

Civic Participation and Smarter Growth:

Improving How Communities and Places Grow and Change

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Abstract

Civic participation is vital to democracy. It takes many forms: individual voluntarism, involvement with neighborhood and other nonprofit organizations, and participation in elections and governmental processes. Everywhere in the country, local decisions are currently being made about land use, transportation, zoning, and public investment. These decisions—about what, where, and how to grow—are opportunities to increase civic participation and decrease social isolation, for the public at large and especially for populations traditionally excluded from decision-making.

The quality of civic life and public participation is closely linked to growth and development in two ways: *process* and *results*. Land use decisions involve public resources and formally require public participation. Consequently, organized, engaged residents can have an enormous influence on political outcomes. When residents are actively involved, the decisions themselves are more likely to reflect and serve the needs of the community. And the built environment that results from public decisions made to benefit the community as a whole will decrease isolation and increase the vitality of civic life.



** The Fundations' Network works to inspire, strengthen, and expand philanthropic leadership and fundations' abilities to support organizations working to improve communities through better development decisions and growth policies. For more information, visit www.fundersnetwork.org.*

The Opportunity: Public Concern about Local Land Use and Transportation Decisions

Residents across North America are deeply interested in the improvement and well-being of their communities. Opinion research, and the work of hundreds of citizen groups of all kinds, reveals that citizens believe better planning for growth requires that public officials consider all the options and make decisions based on a big picture understanding of the broad regional impacts and the long-term consequences of local decisions. How to improve the community is a unifying issue that mobilizes residents and communities. Further, Americans want to limit their commute times and support improved public transportation and better patterns of housing development as the solution to longer commutes.

Throughout the United States, voters of both parties in urban, suburban, and rural communities are voting for transit and rail lines, sensible growth limits, farmland protection, and new planning measures.¹ In 2004, voters approved 79 percent of the 53 public transit ballot measures, with a total price tag close to \$40 billion. In 2005, Americans approved 79 percent of all ballot measures to conserve land, generating over \$1.7 billion in new conservation funding. Voters in 22 states approved 106 of 134 ballot measures.²

Public concern about land use and transportation issues is evident beyond polls and ballot initiatives. Neighborhood, town, regional, state, and multi-state initiatives are underway through which people are voicing their hopes for the future of their communities. More than 800 organizations and coalitions are working to

change how decisions are made about allocating federal transportation dollars, according to the Surface Transportation Policy Project (STPP). Smart Growth America is contacted by residents of a different community every week that want to know how to influence development decisions.³ And a growing number of these citizen groups are from outside urban core areas. Suburban residents, for example, are taking action in regions where traffic congestion has become unmanageable.⁴

Better Land Use and Transportation Planning Through Civic Engagement

Many residents first become active in land use issues to fight a project they fear will adversely impact their neighborhood. People are deeply protective of the places they live. Residents get angry when the institutional mechanisms used for making such decisions are outmoded or broken and preclude meaningful citizen participation. Even unfounded fears are reinforced when residents feel they are not given a chance to participate until it is too late to change outcomes. The traditional public hearing process exacerbates the fears of many local residents, encouraging them to band together in opposition. Lack of information, superficial involvement in decisions, and conflicting interests fuel such opposition and can create political gridlock and lead to poor decision-making. In the San Francisco Bay Area community of Pittsburg, plans for 3,000 new homes on parking lots and vacant land next to the existing Bay Area Rapid Transit (BART) station were foiled when community residents reacted to their lack of input in the plan.⁵

Inviting early community participation allows residents to voice their fears and legitimate concerns, gather new information, imagine a future for their community, and work through differences. Meaningful participation can overcome distrust and build consensus.

