



Building a World-Class City: The Importance of Community Connections

Best practices from around the world

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Overview

“Alone we can do so little, together we can do so much” - Helen Keller

Community is about working together for the greater good where everyone has the opportunity to succeed. A strong community is at the core of strong, vibrant cities. However, in recent decades, we have witnessed a distinct erosion of communities in the United States with growing racial and ethnic tensions, political polarization, and rising wealth and income inequality. In order to reverse these negative trends we need to work to restore our strong sense of community and our belief that we are “all in this together.”

As history shows, it is only by working together that we can realize our full potential both as individuals and as a society. Throughout our history, America has accomplished many incredible feats that were the direct result of a strongly shared sense of national purpose and shared sacrifice. Winning two world wars and the cold war through diplomacy, putting a man on the moon and returning him safely to earth, and building the strongest economy in human history with a flourishing working class and middle class were a direct result of our commitment to community. Together, united by a sense of community, we passed sweeping civil rights legislation and other measures to continue to break down barriers. While there is more work to be done, the increasing inclusion of women, minorities, and other underrepresented groups in the workforce and society has contributed to a more broad based, shared prosperity in the country.

All of these great achievements were driven by a prevailing national belief that “we are all in this together.” When President John F. Kennedy stated in his inaugural presidential address in 1961, “Ask not what your country can do for you - ask what you can do for your country,” he was tapping into that widely held belief. This sense of togetherness and community inspired us to do big things – nationally as well as locally in our towns and cities.

When a natural disaster, pandemic, war or other crisis strikes, individuals have reacted with acts of kindness, coming together as a community to help their neighbors and fellow Americans. Historian and activist Rebecca Solnit has researched people’s responses to disasters and the human capacity to do good. As one example, when Hurricane Katrina devastated New Orleans, hundreds of volunteers rescued more than 10,000 people trapped by floodwaters.



It is clear people step up and lean in to help others during times of crisis and chaos. They do this, even with existing divisions, beliefs, and judgments, to care for the community that surrounds them. And now more than ever, as our country is politically divided, and with new technologies being integrated in every part of our lives and jobs, people need a sense of human connection and belonging more than ever. The question becomes, how do we create this community of caring even in a changing world and uncertain future?

There is an opportunity to take the belief that we all benefit by working together for the greater good and apply it to enrich our daily lives and strengthen our communities.

Through our work on Telosa, the Telosa Community Foundation (501(c)3 Organization) seeks to uncover and highlight the essential characteristics of community that would enable this sense of belonging and reciprocity to come to life in our cities and towns. Telosa then seeks to create an actual livable city and model for future cities that is more equitable and sustainable for how we all work, live, and thrive together. To accomplish our goals of a higher quality of life and greater opportunities, it is essential to have a strong sense of community - one that is of, by, and for the people.

Analyzing and learning from the best practices worldwide, one common characteristic is that all thriving, flourishing cities have a strong sense of community. The starting point to build a people-centric community is to listen and give everyone a voice to co-design and co-create a new model. We are focused on building a new city where everyone has a stake, and no one is left behind. Since the residents generate value in a city, they should benefit from the growth and economic gains created. This produces a culture of shared values and beliefs, a sense of ownership, a belief they are part of something bigger than themselves, and gives purpose.

Telosa is based on three fundamental core values: open, fair, and inclusive. These values are integrated into our co-design and drive our decision making as we engage our community. We have organized a Town Hall meeting, conducted a series of surveys, facilitated numerous focus groups, and interactive webinars to share information, exchange ideas, and incorporate feedback into our planning.

The name Telosa comes from the Greek word Telos, which means ultimate aim or highest purpose. The Greeks believed that for an individual to reach their full potential, it is not enough to achieve personal success; the greater community must also thrive and flourish. History has demonstrated that community is vital to the success of Telosa and other cities worldwide.



Over the past several decades, a growing body of research has shown that community connections and social bonds are a very real and demonstrably beneficial aspect of every city, region, and nation. The networks among people's personal connections and the norms of reciprocity and trustworthiness that arise form the basis of a well-functioning society. A strong community translates to an enhanced economy, more job opportunities, better health, improved safety and security, education, and family life. It has a meaningful impact on our quality of life and access to opportunities.

More specifically, Robert Putnam, a Harvard professor and leading scholar on the subject of social capital, has demonstrated that these core aspects of community have been repeatedly shown to have a direct impact on the quality and success in several crucial areas such as: 1) child welfare and education/life-long learning, 2) active and sustainable neighborhoods, 3) economic prosperity, 4) health, happiness and well-being, 5) active democratic participation, and 6) government's ability to deliver enhanced quality of life to citizens. There is extensive empirical data that shows direct linkages between strong communities and the economic and social benefits to individuals and society as a whole.

There are five essential areas in which strong community connections have a proven empirical benefit:

1. Diverse groups overcome barriers and disagreements through collective solutions versus individual interests. This creates a safe and productive environment for decision-making.
2. Trust facilitates shared connections and interests, resulting in fair business and financial transactions. This contributes toward lowering the legal costs, time, and expense of enforcing contracts, leading to greater prosperity as resources are put to productive use.
3. Increased participation in community decision-making leads to expanded civic engagement and more effective governance. Mutual connections and reciprocity give people a voice and a sense of belonging. When people are heard, they are more active and connected to their community.
4. Enhanced communication and trustworthy information help people work together to achieve community goals. People feel more knowledgeable and informed to exchange ideas and address common concerns and opportunities.
5. Improved mental and physical well-being through social interaction and human connections. This creates a healthier and happier community where members feel a sense of place and purpose.



The Telosa Community Foundation's approach is to find best practices worldwide we can learn from to build world-class cities, improve society, and co-create equitable and sustainable communities. We will apply our research in building the city of Telosa and share our findings to benefit existing cities around the world. This blueprint will demonstrate how we can create a new model for society with a higher quality of life and greater opportunity for everyone today and into our future.

Purpose

The purpose of this report is to learn from best practices from around the world and apply lessons learned. This research is based on a co-design model of community development to ensure all people most impacted by planning and design decisions are authentically engaged in determining the outcomes. It summarizes findings from various research fields spanning community studies, urban planning, sustainable communities, community development, and social capital. This document assembles and consolidates insights into what constitutes a vibrant and thriving community. We draw inspiration from diverse perspectives, real-world examples, and in-depth case studies.

Our goal is to ultimately provide a comprehensive guidebook that clearly defines the constituent parts of community connections and reveals how they are established. This guidebook will be a practical tool for community leaders, planners, and interested parties. It offers best practices, actionable strategies, and frameworks to foster deeper community ties.

Over the last two years, Telosa has brought together thought leaders, community movers, shakers, and individuals with innovative ideas who want to collaborate, discuss, and work together to build a more equitable and sustainable future. Through this community of practice, participants learned about best practices, barriers to implementation, and innovative solutions that can be applied to a new city model and develop a blueprint. The vision is to share these lessons learned with cities across the globe so that all residents in a city will feel safe, welcomed, included, and inspired by those around them. The focus is to improve residents' quality of life and economic opportunity. This report intends to bridge the gap between research findings and implementation. Reference tables for specific examples of implementing critical community characteristics are included in the implementation section. We also provide a series of case studies demonstrating the power of community and how they are created and produced over time, which are included in the Appendix. We are actively engaging with our broader community to gain additional insights which we will apply.



Telosa also collaborates closely with [Polco](#), a company that provides community engagement and analytics solutions that enable government leaders to make informed decisions confidently. Telosa and Polco are creating a new Community Index to measure and assess the strength and effectiveness of community connections and a certification process to evaluate cities and new projects on their impact on the community. This new index will aid local officials and residents with programming, funding, and design decisions contributing to stronger communities. With input from our Telosa community, we are working to develop a new tool with the index and a comprehensive guidebook for cities and residents detailing best practices and ideas on implementation to build stronger communities.

Community

What is “Community”? How can we co-create a vibrant and thriving community that is safe, welcoming, and inclusive? Community is a fundamental aspect of human existence, representing a collective group of individuals who share common interests, values, and goals while residing in a particular geographic area. Families provide the foundation for our personal development and relationships, while societies and communities provide the broader context in which we live and interact with others. Shared values are the beliefs and principles people hold in common. This differs from opinions, which frequently polarize our world and break down social cohesion. Values are core principles in life. This could include excellence, generosity, openness, fairness, security, and integrity. Opinions revolve around strong judgments and assumptions about right or wrong. Focusing on shared values can help people come together and build stronger communities, families and individuals. More information on the definition of community can be found in Appendix A.

Six Key Characteristics of a Vibrant and Thriving Community

We believe there are 6 vital characteristics that constitute a vibrant and thriving community that is safe, welcoming, and inclusive. Beyond the insights from Robert Putnam’s work on social capital and a sense of belonging, several other characteristics contribute to the vibrancy and resilience of a thriving community. We have synthesized many critical findings from Putnam’s research and relevant findings from the American Planning Association (APA) and the National League of Cities (NLC). APA and NLC have guidelines that provide a framework for creating inclusive, sustainable, and vibrant



communities, but the specifics will depend on local factors. Both organizations, APA and NLC, have been involved in many initiatives and have published resources to help cities build stronger communities. We have incorporated these guidelines in the following two sections of the paper. Below, we have detailed six key areas: social capital and belonging; access to effective government and services; high-quality jobs and economic opportunities; education and lifelong learning; arts, culture, and recreation; design and environmental stewardship.

1. Social Capital and Belonging

In thriving communities, there is a strong sense of social cohesion and trust among residents. People feel a genuine connection with one another, leading to higher levels of collaboration, mutual support, and a willingness to work together for the common good. A vibrant community embraces diversity and includes people from various backgrounds, cultures, and perspectives. Embracing diversity enriches the community by promoting creativity, fostering tolerance, and creating a dynamic environment that celebrates differences. A sense of belonging must accompany diversity. For community members to feel a sense of belonging, they feel invited, known, accepted, supported, heard, befriended, needed, and loved (Fang et al., 2022). This atmosphere is critical for all community members, regardless of race, ability, age, gender, ethnicity, religion, and income level, to feel they are contributing and valued community members.

A community with strong social capital encourages civic engagement, with residents actively participating in local decision-making processes, community events, and volunteer opportunities. This engagement fosters a sense of ownership and responsibility for the community's well-being. The community is known for its safety and low crime rates, creating an environment where residents feel secure.

In addition, an inclusive community cultivates strong support networks, such as community centers, clubs, and social organizations. These networks allow residents to connect, share experiences, and assist one another during challenging times. The community has resilience against these challenges, whether they are economic, environmental, or social, and residents work together to overcome them. Active community organizations and groups help facilitate connections, advocacy, and social initiatives.



2. Access to Effective Government and Services

An effective government responsive to its constituents is a foundation for reliable, efficient, and trustworthy local government. The government fosters trust and accountability by actively engaging with citizens and incorporating their input into decision-making, leading to efficient service delivery and inclusive governance (Avwritzer 2003). This transparency in communication enhances conflict resolution and encourages public participation, ultimately enabling the government to innovate and adapt to emerging challenges. Transparent and accountable governance is essential for building trust between residents and local authorities. Decision-making processes are open, and residents have opportunities to provide feedback and be part of the planning and development of their community. Residents actively participate in local governance, community organizations, and volunteer activities, shaping the future of the community.

Access to essential services and resources, such as quality education, health and wellness, public transportation, parks, and recreational facilities, is vital for a thriving community. Ensuring equitable access to these resources enhances the quality of life for all residents.

3. High-Quality Jobs and Economic Opportunities

Communities must offer economic opportunities for all residents, regardless of age, to find meaningful employment and build successful businesses. A robust local economy supports job creation, financial stability, and overall prosperity within the community. Employment opportunities, a robust local economy, and support for entrepreneurship, enable residents to achieve economic stability and growth. The importance of household wealth and the ability to pass it along to future generations has been documented. Wealth is the difference between what families own and what they owe regarding debts. Maintaining positive wealth (what is owned) is crucial for households' economic security, opportunities, protection against economic crises, and access to political power.

In addition, community-based business networks are vital in nurturing local talent ensuring a skilled workforce that can meet the demands of emerging industries. A conducive environment for innovation enhances the livelihoods of a city's residents and sets a foundation for continued mutually beneficial relationships.



4. Education and Lifelong Learning

A community that values education and supports lifelong learning opportunities for all ages will consistently be designated a desirable place to live. A culture of lifelong learning empowers citizens to upgrade their skills to fill the needs of a changing workplace and continue contributing to the community.

Quality educational institutions, libraries, and workshops empower residents to grow, acquire new skills, and stay informed continuously, as well as enhancing creativity and innovation. Access to quality education, from preschool to higher education, is available, to ensure that residents have opportunities to learn and grow. Strong communities tend to have less truancy, fewer discipline problems, and higher academic achievement.

5. Arts, Culture, and Recreation

Arts, culture, and recreational opportunities are vital components of vibrant communities, fostering cultural and social connections that promote a sense of belonging (Putnam, 2000). These elements celebrate and showcase a community's diverse histories, traditions, and talents (Florida, 2002). Additionally, cultural events and recreational activities can stimulate the local economy by attracting tourists, supporting local businesses, and creating jobs (Cohen, 2019). The aesthetic appeal of public art, well-designed recreational spaces, and cultural activities enriches the community and provides inspiration and creativity (Landry, 2000). Recreational opportunities encourage physical activity and offer relaxation spaces, contributing to residents' health and well-being (Maller et al., 2008). The presence of parks, greenways, and public spaces allows residents to connect with nature, relax, and engage in outdoor activities.

