THE CIVIC INDEX

1. CITIZEN PARTICIPATION

Without active citizen participation it is difficult for a community to move forward collectively to deal with its problems. Citizen participation includes voting in local elections, serving on governmental boards, attending public hearings and being active in neighborhood and civic organizations.

Facilitator: Jerry DiFelice, U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, Fort Belvoir, VA
Panelists: Richard Rich, Political Science Department, Virginia Polytechnic Institute, Blacksburg, VA; Steven Radman, Director of Southwest University, Portland, OR

2. COMMUNITY LEADERSHIP

Leadership from the public, private, and non-profit sectors are essential to a healthy community. Each sector’s leaders need to be results-oriented, willing to take risks, and able to work well together and communicate effectively.

Facilitator: Raymond Schnellert, Director of Community Board Programs, San Francisco, CA
Panelists: John Kunde, Bettering Foundation, Fort Worth, TX; Roberta Miller, Roberta Miller and Associates, Watertown, MA

3. GOVERNMENT PERFORMANCE

While government cannot be held responsible for solving all of an area’s problems, it must be both effective and efficient if it is to play a positive role in the community. When local government works well, the public sector is professional, accountable, equitable, entrepreneurial and free of corruption.

Panelists: Paul Eisenberg, Director of Center for Community Change, Washington, DC; Peter Zimmerman, Associate Dean, John F. Kennedy School of Government, Harvard University, Cambridge, MA; Philip Barnes, Government Services Practice, Paul Marwick and Alan Co., Austin, TX

4. VOLUNTARIsm AND PHILANTHROPY

Barring new resources from an already-strapped public sector, communities are faced with giving more of their own time, money, and in-kind services to help themselves. Communities need to look at comprehensive strategies to maximize their local philanthropic and volunteer resources.

Facilitator: Fred Miller, Director of Nonprofit Management Programs, Lincoln Payne Center, Medford, MA
Panelists: Paul Ysbynder, Charles Williams Elb Professor of Education, School of Education, Harvard University, Cambridge, MA

5. INTERGROUP RELATIONS

As communities move more and more ethnically, racial and religious diversity in their populations, programs that encourage these groups to communicate well with each other and with the community as a whole are increasingly important. Communities must ensure that these groups have the skills and opportunities to become actively involved in civic affairs.

Facilitator: Ray Williams, Vice Chairperson, Board of National Civic League, Indianapolis, IN
Panelists: Joseph Tonetti, Executive Director, League of United Latin American Cities; Lois Neiler, President, National Puerto Rican Coalition, Washington, DC

6. CIVIC EDUCATION

If the civic infrastructure is to remain strong, it is crucial to work with schools and youth agencies to help young people develop values, knowledge and skills that will contribute to the greater good and civic health of the community.

Facilitator: Williams, Superintendent of Santa Barbara County Schools, Santa Barbara, CA
Panelists: John Buchman, Chairman, People for the American Way, Washington, DC; Henry Wissler, President, University of Cincinnati, Cincinnati, OH; Fred Newmann, Director, National Center on Effective Secondary Schools, University of Wisconsin, Madison, WI

7. COMMUNITY INFORMATION SHARING

Whether it is the media, a civic organization, a university or a school system, mechanisms are necessary for generating and sharing information and educating the public on major issues, which help communities make balanced judgments and avoid continuous disputes.

Facilitator: Mildred Daley, Director, Graduate Studies Program, Princeton College, Cambridge, MA
Panelists: Ada Alvarez, Rector, Stevens & Co., Member, New York City Charter Commission, New York City; Donald Davis, Director, Institute for Responsive Education, Boston, MA; Carl Mason, National Committee for Citizens in Education, Boston, MA; Dorothy Rich, President, Hane and School Institute, Washington, DC

8. CAPACITY FOR COOPERATION AND CONSENSUS-BUILDING

It is important that all three sectors—public, private and non-profit—be able to work together, first to identify common goals and then to achieve these goals. In areas where differences exist, communities need neutral forums and processes where all opinions are heard and problems can be solved before they escalate into conflict.

Facilitator: Hans Spiegel, Director of Urban Affairs Graduate Programs, Hunter College, New York
Panelists: Christine Carlson, Retiring Foundation, New York; DeAnne Buttefield, Director, Massachusetts Governmental Affairs, Cambridge, MA; DeAnne Buttefield, District Manager, Congresswoman Diana Degette, Skaggs of Colorado, Westminster, CO

9. STRATEGIC, LONG-RANGE PLANNING

Apart from the comprehensive planning that many communities undertake, there is the broader approach to planning that incorporates a community’s vision of its long-term future. This type of strategic planning can only be undertaken with all aspects of the community working together to identify strengths and weaknesses and a desired future.

Facilitator: Barry Checkoway, School of Social Work at University of Michigan, Ann Arbor, MI
Panelists: Christine Carlson, Retiring Foundation, New York; Richard Brinkley, Executive Director, International Downtown Association, Washington, DC; Bill Fiteg, Lincoln Institute of Land Policy, Cambridge, MA

10. REGIONAL COOPERATION

To be competitive and successful, metropolitan or rural areas must find ways for various jurisdictions to work together. Individual communities are no longer competing with each other as much as they are competing with other regions in the national and international marketplace.

Facilitator: William Dodge, Consultant in Strategic Planning and Management, Pittsburgh, PA
Panelists: David Walker, Department of Political Science, University of Connecticut, Storrs, CT; Robert Hartman, Executive Director, National Association of Regional Councils, Washington, DC

ESSENTIALS OF A HEALTHY COMMUNITY: THE CIVIC INDEX

Communities have always been aware of the need to have a strong physical infrastructure—roads and bridges and buildings. Today, though, complicated new realities mean that communities must also look at their civic infrastructure—everything from community leadership to citizen participation to strategic planning efforts. This civic infrastructure, the complex interaction of people and processes by which a community functions, determines a community’s health, both economic and social. The Civic Index is designed to help a community assess the health of its civic infrastructure—and then to provide the community with the hands-on assistance necessary to find solutions and put them into practice.

Session 1: Monday, 10:30 – 11:00 A.M. DEFINING THE KEY FACTORS OF CIVIC LIFE During this session, groups will discuss the Civic Infrastructure concept and the Civic Index—do the ten components establish the right categories for looking at the ways communities function?

Session 2: Monday, 1:45 – 3:15 P.M. FOCUSING ON THE PARTICULAR The task of this session is for each group to identify the four or five most important qualities that define its index component. At this session, groups will develop a set of questions communities can use to assess their strengths and weaknesses in the index area.

Session 3: Tuesday, 9:15 – 10:45 A.M. CREATING POLICIES FOR HEALTHY COMMUNITIES The goal of this session is for each group to identify the policies that will help promote civic health in its index area. The policies may be designed for either the public, private or nonprofit sector, and may be national, state, or local.

Session 4: Tuesday, 1:45 – 3:40 P.M. DEVELOPING PROGRAMS FOR CHANGE Every conference participant has seen programs that work to foster civic health, or has ideas on how to do so. In this session, each group will develop proposals for programs, projects, or activities that will promote, support, and sustain civic renewal in its index area.