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Developers and citizen advocacy groups have been able to gain acceptance of projects by creating meaningful public participation opportunities. In Atlanta, residents of the Home Park and Loring Heights neighborhoods were alarmed about a proposal to redevelop a nearby brownfield site into the 10,000-person Atlantic Station community.⁶ The Georgia Conservancy, a supporter of the project, hosted a 13-week planning workshop for Home Park residents to clarify their goals for the neighborhood and its connection to Atlantic Station. Architect Andrés Duany conducted a weekend charrette involving a broad spectrum of the public.⁷ The developer's Design Control Committee gave neighborhood representatives the power to vote on the design of a new bridge that would connect their neighborhood to Atlantic Station. Home Park residents were able to have their concerns addressed. When the Atlantic Station planning was completed, Home Park residents stayed involved by working on a master plan to guide neighborhood development.⁸

Other areas are creating initiatives to promote participatory decision-making. For example, the Great Communities Initiative in the San Francisco Bay Area is encouraging local governments to support significant early public participation while helping community groups increase their capacity to engage in the planning process. The Initiative's partners—the Transportation and Land Use Coalition (TALC), Urban Habitat, Non-Profit Housing Association of Northern California, and Greenbelt Alliance—see a projected \$12 billion in new mass transit investments that could be used in the Bay Area to create home and transportation opportunities for low- and middle-income families, strengthen existing neighborhoods, and conserve natural areas. One of their primary strategies is to create a development planning process that leads to constructive participation rather than opposition from residents.

Although most residents first become involved in opposition to a project, a good

number stay involved to find solutions that benefit the community. “Most of the local groups working on regional and state policy got their start trying to stop a project that seemed like a bad idea to them,” according to David Goldberg at Smart Growth America. “They realize that just saying no is not enough. They want to offer an alternative to accommodate growth. Through their engagement, they end up learning even more and coming to a sophisticated understanding of the options.”

Civic Engagement and Regionalism

Finding options for communities to grow in a sustainable way requires residents to look at the many factors that affect their community, think beyond their immediate neighborhoods and municipalities, and work with many partners to develop a broader approach. Although proposals in each locality are usually addressed separately, rapid development at the outer edges of a metropolitan region often drives decline and disinvestment in urban neighborhoods and older suburbs. Effective policy solutions usually require a multi-jurisdictional, regional perspective. This represents another frontier and opportunity for civic engagement.

Community leaders are recognizing that place is defined by more than artificial jurisdictional lines. Decisions made in one area can have serious consequences in a neighboring or nearby community. The difficulty is that government or political structures often do not operate at a regional scale or promote regional problem-solving. Rather than working for cooperative solutions, localities end-up competing against one another, creating even greater problems regionwide.

Local governments may be slow to recognize that competition in today's markets is increasingly between regions

rather than just local jurisdictions. They often face the dilemma of being unwilling to stop competing until the other does, for fear of losing out in the short-run. Yet, the areas that coordinate together as a region will meet with more success than those with jurisdictions that continue to compete.

There are examples of structured regional governments and consolidated governments between counties and municipalities in the United States. But perhaps the most common and most promising prospect lies in informal cooperation between communities and governments. The informal approach helps alleviate concerns of loss of autonomy and can better deal with expanding geographic areas of concern in the future by simply adding those affected jurisdictions—a task much more difficult in an organized, formal, institutional setting.

Workable regional solutions challenge residents to recognize that the problems they face cannot be fixed by any single political jurisdiction. Looking at the big picture is a critical part of making decisions about growth. This necessarily means coming to terms with neighbors, not just next door, but perhaps in the next county as well.

Capturing the benefits of regional cooperation, while keeping the advantages of localism, is the focus of regional collaborative initiatives across North America. There is no single formula. Civic participation can be initiated by

any member or group in an area: government, businesses, churches, foundations, nonprofits, universities, or individual residents. Wherever it begins, successful regional civic problem-solving depends on cross-sector and community networks, broad public participation, and high-quality information.

Efforts to promote better growth and development decisions have been yielding lessons for civic engagement at the regional level for almost two decades. Today,

experienced leaders involved with collaborative regional solutions are beginning to tackle the even more complex problems of super-regions (mega regions)—multiple states that share common problems. The New England Futures project is inspiring New Englanders to chart their own future. More than 400 interviews were conducted to identify the issues critical to New Englanders. In 2005-2006, articles on six identified strategic issues were published in major regional newspapers. Town meetings are being used to stimulate public participation and support for action.

Collaborative regional initiatives within and among many states are engaging a broad range of the public in addressing economic, environmental, and social issues at the regional level. These initiatives build regional social, intellectual, and political capital. They help to reframe contentious issues so they can be addressed constructively, and draw in new voices and new perspectives to help build regional identity and create innovative solutions. An energized and well-informed public has turned leaders' attention to regional sustainability.