6. Design and Environmental Stewardship

Urban design is pivotal in establishing sustainable and resilient cities. By incorporating principles like compact layouts, green infrastructure, efficient public transport, and mixed-use development, urban design reduces environmental impact, encourages active mobility, and mitigates climate-related vulnerabilities. Thriving communities are also resilient and adaptable to change. They proactively address economic, environmental, or social challenges and work together to find innovative solutions that ensure their continued growth and



well-being. Resilient infrastructure, adaptive reuse of spaces, and human-centered design to foster community engagement further bolster a city's capacity to withstand disruptions. A resilient community provides green spaces and ensures all residents can access nature and parks. Design can also foster greater inclusion by ensuring that workforce and affordable housing are built into the initial infrastructure and avoid dividing neighborhoods by income, race, or ethnicity.

Through energy-efficient buildings, water management systems, and local food production initiatives, urban design fosters resource conservation and strengthens economic opportunities. A community that prioritizes sustainability by implementing environmentally responsible practices becomes a place where all residents want to live, work, and have fun.

Benefits

In conclusion, a vibrant and thriving community is a solid foundation for human existence, offering many benefits and opportunities for individuals and society. It catalyzes social support, belongingness, collaboration, personal growth, and empowerment. There are a significant number of benefits realized by incorporating the characteristics above. These communities display cooperative problem-solving that can be life-saving during times of adversity and hardship. For example, in the aftermath of Tropical Storm Irene, community groups and individuals emerged throughout Vermont communities to help victims recover as state and federal assistance depleted (Consoer & Milman, 2016). This type of community building also facilitates strong networks among people and reciprocity exchanges. During COVID-19 in the United States, there were many instances of community members helping each other (grocery store runs, essential household supplies, dropping off supplies for older residents) based on a genuine concern for others in their community (Macridis & Wu, 2021).

In addition, another benefit of integrating community characteristics is how it enhances the spread of reliable information and communication of the essential decision-making tools, making business, education, and local governance more effective. Local business chambers of commerce organize workshops to leverage existing business expertise in the community to foster successful business pathways. Massachusetts's Municipal Vulnerability Preparedness (MVP) program provides support at municipal levels to facilitate discussions among diverse sectors in the community to share information and develop climate change vulnerability assessments.



Lastly, it makes all of us healthier and happier and improves our mental and physical well-being, which has been shown to benefit from social interaction and human contact. The increasing popularity of community gardens, community-supported agriculture (CSA) programs, and food cooperatives across the U.S. According to the Trust for Public Land, there are more than 29,000 garden plots in city parks in the 100 largest U.S. cities. These grassroots movements showcase the growing awareness and desire for places that support community connections and social capital building.

By understanding the importance of community and embracing the characteristics that contribute to its vibrancy, we can create environments that support residents' holistic development and happiness, ultimately leading to a thriving and flourishing society.

Empirical Data and Supporting Research

Numerous studies and empirical data support the idea that a strong sense of community in a city is associated with greater economic growth, diversity, and opportunities. Here are some examples of research and data that highlight the positive impacts of community on urban development:

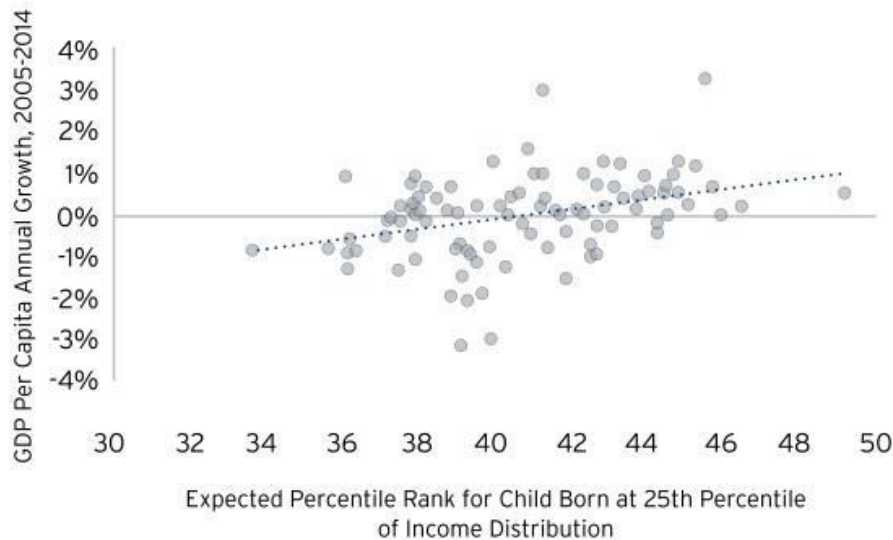
Social Capital and Belonging

- The Brookings Institution's analysis of cities found that diversity and inclusion contribute to economic growth. Inclusive communities attract a wider range of talent, leading to innovation and a stronger economy.

[Committing to Inclusive Growth](#)

Greater equality of opportunity yields greater growth.

Figure 4. Metro areas with higher equality of opportunity experience faster economic growth
Upward mobility vs. GDP per capita growth, 100 largest metro areas



Source: Brookings analysis of data from Moody's Analytics, Chetty et al. 2013

- A study in the journal "Urban Studies" indicated that community organizations and social networks can foster social integration and bridging gaps between diverse groups.

Access to Effective Government and Services

- The National League of Cities published a series of reports highlighting the link between community engagement and better public policy outcomes. Active community involvement can lead to more effective governance and policy decisions.
- Concerted efforts to encourage youth participation and involvement also can help municipal leaders make better decisions and wiser public investments.
[National League of Cities Promoting Youth Participation](#)



High-Quality Jobs and Economic Opportunity

- Research by the World Bank suggests that strong social networks and community ties can foster economic development by promoting information sharing, resource mobilization, and cooperation among businesses and individuals.
[Social Capital and Poverty](#)
- A study published in the journal "Regional Studies" found a positive correlation between social capital (which includes community connections) and economic growth. Regions with higher levels of social capital tended to experience stronger economic growth.
- A report by the Small Business Administration (SBA) indicated that small businesses benefit from strong community ties. Local networks can provide businesses with access to resources, customers, and supportive relationships. More specifically, research has shown that small businesses that receive mentoring early in the development of the business achieve higher revenues and increased business growth.
[Mentoring: the missing link to small business growth and survival](#)
- The book "The Rainforest: The Secret to Building the Next Silicon Valley" discusses the importance of a collaborative and connected community for fostering innovation and entrepreneurial success.
[The Rainforest: How "Chicago Thinking" Explains Silicon Valley](#)
- The Knight Foundation's "Soul of the Community" study found that attachment to a community was a key driver of economic development. Communities where residents felt strongly connected were more likely to have higher GDP growth.
[Knight Soul of the Community 2010](#)
- The Harvard Business Review highlighted how social connections in a community can lead to increased trust, which is vital for collaboration, entrepreneurship, and seizing opportunities.
If a company can transition from simply delivering a product to building a community, they can unlock extraordinary competitive advantages
[When Community Becomes Your Competitive Advantage](#)
- Michael Porter, the founder of the study of modern strategy, describes how healthy businesses are intrinsically linked to healthy communities where the citizens are doing well and there is opportunity for growth. "Shared value is fundamentally about aligning the success of your company with the success of your community — through the recognition that you have a responsibility — and an economic opportunity — to improve the business environment and the fundamental health of the supporting community structure."



[Questions for Michael Porter](#)

Education and Life-long Learning

- Research by Robert Putnam and others on social capital emphasizes that community connections positively influence educational attainment, which in turn impacts economic outcomes.
[The Upswing: How America Came Together a Century Ago and How We Can Do It Again - October 13, 2020](#)
- A study by the American Action Forum finds that “for every 1 percentage-point increase in the portion of a state’s population with at least a bachelor’s degree, the state’s real GDP growth rate increases by about 0.08 percentage points. Consequently, if every state had increased its bachelor’s degree-attainment growth rate by just 1 percentage point over the last decade, then nationwide economic growth would have increased by about \$130.5 billion.”
[The Economic Benefits of Educational Attainment](#)

Arts, Culture, and Recreation

- Arts & Economic Prosperity 5 is Americans for the Arts’ fifth study of the nonprofit arts and culture industry’s impact on the economy. It documents the economic contributions of the arts in 341 diverse communities and regions across the country. Nationally, the nonprofit arts and culture industry generated \$166.3 billion of economic activity during 2015—\$63.8 billion in spending by arts and cultural organizations and an additional \$102.5 billion in event-related expenditures by their audiences. This activity supported 4.6 million jobs and generated \$27.5 billion in revenue to local, state, and federal governments (a yield well beyond their collective \$5 billion in arts allocations). This study showcases that supporting arts and culture can also increase local economic development, jobs, tourism and government revenue.
[Arts and Economic Prosperity 5 Report](#)
- The National Institute of Health study “The Economic Value of Health Benefits Associated with Urban Park Investment” demonstrates the value of developing and enhancing urban parks as a strategy to improve population health and well-being, and as a means of cost savings to the medical system.
[The Economic Value of Health Benefits Associated with Urban Park Investment](#)

Design and Environmental Stewardship

- The New York City Department of Transportation has issued a series of reports that have developed a comprehensive set of metrics to assess how street projects have advanced the City's goals of safety, efficiency, greater travel choice, and economic vitality. Better streets mean better business. Attractive public space and better designed streets are not simply aesthetic or safety improvements. Street projects that improve safety and design and that welcome pedestrians, cyclists, and transit riders see higher retail sales. Better streets attract more people and more activity, thus strengthening both communities, the businesses that serve them, and the city's economy as a whole.

[The Economic Benefits of Sustainable Streets](#)

- Research demonstrates that access to safe, clean, affordable housing in and near cities has a direct influence on social bonds within a community. Studies show that renters who pay more than 30% of their income on rent have difficulty maintaining a stable residence which erodes community. Beyond lowering eviction rates, the evidence further shows that more affordable housing keeps spending within local areas, leads to healthier individuals and families, greater worker stability for local employers, and better infrastructure planning for everyone. High quality affordable housing is essential in promoting household stability, the economy and strong social bonds.

[Impact of Affordable Housing on Families and Communities: Impact of Affordable Housing on Families and Communities](#)

[6 Ways Affordable Housing Can Boost Local Economies](#)

These examples illustrate the multifaceted ways in which a strong sense of community positively impacts economic growth, diversity, and opportunities in a city. While empirical data supports these associations, it's important to note that creating a strong community is a complex and ongoing process that involves multiple factors, including social interactions, urban planning, public policies, and cultural dynamics.

Barriers and Challenges to Implementation

Implementing the framework above faces many challenges due to various barriers and obstacles. These challenges can vary based on context, location, and community dynamics. Financial constraints, limited resources, and socioeconomic disparities can impede efforts to create an inclusive environment with equal opportunities for all residents (Putnam, 2000; Perkins & Zimmerman, 1995). Resistance to change and



cultural barriers may obstruct initiatives promoting diversity and social cohesion (Baumeister & Leary, 1995). Limited civic engagement and a lack of awareness about available resources can be significant barriers to progress in community development. Additionally, political dynamics, bureaucratic challenges, and external influences such as economic fluctuations or national policies can impact the implementation of these characteristics (Putnam, 2000).

Once implemented, the challenges in building and maintaining a strong sense of community are ongoing. Some of these challenges include:

1. **Rapid Growth and Development:** As a city grows and evolves, managing the balance between preserving its community-oriented character and accommodating new development can be a challenge. Ensuring that new developments align with the existing community's values and needs requires careful planning.
2. **Affordability:** The cost of living in many desirable communities can become very high. Maintaining a diverse and inclusive community while managing housing affordability is an ongoing challenge.
3. **Traffic and Transportation:** While cities can emphasize walkability and bike-friendliness, traffic congestion and transportation options can still be areas of concern. As the population grows, managing traffic flow and providing efficient public transportation becomes essential to maintaining a high quality of life.
4. **Cultural Diversity:** While cities strive to become diverse communities, ensuring that different cultural groups feel represented and included can require ongoing efforts in terms of cultural programming, events, and community engagement.
5. **Community Cohesion with Growth:** As the city expands, ensuring that new residents feel integrated and connected to the existing community can be a challenge. Building a sense of belonging among newcomers while preserving the existing sense of community requires intentional strategies.
6. **Preservation of Green Spaces:** The city's natural and recreational areas contribute to its appeal, but preserving these spaces in the face of development pressures can be a challenge. Balancing growth with environmental conservation is an ongoing consideration.
7. **Aging Infrastructure:** Some parts of the city's infrastructure, particularly in older sections, may require maintenance or updates. Ensuring that the community's infrastructure supports the needs of residents and businesses can be a challenge over time.



8. **Community Engagement:** Even when a city has a tradition of community involvement, maintaining high levels of engagement among a growing and diverse population can be a challenge. Sustaining active participation and volunteerism requires ongoing efforts.
9. **Commercial Development:** Striking a balance between attracting businesses and maintaining a sense of local community identity can be challenging. Ensuring that commercial development aligns with the community's vision and values is an ongoing consideration.
10. **Managing Change:** As a city evolves, there can be resistance to change from some longtime residents who may fear that the community's unique character is at risk. Managing the tensions between preserving tradition and embracing progress can be a challenge.

Overall, these challenges highlight some of the key considerations and the ongoing efforts required after implementation to sustain and enhance livability as the community continues to grow and evolve.

A strategic plan that includes diverse partnerships, education, transparent governance, and collaborative leadership will enable a community to succeed in implementing and maintaining many of the action items listed above.

Overcoming Challenges

People coming together can make a difference in their community.

