Civic Engagement: The Policy & Politics

Florida Civic Summit

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Outline:

• A View from the Field: The Changing Citizen/Gov’t Relationship
• Two “Revolutions” in public policy
• What’s the worst that could happen?
• How will this change our politics?
“It used to be that if you did something, you had to tell the public about it. And then it became, if you are planning to do something, you have to tell them about it. And then it became, if you are planning to do something, you have to offer them an opportunity to come in and say what they want to say. You don’t have to do anything about it, but you have to give them the opportunity to come and have input. The model now is when you have an issue, you are better off to have the community weigh in on the definition of the problem, the possible solutions of the problem, and to actually affect the outcome of the decisions process.”

-Dave Knapp (Fmr. City Mgr, Cupertino), “Aligning the Work of Gov’t” (Pearce)
"Testing the Waters" Survey of 900 CA Public Officials:

- **85%** Respondents say “their views of public engagement have changed since their careers began” (avg: 22 years exp)

- **77%** “are interested in hearing more about public engagement practices that have worked in other places.”
“Testing the Waters” Survey of 900 CA Public Officials:

- **76%** say their public meetings are “typically dominated with narrow agendas”
- **64%** say their public hearings “typically attract complainers and ‘professional citizens’”
- **69%** say a “lack of resources and staff could stand in the way of a deliberative public engagement approach.”
“This decade of local government will be a time of ‘creative destruction’ that will produce an unprecedented amount of innovation...Local governments increasingly will be expected to ‘go it alone,’ with little help from Washington or their state governments. Cross-sector strategies will be the norm. Performance and results -- not just inputs and outputs -- increasingly will matter.

- Bob O’Neill/ICMA in GOVERNING, May 2013
“For the state is about to change. A revolution is in the air, driven partly by the necessity of diminishing resources, partly by the logic of renewed competition among nation-states, and partly by the opportunity to do things better. This Fourth Revolution in government will change the world...There is a global contest, but one based on promise as much as fear: government can be done better ”

- The Fourth Revolution (2014) Mickelthwait & Wooldridge
“If you look at each of the main assumptions behind the old state, they are being challenged. The desire to control everything is giving way to pluralism, uniformity to diversity, centralization to localism, opacity to transparency, and *immobilisme*, or the resistance to change, to experimentation.”

- *The Fourth Revolution*
“Society is witnessing a step change in how it deals with its own problems - a shift from a government-dominated model to one in which government is just one player among many...This is the central idea behind the solution revolution: social impact becomes a form of currency with real value to millions - from foundations to gov’ts to venture philanthropists to individual citizens.”

What’s the worst that could happen?
Bell: What democracy looks like?
The worst that could happen...

“If Bell is to survive, it will be up to its residents. There are some good signs - there is a solid group of residents who love this city, and they’re the only reason Bell is still intact today - but there are massive challenges too.”

- Interim City Manager Ken Hampian
Bell: A Civic Success Story?
A “Civic Engagement Moment” in Our Politics?

- “Civic Engagement” = “Citizenship”
- How will we mediate this changing gov’t/citizen relationship?
- “Government is the problem” ➔ “Performance Government”
Thank you.