Civic leaders are learning from each other at a rapid pace. Yet there still is a great deal to learn, especially about how to effectively include all the interests of a region.

Expanding Participation: Building Broad-Based Coalitions

A great challenge in achieving meaningful regional plans is ensuring that everyone can participate, including those traditionally underrepresented. Low-income communities and people of color have long seen unfair public decisions about land use reduce their social and economic opportunity, accelerate the concentration of poverty, and move jobs farther away from homes that are affordable. Strategies are emerging to help neighborhood leaders

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connect these concerns with regional trends and engage in regional dialogues. For example, the National Neighborhood Coalition program on “Neighborhoods, Regions, and Smart Growth,” promotes community-based and faith-based organizations as advocates for regional planning and neighborhood redevelopment.

Churches and other faith-based organizations can play a key role in regional planning. In St. Louis, a coalition of 80 churches from across the region created Metropolitan Congregations United. Started by individual church leaders, the group now represents over 30,000 people. It holds public meetings and fosters one-on-one relationships with key regional business and civic leaders on regional issues such as transportation, taxes, and racial and economic disparity.

In New Mexico, Albuquerque Interfaith played a central role in the city’s passage of the Planned Growth Strategy for land use and growth through 2025. The coalition of 140 organizations, businesses, and individuals arranged presentations and a speakers bureau; facilitated direct mail, door knocking, letters to the editor, and newsletter articles; and provided testimony. The diverse coalition was effective with elected officials, especially those from largely Hispanic, poor, and working class neighborhoods.⁹

The Office of Urban Affairs of the Archdiocese of Hartford helped to organize the diverse CenterEdge Coalition of civic leaders and residents. Its *Connecticut Metropatterns* report in March 2003 analyzed the impact of development patterns on income, race, and fiscal inequity and helped people from different racial, ethnic, social, and economic backgrounds to think through how fair decisions about growth and development can increase social and economic opportunity. In town meetings supported by the Hartford Foundation for Public Giving and at public education events in each of the 169 towns in Connecticut,

residents from various socioeconomic backgrounds shared their experience, common vision, and goals.¹⁰

Other kinds of community institutions also are vital to engaging residents in dialogue about growth policies and practices. In particular, media of all kinds—especially news media—can work with citizen groups to share information and engage the community. In some cases, major local newspapers see covering growth and development and regional cooperation as a way to fulfill their own commitment to civic participation.¹¹

Universities, using their resources and expertise to research regional conditions, can actively encourage citizen participation in public policy debate and formulation. The Asset-Based Community Development Institute at Northwestern University has published a manual, *Building Communities from the Inside-Out*, which helps communities inventory, “the many individual, associational and institutional assets that all communities—even the poorest—possess, and find new ways to mobilize them.”¹²

Tools for Civic Engagement

Leaders in community planning have invented and adopted innovative computer and technology applications that allow vast numbers of people to access and use information about their community, create and study development options and alternatives, and visualize the impacts of potential decisions.¹³ The new technologies allow *more* residents to participate in community design processes, including electronic town meetings, surveys, groupware, and key pad polling.¹⁴ These tools empower residents with better information about choices and better opportunities to influence outcomes. PlaceMatters, an independent affiliate of the Orton Family Foundation, tracks these tools on its website (www.placematters.com).



In addition, the Alliance for Regional Stewardship collects and shares stories of success. The Alliance, created in 2000, is a national network of leaders from metropolitan areas that fosters collaborative, multi-sector regional stewardship as a means for advancing economic, social, and environmental progress, while maintaining a sense of place. Elected officials, regional business leaders, and nonprofit organizations with regional missions use the Alliance to learn about best practices and lessons.

