The Promise of Civic Advance in Florida

Florida Civic Advance – Orlando Florida
February 2015

Randall H Reid
ICMA Southeast Regional
Director / Director of
Performance Analytics

Bob Graham Center for
Public Service Practitioner In Residence
ICMA Sustainable Communities Initiative

We are the premier association of professional local government leaders building sustainable communities to improve lives worldwide.

Vision Statement, 2008 ICMA Strategic Plan

9000 members – 33 countries – appointed officials
Ethics – Leadership - Performance
Civic Well-being Is Fundamental For Sustainability

“Civic health is a measure of the well-being of a community, state, or nation”.

National Conference on Citizenship
Eight Challenges for Local Government

- Escalating demands for services with ill-defined core missions
- Mandates without money to properly provide services
- Static inefficient governments, structures & systems
- Accelerated use of technology and outdated analytic capability
- Silos of self interests inhibit cross boundary and multi-jurisdictional problem solving
- Reform of archaic tax structures still based upon an old economy and physical assets
- Rising citizen mistrust, alienation > civil unrest > terrorism
- Growing lack of elementary civic knowledge
Credibility Is Essential To Governance

Performance + Accountability + Transparency + Engagement = Trust*

*March 2013, Public Management Magazine, Special Report
The Still Essential Community Conversation

The irreplaceable traditional conversations within a small group or online in community forums remain essential civic interactions to understand:

- a community’s real assets and challenges,
- priorities of needed services and supportable strategies,
- methods citizens might assist in problem solving.

“Community begins in conversations” and generates a sense of interconnectedness for “sustaining community”
According to Peter Block, author of “Community: The Structure of Belonging” …

The social bonds of community are created “one room at a time”
Civitas

To a Roman "civitas" in Latin was not only reference to the collective body of all the citizenry, it was the social contract binding them all together, because of which each is a "civis" or "citizen" with rights and responsibilities of "citizenship".
“Citizenship is... a sense of belonging to a community for which one bears some responsibility. In a word, citizenship implies public-spiritedness, which is akin to patriotism, and has to be cultivated.”

— Walter Berns
Creating Civitas In Florida

A civic culture of a community is a reflection of the collective habits and mores of its individual citizens.....

Healthy civic habits can be learned and re-enforced through education, practice and market influences.

“Fundamentally, the behavior of citizens is what will be decisive in sustainable communities”

- Peter Block
Rx for Civic Health

**Diagnosis:** The absence, fraying or decline of the social contract that binds us together in a functioning civil society we inhabit is the essential threat to human resiliency and sustainable communities.

- Civic Education
- Civic Mentoring
- Civic Engagement
- Civic Responsibility
- Civic Metrics
Sustainable/Resilient Civic Health

Sustainability acknowledges the interdependence of civil society, the economy and the environment, and it encourages long-term, strategic thinking that promotes effective stewardship of our natural, civic and economic resources.
Transformational Civic Leadership

- Optimal Decision
- Economy
- Society
- Environment
- Collaboration and Dialogue
Envisioning Alternative Civic Futures

Creating Strong Democracy

CREATING ALTERNATIVE FUTURES

Empower employees and citizens

Implement technology that serves the organization and community

Improve systems of management and accountability
Civics For The Digital Age

SOCIAL MEDIA & CIVIC ENGAGEMENT
AT THE UNIVERSITY OF FLORIDA
Regardless how your community defines civic health, **without** measurement of key indicators you will not know the degree of your success nor monitor your performance.
Civic Metrics Matter

1) What metrics are indicators of civic health?
   • People participating in civic groups or clubs
   • Volunteer hours in community organizations
   • Voter turnout or attendance at community meetings or online forums and webinars
   • Local giving rates to charities or foundations
   • Knowledge level of community governance
   • Instate burial rates versus transport out of state
   • Crimes committed against other citizens

2) What strategies could improve these metrics over time?
Capacity for Leading Civic Change

- Any jurisdiction that aspires to be capable of producing positive sustainable civic outcomes must **first focus on their desired future and civic capacity to change**.

- **Inclusive strategies are critical** for civic capacity building, civic health measurement and change management.

- **Core learning capabilities** can be taught as citizenship is nourished and mentored.
Capacity Building Processes

- Civic sustainability requires the development of civic leadership capacity, which includes establishing civic health goals and measures or metrics, incorporating civic engagement into all operations, and developing a supportive infrastructure and facilities.

- Getting stakeholders involved in decision-making furthers the capacity for sustaining civic efforts and mentoring new generations of civic leaders.

- Nurturing citizen trust and commitment is strongly associated with securing financial support necessary for sustainable civic governance.
Collaboration is essential as a desired future or outcome can seldom be achieved by a single agency.

- What are the obstacles to collaborating?
- What are the benefits that will be derived from an open process?
- What vested interest will oppose the process or transparency?
- What are the inherent risks?
- Who is at the table? Are you even at a table, any table?
- Is it the right table(s) with the right people?
- How do you reach the necessary stakeholders?
- Who will speak for the people not in the room?
- Where is the common ground upon which to initiate dialogue?
- Can a unifying vision be achieved to provide cause to seek solutions?
- How will you communicate earlier dialogue to others joining late?
- Who may lose or have to sacrifice something in the process?
- How can accommodation be made for their concerns?

Think about the PROCESS and about the ATTENDEES .....but even more the think about the INVITATION to participate which must be meaningful and sincerely delivered.
Sustainable and resilient communities (SRCs) recognize a community has an abundance and variety of civic resources beyond governmental tax resources.

This “community budget” is finite but inherently larger when mobilized through community collaboration. It consists of all of the civic resources that all of the sectors of the community can muster and direct towards community action and solutions with shared leadership.

This is the hidden strength of Florida communities and a concept necessary in addressing lagging community indicators of civic health.
“Engaged Citizenship”: Engaging citizens in the co-production and delivery of public goods, services or outcomes.
A Sustainable Civic Ethic For Florida

The improvement of the civic health in Florida will require the application of a civic ethic that respects diverse people and seeks fairness and equity among Floridians inhabiting and sharing the common resources of our state and protecting the places we cherish and need to survive.

Start with the “Golden Rule” and apply it as a principle of any process.
Civic sustainability and governance is about the incremental choices made by individuals, communities, and corporations and their inevitable impact on the places we love and inhabit.
Contact Information

Randall H. Reid
Southeast Regional Director
International City and County Management Association (ICMA)
777 North Capitol St, NE ,
Suite 500
Washington DC 20002-4201

telephone: 941.445-3567
Email: rreid@icma.org
Website: www.icma.org