Bryant Park, NYC – The Power of Community

Bringing people together in a safe, welcoming, green space is an effective way to promote social cohesion, trust, and to build strong communities. Social connections are vital to create shared bonds and a vibrant environment. In the late 1960s and 1970s, the park had fallen into disrepair and become a center of NYC's drug trade amidst a period of financial crisis. Within a few years, they were able to eradicate the drug trade and convert this community blight into a gathering place for workers, tourists, and all NYC residents. Today, there are several thriving restaurants in the park and the evening hours feature events such as outdoor movie nights and group yoga classes in the summer and a family skating rink and Christmas market in the winter. Bryant Park provides a perfect example of how committed citizens, responsive government, and the public can join to improve their environment, provide safe, beautiful places for people to gather, and in the process, promote stronger, healthier communities together.

Framework for Implementation

Implementing the crucial characteristics of a thriving and vibrant community requires a concerted effort from community members, leaders, and stakeholders to co-create the vision described above. It involves strategic planning, community engagement, and collaborative actions. Collaboration among local organizations, businesses, educational institutions, and government entities is also essential for creating a holistic and sustainable approach to community development. Local leaders, residents, and other stakeholders all have a role in ensuring the successful implementation of the above community characteristics. The following framework includes practical steps to implement the essential characteristics. Many of the steps contain links to examples in cities across the globe.

Appendix B in this report showcases case studies of communities that have successfully implemented the characteristics showcased below.



Social Capital and Sense of Belonging

Implementing social capital in a community involves creating opportunities for residents to connect, build relationships, and engage in collective activities. One approach is organizing community events and activities that unite people and encourage social interaction. Hosting town hall meetings, neighborhood block parties, and volunteer opportunities can foster a sense of belonging and facilitate relationship-building. Another strategy is to support the creation and maintenance of local organizations and groups that allow residents to collaborate, share knowledge, and pursue common goals. Finally, promoting a culture of inclusivity and participation can help create an environment where all community members feel valued and encouraged to engage actively in their community.

These efforts are crucial, as studies have shown that communities with higher levels of social capital tend to have better health outcomes, lower crime rates, and more effective local governance (Kawachi et al., 1997; Sampson et al., 1997).

Case Study: Reston, VA - Building Social Capital

Reston, Virginia's history is rooted in a vision of creating a planned community that prioritized community interaction, inclusivity, and a high quality of life. Its founder, Robert E. Simon, purchased the land in the early 1960s with the intention of developing a new kind of suburban environment.

Simon's vision and principles left a lasting impact on Reston's identity. Even as the community evolved, the emphasis on diversity, inclusivity, and a strong sense of belonging has persisted.

Open to everyone of all ages, incomes, and ethnicities (It became the first open community in Virginia, well before the Fair Housing Act of 1968 made housing discrimination illegal.) Simon was committed to selling homes to people of all races and backgrounds, which set a precedent for an integrated community from the beginning.

See the appendix for additional details.



The following table identifies action items, some examples, and responsible parties recommended to build social capital and a sense of belonging in a community.

Social Capital and Sense of Belonging	
Action Item	Facilitator
Organize community events and festivals that bring residents together. Ensure these events represent different cultures and traditions with educational opportunities.	Community Development Department, non-profit, educational institutions, Department of Cultural Affairs and Special Events
Ensure public spaces are designed with placemaking guidelines to foster bridging social capital. Portland, Maine: Congress Square Park	Community Development Department, Planning Department
Fund and support neighborhood watch programs to enhance safety and build trust among residents. Cops and Barbers Program , Charlotte, NC	Public Safety and Police Department
Create a Community Concierge program (welcoming committee) that communicates with new residents and businesses to help them feel part of the community. Greater Louisville Inc.'s City Champs Program ; Text A Detroit ; Milton Keynes, UK	Community Development Department, Civic Engagement Commission/Office
Develop policies and programs that promote diversity and inclusion within the community. City of Huntington "Open to All Campaign"	DEI Office
Provide language translation services and resources for diverse language-speaking residents. Create an executive order establishing this. Seattle, WA Executive Order	Civic Engagement Commission/Office, Mayor/City Manager Office

<p>Conduct town hall meetings and community forums to encourage resident participation. These meetings should be dispersed throughout the community. Consider bringing the meetings to the citizens through innovative engagement techniques such as Meeting in a Box, Post-it Note Billboards, and other online opportunities.</p> <p>We Will Chicago</p>	<p>Community Development Dept, Civic Engagement Commission/Office</p>
<p>Establish advisory boards and participatory budgeting committees where residents can have a voice in decision-making to fund community projects.</p> <p>NYC Participatory budgeting</p>	<p>Finance/Budget Office, Civic Engagement Commission/Office</p>
<p>Implement online platforms for citizen engagement, such as community forums or suggestion portals.</p> <p>Taiwan Open Government Action Plan</p>	<p>Civic Engagement Commission/Office, Community Development Department</p>
<p>Fund community centers, and organizations that provide support services.</p>	<p>Parks and Rec, Community Development Department</p>
<p>Establish community centers or recreational facilities that serve as gathering spaces.</p>	<p>Planning Dept</p>
<p>Support mental health and counseling programs to address community well-being.</p>	<p>Local Hospitals, Public Health Department</p>
<p>Develop community outreach programs to connect residents in need with available resources.</p>	<p>Public Health Dept, Social Services Department</p>
<p>Establish Community Foundation to reinvest in the community through grants.</p> <p>Tulsa Community Foundation</p>	<p>Community Foundation Office</p>
<p>Establish neighborhood partnering programs.</p> <p>Austin's Neighborhood Partnering Program: This program supports community-led projects that enhance neighborhoods and strengthen social bonds. It empowers</p>	<p>Civic Engagement Commission/Office, Community Development Department</p>

<p>residents to take an active role in shaping their communities and fosters a sense of belonging.</p>	
<p>Create initiatives to engage the public in projects that activate public spaces.</p> <p>The Miami Foundation's Public Space Challenge is an annual initiative that encourages residents to propose and implement projects that activate public spaces. It fosters community engagement and a sense of belonging by involving residents in shaping their city's public spaces</p>	<p>Community Development Department</p>
<p>Invest in community driven public safety initiatives.</p> <p>New York City: South Bronx Community Connections: Directs public resources to local community-driven public safety strategies that extend beyond traditional law enforcement and corrections players. This approach diverts youth who have been arrested from formal court involvement by connecting them to a network of positive adults and activities in their neighborhoods.</p>	<p>Public Works, Police Department, Fire Department, Civic Engagement Commission/Office</p>

Access to Effective Government and Services

Creating access to effective government and services is essential for fostering a fair and just society. Access to government services and resources ensures that citizens' basic needs are met and they can fully participate in their communities' economic, social, and political life (World Bank, 2004). Inclusive access to government resources reduces disparities, enhances social cohesion, and strengthens democracy by ensuring that all individuals, regardless of their socioeconomic background, have a voice in shaping the policies and programs that affect their lives (Dahl, 1989; Gaventa, 2006). Additionally, when citizens have access to essential services such as healthcare, education, housing, and transportation, they can improve their quality of life, contribute to their community's growth and development, and engage in economic activities that boost the overall economy (Marmot, 2005). By promoting equal access to government services and resources, policymakers can create more inclusive, equitable, and prosperous communities where all residents can thrive.

Case Study: Copenhagen - Access to Effective Government and Services

Copenhagen has pioneered the use of Smart City design for better governance and more effective decision-making. Six dimensions to a 'smart' city, whether developing new cities from scratch or rebuilding existing cities the challenge is to ensure that the city becomes more livable, economically successful, and environmentally responsible. The following six dimensions can be used to measure how 'smart' a city is:

- Smart governance (political strategies and perspectives, transparency, and community participation in decision making)
- Smart economy (high productivity, entrepreneurship, and ability to transform)
- Smart mobility (strong ICT infrastructure and sustainable transport systems)
- Smart environment (Sustainable resource management, pollution prevention, environmental protection)
- Smart people (diversity, creativity and participation in public life)
- Smart living (cultural facilities, housing quality, health and safety issues)

Copenhagen applies the above to ensure a strong social safety net and community services to enable all residents to be active citizens and thrive.

See the appendix for additional details.

The following table identifies action items, some examples, and responsible parties recommended to create access to government and services.

Access to Effective Government and Services	
Action Item	Facilitator
Invest in infrastructure development and maintenance, including roads, parks, and public facilities.	Public Works, Parks and Rec, Finance Department
Provide affordable housing options and support for low-income residents.	Social Service Office, Community Development Department
Collaborate with local agencies to ensure access to healthcare, education, and social services.	Social Service Office, Public Health Department



<p>Create spaces for community gardens and other resources that can be shared within neighborhoods.</p> <p>Portland, leader in community gardens; Boston, Fenway Victory Gardens</p>	<p>Civic Engagement Commission/Office, Community Development Department, Parks and Rec</p>
<p>Modify existing zoning maps to encourage mixed-use development and housing that supports (often neglected for high and low-income) workforce housing.</p> <p>Buffalo Green Code, Reston VA</p>	<p>Community Development Department</p>
<p>Ensure public access to information through open records and transparent decision-making.</p> <p>Taiwan Open Government Action Plan</p>	<p>City Manager, IT Department</p>
<p>Maintain clear communication channels to respond to residents' concerns and queries.</p> <p>Pittsburgh 311: (Citizens Hotline) The Pittsburgh 311 system is a centralized platform that allows residents to report non-emergency issues, seek information, and access city services more efficiently. It improves government responsiveness and enhances residents' ability to engage with local authorities.</p>	<p>Mayor/Manager Office, Civic Engagement Office</p>
<p>Encourage participation in local town hall meetings and public forums to exchange ideas and foster community engagement.</p>	<p>Mayor/Manager Office, Civic Engagement Office</p>
<p>Facilitate participation and engagement in local programs and events through the use of mobile apps.</p>	<p>Civic Engagement Office</p>
<p>Provide accessible transportation options for residents to access jobs, homes, and recreation.</p> <p>Boulder Neighborhood EcoPass Program: The Neighborhood EcoPass Program provides discounted transit passes to residents of participating neighborhoods. It encourages the use of public transportation, reduces car dependency, and fosters a sense of community among neighbors who commute together.</p>	<p>Planning, Community Development, and Transportation Department</p>



<p>Engage the community in fire safety awareness and preparedness.</p> <p>Santa Rosa CA Fire Department's Fire Prevention and Safety Education Programs: These programs contribute to responsive social services and engage residents in safety initiatives.</p>	<p>Fire Department</p>
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High-Quality Jobs and Economic Opportunities

High-quality jobs and economic opportunities are critical to the well-being and development of any community. Quality jobs offer fair wages, benefits, and opportunities for career advancement, enabling individuals to support themselves and their families and to contribute to the local economy.

Case Study: Singapore - High Quality Jobs and Economic Opportunity

Singapore is considered by many highly respected development experts, such as Paul Colliers and John Micklethwait, as the greatest economic success story of the 20th century. After gaining independence in 1965, it has gone from a colonial backwater of British rule, to one of the top five countries in the world in GDP per capita. Unlike most countries with this rate of prosperity, it has not accomplished this miraculous feat through hydrocarbons or other natural resources but through hard work, dedication, and inclusive, innovative government policies.

Singapore is the proof that a new model for a city can be successful in creating sustainable, intelligent development by implementing innovative policies in a pragmatic way. As fundamental governing principles, Singapore adopted a few central tenants that have guided its actions from the very beginning:

Land was to be used to promote economic development and a strong community, not as a tool of speculation.

A dual mandate focused on long-term, sustainable economic growth and quality of life for all citizens

A free, welcoming environment for businesses and individuals looking to prosper together

Open and transparent governance that is accountable for delivering results and creating opportunities for the community

See the appendix for additional details.

The following table identifies action items, some examples, and responsible parties recommended to create high-quality jobs and economic opportunities.

High-Quality Jobs and Economic Opportunities	
Action Item	Facilitator
Create economic development plans to attract and support businesses.	Community Development Dept, Small Business Development Office

<p>Offer grants, loans, or incentives for local entrepreneurship and business growth. This includes supporting Makerspaces which are places in which people with shared interests, especially in computing or technology, can gather to work on projects while sharing ideas, equipment, and knowledge.</p> <p>Copenhagen Makerspace</p> <p>The city of Copenhagen is home to eight makerspaces, offering shared workspaces equipped with tools ranging from emerging technology like 3D printing to traditional crafts like woodworking. These spaces provide training on equipment usage and host classes on specific fabrication techniques and meetups for enthusiasts. These makerspaces foster DIY hobbies, support small businesses, and encourage collaborative projects, enhancing the city's innovative spirit (see Appendix B).</p>	<p>Finance Department, Small Business Development Office</p>
<p>Partner with educational institutions to offer workforce development and job training programs.</p> <p>Chicago Cook Workforce Partnership</p>	<p>Mayor/City Manager Office; Finance Office</p>
<p>Create a more inclusive workplace. Consider a platform to quantify inclusion, while demonstrating improvements to an organization's bottom line.</p> <p>The Inclusive Organization: Real Solutions. Impactful Change. and Meaningful Diversity</p>	<p>DEI Office, Mayor/City Manager Office, Economic Development</p>
<p>Establish an accelerator program that supports financial health and wealth for the underserved.</p> <p>The Fintech Innovation Hub is about making an impact</p>	<p>Small Business Development Office</p>
<p>Consider implementing Land Value Return policies to support community reinvestment.</p> <p>"Land value return" and building a more equitable economy - Harrisburg, Pennsylvania.</p>	<p>Mayor/City Manager Office; Finance Office</p>
<p>Establish a technology council to create jobs and economic opportunities.</p>	<p>Economic Development</p>



<p>The Pittsburgh Technology Council - Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania: Organizations like the Pittsburgh Technology Council provide resources, networking opportunities, and support for technology and innovation-driven businesses, contributing to the city's economic growth.</p>	
<p>Introduce programs to attract high tech workers.</p> <p>Tulsa Remote - Tulsa, Oklahoma: The Tulsa Remote program offers remote workers financial incentives to relocate to Tulsa. It has attracted a diverse group of professionals and contributes to the city's economic vitality.</p>	Economic Development

Education and Life-long Learning

Access to quality education equips residents with the knowledge and skills necessary to succeed in the workforce, make informed decisions, and engage in civic life. Education also helps reduce income inequality and social disparities, leading to a more equitable and inclusive society. Investing in high-quality jobs and educational opportunities empowers communities to break free from the cycle of poverty and drive economic growth (Becker, 1964; Schultz, 1961).