An example of utilizing a variety of tools in a local setting is the Citizen's Transportation and Air Quality Commission (CTAQC). In order to help assess the rapidly growing number of available tools, CTAQC was formed in

1991 by the Center for Neighborhood Technology to ensure that the 1990 federal transportation law would be implemented in the Chicago metropolitan area. The Commission formulated unique public involvement tools such as visioning wheels (three-dimensional paper towers showing the impact of transportation decisions) and Transopoly (a game for building consensus among disparate interests about infrastructure investments within a designated budget). The tools were used in workshops where citizens imagined their community's future and learned how to participate in the planning

process. The project has engaged more than 190 Chicago-area organizations and hundreds of citizens in creating alternative regional transportation plans for the Chicago metropolitan area. In coalition with public officials, Chicago Metropolis 2020, and the Metropolitan Planning Council, CTAQC successfully advocated for the creation of a streamlined regional planning entity. The new Regional

Planning Board, formed in October 2005, will prepare the first integrated land use and transportation plan and budget for the Chicago area.

New tools have also been developed to help communities look at a range of factors as measurable indicators. By quantifying aspects of a community's well-being, these indicators promote a well-informed citizenry and accountability from leaders. The process of developing these indicators is an opportunity to identify and reflect a shared vision and community values. Periodic community conversations about indicators help to bring issues to the forefront and tell a society if it is making progress toward a stated goal.¹⁵ As more regions use indicators to measure their progress, this can encourage the sharing of information between communities.¹⁶

There are many organizations that provide useful information regarding community indicators. Redefining Progress has a Community Indicators Project that facilitates the development of community indicators, links existing and emerging projects, provides a directory database, and gives basic information on over 200 community indicator projects around the United States. The Urban Institute has developed the National Neighborhood Indicators Project (NNIP). This project involves an information system that tracks and compiles neighborhood conditions within cities and communities. The Project is unique in that its theme focuses on democratizing information by delivering practical data to city and community leaders rather than simply offering research reports and commentary. In 1995, the Urban Institute surveyed 33 major cities, most of which planned on maintaining these indicators. In the cities that continued, the primary responsibility for developing and continuing to monitor the neighborhood indicator systems usually fell on non-governmental entities (most of which were either area universities or nonprofit civic organizations).¹⁷

Citizens, through the Internet and other programs, are gaining increased access to the large amount of information compiled by government agencies. For example, the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development's Community 2020 software utilizes geographic information systems (GIS) and allows communities to visually analyze, understand, and respond to community needs and opportunities.

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The ability to make better development decisions, reshape policy, and create sustained public involvement relies on this kind of information. Through it, stakeholders can become more informed and more involved. It is important to ensure that those who control the information must make it easily accessible to the public. Comprehensive and accessible information for all stakeholders is vital to reasoned and balanced discussions and decision-making.

The use of these tools can make, "planning and related land use issues at the local level one of the greatest opportunities for improving participatory democracy," according to Ken Snyder, director of PlaceMatters.²²



Where It's Working

Following are three stories of regional visioning processes that actively engaged citizen input and participation to help shape the future of the community.

Envision Utah

Envision Utah has demonstrated as well as any regional visioning project the benefits of using planning support tools and participatory decision-making techniques. Since 1995, Envision Utah has engaged thousands of citizens in the development of a broadly supported Quality Growth Strategy to protect Utah's environment and economic strength, improve region-wide transportation systems, and provide housing options for all residents. Envision Utah's goal throughout the process has been to involve key decision-makers and the community to build grassroots support. Through the thorough involvement of the public, local and state elected officials, the business, civic, and religious communities, and other key stakeholders, Envision Utah has gathered information about what Greater Wasatch Area residents value and how they think growth should be accommodated. At workshops throughout the state, residents used GIS data gathering and other tools to model, analyze, and discuss the regional impacts and costs of growth and identify their preferences. Their work ultimately shaped the Quality Growth Strategy.

Over 1,000 local officials have also been engaged, developing model plans, demonstration projects, tools, training, and technical assistance. Envision Utah's toolbox, training seminars, and technical assistance are helping local governments to implement the goals of the Quality Growth Strategy. Because local planners designed the toolbox, other planners use it.

In addition to its extensive workshops and research concerning core values of Utah residents, Envision Utah conducts public awareness and education efforts, encouraging Utah residents to express their preferences for their communities' future and to become active in building that future. The organization worked from the start to engage the active participation of regional media outlets. Several publishers and television managers have served on the Envision Utah steering committee, which seeks to include media managers and owners in every meeting.

