

# CIVIC ENGAGEMENT CASE STUDIES

---

## GREAT VALLEY CENTER

---

### The Institute for the Development of Emerging Area Leaders

#### 1. Initiative Description

The Institute for the Development of Emerging Area Leaders (IDEAL) is a six-month fellowship program sponsored by the Great Valley Center in partnership with the Coro Foundation of Northern California. Its mission is to promote the importance of collaborative community leadership in fostering effective, creative, and quality decision-making in the public affairs of the Central Valley, and to provide access and information to emerging leaders with a focus on outreach to underrepresented and rural communities. In monthly seminars held in communities throughout the Valley, fellows learn from policy experts, field studies, and group discussions about the issues shaping the Central Valley, including water, land use, the economy, technology, agriculture, and growth. Because the fellows are drawn from throughout the region, an interactive website is used to promote interaction and develop a network for program and community information between formal sessions.

#### 2. Why did you undertake this initiative?

Changing demographics bring new political leadership, initially pursuing concerns such as housing, health, and education, but the leadership often has no background in land use, water, agriculture, conservation, technology, or the economy. The IDEAL was created to provide emerging leaders with resources and a background of these complicated and complex issues that are most often decided locally. It furthers the Great Valley Center's role as a resource for community-based organizations and local governments by providing emerging leaders with leadership tools, specific knowledge of public policy issues, and a regional network of other civic leaders in the Valley.

#### 3. Why did you design it the way you did?

By bringing together a diverse class of Fellows from across the region with backgrounds in a wide variety of civic activities, community issues, and organizational and professional experiences, the IDEAL promotes the discussion of policy issues in a collaborative setting. Additionally, it exposes people with different points of view to new information through open channels of communication and encourages the creation of a regional leadership network over time.

#### 4. Whom did you include and why?

Fellows are selected to create as diverse a class as possible, representing the Valley in both in geography and ethnicity. The first class of 18 Fellows graduated in July; its members came from diverse

communities ranging from Tehama County to Kern County. The class included elected and appointed officials, Latino and Asian community organizers, individuals from agricultural businesses, public agencies, and non-profit organizations, conservatives and liberals all of varying ages.

### **5. What have been the most important results?**

The first graduating class (July 1999) experienced open discussions of important policy issues; the introduction to online technology as a component of leadership and community development; increased awareness and understanding of regional policy issues; and a personal rededication to leadership — all while creating the foundation for a regional network of civic leaders. Class evaluation comments indicated increased knowledge of policy issues, heightened awareness of the Central Valley as a region, and a better understanding of the perspectives of other participants:

*"I believe that IDEAL has been tremendously valuable for me. As a public servant, it has really broadened my horizons on issues that not only effect our city, but also the Central Valley. Through guest speakers, I have learned the value of agricultural land within our own communities and have become interested in reading articles that focus on sprawl. The interesting thing is that there are always two sides to the issues, but it has helped me to not be so biased, especially when it can unsettle our environment. I realize that I "knew but didn't know" the importance of land and transportation, and how these two truly are one. As a public servant, this understanding will help me change how we do business..."*

*"The value of my IDEAL experience lies in the relationships, the broadened perspective, and the wealth of information I have gained. All will be useful as I move forward..."*

*"It has reminded me that public service is more than just public office..."*

While the comments are encouraging, a better assessment of the program's results will be possible after tracking the participants over a greater length of time through the IDEAL Alumni Network.

### **6. What have you learned about how to do this right?**

A program like IDEAL must aggressively outreach into targeted groups. Because of the diversity in the backgrounds of the participants, the program must be well facilitated to incorporate the individual experiences and perspectives of all participants into the development of a shared vision. Additionally, a balance of viewpoints must be presented by experts who are prepared to represent the issues fairly and provide resources where few exist. Participants have to learn to separate facts from personal feelings and learn to acknowledge both.

### **7. What are the most relevant implications for other regions?**

While the Central Valley is a unique region of California, lessons from the IDEAL are definitely applicable to other regions. With term limits and the present cynicism about government, it is more important than ever to build leadership capacity in layers, locally at first, then to create a sense of region and of regional issues throughout the diverse community — not just in the existing power elite. Dialogue between races and real inclusion must be the basis for regional planning and development. Without broader participation and buy-in, political conflict and policy gridlock will result.

The Institute for the Development of Emerging Area Leaders is designed to soften edges and facilitate dialogue that will, over time, make better results possible. The issues and dividing lines in other regions may differ, but the need to develop wise community leadership is universal.