Case Study: Raleigh, NC - Education and Life-long Learning

Raleigh's vision is often described as a "City of Innovation," and it seeks to be a leading center for innovation, technology, education, and culture.

Technology and Innovation: The city supports technology-driven industries, innovation hubs, and startups, with the aim of becoming a recognized center for technological advancement.

Education and Research: Raleigh continues to invest in education and research institutions, including partnerships with universities and organizations that contribute to innovation and knowledge. The number of technology and scholarly institutions around Raleigh, Chapel Hill, and Durham make the area known as the Research Triangle.

Collaborative Environment: The Research Triangle area encourages collaboration between academia, research institutions, and businesses, fostering a culture of cooperation and shared progress

As of 2011, Time ranked Raleigh as the third most educated city in the US based on the percentage of residents who held college degrees.

See the appendix for additional details.

The following table identifies action items, some examples, and responsible parties recommended to create education and life-long learning opportunities.

Education and Life-Long Learning	
Action Item	Facilitator
Support local schools and educational institutions through funding and partnerships. TechHire San Francisco	Education Department, Economic Development



<p>This program aims to bridge the digital skills gap by providing tech training to underserved populations. TechHire partners with tech companies to offer training and job placement opportunities.</p>	
<p>Create an innovation ecosystem to promote education, innovation and entrepreneurship.</p> <p>Innovate Raleigh Innovate Raleigh is a not-for-profit charitable organization committed to making Raleigh the top center for innovation and entrepreneurship in the nation.</p>	<p>Education Department, Economic Development</p>
<p>Organize workshops, seminars, and educational events for residents of all ages.</p>	<p>Department of Cultural Affairs and Special Events</p>
<p>Establish public libraries and provide access to educational resources. Establish a Lifelong Learning Advisory Council.</p> <p>Aspen Institute Guide.</p>	<p>Library</p>
<p>Support and create scholarship programs to attend trade colleges or trade schools.</p> <p>Pittsburgh Promise: The Pittsburgh Promise is a scholarship program that provides financial assistance to eligible students who graduate from Pittsburgh Public Schools and attend a college or trade school. It not only promotes education but also enhances economic opportunities for students and their families.</p>	<p>Education Department, Economic Development</p>
<p>Ensure universal preschool and affordable childcare.</p> <p>San Francisco Preschool for All Program: San Francisco offers universal preschool for four-year-olds, making early childhood education more accessible to families and supporting working parents.</p>	<p>Education Department, Mayor/City Manager Office</p>
<p>Support and kickstart organizations that are place-based, and center on improving educational and health opportunities for children in the neighborhood.</p> <p>The Harlem Children's Zone (HCZ) - New York City, New York:</p>	<p>Community Development Office, Education Department</p>

<p>HCZ is a comprehensive community-based initiative that provides a range of services, from education and healthcare to family support, in order to improve outcomes for children and families in Harlem. It has contributed to improved educational outcomes and community engagement.</p>	
<p>Provide technical assistance to existing educational coalitions establishing digital infrastructure.</p> <p>Local learning ecosystem, Paris, France: This educational framework combines a digital network, programs in emergent fields such as urban agriculture and circular design, and formal government certifications. A local makerspace established the joint effort as it was a central hub for experts, enthusiasts, and unemployed people.</p>	<p>Education Department, Economic Development, Small Business Development Office, Information Technology Office</p>
<p>Consider alternative educational and vocational learning methods.</p> <p>10 reasons why Finland’s education system is the best The Scandinavian Model has been very successful in educating students for productive careers in both knowledge-based and vocational sectors. Most are at the top of the rankings, especially Finland which perennially ranks first or second in the world. They have a different emphasis which begins with student autonomy and encouragement to take risks, master the basics and have a work/school/life balance. It has many unique features and has consistently produced outstanding results.</p>	<p>Education Department</p>
<p>Develop programs to help at-risk children in primary and secondary education to incentivize attendance and improve performance.</p> <p>Oakland Natives Give Back</p> <p>How Partnerships connect Communities and Schools Extensive research demonstrates that communities with higher social capital and stronger community bonds have less truancy, lower youth crime and disciplinary problems and better test scores (Putnam, Upswing).</p>	<p>Education Department</p>

Arts, Culture, and Recreation

Arts, culture, and recreational opportunities are crucial in building strong communities. They foster social interaction and create a sense of belonging by bringing people together around shared experiences and interests. Cultural and artistic activities, such as festivals, performances, and exhibitions, celebrate diversity and enhance community identity. These activities also contribute to the local economy by attracting visitors and creating job opportunities. Recreational opportunities like parks, trails, and sports facilities promote physical health, encourage outdoor activities, and provide spaces for relaxation and enjoyment.

Case Study: Portland, Maine - Vibrant Arts, Culture and Recreation

Portland's vision often centers around being a welcoming, diverse, and sustainable community that offers a high quality of life for its residents.

Cultural Enrichment: Supporting cultural organizations, arts programs, and initiatives celebrating the city's diverse cultural heritage.

Portland has a rich history that residents take pride in. Historical preservation efforts and a focus on local heritage help build a shared identity and sense of place.

The city hosts various community events throughout the year, such as festivals, farmers' markets, and cultural celebrations which bring people together and encourage interaction.

Portland's Arts and Cultural District is home to numerous arts organizations, galleries, theaters, and cultural events. It fosters artistic expression, cultural engagement, and recreational opportunities, enhancing the city's cultural vibrancy.

See the appendix for additional details.



The following table identifies action items, some examples, and responsible parties recommended to create arts, cultural and recreational opportunities.

Vibrant Arts, Culture, and Recreational Opportunities	
Action Item	Facilitator
<p>Consider creating public spaces with art, cultural and recreational opportunities in unused public spaces.</p> <p>The Underline Miami FL</p>	<p>Dept of Cultural Affairs and Special Events</p>
<p>Create and Support Cultural Districts.</p> <p>Pittsburgh Cultural Trust and Cultural District: Pittsburgh's Cultural Trust manages a vibrant cultural district in the heart of downtown. It hosts numerous arts and cultural events, theaters, galleries, and public art installations. This district fosters creativity, cultural engagement, and a sense of community through the arts. Pittsburgh, PA</p>	<p>Dept of Cultural Affairs and Special Events</p>
<p>Support local arts organizations and cultural events through funding and grants.</p> <p>Peterborough, NH Night Market, Public Art Exhibition, and Emerging Artists Exhibition: These annual public events are hosted by the local makerspace in the town center.</p>	<p>Dept of Cultural Affairs and Special Events</p>
<p>Promote public art installations and cultural heritage preservation projects.</p>	<p>Dept of Cultural Affairs and Special Events</p>
<p>Incorporate arts and cultural elements into public spaces and city planning.</p> <p>Keene NH Walldog Murals</p>	<p>Dept of Cultural Affairs and Special Events, Planning Department</p>
<p>Work with the private sector to fund art collections for the community using a percentage of proceeds from commercial real estate development.</p>	<p>Dept of Cultural Affairs and Special Events</p>



The Woodlands is Home to One of the Largest Outdoor Art Collections in the Nation	
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Design and Environmental Stewardship

Urban design plays a critical role in shaping vibrant communities. Thoughtful planning can promote walkability, create public spaces for interaction, and encourage mixed-use development (Putnam, 2000). Urban design also supports equity through the creation of neighborhoods that include workforce and affordable housing.

Urban design and sustainability are intrinsically interconnected. Sustainable urban design considers development's environmental, social, and economic impacts, ensuring that the built environment minimizes resource consumption and pollution while enhancing quality of life and fostering social inclusion. Sustainable practices, such as conservation of resources, waste reduction, and promotion of green infrastructure, ensure the long-term health and vitality of a community's natural environment (Hart, 1999). A healthy environment, in turn, supports public health by providing clean air, water, and access to green spaces (Frumkin et al., 2004). Furthermore, sustainable communities are often more resilient to environmental challenges, such as climate change and natural disasters, due to their emphasis on sustainable design, infrastructure, and resource management (Wilbanks and Kates, 1999). By prioritizing sustainability and thoughtful design, communities can enhance their quality of life, support the well-being of current and future generations, and create long-term social, economic, and environmental prosperity (Brundtland, 1987).

Case Study: Milton Keynes, UK - Design and Environmental Stewardship

Forward-Thinking Design: The innovative approach to town planning in Milton Keynes, including the incorporation of sustainable features, has attracted residents who share a vision for a modern and environmentally conscious way of living.

Planned Development: Milton Keynes was meticulously planned with a focus on creating a balanced and self-contained community. The town was designed to be pedestrian-friendly, with a "grid" road system that promotes easy navigation and reduces traffic congestion. This layout encourages people to walk and interact with their neighbors, fostering a sense of community.

See the appendix for additional details.

The following table identifies action items, some examples, and responsible parties recommended to create design and environmental stewardship opportunities.

Design and Environmental Stewardship	
Action Item	Facilitator
<p>Design for mixed use neighborhoods that includes transportation, housing jobs, parks and other amenities.</p> <p>The BeltLine Project - Atlanta, Georgia: The Atlanta BeltLine is a comprehensive urban redevelopment project that has transformed unused rail corridors into parks, trails, and mixed-use developments, revitalizing neighborhoods and boosting economic activity.</p> <p>The Inclusionary Zoning Program, Montgomery County, MD: This program requires developers to include affordable housing units in new residential developments. It helps address housing affordability issues and create diverse, inclusive communities.</p>	<p>Community Development, Energy and Climate Office, Civic Engagement Commission/Office</p>

<p>Implement environmental initiatives, such as recycling programs and zero-waste programs.</p> <p>Smart City Sweden San Francisco</p>	<p>Energy and Climate Office</p>
<p>Enforce local ordinances to maintain cleanliness and safety in public spaces.</p>	<p>Public Works</p>
<p>Create and design human-centric spaces to foster the gathering of the community in public.</p> <p>Copenhagen - Creative Placemaking in Denmark. Best Practices and Recommendations Superkilen Urban Park in Denmark. A public park co-created with local inhabitants, with over 60 nationalities, who contributed their own ideas and artifacts to the park they enjoy today.</p>	<p>Community Development Department, Planning Department, Civic Engagement Commission/Office</p>
<p>Develop and implement sustainability plans to reduce the community's environmental impact.</p> <p>PlaNYC: Getting Sustainability Done</p>	<p>Energy and Climate Office, Community Development Department</p>
<p>Invest in renewable energy projects or green infrastructure.</p> <p>100% renewable campaign</p>	<p>Energy and Climate Office</p>
<p>Support environmental education programs to raise awareness and encourage sustainable behavior.</p>	<p>Energy and Climate Office</p>
<p>Develop disaster preparedness and emergency response plans.</p>	<p>Fire Department, Energy and Climate Office</p>
<p>Implement climate change adaptation and mitigation strategies to address potential challenges.</p> <p>The Seattle 2030 District - The Seattle 2030 District is a public-private partnership aimed at reducing energy use and emissions in downtown Seattle, WA contributing to environmental sustainability and economic efficiency.</p>	<p>Energy and Climate Office, Community Development Department, Planning Department, Mayor/City Manager Office, Civic Engagement Commission/Office</p>

<p>Boulder's Climate Commitment and Sustainability Initiatives: Boulder has committed to aggressive climate goals and sustainability initiatives. These efforts include renewable energy programs, energy efficiency incentives, and land use planning that promotes environmental stewardship and sustainable design.</p> <p>Toronto - Climate, Energy & Resilience.</p>	
<p>Support community-led resilience-building initiatives and programs.</p> <p>NYC East Side Coastal Resiliency Project : Designed to protect NYC's coast from floodwater, storms, and other threats posed by climate change. Over 40+ stakeholder sessions with more than 1,000 participants from the community and surrounding neighborhoods provided input.</p> <p>Eastie Farm, CREW in East Boston.</p>	<p>Energy and Climate Office, Community Development Department, Planning Department, Civic Engagement Commission/Office</p>
<p>Create neighborhood resiliency hubs for residents during times of natural disasters.</p> <p>Baltimore</p>	<p>Civic Engagement Office, Community Development Dept, Energy and Climate Office, Fire Department</p>
<p>Create a Sustainable Business Certification program.</p> <p>Eugene OR, Sustainable Business Certification Program recognizes and supports businesses committed to sustainable practices. It promotes environmentally responsible entrepreneurship and provides economic opportunities in the green economy.</p> <p>Portland OR; Santa Rosa, CA; Los Angeles and USGBC</p>	<p>Economic Development Department, Energy and Climate Office, Small Business Development Office</p>
<p>Create zoning and site plan regulations that require green building.</p> <p>Austin's Green Building Program: promotes sustainable building practices and green design. It contributes to environmental stewardship by encouraging energy-efficient and eco-friendly construction in the city.</p>	<p>Community Development Department, Planning Department</p>



<p>Support existing recycling coalitions.</p> <p>Remix Ecodesign, Barcelona, Spain: A network of designers, formed by a local makerspace, recycles biomaterial within the community. They co-create solutions to reuse neighborhood food leftovers and create educational opportunities for circular practices based on food-waste crafts and community engagement—the Starts Prize 2021 winner.</p>	<p>Education Department, Economic Development, Energy and Climate Office, Small Business Development Office</p>
<p>Ensure Inclusion and Diversity to create Affordable housing through Neighborhood Design.</p> <p>Designing New York: Quality Affordable Housing</p>	<p>Community Development Department, Planning Department, DEI Office</p>

Opportunity

Together we are working to create a new index with a goal of creating more thriving communities. The Community Connections Index (CCI) focuses on measures that relate to social capital, belonging, and community connections. Traditional measures to rank country or community quality are often based solely on the performance of economic and health indicators, and can overlook factors that can better measure the impact of community connectivity. We are bringing together the key factors such as social cohesion, neighborliness, public trust, equity, and inclusion as well as other indicators related to safety, jobs, and education.