Through its extensive participatory work Envision Utah identified six broadly supported primary goals:

- Enhance air quality;
- Increase mobility and transportation choices;
- Preserve critical lands, including agricultural, sensitive, and strategic open lands;
- Conserve and maintain availability of water resources;
- Provide housing opportunities for a range of family and income types; and
- Maximize efficiency in public and infrastructure investments to promote these goals.

According to Envision Utah, the 32 individual strategies developed to realize these goals, "rely on citizen involvement with local officials, local land use decision-making and more awareness of free market needs in housing choices."

Region 2020: Greater Birmingham

In 1996, The Community Foundation of Greater Birmingham brought together civic and community leaders to explore the potential for developing a comprehensive plan for the greater Birmingham region. Regional leaders recognized the balkanization and racial tensions of the 12 county-region as an impediment to prosperity. With support from the Community Foundation, an informal leadership team researched best practices in other regions and hired consultants to help design an outreach strategy for each county. Eight working committees involving 150 residents worked together to undertake the Region 2020 visioning project in 1997. The Foundation helped to create Region 2020 to serve as regional catalyst and project incubator for new plans. According to Region 2020 staff, the volunteers on the working committees, “became Central Alabama’s first regional stewards.”

In 1998, more than 5,000 residents helped to formulate Region 2020’s 34 goals and 217 strategies with action steps. The 34 goals cover all aspects of regional quality of life, including environmental quality, education, transportation, economic development, social services, wellness, community development, and citizen leadership. The visioning process created discussion across racial and socioeconomic lines about the future of the community. Region 2020 trained a racially- and culturally-diverse pool of 200 facilitators and a speakers bureau. As important was the extensive donated promotional materials and media and volunteer outreach.

Region 2020 shared the results across the region and 350 residents volunteered to participate in the implementation phase. Interviews were conducted to discover which strategies most needed Region 2020’s attention and which were already underway. Implementation Teams were created with representatives from government, the private sector, and the nonprofit sector.

Region 2020 has incubated a number of projects, including the Cultural Alliance of Greater Birmingham, which supports arts and cultural organizations and working artists. It also has facilitated investment in a variety of projects, such as a pilot community renovation project to help address Jefferson County’s housing crisis. Region 2020 also helped form several new organizations that foster regional collaboration—The Regional Growth Alliance and the Center for Regional Planning and Design.

The Cahaba watershed study is an example of progress in fostering regional planning. Twenty local governments came together to pay for a study to plot the future of development along the watershed. Another sign of progress is that the local newspaper has hired a regional reporter.

To sustain interest during the 10 to 15 year implementation process, Region 2020—with partners that include The Community Foundation of Greater Birmingham, the Public Affairs Research Council of Alabama, the Regional Planning Commission of Greater Birmingham, and the United Way of Central Alabama—developed the, “Community Counts: Measuring Progress in Our Region,” data book, which measures progress in the 12-county region using indicators for each of the goals in the Region 2020 vision.

The Urban Land Institute, cites three key features of Region 2020: 1) the visioning effort started with a blank slate; 2) visioning leaders made a commitment to geographical and demographic inclusiveness; and 3) although the effort was citizen driven, roundtables with elected officials were held early in the process, to ensure government involvement.

ENVIS10N: Greater Dubuque

In both the 1980s and 1990s, Dubuque, Iowa, completed successful community visioning processes. A third process took shape in 2005 under the leadership of the Community Foundation of Greater Dubuque as an effort to engage more young professionals in civic life.

Nancy Van Milligen, the president/CEO of the Community Foundation, and Steward Sandstrom formerly of the Dubuque Area Chamber of Commerce, co-chaired a nine-person steering committee that met every week for nine months. Initial resistance to including the public at large was overcome as the group recognized that change would be difficult to achieve without public support.

The steering committee kicked-off the ENVIS10N (Envision: Ten Community Projects by 2010) process with a free community breakfast and 480 participants were given Visioning Tool Kits that also could be downloaded off of the website. Informal groups worked on their own for a few months and submitted their ten best ideas for making Dubuque a better place to live, work, and play. The Community Foundation and Chamber also facilitated other visioning sessions. A \$45,000 budget for marketing and events help attract interest. About 5,000 people participated and more than 2,300 ideas were submitted.