**Sierra Leadership Seminar****1. Initiative Description**

The Sierra Leadership Seminar (SLS) is a ten-day course in collaborative leadership launched by the Sierra Business Council (SBC) in the spring of 1997 to strengthen the ability of current and emerging local leaders to spearhead positive change in their communities. To date, 71 county supervisors, business owners, planning commissioners, ranchers and other decision-makers graduated from the first three classes of the Seminar. Seminar graduates have provided critical support to SBC's work throughout the region and are leading many local initiatives in their own communities.

**2. Why did you undertake this initiative?**

There is no substitute for effective leadership at the community level. As the Sierra Nevada continues to grow rapidly, we need to identify, support and develop dynamic new leaders who are interested in helping their communities meet the challenges ahead. Prior to launching SLS, the Sierra Business Council had already become a magnet for the most positive, community-minded business owners in towns throughout the Sierra. Building on our existing training and outreach program, the SLS was initially designed to be a one-year seminar for 20-30 highly talented and motivated new leaders from the private sector. We quickly expanded the program to include emerging leaders in the public sector. We hoped that, over time, graduates of the program would provide a critical mass of leaders capable of initiating and managing creative problem-solving and developing and implementing positive plans in their communities.

The SLS was designed to enhance the Council's ability to affect positive change in the Sierra Nevada by:

- Expanding the skills, knowledge, confidence, and motivation of existing and emerging local leaders who are committed to working with SBC to build a healthy future for our region
- Providing a stimulating and challenging forum where existing and emerging leaders can exchange ideas and experiences, learn from each other through formal and informal interaction, and form lasting friendships
- Building strong, positive working relationships between SBC and regional leaders to strengthen SBC's effectiveness at the local and regional levels
- Continuing to enhance SBC's reputation as an organization of positive, talented, and effective leaders seeking practical, win-win solutions to the challenges facing our region.

### **3. Why did you design it the way you did?**

As described above, the SLS was designed to enhance the ability of local decision-makers to address issues critical to the long-term health of their communities, and to build the leadership of the SBC across the Sierra Nevada region. The course provides training in specific leadership skills. Starting with the building blocks for collaboration (interest-based negotiation, facilitation, interpersonal skills, running effective meetings), the course moves into process design and strategies for collaborative problem-solving and culminates with presentation and discussion of collaborative processes, designed by participants, that address current issues in their own communities.

Included is a workshop on the economic, environmental, and social challenges facing the Sierra, the interrelationship of these challenges, and the importance of seeking solutions that expand the overall well-being of our communities. Participants are encouraged to think creatively and comprehensively about the challenges and opportunities in their areas. Role-playing allows them to begin applying the skills they are learning to an issue or problem in their own communities, with their fellow classmates serving as sounding boards. Each session is held in a different location to introduce participants to other communities in the Sierra.

In order to encourage more local leaders to embrace these new, more inclusive and positive approaches to decision making, we also organized a shorter, two-day session. This session focused on new approaches to community decision-making for local elected and appointed officials, city and county planning directors, and others who are responsible for designing public participation and outreach strategies. Participants learned about innovative ways to involve the public in planning and community development decisions — from visioning techniques to community image surveys and design charettes. A condensed version of the Sierra Leadership Seminar was also provided.

### **4. Whom did you include and why?**

SLS uses a variety of trainers with expertise in leadership development, conservation, land-use planning, public outreach strategies, social welfare, and redefining wealth. Participants are recruited from local communities based on their demonstrated ability to lead, their commitment to SBC's principles, and their commitment to ongoing involvement in the public sector. We target leaders in all sectors of the community. The most recent class included a wonderful mix of individuals, from the BLM District Manager for Inyo and Mono Counties to the Senior Vice President of Mammoth Mountain.

### **5. What have been the most important results?**

The value of the Seminar has become apparent over time. For example, several SLS graduates traveled to Inyo County to facilitate small group sessions at the Inyo 2020 Forum. The Forum was co-sponsored by the Inyo County Board of Supervisors and SBC and brought together over 200 people from around Inyo County to shape a vision for the County's future. SLS facilitators earned high marks from the

participants. The Inyo 2020 Forum is the kind of project that would simply not be feasible or affordable for SBC to organize if we did not have access to such a large, skilled, and committed group of regional leaders.

Another example is Placer Legacy, where SBC is partnering with Placer County on a two- to three-year project to develop and implement a countywide open space and habitat protection program. SLS graduates were instrumental as facilitators at the seven public input forums the SBC organized last fall, and will continue to be essential to the success of that initiative. SLS graduates are also actively involved in conservation efforts on private lands throughout the Sierra Nevada through SBC's Working Landscapes.