The CCI index was created through a collaboration of Polco and Telosa through significant literature reviews, expert consultation, investigation of best practice cities, and focused discussions with the Telosa community. The index provides opportunities for city officials and residents to assess their current level of connection and social capital to move forward in creating more vibrant and cohesive communities.

The Telosa community hosted a focus group to incorporate feedback about the value of creating a new proposed index or assessment and what additional information should be included in the index. Overall, the answer from breakout group discussions was yes, a proposed index would be valuable. However, feedback was received in many of the breakout groups that focused on what would happen if an index is created? How do we ensure a community addresses and implements actions to correct downward trends that



might be shown in the proposed index? In addition, there were a lot of comments on how to decide the metric points, and what indicators need to be included to measure community livability. Many participants also felt there needed to be education on why the index is valuable and how it could improve the lives for community members.

Themes were uncovered across all the breakout group discussions on what additional information should be included in the proposed index. This included ensuring we measure health, food security, access to nature, including parks and community gardens. In addition, other topics mentioned were: education, sports and recreation, sustainability and accessibility.

https://cityoftelosa.com/2023-09-28_webinar-focus-group-notes/

Polco-Telosa Community Connections Index

While traditional measures to rank country or community quality are often based on the performance of economic and health indicators, together we are working to create a new index that focuses on measures often ignored that relate to social capital, belonging, and community connections. We are bringing together the key factors detailed above to improve decision-making by city official and residents, and to better measure the impact of community connections. This approach will help realize the goal of creating more thriving communities.

Details coming soon!

Conclusion

Learning from the best practices worldwide, we have found that vibrant, thriving, and equitable cities have a strong sense of community. Having explored strategies we admire worldwide, our goal is to promote a co-design approach that ensures everyone plays a role in shaping our community. We plan to integrate these best practices into future projects, allowing our communities to flourish in a prosperous city for everyone.

Over the last two years, Telosa has brought together thought leaders, community movers, shakers, and individuals with innovative ideas who want to collaborate, discuss, and work together to build a more equitable and sustainable future. Through this



community of practice, participants learned about best practices, barriers to implementation, and innovative solutions that can be applied to a new city model and to develop a blueprint.

In this report, we have charted action items with a clear and direct benefit for cities and towns that reflect Telosa's values of an open, fair, and inclusive community. Our findings report is the first step toward creating a guidebook for cities and towns to implement, measure, and evaluate action steps toward building community. The next step is to obtain feedback and information from individuals and organizations working in this field through interviews, focus groups, and surveys.

This framework offers a clear model to inform decision-making with evidence-based strategies that have been uncovered and synthesized. Grounded in research, the report showcases approaches that strengthen community bonds to benefit current and future generations. Once a further refined list of characteristics and action steps are included, a follow-on report will be produced to measure and monitor success. With continued input from our community and in collaboration with our partner, Polco, our goal is to produce a guidebook and community index that will provide cities and its residents with practical steps and tools to strengthen communities and improve social cohesion.

Throughout the process, we will continue to center our work in a co-design model that relies on the voices of people to collaborate and create equitable and sustainable cities that are open, fair, and inclusive.

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APPENDIX A - Definition of Community

Communities can manifest in various forms, such as geographical communities like neighborhoods, towns, or cities or virtual communities formed through online platforms, forums, and social media. These communities play a pivotal role in shaping identities, fostering a sense of place, and generating shared experiences among their members. Community can be both a feeling and a set of relationships among people. Those feelings and relationships are the foundation for individuals to have a sense of trust, feel that they belong, and are safe in a location like a city.

One of the primary reasons why communities are crucial lies in their ability to provide social support and a sense of belonging to their members. In addition to family and friends, community members can turn to each other for emotional support, encouragement, and a helping hand in times of joy or adversity. The feeling of belongingness from being part of a community enhances well-being, reduces feelings of loneliness, and contributes to overall physical and mental health. This social cohesion also contributes to a thriving local economy. A positive correlation between community cohesion and economic growth has been found in numerous studies.

Robert Putnam's work on social capital has been groundbreaking and has significantly shaped our understanding of community building. According to Putnam, a thought leader on building social capital, communities foster social cohesion by encouraging cooperation, teamwork, and mutual understanding among their members. When people share common goals and work collectively towards achieving them, it strengthens the bonds within the community. This collaborative spirit enhances the community's ability to address challenges and promotes positive social change and development. Putnam defines social capital as the connections, networks, and social relationships that facilitate cooperation and mutual trust within a community. Social capital is essential for community cohesion, as it binds individuals together and fosters a sense of solidarity and reciprocity. Many cities face serious challenges today, and these types of strong community bonds greatly enhance their ability to solve these problems.

The key to creating community is bridging social capital, which means bringing together the connections and relationships between individuals or groups from different backgrounds, social circles, or communities. It involves building links and networks across diverse groups, fostering interactions between people who may not typically interact, and creating opportunities for collaboration and cooperation, empowering collective decision-making. Bridging social capital is vital for various reasons, as it plays



a significant role in promoting social cohesion, fostering trust, and enhancing overall community well-being.

Putnam's research highlights a concerning trend of diminishing civic engagement within communities. Traditional communal activities, such as participation in clubs, religious organizations, and local events, have witnessed a decline. This shift from "we" to "I" weakens the fabric of community life and diminishes the potential for collective action on important issues. As observed in many modern societies, a decline in social capital weakens community bonds and contributes to feelings of isolation and disconnection among individuals, which can affect mental health and wellness.

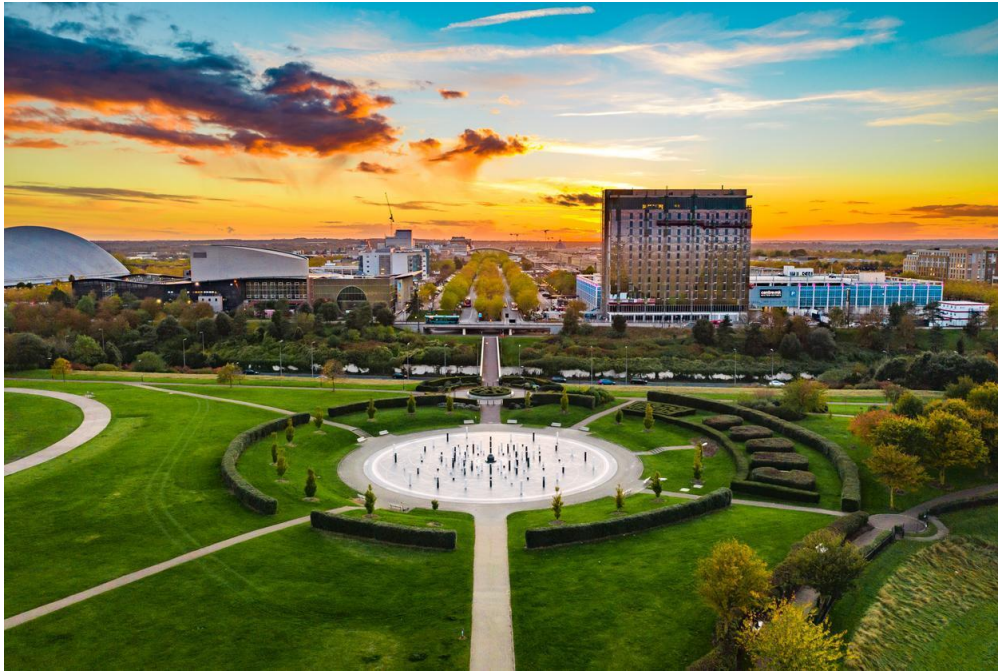
APPENDIX B - Case Studies

The definition of “best” communities can vary widely depending on individual preferences. We view successful cities as those that create an environment where individuals, families, and the whole community can thrive together.

In approaching the case studies, we are highlighting key concepts from around the world and providing specific examples of successful implementation. Many of the cities we have studied excel in a number of different areas, not just the ones specifically cited. In fact, most of the cities we reference are outstanding in multiple categories, but we are emphasizing an area where they distinguish themselves. We are working to compile a comprehensive guide of global leaders in each category.

In the United States, some well-regarded communities including Portland, Maine; Raleigh, North Carolina; Atlanta, Georgia are known for their quality of life, culture, and amenities. Globally, places like Copenhagen, Denmark; Milton Keynes, England; and Singapore often rank highly for their overall livability. What makes a community the "best" can be quite subjective and depends on your specific interests and needs. We can learn from the best practices of each of these cities on design policies, programs and development to make a difference in our own communities.

Milton Keynes, England - Design and Environmental Stewardship



“By knowledge, design and understanding” - city motto

Vision/Goals

- Vision: Milton Keynes envisions itself as a vibrant, sustainable, and inclusive city that offers a high quality of life for its residents and visitors. The city aims to be a place known for innovation, economic growth, and environmental stewardship, while maintaining its unique character and green spaces.
- Opportunity, freedom of choice; Easy movement, access to good communication; Balance, variety; An attractive city; Public awareness, participation; Efficient, imaginative resource use.

Background

- A city that started as the dream of politicians and planners in the late 1960s, Milton Keynes is now home to almost 270,000 residents in 2022 and 11,000 businesses. It is a cultural artifact in its own right.
- Milton Keynes was founded as a response to urban overcrowding and the need for new housing and infrastructure. Its history and design principles have contributed to the development of a strong sense of community.
- Located on 22,000 acres in the south of England between London and Birmingham. Considered an edge city - surrounded by London, Birmingham, Oxford and Cambridge. All one hour away by car except Birmingham 1 ½ hours. London ½ hour by transit.

- Milton Keynes was part of the third wave of New Towns Program (32 new towns in the United Kingdom, 21 in England to provide a new future after the ravages of war).
- The government established a Development Corporation (MKDC) to oversee planning and early development. Operating 1967-1992, MKDC had control over land, finances/budget, and plans.

Social Capital and Belonging

- Diverse ethnic/age population. “People came to MK to be part of something new where everyone could shape their place called home, creating a community keen to progress and move forward.”
- The Social Development Program offered encouragement and opportunities for effective public participation and growth of the city in the early years. Arrival Workers working for the MKDC in the late 1960s/early ‘70s helped people settle in; helped them establish local associations, clubs, **community** newspapers and all types of arts and crafts, sports and leisure groups.

Access to Effective Government and Services

- **Community Engagement:** Local authorities in Milton Keynes have actively involved residents in decision-making processes, giving them a voice in shaping their community. This participatory approach has empowered residents and made them feel invested in the town's growth and development.
- There is some homelessness. To help address the issue, the MK Council pays for more than 800 families to stay in temporary housing, up from 648 in April 2018 (MK Citizen 2019.08.01).

High Quality Jobs and Economic Opportunities

- **Economic Diversification:** The planners of Milton Keynes focused on creating a diverse economy by attracting a range of industries and businesses. This economic diversity helped create jobs and opportunities, making the town a more attractive destination for residents and investors.
- Above-average economic growth; a jobs boom of 18% according to a study by the Center for Cities Research. MK ranks #1 for job opportunities in the UK based on 2022 research from HR software provider Ciphir.
- Home to national & international companies: Argos, Domino's Pizza, Mercedes Benz, Marshall Amplification, Volkswagen AG, Red Bull Racing (Formula One), Network Rail, Yamaha Kemble.
- Major local employers: Santander and Open University (The latter arrived in the late 1960s and pioneered distance learning for all).
- Fastest growing economy in the UK. MK is one of the most productive and contributes significantly on a national level making it a great place to work and run a business.

Education and Lifelong Learning



- A focus on educational institutions: Milton Keynes College, University Campus Milton Keynes (a University of Bedfordshire campus).
- Milton Keynes has some of the best schools in Buckinghamshire, UK. As of September 2021, more than 10 primary schools in the town were rated 'Outstanding' by Ofsted.
- Milton Keynes Education Trust (MKET) was the first multi-academy trust established in Milton Keynes (2011). The aim is to improve education provision by creating and developing a mutually beneficial partnership between local schools.

Arts, Culture, and Recreation

- **Cultural and Recreational Offerings:** The town has actively promoted cultural and recreational events, including music festivals, art exhibitions, and outdoor performances. These events bring people from different backgrounds together, fostering a shared sense of identity and community pride.
- There are free and low-cost arts and heritage activities available.
 - Arts including: MK Gallery, Milton Keynes Art Center, Milton Keynes Theatre, The Stables with film and live programming.
 - Heritage including: Milton Keynes Museum, Bletchley Park, Cowper and Newton Museum, Milton Keynes Libraries.
 - Parks, public art, trails and outdoor activities including: The Parks Trust and MK Trails App (free cultural trails).