Although Dubuque is relatively homogeneous, every effort was made to achieve diversity on the Selection Committee to choose the best 100 ideas. Attention was paid to including a mix of age, gender, race, ability, and disability. The 100 ideas were presented in a Town Meeting, with 300 volunteers using hand-held voting devices to record their choices and narrow the list to 30 ideas. The Selection Committee then pared the list to ten high-impact ideas for greater Dubuque.

Participants were eager start on projects even while the selection process was underway. The Steering Committee took advantage of the frequent inquiries from community members to refer people to organizations that needed board members or volunteers. ENVIS10N's greatest success was in helping people realize the many opportunities to use their strengths and be involved in the community.

The ten best ideas were announced in January 2006. The *Dubuque Telegraph Herald* featured each of the top ENVISION 2010 ideas in a weekly Sunday series. The ideas included:

- Expanding the America's River development with four new cultural destinations;
- Bilingual education;
- Community-wide wireless access;
- A community health center;
- An indoor/outdoor performing arts center;
- An integrated walking/biking/hiking trail system;
- Library services expansion;
- Mental health and substance abuse services;
- Passenger train service; and
- Warehouse district revitalization.

Committees were formed to develop action plans for each of the ten ideas and the Community Foundation took a less visible role—in part because it did not have the staff

to stay involved in the action planning for all ten ideas. The Community Foundation continues to help committees that request it and connects new people to the ten committees. It will host bi-annual meetings to check-in on progress. It also has helped to identify donors for the projects and has created endowments funds within the Foundation. For example, the Foundation helped secure a \$1 million gift and a \$700,000 gift for the community health center and is working with the Rotary Club on a three year fund-raising effort for the health center. ENVIS10N's community support made it easier to attract gifts and volunteer support for the ten ideas.

The idea to expand the America's River development project has received a large grant and is ready to move into the second half of its capital campaign. The passenger train service from Dubuque to Chicago had seemed the most formidable challenge of the ten ideas, but the state of Illinois passed legislation increasing funding for Amtrak and made a train to Galena, Ill., (a nearby community) a high priority. The committees working on the other ideas all are taking steps forward, some small and some large.

ENVIS10N raised the stature and visibility of the Community Foundation of Greater Dubuque. Board members who struggled with the Community Foundation's leadership role have seen how directly leadership activities relate to fund development. The ENVIS10N Steering Committee got along well and stayed committed, as members felt they were part of something big. The process was open and inclusive. There was lots of theater to generate excitement. The Community Foundation remains involved in making connections, identifying committed donors, and encouraging continued forward movement.



Opportunities for Funders

As demonstrated in examples outlined in this paper, funders are playing a key role in promoting civic education and participation in planning and visioning activities at local, regional, and statewide levels. Growth and development decisions are ideal opportunities to strengthen social and civic life. Research and monitoring of broad-based, collaborative growth and development efforts—where residents have been successfully engaged—is needed to engage the public and build collaborative processes in the future. Following are a few recommendations, opportunities, and needs.

Research Into What Works

More needs to be known about the range of activities in regions across the country to engage residents—and identify and share what is working. Research and case studies about how citizen interests have been activated and mobilized on planning and development issues could help communities nationwide apply the same techniques and approaches. What kinds of information, means of communication, and techniques for participation are most effective in engaging residents? How has citizen participation been successfully sustained over time? What model works well for making sure lower-income residents are genuinely included in decision-making processes?

Coalition building isn't easy. More insight is needed about the success and limitations of different approaches. Examples of how residents gain “real” influence rather than token input can offer models. Increasing the opportunity for all socioeconomic interests to be represented in public decisions about growth and development is important—for example, who has been successful, how did

they manage it? Funders can support projects that examine laws and policies that need reform so that citizen participation and consensus building on growth and development issues are built into the legal and political process.

Supporting Actions

Research must be tied to real on-the-ground efforts. Funders can support projects designed to:

1. Inform and engage residents from all quarters, find common interests, and sustain their participation and involvement;
2. Leverage and connect existing local institutions in each region, such as churches and civic and educational institutions;
3. Identify laws and policies for reform so that residents gain “real” influence, rather than token input, in decision-making about growth and development;
4. Engage public agencies in considering new approaches to civic engagement;
5. Implement and lead regional, community-led consensus-building processes; and
6. Develop and distribute knowledge and easy-to-use tools to assist citizen input.