Finally, SLS graduates are leading many local initiatives in their own communities. A recent *Los Angeles Times* editorial described one initiative in the Eastern Sierra as a potential model for addressing conflicts over wilderness use in other locations. Key individuals involved credit the Sierra Leadership Seminar for inspiring the idea and for providing them with the tools they needed to make the process work.

As graduates of the program return to their communities, we expect to see more examples of collaborative community problem solving throughout the Sierra. The graduates are beginning to develop an informal network, sharing information about challenges and successes in their communities. To encourage the development of this network, we organize an annual reunion of SLS graduates in conjunction with our annual conference.

## **6. What have you learned about how to do this right?**

- Having the right lead trainer is instrumental to the success of the program
- The hands-on nature of the training, emphasizing role playing, group interaction, and immediate practical application, is a critical element of the program's success
- Interaction and bonding between members of the group is as important as the specific material covered in presentations. It is important to leave time for socializing, troubleshooting, information-sharing between participants, and in-class discussion based on real world experiences
- There is great value in incorporating Seminar alumni into our current programs. They not only practice utilizing the skills they learned at the Seminar, but also deepen their commitment to SBC and strengthen their ties with each other.

**7. What are the most relevant implications for other regions?**

In just three years we have formed a cohesive network of leaders committed to improving the quality of life in their communities through the use of collaborative approaches, all accomplished by simply training a small pool of key decision makers annually. We believe that this type of training program is an effective model that could be duplicated in other regions in the country.

---

# BAY AREA ALLIANCE FOR SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT

---

## Community Capital Investment Initiative

### 1. Initiative Description

The mission of the Community Capital Investment Initiative (Initiative) is to mobilize high-level business leadership in partnership with poor and older neighborhoods. The purpose is to facilitate strategic market-based capital investments in order to simultaneously tackle poverty and promote smart growth. The Initiative seeks to increase the capacity and scale of development projects in low-income communities, while at the same time minimizing displacement. At a regional scale, it will integrate a place-based, sector-based and people-based strategy for community revitalization. Market-based investments and increased business capacity will be leveraged in areas where a coherent community investment/development strategy is being implemented. The Initiative will develop an ongoing collaborative forum between the community economic development sector (community capital intermediaries, CDCs, CDFIs, community-based organizations, environmental, and social justice groups) and mainstream finance and corporate leaders.

### 2. Why did you undertake this initiative?

The Bay Area economy, environment, and level of social equity are fully interdependent. According to a recent analysis of the comparative economic advantages of the Bay Area in relationship to other regions, the increasing rate of poverty in the Bay Area is one of the top five challenges to long-term sustained economic prosperity.

The impetus for efficient land use, to reduce traffic congestion and air pollution, as well as the ongoing loss of open space and prime agricultural land, all coincide with the need to revitalize our inner-city communities, where much of the poverty is concentrated. Current and projected Bay Area population and job growth make it an environmental imperative that the existing urban footprint be used efficiently to accommodate the growth. *The Bay Area Partnership* identified 46 neighborhoods in the Bay Area with persistent and high concentrations of poverty. The manner in which the 46 neighborhoods are integrated into the region and the economy are key for any type of smart growth or sustainable development strategy to be successful.

### 3. Why did you design it the way you did?

The Initiative has been designed to address key barriers to economic development in neighborhoods with high concentrations of poverty. Though there is a significant supply of capital in the Bay Area, much of it never reaches low-income communities. This is due to a lack of connectivity between high-level business leaders and the community economic development sector. In the past, the limited scale of community economic development projects along with the constrained capacity of the community entities to manage

larger efforts have been factors in limiting the flow of investments. For their part, private sector leaders have often not been able to either recognize the market potential of these communities, or to understand how to work within or invest in these communities. This disconnect has resulted in a low flow of investment to these communities.

#### **4. Whom did you include and why?**

The Initiative serves to implement the charter of the Bay Area Alliance for Sustainable Development Commitment to Action: "focus investment to preserve and revitalize neighborhoods." The Initiative has gone through a series of evolutions. First, an inventory of the community capital infrastructure — those providing capital for low-income communities — was completed. The community capital intermediaries were then brought together to share their understanding of the challenges to investing in low-income neighborhoods. This group produced and endorsed an informal work plan, with specific types of outcomes and measures of success. A series of meetings then followed with on-the-ground CDCs and other community-based organizations to identify possible development opportunities and further clarify what niches the Initiative could serve. Most recently, a regional team composed of representatives of the economic development, environmental, social equity, local government and regional agency communities further defined the scope of the Initiative.