Design and Environmental Stewardship

- **Forward-Thinking Design:** The innovative approach to town planning in Milton Keynes, including the incorporation of sustainable features, has attracted residents who share a vision for a modern and environmentally conscious way of living.
- Open city, open spaces with lots of greenery/heavily landscaped, low density housing. City in a forest; town/country mix. Over 22 million trees planted in over 50 years. Parks, lakes and green spaces cover about 25% of MK.
- **Community Facilities:** Milton Keynes was designed to have an abundance of community facilities, such as community centers, sports complexes, libraries, and parks.
- Good transportation, very good accessibility – train lines and airport.
- Plenty of parking. Choice of private and public transport.
- **Planned Development:** Milton Keynes was meticulously planned with a focus on creating a balanced and self-contained community. The town was designed to be pedestrian-friendly, with a "grid" road system that promotes easy navigation and reduces traffic congestion. This layout encourages people to walk and interact with their neighbors, fostering a sense of community.
- No congestion. MK distinguishes between corridors of movement. The grid roads with landscaping shield the daily life of people from the noise and air pollution of fast movement.

- **Mixed-Use Neighborhoods:** The town's design incorporates mixed-use neighborhoods, where residential areas are often interspersed with local amenities, shops, schools, and green spaces.
- Extensive network of shared paths for leisure cyclists and pedestrians. Ways of crossing are bridges or underpasses. MK underpasses are generous in width and visual approach, so it feels safer. Cyclists/pedestrians do not have to compete with cars and never need to encounter vehicles at crossing points.
- Trailblazing in the use of smart city technologies to improve the environment for business & local residents – e.g.: download an app to your phone that will enable you to find a parking space in real time or book that parking space.
- Britain's first driverless car trial through pedestrianized parts of MK was a success in 2015-16.
- Amenities include a large theatre (1999), municipal art gallery, three museums, Arts Centre, multiplex cinema, open air National Bowl, professional sports teams (football, ice hockey, Formula One racing), street skateboarding plaza, etc.

Success/Failure Factors

- Built with flexibility and space for organic growth. Earlier towns in the New Towns program had been too rigidly built. Richard Llewelyn-Davies, who led the architectural team responsible for the city's masterplan, described the future as indeterminate. "In planning of this sort it's futile to make guesses. You have to design a city with as much freedom and looseness of texture as possible. Don't tie people up in knots." In retrospect, at least one member of the initial planning team believes some areas of the masterplan should have been clearer and more forceful, e.g.: should have devised land policies and pricing strategies along with tough design briefs to anticipate and work around market forces (Britain's notoriously conservative volume housebuilding firms regarding their densities).
- The founders planned and implemented the parks before the development arrived, so housing and industrial infrastructure had to fit in with it. Plan left 40% green space within the city and two valleys as linear parks with lakes to hold flood waters. One of the lessons and successes of MK is the way it managed its green infrastructure in the long term through the Parks Trust.
- **Accessibility and Connectivity:** The town's well-designed road network, efficient public transportation, and proximity to major cities like London contributed to its accessibility. The ease of getting around made Milton Keynes an appealing place to live and work.
- The strong sense of community in Milton Keynes can be attributed to its design, which incorporates mixed-use neighborhoods, community centers, and local facilities within walking distance of residences.
- The importance of economic diversification to create jobs and a more resilient economy.
- Being proactive in supporting new arrivals in early years led to greater community interaction.

Best Practices for Telosa

- **Long-Term Vision:** The planners of Milton Keynes had a long-term vision for the town's growth and development. This forward-thinking approach ensured that the town continued to thrive and meet the needs of its residents as it expanded.
- The design approach of MK was multidisciplinary – architects, planners, landscape architects, engineers, economists, sociologists, commercial people, etc. all worked together. Lots of diversity and difference of opinion, but viewed as exciting, creative.
- Purpose built down to every detail. When designing MK, they were developing a blueprint for growth.
- The intentional design, emphasis on amenities, and opportunities for engagement have helped create a place where residents feel connected and a part of something larger than themselves.
- **Green Spaces and Environment:** The incorporation of green spaces, parks, and sustainable features into the town's design enhanced the quality of life for residents. These features not only provided recreational opportunities but also contributed to a healthier and more appealing living environment.
- Lofty and empty abstractions (choice, flexibility, diversity, sustainability) are great words for building consensus, but avoid use in the plan unless elaborated into precise requirements, otherwise they can be lost.
- Be proactive in supporting the new residents, especially in the early developmental years.

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New study reveals the best cities in the UK for job opportunities

[New study reveals the best cities in the UK for job opportunities](#)

Reston, Virginia - Social Capital and Belonging



“Live, Work, Play” - Robert E. Simon, Jr., Founder

Vision/Goals

- **Vision:** Reston's vision, summarized in its motto "Live, Work, Play," is to create a balanced and sustainable community where residents can enjoy a high quality of life while living, working, and recreating within the same community. The community values diversity, inclusivity, environmental stewardship, and a strong sense of place.
- Build a new town that was not characterized by the suburban sprawl that was typical of post-WWII development.
- Walkability, accessible amenities, and the idea of living and working in the same area.
- Open to everyone of all ages, incomes, and ethnicities. It became the first open community in Virginia, well before the Fair Housing Act of 1968 made housing discrimination illegal.
- Reston's Founding Principles directly informed the town's design:
 - Reston would have **housing** for all.
 - Reston would allow residents to “**Live, Work & Play**” in the same community.



- Reston would put the **importance and dignity of each individual** as the focal point of planning.
- Reston would be **beautiful** - nature would be fostered.
- Reston would accommodate **leisure time**.
- Reston would have **amenities** from the outset including a library, golf courses, art, and more.
- Reston would be **financially successful**.

Background

- Reston, Virginia's history is rooted in a vision of creating a planned community that prioritized community interaction, inclusivity, and a high quality of life. Its founder, Robert E. Simon Jr., purchased the land in the early 1960s with the intention of developing a new kind of suburban environment.
- Robert E. Simon Jr. created the community's motto: "Live, Work, Play."
- Founded on April 10, 1964. The Fairfax County Board of Supervisors approved RPC zoning and the Reston Master Plan on July 18, 1962.
- Reston required a Residential Planned Community (RPC) zoning that would allow for mixed-use, mixed-density flexible development. Housing would be constructed in tightly knit groupings called clusters, which allowed for woodland conservation and recreational areas.
- Gulf Oil Corp. was an early investor. Three years after Reston's founding, struggles over home sales and development costs culminated; Simon was forced out by the Gulf Oil board of directors.
- Gulf created a subsidiary, Gulf Reston Inc., to manage the project. Gulf prioritized profitability but also largely followed the master plan. Central plazas remained a fixture of the villages, but Gulf emphasized they needed to be profitable.
- Gulf Reston later divested its holdings to an investment firm and transferred title of many of its recreational facilities which protected them from overdevelopment.
- Despite the management shift, Reston's community values held and became an integral part of the town's culture.

Facts and Figures

- An unincorporated community in Fairfax County.
- Population: 63,226 (2020 Census).
- Area: 15.7 Square Miles.
- In 2002 Reston received the American Institute of Certified Planners Landmark Award.
- Reston Town Center, with restaurants, shopping, offices, and residences opened in 1990.
- In 2014, Metro Silver Line came to Wiehle Avenue in Reston with another station opened in Reston Town Center in November 2022.
- Ranked 29th Best Place to Live in America by Money Magazine, 2017.
- Reston is an official Biophilic "City," 2017.



- Lake Anne Village Center listed on the National Register of Historic Places in 2017.

Social Capital and Belonging

- At the outset, the developers in cooperation with the Welfare and Health Council of Fairfax County made efforts for advance planning of physical facilities for social organizations and cultural and educational programs to facilitate the best and earliest development of such programs. They noted that ultimately it would be dependent on the interests and leadership of the residents.
- **Neighborhood Identity:** Besides community space in the Town Center, community facilities were planned for each neighborhood. Reston's design incorporated different neighborhoods, each with its own unique character and amenities. This allowed residents to identify strongly with their immediate community while still being part of the larger Reston whole.
- In the Master Plan, space for a conference facility and hotel was reserved in Reston, close to the golf course. This met a need in the Washington Metropolitan Area.
- There was planning for places of worship. The idea was to locate them along busy walkways of the community and in village centers. The developers recognized the value of church sponsorship of community activity programs and planned to assist in the design of buildings and program facilities.
- Reston's "early pioneers" were quick to contribute to the town's founding principles by, for example: establishing a neighborhood day care system and contributing to weekly meetings on artistic and cultural programming.
- **Community Centers:** Reston was designed with community centers that serve as hubs for social activities, classes, and events. These centers facilitate interaction among residents and provide spaces for communal gatherings.
- Reston Strong started as a grassroots movement by a few volunteer leaders and has grown into a community action group - "We Change the World One Neighbor at a Time." - <https://www.restonstrong.com/>
- Today, there is still deep civic engagement in the arts and faith communities, a passion for living among nature, and a commitment to a community that offers chances to "Live, Work, Play."

Access to Effective Government and Services

- **Civic Organizations:** Simon helped establish various civic organizations that focused on community building, environmental stewardship, and social engagement.



- The county's homeless shelter for northwestern Fairfax County, the Embry Rucker Community Shelter, was intentionally invited by the Reston civic and faith community 30+ years ago and supported by volunteers from the community.
- The Reston Association, the overall homeowner association that provides the unincorporated community's public-facing services, supports a range of civic needs from pools to summer camps to vast public natural areas.
- Reston is part of Fairfax County and benefits from the resources, infrastructure and services provided by this prospering county.

High Quality Jobs and Economic Opportunity

- **Proximity to Jobs and Services:** Reston's strategic location within the Washington, D.C. metropolitan area provides residents with access to a wide range of job opportunities, services, and cultural attractions.
- Over the years, it has been home to a large number of international firms, including: Rolls-Royce, General Dynamics, Leidos, Learning Tree International, and many others because of Reston's location in the Dulles Technology Corridor.
- Reston is home to the "East Coast Headquarters" of numerous technology and government contracting firms including: Google, Microsoft, Oracle, and Meta.
- Reston is now widely recognized as one of the best places in Northern Virginia to dine and shop. The Reston Town Center is home to over 50 shops, restaurants, and services, including an Apple Store, J.Crew, Anthropologie, South Moon Under, and many more upscale establishments.
- There are 35 dining options, ranging from fast food (like Chipotle) to upscale casual (like Ted's Bulletin, a DC institution) to international fare (like BarTaco and Mon Ami Gabi). Reston Station, Lake Anne, South Lakes, and other areas also include clusters of restaurants outside of the Reston Town Center.
- Reston was ranked as the #1 place to live if you work from home by Money Magazine in 2021.

Education and Lifelong Learning

- Reston Association (www.reston.org), the community's homeowners association, offers a range of environmental education programs. These programs include nature hikes, wildlife education, and environmental stewardship workshops. They provide residents of all ages with opportunities to learn about and connect with the natural world around them.
- RCC (Reston Community Center) offers a wide array of educational and cultural programs for all ages. They provide classes in the arts, fitness, personal



enrichment, and more. RCC also hosts cultural events, performances, and exhibitions that contribute to lifelong learning and cultural enrichment.

- Reston is served by Fairfax County Public Schools (FCPS), offering quality education for students. In addition, there are community organizations and tutoring services that provide educational support and resources to students and families.
- The Reston Regional Library hosts events such as author talks, workshops, and book clubs that promote lifelong learning and literacy.

Arts, Culture, and Recreation

- **Public Art and Culture:** Simon believed that art and culture were vital to community development. He ensured that public art installations, cultural events, and performance spaces were integral to Reston's design, fostering a sense of cultural enrichment.
- **Natural Spaces:** Reston's planning emphasized the preservation of open spaces, parks, and trails. These green areas not only provided recreational opportunities but also promoted a healthier lifestyle and opportunities for community interaction.
- The Reston Association's Walker Nature Center is a 72-acre woodland providing environmental education for all ages with 99% of the site conserved as forested open space.
- Outdoor spots like Lake Anne, among others. 16 tennis courts, 15 swimming pools, and over 55 miles of biking and jogging paths and numerous athletic fields provide recreational opportunities.
- League of Reston Artists - <https://www.leagueofrestonartists.org>
 - Provide members with opportunities to grow, learn, and exhibit their creative accomplishments.
 - Provide the local community with opportunities to experience and appreciate a wide range of visual art and acquire insight into the creative process.
- Tephra Institute of Contemporary Art - <https://www.tephraica.org>
 - A non-profit, non-collecting institution committed to promoting innovative contemporary art and thinking. They work with artists, galleries, institutions, universities, thought leaders, and collectors globally.

Design and Environmental Stewardship

- The master plan established seven villages, each with a distinct architectural style and built for 10,000 residents. Each village was centered on a plaza that provided walkable access to stores and restaurants, created jobs, generated



revenue through commercial leasing, and had designated space for educational, recreational, and cultural programming.

- Surrounding each plaza was an assortment of housing types meant to cater to different life stages and income levels — from more affordable apartments and condominiums to single-family homes. Schools, churches, job centers, and parks were interspersed throughout the villages.
- Reston was influenced by the Garden City movement that emphasized planned, self-contained communities that intermingled green space, residential neighborhoods, and commercial development.
- Reston promotes multi-modal transportation by maintaining 55 miles of pathways and trails.
- The Reston Association uses several energy efficient and renewable technologies throughout Reston, including smart thermostats and LED lighting. Other energy-saving strategies have reduced energy costs at the Nature House by 37%.
- To improve water quality in Reston and Fairfax County, measures have been implemented to monitor water quality and promote water conservation efforts.

