and listing whom to contact
Being able to fully reflect on the LA visit and the questions used to look at the site visit
The psycho-reactive value of place
The value of meandering
Getting the agenda for the “grasstops” convening; it’s going to be deep and productive

New Information or Considerations (coming out of today’s meeting)

What is the process flow and key messaging for each piece
Want to think more about feasibilities of various models and how they could work here
Similarities I see in civic engagement efforts across the country
First meeting so all information was new; concept of a “civic engagement model”
All of the questions that came up out of the set of questions for the site visits
How we do both/and work
Still seeking common ground on definition of “civic engagement” and “grass tops”
Today’s meeting has led me to redouble my efforts to empower citizens and create an equitable civic engagement structure.
Further Work on Creating the CE Model

Observations/Learning from Mississippi visit
- Similarities between Detroit and Gulfport area
  - Powerful private land owners/developers
  - Powerful casinos
  - Vacant land
  - Historically a community of color
  - Demoralized population
  - Need for income/jobs
- Observations about STEP (coalition)
  - Multijurisdictional
  - Has paid staff
  - Received Federal funding to initiate
  - Organizing force is quality of life issues post-Katrina
- Observations about Regional Planning Commission (local government agency)
  - Issues of scale; need to ramp up their role and capacity
  - Are engaged with elementary schools as well as other institutions
- Other Observations
  - Katrina (storm) has been a catalyst for engagement of previously disinvested voices
  - Not clear what is the catalyst for engagement in Detroit; “we react (rather than act) too much” here in Detroit
  - There is an absence of a public official champion in the Gulfport region (unlike in LA and their Empowerment Congress)
  - Additional notes from taken during the end of trip debrief are attached

Feedback from Conversation with Jon Powell
- The conversation with Professor Powell addressed the question of leverage points in the emerging “terrain of civic engagement”. This terrain was described as consisting of four domains:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Corporate</th>
<th>Private</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Non-Private Non-Public</td>
<td>Public</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
The power relationships and dynamics among these domains are in flux. There is the threat of collapse of the public space concurrent with expansion of the rights and a redefinition of the responsibilities of the corporate space.

Dr. Powell describes this as a “wet cement” moment i.e. encouraged the Fellows to analyze the new power players /space and consider how these trends might impact a model for civic engagement.

Session Evaluation Feedback  N=7

**Satisfaction with today’s session: 9(3); 8+ (1); 8 (1);7(1); 6 (1)**

Unable to adequately get to discussion of civic engagement model (3)
  i. Could have got further with the model but the conversation was fruitful
  ii. Didn’t get to next step deliverables

Quality of conversation (3)
  i. Good dialogue
  ii. Interesting discussion
  iii. good conversation

Did not go to Gulf Coast; nice to hear unpacking and lessons learned
Report out wasn’t as valuable as LA; maybe if questions were asked that directed the conversation to what could be used in Detroit would have made it more valuable

**Most Value from Today’s Meeting**

Jon powell’s ideas (3) and unpacking
Knowledge/feedback from site visits (3)
How to rethink who we are engaging (4)
  i. Clarification on the four domains
  ii. Discussion about the “terrain” of civic engagement
  iii. Moving to the question of what civic engagement looks like with this new terrain of eroded public and growth of the corporate
dialogue on civic engagement as it will be framed in the deliverable

**New Information or Considerations (coming out of today’s meeting)**

The dynamic involving the corporate sphere and its erosion of the private and public space
To think about engaging more than the political realm – philanthropic, financial, etc.
The terrain of civic engagement
The emerging four spheres
Emerging and new power/leverage points
(Be) ready to look back at notes and frameworks discussed to prepare for the 6/8 (session)

(that) Rupert Murdoch is a master of civic engagement
Jon Powell’s comments at the end were very valuable; helped to clarify and add extra information to our work
Special Thanks to

The Empowerment Congress

STEPS Coalition

Mississippi Center of Justice

Gulf Regional Planning Commission

Detroit Works

Ashley Shelton, One Voice Louisiana