#### **5. What have been the most important results?**

The most important results to date have been the findings of the feasibility phase of the Initiative. During that process, many members of the community capital infrastructure from the region met for the first time and established relationships. The Economy, Environment, and Social Equity stakeholders ("Three Es") along with the government sector of the Bay Area Alliance for Sustainable Development have expressed overwhelming support for the market-based approach described in the Community Capital Investment Initiative.

Major Findings of the Feasibility Phase:

- There are a number of potentially viable "bankable" keystone developments that could generate a "deal flow" for investment
- There is a sufficient supply of capital, both debt and equity. However, equity capital is not significantly available in the 46 neighborhoods identified by the Bay Area Partnership as experiencing persistent and high concentrations of poverty
- There is an inadequate flow of capital to achieve scale and impact

- There is an established community economic development infrastructure, but it lacks sufficient connection to mainstream capital markets
- While many institutions are investing in poor neighborhoods, there is often not a coherent investment development strategy or framework. No optimal synergy occurs
- There is a need for a new organization that connects high-level business and civic leadership to facilitate and broker capital investments
- The question of how to enable existing residents, particularly those without collateral, to generate wealth and equity without displacing them is a critical issue that must be faced for the Initiative to produce the outcomes it seeks.

#### **6. What have you learned about how to do this right?**

It is too early to say how to do this right. However, it would appear that a gradual approach that seeks the input of larger and larger concentric circles of interests has been a useful process. Making the connection between the high-level business leaders in the mainstream financial sector and the community capital infrastructure takes time. Avoiding the temptation to immediately raise the funds to invest in undetermined deals may prove a key tactic to engage business leadership on an ongoing basis.

#### **7. What are the most relevant implications for other regions?**

The most relevant implication for other regions is the importance of engaging high-level business leadership in community development projects on a sustained basis. The expected dynamic between community and business interests will redefine the manner in which solutions develop for local and regional challenges. An important lesson will be the development of new financing arrangements and partnerships that increase the scale of community development and revitalization while preventing displacement of existing residents.

---

# SAN LUIS OBISPO FOUNDATION FOR COMMUNITY DESIGN

---

## Civic Participation Initiative

### 1. Initiative Description

The Civic Participation Initiative (CPI) is a countywide effort of community, business, education and political leaders with a multi-disciplinary approach to community planning and civic participation in San Luis Obispo County. A CORE group of seven members representing organizations such as EOC's Las Promotoras Comunitarias de Salud, 4H, Vision Unida, SLO County YMCA, the Economic Vitality Corporation, Cuesta College and the Foundation for Community Design was established as a collaborative dedicated to enhancing opportunities for civic involvement and engagement of all residents in San Luis Obispo County.

### 2. Why did you undertake this initiative?

The Foundation for Community Design of San Luis Obispo County (FCD) involved thousands of individuals in the Future Communities Project (FCP), a visioning process conducted several years ago in San Luis Obispo County. The project designed an inclusive process for participation of individuals who had not traditionally been involved in the public planning process, which included a diverse portion of our county's population. Through this effort, individuals identified three key elements needed for involvement:

- The need for increased education and training
- Opportunities to increase civic engagement
- Elimination of barriers to public participation.

### 3. Why did you design it the way you did?

The FCD convened organizations throughout the county that were providing civic participation and/or leadership training programs to a diverse group of constituents. The purpose was to identify what was being done, what gaps existed, which audiences were being served, and to determine what the group was willing to do to create a continuum of services in the area of civic participation and engagement for all residents.

This opportunity to learn from one another resulted in creating obligated relationships among a larger group of organizations in addition to the core members. The majority of those involved feel the ownership and dedication to the core values of the CPI.

### 4. Whom did you include and why?

The Civic Participation CORE Collaborative group involved both institutions and individuals in this new and challenging endeavor. First, we needed to examine our civic structures and mediating organizations to assure that they were accessible and welcoming to diverse populations previously excluded from community decision-making. Secondly, we needed to provide the necessary skills for increased civic participation by those who had yet to be heard — the young, the non-white and, in particular in San Luis Obispo County, the growing Latino population.

The FCD chose members for the CORE group based on relationships with individuals who had leadership capabilities and operated organizations that were committed to civic participation. These individuals exhibited in their own lives an explicit dedication for civic responsibility and community building. For

example, the YMCA has for more than a century been dedicated to citizenship education and responsibility. Vision Unida was established to create opportunities for under-represented individuals.