Success/Failure Factors

- By living by its motto, "Live, Work, Play," Reston has become a **balanced and sustainable community** where residents can enjoy a high quality of life while living, working, and recreating within the same community. The community values diversity, inclusivity, environmental stewardship, and a strong sense of place.
- **Mixed-Use Development:** Reston was one of the pioneers of mixed-use development, where residential, commercial, and recreational spaces coexist in close proximity. The goal is to provide residents with convenient access to essential services, shopping, dining, and job opportunities.
- **Integrated with Nature** - Green areas not only provided recreational opportunities but also promoted a healthier lifestyle and opportunities for community interaction.
- Reston has a great deal to offer its residents:
 - A thriving economy and hub for employment.
 - An exciting destination filled with fun things to do: performing arts, dining, shopping, and more.
 - Outdoor spots like Lake Anne (one of several man-made lakes) and the Reston Association's Walker Nature Center, a 72-acre woodland, provides environmental education for all ages; 99% of the site is conserved as forested open space.



- Reston also has drawbacks:
 - The current market is failing to produce Simon's vision of a mixture of housing types.
 - The design and architecture of new development is below the early ambition of Reston, with none coming close to the clear sense of place achieved at Lake Anne Plaza - Reston's first village center. It features a mix of commercial and residential buildings around a plaza and inlet of Lake Anne, a man-made reservoir.
 - The high price tag to live in Reston - cost of living is higher than the national average.
 - Traffic throughout the region. The infrastructure in Northern Virginia has not kept up with the region's rapid expansion. As a major job center, Reston attracts workers from as far as several counties away.
 - The never-ending construction.

Best Practices for Telosa

- **Legacy of Values:** Simon's vision and principles left a lasting impact on Reston's identity. Even as the community evolved, the emphasis on diversity, inclusivity, and a strong sense of belonging has persisted.
- **Master Planning:** Reston was carefully planned from the start with a focus on creating a balanced community that integrated residential, commercial, and recreational spaces. The "Village Concept" emphasized mixed-use neighborhoods, green spaces, and local amenities within walking distance.
- **Diversity and Inclusion:** One of Reston's founding principles was to create a diverse and inclusive community. Simon was committed to selling homes to people of all races and backgrounds, which set a precedent for an integrated community from the beginning.
- **Emphasis on Walkability:** Reston's pedestrian-friendly design makes it easy for residents to walk or bike to various destinations, promoting a healthy lifestyle and increasing opportunities for social interaction.
- **Commitment to Sustainability:** Reston has embraced sustainability practices, including green building design and conservation efforts. This commitment to environmental responsibility resonates with residents who value a sustainable way of living.
- **Public Art and Culture:** Simon believed that art and culture were vital to community development. He ensured that public art installations, cultural events, and performance spaces were integral to Reston's design, fostering a sense of cultural enrichment.



- Overall, the combination of thoughtful planning, diverse housing options (which continues to be a focus), green spaces, cultural activities, and community engagement has contributed to Reston's reputation as a livable city with a strong sense of community.

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Copenhagen, DK - Access to Effective Government and Services



Vision

Copenhagen's vision is often summarized as "Copenhagen - City of Cyclists" and "The Green Capital." These slogans reflect the city's aspirations to be a world-leading, sustainable metropolis that prioritizes the well-being of its residents and the environment.

Goals

- Copenhagen has set ambitious goals to **optimize sustainable urban development, energy consumption and economic activity**.
- **Climate Neutrality:** Copenhagen has committed to becoming carbon-neutral by 2025. The city is actively reducing its carbon emissions, investing in renewable energy, and implementing sustainable transportation options.
- Improved **Urban Mobility:** Copenhagen continues to enhance its public transportation system, expand cycling infrastructure, and reduce reliance on cars. The aim is to create a city where people can easily move around using sustainable modes of transportation.
- **Green and Resilient Infrastructure:** The city invests in green infrastructure, including flood prevention measures, green roofs, and sustainable urban

development. These efforts help Copenhagen adapt to climate change and create a healthier urban environment.

- **Housing Affordability:** Copenhagen is working to ensure that housing remains affordable for a wide range of residents. This includes building new affordable housing and implementing rent control measures.
- **Innovation and Entrepreneurship:** The city supports innovation hubs, research institutions, and startup incubators to foster a culture of innovation and economic growth.
- **Cultural and Creative Hub:** Copenhagen aims to remain a center for arts, culture, and creative industries. The city supports cultural events, museums, and creative spaces that contribute to its cultural vibrancy.
- **Social Welfare and Inclusion:** Copenhagen prioritizes social welfare programs, including healthcare, education, and social services, to create an inclusive and equitable society.
- **Copenhagen's Six Dimensions of a 'Smart' City**

Whether developing new cities from scratch or rebuilding existing cities, the challenge is to ensure that the city becomes more livable, economically successful, and environmentally responsible. The following six dimensions can be used to measure how 'smart' a city is:

- **Smart economy** (high productivity, entrepreneurship and ability to transform).
- **Smart mobility** (strong ICT infrastructure and sustainable transport systems).
- **Smart environment** (Sustainable resource management, pollution prevention, environmental protection).
- **Smart people** (diversity, creativity and participation in public life).
- **Smart living** (cultural facilities, housing quality, health and safety issues).
- **Smart governance** (political strategies and perspectives, transparency and community participation in decision making).

Background

- Originally a Viking fishing village established in the 10th century.
- Copenhagen became the capital of Denmark in the early 15th century. From the 17th century, it became a regional center of power with its institutions, port and trade networks, and armed forces.
- By the beginning of the 20th century, Copenhagen had become a thriving industrial city.

Facts and Figures

- Copenhagen is the capital and most populous city of Denmark, with a population of around 650,000 in the municipality and 1.4 million in the urban area (2020).
- The City covers a land area of 69 square miles.
- Copenhagen's landmarks such as Tivoli Gardens, The Little Mermaid statue, the Amalienborg and Christiansborg palaces, Rosenborg Castle, Frederik's Church, Børsen and many museums, restaurants and nightclubs are significant tourist attractions.

Social Capital and Belonging

- **Urban Planning:** Copenhagen's urban planning emphasizes pedestrian-friendly streets, bike lanes, and public spaces. This design encourages face-to-face interactions, making it easier for residents to engage with each other.
- **Public Plazas and Squares:** Copenhagen's well-designed public plazas and squares act as meeting points and venues for community events. Residents gather for markets, festivals, and other activities, strengthening community bonds.
- **Compact Size:** Copenhagen's relatively compact size allows for a greater sense of interconnectedness among residents. People are more likely to encounter each other in everyday life, fostering a sense of familiarity and community.
- **Emphasis on Work-Life Balance:** Copenhagen's focus on work-life balance and flexible working hours allows residents to spend more time with their families and engage in community activities.
- **Local Engagement:** Residents often participate in neighborhood associations, community projects, and local initiatives. This involvement builds connections and a sense of ownership in their surroundings.
- **Strong Sense of Trust:** Denmark, including Copenhagen, consistently ranks high in global surveys measuring social trust. This high level of trust among residents contributes to a sense of community and cooperation.
- **Courtyards and Shared Spaces:** Many residential buildings in Copenhagen are designed with communal courtyards or shared gardens. These spaces encourage neighbors to interact, children to play together, and residents to engage in spontaneous conversations.
- **Cooperative Housing:** Cooperative housing complexes, known as "kolonihaver," are a part of Copenhagen's architectural landscape. These complexes provide private plots for gardening while also creating a sense of shared space and community among residents.

Access to Effective Government and Services

- **Social Safety Net:** Denmark's robust social programs contribute to a sense of security and inclusivity. Residents feel a collective responsibility for each other's well-being, fostering a strong sense of community.
- **Inclusive Public Policies:** The city's policies promote inclusivity, diversity, and gender equality. Such policies create an environment where all residents feel valued and part of the larger community. For example, Copenhagen has created a series of community centers that create new social contacts, new boundaries for social engagement, new roles, new ways to contribute, new ways to see their neighbors and new ways to collaborate with each other.
- **Public Transportation:** Efficient public transportation encourages people from various walks of life to share the same spaces, fostering a sense of unity.

High Quality Jobs and Economic Opportunity

- **Economic Prosperity:** The city strives to maintain a strong and innovative economy by attracting businesses, fostering entrepreneurship, and supporting research and development. (See Copenhagen MakerSpaces below.)
- The city is the **cultural, economic, and governmental center of Denmark**; it is one of the **major financial centers** of Northern Europe with the Copenhagen Stock Exchange.
- Copenhagen's economy has developed rapidly in the service sector, especially through initiatives in **information technology, pharmaceuticals, and clean technology**.
- Copenhagen is the **corporate headquarters** for leading companies including: Maersk, Novo Nordisk, Danske Bank, Carlsberg Group, Vestas Wind Systems, and others.
- **Mixed-Use Development:** The city's architectural design often incorporates mixed-use developments, where residential, commercial, and recreational spaces coexist.

Education and Life-Long Learning

- Education is one of the key priorities in the Danish welfare system. In fact, Danes enjoy free primary schools, upper secondary schools, and universities. As of 2022, the most common type of education completed in Denmark was vocational education and training programs. Close to 28 percent of the population between 15 and 69 years of age had completed this education.



- Copenhagen is home to the University of Copenhagen, the Technical University of Denmark, Copenhagen Business School, and the IT University of Copenhagen. The University of Copenhagen was founded in 1479.
- The educational approach in Denmark avoids class rankings and formal tests; instead, children work in groups and are taught to challenge the established way of doing things.

Arts, Culture, and Recreation

- **Biking Culture:** Copenhagen's cycling culture encourages people to interact as they commute, creating a friendly atmosphere and a shared sense of identity among cyclists.
- **Cultural Offerings:** Copenhagen offers a range of cultural events, festivals, and art exhibitions. These opportunities for shared experiences help bring people together and strengthen community bonds.
- **Cultural and Civic Centers:** Architecturally appealing cultural and civic centers serve as focal points for artistic, educational, and community-oriented events. These spaces contribute to a sense of shared cultural experiences.
- **Urban Green Spaces:** Copenhagen's numerous parks, gardens, and green areas provide residents with spaces to relax, socialize, and engage in outdoor activities.

Design and Environmental Stewardship

- **Focus on Sustainability:** Copenhagen's commitment to sustainability and eco-friendly practices resonates with residents who share a common goal of environmental responsibility.
- **Public Spaces:** The city is known for its well-maintained parks, squares, and waterfront areas.
- The city of Copenhagen is one of the most sustainable and energy efficient cities in the world. According to its **Carbon Neutral by 2025 Plan**, it has the ambition of becoming the first carbon neutral capital by 2025.
- Some initiatives that have helped support this goal include Copenhagen's environment friendly modes of transport, sensitivity to climate change, sustainable urban redevelopment, and efficient energy use tactics.
- Throughout its efforts in encouraging a healthy, sustainable lifestyle among its people, its planning process plays a more significant role than simply altering people's values.

Success/Failure Factors



- Copenhagen is recognized as one of the **most environmentally friendly cities** in the world.
- Copenhagen has focused on three key factors of Urban design to facilitate the transition to a green city: **Sensitivity to Climate Change, District Heating / Cooling, Preserving Green Space.**
- Copenhagen's approach to urban planning and architecture certainly contributes to the city's reputation for having a **strong sense of community**. These design elements encourage social interaction, enhance accessibility, and create spaces that facilitate connections among residents.
- **Historical and Modern Integration:** The integration of historical architecture with modern design principles creates a sense of continuity and connection to the city's past, fostering a shared heritage and identity.

Copenhagen also has drawbacks:

- High housing and living costs.
- Even though Copenhagen's approach will yield tremendous benefits over the long-run, it has been capital intensive in the short-run. The crowding out effect means that trade-offs have been made in other areas to finance the long-run goals of environmental sustainability.

Best Practices for Telosa

- **Human-Centered Urban Planning:** Copenhagen's urban planning prioritizes human well-being and encourages social interaction. Pedestrian-friendly streets, bike lanes, and public spaces create opportunities for people to gather, walk, and bike, leading to more frequent face-to-face interactions.
- **Inclusive Design:** Architectural design in Copenhagen often prioritizes accessibility and inclusivity, making public spaces and buildings welcoming to people of all abilities and backgrounds.
- **Sustainability:** Copenhagen aims to be one of the world's most sustainable cities. It envisions a future where the city's carbon emissions are minimized, energy is primarily sourced from renewable resources, and urban development is environmentally responsible.
- **Cycling Culture:** Known for its extensive network of bike lanes and a strong cycling culture, Copenhagen's vision includes making cycling the preferred mode of transportation for its residents. The city encourages cycling to reduce congestion and promote physical activity.



- **Green Spaces:** Copenhagen values its green spaces and aims to create a healthy urban environment with parks, recreational areas, and green roofs. The city seeks to improve air and water quality and protect biodiversity.
- **Social Inclusion:** Copenhagen emphasizes social inclusion and aims to create a city where everyone has access to education, healthcare, housing, and job opportunities, regardless of their background.

Overall, Copenhagen's approach to urban planning and architecture certainly contributes to the city's reputation for having a strong sense of community. These design elements encourage social interaction, enhance accessibility, and create spaces that facilitate connections among residents.