Obviously, organizations and experts with experience in land use decision-making and successful track records of civic participation need support for their work. The organizations themselves should be encouraged to further collaborate with other organizations, especially those that do not yet work on growth and development as part of their approach to their issues. Many organizations have yet to understand the connections between their civic work and the effect that growth decisions have on virtually every area of community life.

Growth and development decisions are ideal opportunities to strengthen social and civic life.

Funders can provide great benefit to communities through work with strong institutional entities, such as the League of Women Voters, local leadership development programs, and service clubs, to ensure that those entities incorporate growth and development perspectives in their own outreach and engagement with the public.

There of course is no single model for promoting civic participation in growth and

development decisions. But there is a range of strategies for a range of places. Communities possess the intrinsic knowledge of what they need and want—funders can provide venues, processes, and assistance to help them lead their own development decision processes. Funders acting as catalysts, leaders, and partners can engage communities to achieve inspiring, dramatic results.

Endnotes

¹ Keith Schneider, “Bush, Kerry Supporters Agree on New Development Strategy,” *Great Lakes Bulletin News Service*, December 3, 2004.

² Trust for Public Land, LandVote, 2006.

³ Comments of David Goldberg, Smart Growth America, March 2006.

⁴ Comments of Stuart Cohen, Transportation and Land Use Coalition, March 2006.

⁵ Ibid.

⁶ A brownfield is an industrial or commercial parcel that is abandoned or underused and often environmentally contaminated, especially one considered as a potential site for redevelopment.

⁷ A charrette is an intensive process involving a series of collaborative design and public input cycles for multiple, consecutive days. A central element of the charrette is the “design team,” a multidisciplinary group of professionals that provide the necessary expertise to create a feasible plan that considers all relevant input.

⁸ David Goldberg, “Atlantic Station: From Contaminated Site to New City, with Neighbors,” *Choosing Our Community’s Future: A Citizen’s Guide to Getting the Most Out of New Development*, 2005, p. 59.

⁹ Colombo, Louis. “Adopting the Albuquerque Area Planned Growth Strategy, Lessons Learned,” April 24, 2004.

¹⁰ Funders’ Network for Smart Growth and Livable Communities, “Building Coalitions Through Knowledge: CenterEdge Project,” *Signs of Promise: Stories of Philanthropic Leadership in Advancing Regional and Neighborhood Equity*, August 2005, pp. 45-47.

¹¹ Examples of newspapers playing a role in their communities include those papers that have hired Neil Peirce and his colleagues to produce “Pierce Reports,” which review the state of particular regions. An even stronger, proactive media commitment has been termed “civic journalism.”

Endnotes (cont.)

¹² John P. Kretzmann and John McKnight, *Building Communities From the Inside Out: A Path Toward Finding and Mobilizing Community Assets*, (Northwestern Innovations Network, 1993). See also Carmen Sirianni & Lewis Friedland, *Civic Innovation and American Democracy*, at (http://www.cpn.org/sections/new_citizenship/change.html).

¹³ Ken Snyder and Julie Herman, “Visualization Tools to Improve Community Decision Making,” PAS Memo, American Planning Association, November 2003.

¹⁴ Pete Plastrik, “Declaration of Intention: Promoting Effective Community Design & Decision Making In America,” January 2002.

¹⁵ One group that has played a lead role in the 1990s has been the Urban Institute, which has developed the National Neighborhood Indicators Project (NNIP). This concept involves designing an information system that tracks and compiles neighborhood conditions within cities and communities. The Project is unique in that its theme focuses on democratizing information by delivering practical data to city and community leaders rather than simply offering research reports and commentary. In 1995, the Urban Institute surveyed 33 major cities, most of which planned on maintaining these indicators. Usually in the cities that continued, the primary responsibility for developing and continuing to monitor the neighborhood indicator systems fell on non-governmental entities (most of which were either area universities or nonprofit civic organizations).