## **5. What have been the most important results?**

Tangible, measurable results of the CORE Collaborative are:

- The formation of a very strong CORE collaborative whose members are both individually and organizationally committed to the core values of civic participation; willing to pool their resources to develop strategic civic participation activities; represent a broad range of organizations; work closely and honestly with one another and are prepared to take risks in the community on behalf of under-represented citizens
- 1. Increased value in the process of building relationships and trust within the CORE group and the development of a style and culture as a foundation for success. This is often lacking in collaborative efforts that quickly establish formal structures, have large amounts of funding, and immediately address programming needs without first creating trust and establishing decent relationships
- Necessary education and a deeper understanding of the process resulting from the training and coaching provided to the CORE group by Tony Massengale and Erica Kohl in the areas of civic participation, organizing, and active engagement
- The proposal recently submitted to the W. K. Kellogg Foundation represented a great deal of group work and could have huge results if funding is obtained

Tangible, measurable results of the Latino Civic Participation Group are:

- The coaching and mentoring support provided to emerging leaders in the Latino community by CPI members has built a strong foundation for future engagement. Invited speakers to the group's monthly meetings have assisted in building the capacity of the group by providing connections and potential resources as the group determines how it wants to move forward with their work
- The CPI has also successfully begun to make connections with the Latino community, which include Spanish language newspaper ads, a potential weekly television show in Spanish and assistance from the Mexican Consulate.
- The facilitation and organizational training for the leaders of this group provided by the Sustainable Communities Leadership Program Intern not only assisted in developing actual skills but also enhanced the confidence and self-esteem of those individuals.

Tangible, measurable results for the Civic Audit Pilot Project are:

- The Civic Audit Pilot project resulted in 13 organizations conducting a self-evaluation in the area of civic participation. For the first time, several organizations recognized and verbalized the areas where they fell short in terms of providing leadership, service, and engagement opportunities to diverse constituents
- The Civic Audit process and results prompted organizations to begin working together to pilot solution-oriented projects such as: design a Board/Employee Diversity training program, develop a Civic Participation Resource guide, and devise reforms and improvements internally for participating organizations

- This effort has also garnered a large database of Civic Participation Best Practices that can be used to recruit additional organizations to administer the Civic Audit, and promote the value of civic-minded institutions countywide.

## **6. What have you learned about how to do this right?**

Lessons learned are as follows:

- Building a strong collaborative takes **TIME**
- Developing core values that will be adhered to is **CRITICAL** to making decisions about projects, expansion and potential partnerships
- Building civic participation requires consistent attention to one-on-one relationships
- Inclusion of under-represented community members requires providing opportunities to build the necessary skills, connections, and support in order for them to become increasingly engaged in community decisions and projects.
- Maintaining open, honest and regular communications channels are necessary ingredients for collaboration
- Sustaining the process when individual partners fear change necessitates constant and deliberate strategies that meet the ultimate goal of improving and changing local systems and organizations to better serve a broader population.

## **7. What are the most relevant implications for other regions?**

One of the most important implications is the basic reality that the demographics in the State of California are shifting rapidly towards a minority majority and to a Latino majority by the year 2025. If these individuals are not given opportunities in all sectors of life now, we are going to face serious problems in the future. The methods, institutions, and cultural imperatives that have supported civic participation are often inaccessible, unknown, and sometimes irrelevant to a majority of citizens in California. San Luis Obispo County represents a microcosm of California's non-urban and rural areas. In order to address the discouraging state of democracy in our country, there is a need to develop the skills of public participation and to create public places that welcome those not traditionally involved in the decision-making processes of community life.

Regions that are investing in collaborative/sustainable planning from an environmental and/or development perspective need to value, welcome and respond to citizen input, particularly from those individuals who have not had a voice in regional planning in the past. If the Collaborative Regional Initiatives fail to listen to those in the poorer, more rural, inner city, ethnic minority areas, the results will more than likely fail to build the kind of communities that will sustain themselves in a strong and vibrant manner. Environmentalists know how to preserve the environment, developers understand what is good for business, and local residents know what is good for people and communities. All of these perspectives are needed and Civic Participation Initiatives help to guarantee that those usually not at the table have a voice in the process.

Communities throughout California and the nation are discussing how government, business and social service agencies can be more responsive and accountable to their communities. The Civic Audit process as designed and piloted by the Civic Participation Initiative in San Luis Obispo county could be replicated for other regions interested in building institutional accountability to those being served.

**Partnership for the New Economy and Study of Clusters of Innovation****1. Initiative Description**

The San Diego region seeks to understand the challenges faced by its new economy by engaging the CEOs of the industry clusters that are driving the region's growth: biosciences, telecommunications, electronics, software, defense and space, and recreational goods. The initiative is designed to identify these clusters' most critical needs and issues and develop action plans to address them. Because these industries are based on the region's capacity to foster innovation, a parallel initiative is underway to understand "clusters of innovations" to map the region's innovation capacity, causes, and outcomes so that we can ensure that we are fostering the public policies at all levels of government that will allow this innovation to continue and flourish.

**2. Why did you undertake this initiative?**

The San Diego region — like most of California — went through wrenching economic restructuring in the early '90s. The region has come out of the long recession, where it lost 58,000 jobs, with a stronger, new economy based on technology. Even so, while the region is the 16<sup>th</sup> largest metropolitan area in the nation, the average pay ranks 57<sup>th</sup>. Compounding the problem is a cost-of-living factor that is 20% higher than the national average. By addressing the needs of the targeted clusters, which pay an average 70% higher than the current regional average, we will be helping to raise the region's standard of living. Therefore, it is critical to understand these new industries and their needs and to benchmark ourselves against the competition to ensure that these industries — and new "trans-sector" industries like bioinformatics that will surely follow — can succeed from a San Diego base.

**3. Why did you design it the way you did?**

There are two parallel initiatives and two reasons for designing it the way we did: The first is that I was in the enviable position of chairing the first statewide Economic Strategy Panel for four years, and embraced the methodology that was carefully developed (and, in fact, launched in the San Diego region in 1994) as a sound way to understand a regional economy and its growth industries. The second reason is that — along with UC San Diego — I have participated in a national effort by the U.S. Council on Competitiveness to understand innovation. The Council asked Dr. Michael Porter to assess the nation's innovation capacity and he determined that, if we do nothing, we fall to #6 in global innovation capacity by 2005. The Council has focused on understanding regions as "clusters of innovation" and, thanks to San Diego's cutting-edge work, selected our region to be one of six in the United States where this regional study will be undertaken.

#### **4. Whom did you include and why?**

Again, there are two answers: First, we created a Partnership for the New Economy, consisting of a leadership panel of 50 industry and academic CEOs as well as public sector leaders, to understand each industry cluster and then to focus on the overarching issues that are of highest priority. To date, nearly 300 chief executives from the targeted clusters have participated in cluster forums and meetings to develop four action plans around four distinct issue areas. These four issues are Cluster Finance, Expectations of Educational Excellence, Technology Entrepreneurship and Management, and Cluster Voice on Land Use, Transportation, and Housing. Second, for the “clusters of innovation” study, EDC and the UCSD Science & Technology Council have partnered to work with Dr. Porter and his team to understand San Diego’s clusters of innovation. As this second project goes forward, we anticipate including many of the people active in the Partnership.

#### **5. What have been the most important results?**

Our Partnership has brought together executives from our growth industries who haven’t previously had the opportunity to work together. It has created “civic entrepreneurs” from executives who had not previously been very involved in the region’s civic life, in part because we began with a focus on their industries. These CEOs have worked across industry clusters to prioritize the issues the region most urgently needs to address, and many of them have become champions of selected initiatives that will be ongoing. It has also led to the creation of a “new voice” on civic and public policy matters. We are in the process of identifying “early wins” in the four initiative areas and will publicly roll out the program later this year. It will be industry-driven even though it involves both public and academic leaders. We have adopted a mantra, “no champion, no initiative.” So far, all initiatives are progressing.

#### **6. What have you learned about how to do this right?**

Having had the advantage of chairing the statewide Economic Strategy Panel for four years, I have applied many lessons from that effort to San Diego. It is critically important to have quality work done. It’s essential that you have CEO-level contact, which in EDC’s case starts with one of the most powerful Boards of Directors in San Diego. It is vitally important to hire a good consultant/facilitator to achieve success in the kick-off meeting, the industry forums, and the Partnership leadership efforts, ensuring that the private sector is engaged and driving the agenda. It’s essential to have good, frequent communications with the group and, once started, to meet deadlines and keep meetings regular. It is also essential to tell CEOs up front how much of a time commitment each phase will involve, and then to stick with those commitments. It’s valuable to have co-chairs of every initiative because executives are busy and may well be out of town.

It is important to inventory what is already going on in your issue areas so that you don’t risk an impression that your initiative is the first. When you honor other work that may be underway, you build

more champions and the potential to hand off the initiative to another organization that may be in a better position to carry it out in the long-term. And you reinforce the spirit of collaboration.