¹⁶ There are many organizations that provide useful information regarding community indicators: Redefining Progress’ Community Indicators Project (<http://www.rprogress.org>) facilitates the development of community indicators, links existing and emerging projects, provides a directory database and gives basic information on over 200 community indicator projects around the United States; Indicator Initiatives; (<http://iisd1.iisd.ca/measure/compindex.asp>.) provides a comprehensive online information base of indicator initiatives being carried out in the context of sustainable development; The National Neighborhood Indicators Partnership (<http://www.urban.org/nnip/>) provides helpful information; the Sustainable Development Indicators Group is a White House Interagency Working Group that had the task of developing a list of recommended national economic, environmental, and social indicators of sustainable development (see their report, *Sustainable Development in the United States: An Experimental Set of Indicators*, December 1998).

¹⁷ Comments of David Goldberg, Smart Growth America, March 2006.

¹⁸ Geographic Information System refers to a system for capturing and manipulating data related to the Earth. A common use of GIS is to overlay several types of maps (for example, train routes, elevation data, street maps) to determine useful data about a given geographic area.

¹⁹ Livable Communities, *Empowering Individuals and Communities*. (http://www.livablecommunities.gov/toolsandresources/ic_c2020.htm). See also (<http://www.hud.gov/cpd/2020soft.html>).

Endnotes (cont.)

²⁰ More information about this program is available at (<http://urban.wr.usgs.gov/urban.html>).

²¹ More information about these programs are available at (<http://www.epa.gov/empact>) and (www.epa.gov).

²² Ken Snyder, “The Need for Improved Democracy in Planning,” Planetizen Op-Ed, September 29, 2005.

Translation Papers

The Funders' Network's series of translation papers are designed to assist funders and other interested parties to better understand the connection between sprawling patterns of development and urban disinvestment and specific issue areas and to articulate opportunities for progress that would be created by smarter growth policies and practices. Four updated second editions of the first papers in the series, including this one, have been published to date. Sixteen topics were covered by first editions in the series. Visit www.fundersnetwork.org to download electronic copies or request printed versions.

2nd Editions

- #4 *Civic Participation and Smarter Growth: Improving How Communities and Places Grow and Change.*
- #3 *Parks, Public Greenspace, and Smarter Growth: Opportunities for Linking Land and People*
- #2 *Workforce Development and Smart Growth: Opportunities for Linking Movements.*
- #1 *Regional Equity and Smart Growth: Opportunities for Advancing Social and Economic Justice in America.*

1st Editions

- #16 *Air Quality and Smart Growth: Planning for Cleaner Air.*
- #15 *Energy and Smart Growth: It's About How and Where We Build.*
- #14 *Water and Smart Growth: The Impacts of Sprawl on Aquatic Ecosystems.*
- #13 *Community Development and Smart Growth: Stopping Sprawl at its Source.*
Jointly commissioned by the Funders' Network and the Local Initiatives Support Corporation (LISC).
- #12 *The Arts and Smart Growth: The Role of Arts in Placemaking.* Jointly commissioned by the Funders' Network and Grantmakers in the Arts.
- #11 *Health and Smart Growth: Building Health, Promoting Active Communities.*
- #10 *Biodiversity and Smart Growth: Sprawl Threatens Our Natural Heritage.*
- #9 *Children, Youth and Families and Smart Growth: Building Family Friendly Communities.*
- #8 *Education and Smart Growth: Reversing School Sprawl for Better Schools and Communities.*
- #7 *Aging and Smart Growth: Building Aging-Sensitive Communities.*
- #6 *Transportation Reform and Smart Growth: A Nation at the Tipping Point.*
- #5 *Agricultural Sustainability and Smart Growth: Saving Urban Influenced Farmland.*
- #4 *Civic Participation and Smart Growth: Transforming Sprawl into a Broader Sense of Citizenship.*
- #3 *Opportunities for Smarter Growth: Parks, Greenspace and Land Conservation.*
- #2 *Opportunities for Linking Movements: Workforce Development and Smart Growth.*
- #1 *Opportunities for Smarter Growth: Social Equity and the Smart Growth Movement.*



1500 San Remo Avenue, Suite 249
Coral Gables, FL 33146
(305) 667-6350 phone
(305) 667-6355 fax
info@fundersnetwork.org
www.fundersnetwork.org