The establishment of a Leadership Alliance willing to meet twice a year builds in accountability as the initiative goes forward. We expect to bring our group back together twice a year to report on progress. That way, we will not end up with a report that gathers dust on a shelf. Instead, we will commit ourselves to an inclusive process of continuous improvement for our region and thereby to long-term economic prosperity.

The study of “clusters of innovation” will enrich this effort and experience similar results.

### **7. What are the most relevant implications for other regions?**

Economic development can't be based on wishful thinking. Many regions aspire to be technology centers of excellence without assessing whether they have the raw material to succeed: an outstanding research university, a workforce, and a core group of companies and suppliers. Regions must understand their basic attributes, which go beyond a low cost of doing business, in order to succeed as a technology center. If they have some of the attributes, they must be prepared to invest in aggressive economic development and be patient enough to wait, perhaps years, for real success.

Regions that have a critical mass of technology companies must establish means of regularly interacting with these companies to ensure that they understand their changing needs. Regions must also benchmark themselves against competitor regions and, where they find they are wanting, move quickly to make change.

---

## **METROPOLITAN FORUM PROJECT**

---

### **New Schools/Better Neighborhoods**

#### **1. Initiative Description**

The New Schools/Better Neighborhoods initiative is a three-stage process to reshape how to site, design, and build public schools in Los Angeles. The initiative is co-sponsored by a broad range of community partners, including the Los Angeles Unified School District, the L.A. School Bond Citizens Oversight Commission, the Getty Education Institute for the Arts, the Urban Land Institute's Los Angeles District, and the Metropolitan Forum Project. The goal is to bring together community, regional and national leaders in education, architecture, finance, community development, government and the arts to begin defining the new schools and community centers of the 21<sup>st</sup> century and identifying a course to achieve them.

#### **2. Why did you undertake this initiative?**

We are at a critical point in the L.A. metropolitan area. The Los Angeles Unified School District, the nation's second largest, is poised to spend approximately \$1.8 billion on 51 new schools, primarily in our most overcrowded neighborhoods. With the student population projected to swell to 776,150 by the year 2008, and 18,000 students bussed everyday, challenges abound for school district officials charged with identifying sites in some of the city's densest neighborhoods. More than half the new schools are needed for the youngest students, a result of class-size reduction reforms. And already, ten district high schools have enrollments topping 4,000 students each, and nearly a third of the high schools in the district are on multi-track, year-round schedules. Available land with appropriate site characteristics are not plentiful; and the state facilities master planning process and state allocation board serve better the interests of school districts building in the suburbs and rural areas than on urban infill sites.

At the same time, hundreds of millions of dollars have been authorized by the voters of the region for investment in parks and libraries throughout the county. The issue is how — through creative siting, design, programming and joint-use with parks, libraries, healthcare and other agencies — to leverage these unprecedented opportunities in order to create better learning environments and better neighborhoods in the region's core and first-tier ring cities.

#### **3. Why did you design it the way you did?**

The first stage of this process was to hold a regional symposium in May, bringing together the leaders mentioned above to engage in direct dialogue with expert panels in three areas, helping to set the agenda for future work. The three areas were:

- Defining the Vision: 21<sup>st</sup> Century Community-Based Schools, where leading innovators shared experiences in community-based school design
- Identifying Regulatory Barriers to Achieving this Vision
- Leveraging Joint-Use Opportunities, strategizing how the L.A. Unified School District can leverage the efforts and resources of other City and County agencies to maximize the returns to Los Angeles neighborhoods.

During the second stage, groups are working through the summer to prepare detailed recommendations for dealing with the issues raised in the May Symposium; and participatory community school building demonstration projects are being funded, staffed and documented. The recommendations and findings will be presented in the fall, when the groups reconvene. At that point, recommendations which are approved will be considered for implementation through a mutually-determined action plan.

The three-phase process is collaborative, involving all the key stakeholders, with a richness and diversity of creativity and resources. The design is very specifically focused to identify strategies, remove barriers, and move forward to address critical needs and take advantage of the timely opportunities in the L.A. region.

#### **4. Whom did you include and why?**

Sponsors of the Symposium include, in addition to those listed above, the U.S. Secretary of Education's Office, the Division of the State Architect, the Advancement Project and Community Partners and other coalitions. There is an Advisory Board with representatives from each of the key stakeholders, as well as a broader group of advisory members. The symposium event itself included more than 180 city, state, and federal leaders from the public and private sectors. Those who are involved represent the key constituencies committed to and capable of improving the process for creating new schools and better neighborhoods, and leveraging the requisite resources.

#### **5. What have been the most important results?**

The symposium event created a focal point for and commitment to not only better designed public facilities but an investment strategy to ensure healthier neighborhoods. The symposium as a participatory "teach-in" allowed participants to "vision" another way to build schools and create communities, involving the community as a full partner in the process to make schools centers of learning and neighborhoods. Momentum and excitement has been generated; the challenge is to move forward with credible recommendations which will be embraced and acted upon during the second and third phases of the initiative.

**6. What have you learned about how to do this right?**

It is important that all the right stakeholders are at the table. The development of working relationships with school district staff and board members has been invaluable. Also, great value has been added to the dialogue by the presence and expertise of creative practitioners in a wide variety of fields from local, statewide, and national areas. Lastly, the media's coverage of NSBN is critical to our ultimate success.

**7. What are the most relevant implications for other regions?**

Many regions face the problems of aging and obsolescent schools facilities, limited space options and resources, the need to integrate schools more closely into the fabric of the community and create true learning centers, and improve the overall health of their neighborhoods. This process offers a model which could be of value throughout California.

---

# THE CALIFORNIA 2000 PROJECT

---

## Civic Engagement Initiative

### 1. Initiative Description

The California 2000 Project was created by The James Irvine Foundation and The William and Flora Hewlett Foundation to support policy research and public education on fiscal, governance and land-use issues in California. The California 2000 Project's two-fold aim is to promote active collaboration and exchange of information among organizations and agencies interested in diverse aspects of fiscal, governance, and land-use reform at the state, regional and local levels in California; and to launch a civic education initiative to inform and educate Californians about the need for fiscal, governance and land-use reform.

### 2. Why did you undertake this initiative?

While many policymakers understand the need for fiscal, governance and land-use reform, policy discussions continue to be disconnected from the public. California organizations increasingly understand that accomplishing their specific objectives (housing, education, transportation, environment, etc.) requires fiscal, governance and land-use reform. The public does not recognize how the issues they care about link to fiscal, governance and land-use reform.

Meaningful reform will only occur when an informed, mobilized constituency understands and supports the need for reform. The California 2000 Project sees an opportunity to promote an ongoing dialogue among Californians about these issues from their own point of view. The overarching themes for the discussions are the projected growth rate, maintaining a high quality of life, and planning for the 21<sup>st</sup> Century.

### 3. Why did you design it the way you did?

Public opinion research consistently shows the public is disengaged from fiscal, governance and land-use reform and they don't understand the need to change the existing system. The C2K civic education initiative is designed to engage Californians in a dialogue about the state's future and help them better understand fiscal, governance and land-use issues so they can make informed and thoughtful decisions. The initiative will build awareness about the need for reform by making the linkages with issues Californians care about, including schools, traffic, parks and open space, affordable housing, jobs and neighborhood safety.

The California 2000 Project has designed a sequenced initiative to follow the natural progression of public opinion development. The initiative first creates a sense of urgency (increased population growth), then moves people from emotional responses (traffic congestion) to a deeper understanding (the

connection between traffic and the current fiscal, governance and land-use systems) and resolution about an issue (fiscal, governance and land-use reform is needed to reduce traffic). Finally, the initiative provides opportunities for an informed citizenry to contribute to the reform debate.

**4. Whom did you include and why?**

The California 2000 Project is structuring a network for state, regional and local organizations interested in diverse aspects of fiscal, governance and land use reform to facilitate greater information sharing and active collaboration. The C2K civic education initiative utilizes that framework to foster community connections and dialogue among policymakers, organizations and citizens.

The C2K initiative builds upon and supports the many community outreach efforts currently underway and will be implemented at both the local and regional level. Diverse constituencies will be actively recruited to broaden the dialogue and perspectives around reform.

**5. What have been the most important results?**

The C2K civic education initiative targeting the engaged public will not actually be launched until January, 2000. The California 2000 Project is currently building a framework for shared action by linking existing organizations and leveraging limited resources. Already, new partnerships are being created and increased coordination is taking place among groups.

**6. What have you learned about how to do this right?**

It is too early to say, given that the initiative is still in the start-up phase.

**7. What are the most relevant implications for other regions?**

The C2K initiative is a statewide effort to inform and educate Californians about the need for fiscal, governance and land-use reform. The initiative builds upon the work of existing regional community outreach and civic engagement efforts. The network will provide opportunities for coalition building, communications support and policy expertise.