Case Study Appendix: Highlighting Copenhagen Makerspaces

- I. Vision/Goals of Makerspaces in Copenhagen
 - Formed by either local businesses or grassroots networks, each makerspace offers a different niche and community for diverse opportunities for citizens to experiment, design, build, collaborate, and strategize business operations.
- II. Background of Makerspaces in Copenhagen
 - Makerspace refers to shared workspaces that give the public or paying members access to machinery to develop DIY hobbies, small businesses, or collaborative projects.
 - Worldwide, the maker movement saw a popular increase in the 2010s. This movement was an offshoot of communities of artists, craftspeople, DIY-ers, and IT tinkerers.
 - Copenhagen has celebrated its maker movement since 2016 and has grown into eight distinct makerspace organizations and facilities.
 - There are eight makerspaces currently in operation in Copenhagen.
- III. How Makerspaces Contributed to a Thriving Community
 - Access to Tools
 - Tools vary between locations.
 - Urban communities tend to include emerging technologies and digital fabrication, such as 3D printing.
 - Rural communities tend to have woodworking, metalworking, and textiles.
 - Most have a diverse collection to meet the existing culture of the community.

- Instruction
 - Training members on how to use the equipment is generally required.
 - They offer optional guidance on completing individual projects and classes about specific fabrication techniques, such as table building.
 - The space often forms clubs focusing on particular fabrication categories.
- A. Social Capital and Belonging
 - Citizens join makerspaces often as an opportunity to fulfill an individual project but then stay for the community through events hosted by the makerspace.
 - Collaborative workshops or classes
 - E.g. Build a modular synth at the Copenhagen Music Maker Space.
 - Clubs or casual socialization events
 - E.g. Laser cutter meeting at Labitat.
 - Team building and competitive events
 - E.g. Trifolium hosts events targeted at commonly targeted tasks. This includes construction duels and crafts for tailor-made tasks for members or company events.
 - The strong support networks are formed through casual means of sharing space while also establishing formal support networks and networking opportunities that allow members to connect with more experienced makers with questions or proposing collaborations.
 - E.g. Network Copenhagen with Republikken Learning workshop and networking opportunities for new entrepreneurs, social media strategy, sales strategy, personal and professional development, funding, and post-COVID-19 business strategy.
 - The variety in payment plans for memberships at makerspace allows for affordable access to the diverse socioeconomic group. Most makerspaces have daily, monthly, and hourly fees for using the space and attending events.
 - E.g. Copenhagen Fablab is free to everyone and does not require membership.
 - The large number of makerspaces available means more spaces are within walking distance for more of the community.

- E.g. Trifolium offers a Mobile Production Unit fully equipped with manufacturing tools that can temporarily be driven to the location of the member's choice.
- B. Access to Effective Government and Services
 - Most all makerspaces, except those that offer exclusively shared office workspaces, provide formal or informal vocational training through education on proper tool use for skilled trades.
- C. High-quality Jobs and Economic Opportunities
 - The manufacturing process becomes accessible to the layperson by providing both training and access to various machines and tools in the following sectors:
 - Woodworking
 - Metal working
 - 3D printing
 - CNC and laser printing
 - Automation equipment (ex. robotic arms)
 - Electronics
 - Textile
 - Photo studio
 - Knowledge sharing between different startups and entrepreneurs provides opportunity for infusing innovation with economic opportunity.
 - E.g. Univate Islands Brygge provides a shared working space specifically for startups and entrepreneurs working in the IT industry. The commonality allows collaboration to introduce new ideas in a rapidly changing field.
- D. Education and Lifelong Learning
 - Education within makerspaces is based more on skills rather than ideas, which fosters a problem-solving framework in members.
 - Makerspaces can meet people where they are, with novices and experts welcome, due to the wide variety of entrance points with tools and classes.
- E. Arts, Culture, and Recreational Opportunities
 - Makerspaces often host festivals, beyond members, that are open for the entire city to enjoy.
 - E.g. The Copenhagen Music Maker Space hosted the Nordic Music Arts and Crafts Festival.
 - E.g. Labitat hosts Hacks on the Harbour, a maker festival with electronic design programming.

- E.g. Maker hosted the Copenhagen Maker Faire.
 - Copenhagen Music Maker Space, a communal workshop to build and modify musical instruments.
- F. Design and Environmental Stewardship
 - By making their own products, members are less likely to purchase material for single-use. This can also foster care for materials made by oneself, which combats throw-away culture.
 - Free repair events open to the public can double as social events and address the barrier of profitability associated with the electronics repair sector.
 - E.g. None of the eight makerspaces currently advertise repair cafe events, but the University of Copenhagen has been hosting repair events at [Studenterhuset](#).
 - Makerspaces are inherently linked to a circular economy seen in [several European cities](#).
 - Members at makerspaces can be commissioned to produce urban art with blue-green infrastructure principles.
 - E.g. BetaStudio, now known as Trifolium, helped establish a pilot program creating geodesic domes on wood platforms surrounded by trees in the urban environments outside of Copenhagen.
- IV. Success/Failure Factors
 - The COVID-19 Pandemic has affected makerspace membership worldwide. In a time when many facilities were starting up, lockdown prevented these communities from meeting in their communal locations. Many were unprepared for a sudden decrease in membership and volunteers and had to temporarily or permanently close facilities.
 - Most US cities have no more than two makerspaces outside schools and libraries. The fact that Copenhagen can support eight makerspaces is a testament to the demand for and dedication of the maker movement. The several commercial businesses and nonprofits showcase that the industry can diversify, sustain itself, and add value to a thriving city community.

Copenhagen, DK Additional Reference Information

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World city with responsibility

[World city with responsibility](#)

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Sustainable Development Goals

[Denmark ∴ Sustainable Development Knowledge Platform](#)

Singapore - High-Quality Jobs and Economic Opportunities



Vision

To become a “Global City.” One people, one nation, one Singapore.

National Motto: Onward, Singapore. It reflects the nation's commitment to progress, development, and continuous improvement. It is often used to inspire and unite Singaporeans in their efforts to build a better future for the country.

Key elements of Singapore's Vision 2030:

1. **Sustainable and Inclusive Economy:** Singapore aims to maintain a vibrant and innovative economy that generates opportunities for its residents. This includes supporting key industries, promoting entrepreneurship, and fostering innovation.
2. **Quality of Life and Well-Being:** The vision emphasizes the importance of ensuring that Singapore remains a great place to live, work, and play. It includes provisions for high-quality education, accessible healthcare, affordable housing, and a clean environment.
3. **Strong and Cohesive Society:** Singapore's vision includes the goal of building a cohesive and harmonious society where people of all



backgrounds live together in peace and harmony. It promotes social inclusion, racial and religious harmony, and active citizenship.

4. **Environmental Sustainability:** Environmental sustainability is a crucial aspect of the vision, with the aim of becoming a sustainable and green city. This includes efforts to reduce carbon emissions, conserve water resources, and protect natural ecosystems.
5. **Smart City:** Singapore envisions itself as a "Smart Nation," leveraging technology and data to enhance the quality of life for its residents and improve the efficiency of government services.
6. **Global Connectivity:** The vision includes Singapore's continued role as a global hub, facilitating trade, investment, and cultural exchange. The city-state seeks to strengthen its global connections and contribute to global challenges.
7. **Resilience and Security:** Singapore places a strong emphasis on resilience and security, ensuring that it is well-prepared to address challenges, both internal and external, and protect the well-being of its residents.

Background

Singapore's history dates back at least eight hundred years. Its contemporary era began in 1819, when Stamford Raffles established Singapore as a trading post of the British Empire. Singapore gained self-governance in 1959 and, in 1963, became part of the new federation of Malaysia. It became an independent sovereign country in 1965.

Since its founding in 1965, Singapore has faced many challenges. As a small city-state, they had a small, primitive economy with no natural resources and limited access to fresh water. To build their economy, provide greater opportunity, and improve the quality of life for their citizens, they embarked on an ambitious plan to build their domestic industries and create an open, welcoming business environment to attract talent and successful companies from around the region and the world.

Singapore is considered by many highly respected development experts, such as Paul Colliers and John Micklethwait, as the greatest economic success story of the 20th century. After gaining independence in 1965, it has gone from a colonial



backwater of British rule, to one of the top five countries in the world in GDP per capita. Unlike most countries with this rate of advantages, it has not accomplished this miraculous feat through hydrocarbons or other natural resources but through hard work, dedication, and inclusive, innovative government policies.

Singapore is the proof that a new model for a city can be successful in creating sustainable, intelligent development by implementing innovative policies in a pragmatic way. As fundamental governing principles, Singapore adopted a few central tenants that have guided its actions from the very beginning:

- Land was to be used to promote economic development and a strong community, not as a tool of speculation.
- A dual mandate focused on long-term, sustainable economic growth and quality of life for all citizens.
- A free, welcoming environment for businesses and individuals looking to prosper together.
- Open, transparent, corruption-free governance that is accountable to the community for delivering results, not promises and platitudes.

The evolution of the market economy in the late 18th and early 19th centuries transformed the categorization of land from a resource to a commodity which has given rise to many problems. Today, successful cities such as Singapore are reimagining that definition.

How a country uses land most efficiently and effectively to promote economic growth and the wellbeing of its citizens is not just an economic or governance question, but one of fairness, inclusion and economic mobility. But there is another dimension, how we can build a community of people – unified, resilient, energetic, optimistic, and happy.

Facts and Figures

- The population of Singapore is 5.6 million.
- The size of Singapore is 283.5 square miles (181,400 acres) which is about half the size of Rhode Island but has 6 times the population.
- It is one of the 20 smallest countries in the world.



- It's a city of not just one island, but 64.
- It's one of the world's greenest cities.
- Singapore ranks highly in key social indicators: education, healthcare, quality of life, personal safety, infrastructure, and housing.
- One of the highest home ownership rates - 89%

Social Capital and Belonging

- One of the most important lessons that can be learned from Singapore is the intentional and strategic approach to fostering social cohesion and community bonds.
- **Cultural Diversity and Harmony:** Singapore's design encourages the coexistence of different cultures and religions, fostering a sense of community among diverse populations.
- **Community Engagement:** The design of Singapore's public spaces, community centers, and social programs encourages residents to engage with each other, fostering a strong sense of community.
- **Quality Public Housing:** Singapore's well-designed public housing has created an environment where people from different socioeconomic backgrounds live in close proximity. This diversity contributes to social cohesion and reduces income inequality.
- **Racial Harmony Day:** Singapore celebrates Racial Harmony Day to promote racial and religious harmony among its diverse population. This includes activities such as cultural performances, shared meals, and educational programs to foster understanding and respect among different ethnic and religious groups.
- **National Service (NS):** Singaporean men are required to complete NS, which fosters a sense of duty and shared experience among citizens. This program helps build camaraderie and social bonds.
- **Community Involvement Projects:** NS includes community involvement projects where servicemen contribute to community service and engage with local residents.

Access to Effective Government and Services

- **Balancing Growth with Livability:** Singapore's balanced approach to economic growth and quality of life can serve as a model for other cities to prioritize both prosperity and the well-being of their residents.



- **Efficient Public Transportation:** The city's efficient public transportation system reduces reliance on cars and congestion, making commuting easier and promoting community engagement.
- **Smart Urban Planning:** Singapore employs smart city technologies for efficient waste management, traffic control, and public services. Implementing such systems can improve residents' quality of life and create economic opportunities.
- **Residents' Committees (RCs):** RCs are grassroots organizations in neighborhoods across Singapore. They organize community events, foster a sense of belonging, and act as intermediaries between residents and government agencies.
- **Community Engagement Programs:** Singapore promotes active community participation through engagement programs, town hall meetings, and feedback channels that allow residents to voice their concerns and ideas.
- **Community Health Assist Scheme (CHAS):** CHAS provides affordable healthcare services to Singaporeans and includes subsidies for low-income individuals, promoting access to healthcare in the community.
- **Senior Activity Centers:** These centers offer a range of activities and support services for seniors to stay active and engaged in their communities.
- **SG Cares:** SG Cares is a national movement that promotes volunteerism and encourages individuals and organizations to contribute to the community through volunteering.

High Quality Jobs and Economic Opportunity

- It is a major aviation, financial, and maritime shipping hub.
- Some of the leading companies include: Singapore Airlines, DBS Bank, and Maersk Singapore.
- **Mixed-Use Development:** Singapore's planning encourages mixed-use neighborhoods, where residential, commercial, and recreational spaces are close together. This promotes convenience, reduces congestion, and supports local businesses.
- Singapore offers many programs to assist residents in preparing for and finding positions to help them maximize their potential. For example, the Career Conversion Programmes (CCP) provides the ability for mid-career citizens to retrain and upgrade their skills in a rapidly changing work environment: <https://www.wsg.gov.sg/home/individuals/attachment-placement-programmes/career-conversion-programmes-for-individuals>
- Singapore offers job placement services that prepare, place, and support people - the unemployed, underemployed, and those needing new skills - in

life-changing careers that would otherwise be unattainable.

<https://singapore.generation.org/>

- **Land Usage and Land Value Return.** Because of the scarcity of land in Singapore, land values are extremely high. To avoid the problem of rising prices limiting development and enriching a few at the expense of the many, the government directly owns close to 90% of the land. It then leases the land to developers through long-term contracts and charges an annual ground rent. These resources are then reinvested back into the community in the form of education, housing, health care, and world-class parks and recreational areas. This provides clean, comfortable and safe housing for citizens of all income levels and ensures a high quality of life for residents.

Quality Education and Lifelong Learning

- **Investment in Education and Innovation:** Singapore's commitment to education has helped to foster innovation and drive economic growth. They are consistently among the world leaders in primary and secondary education and attract top students from all over Asia to its world class public universities.
- **Citizenship Education:** Singapore's education system places a strong emphasis on character and citizenship education to instill values such as responsibility, empathy, and social awareness in students.
- In 2005, Singapore adopted a new framework called Teach Less, Learn More. This framework urged teachers to focus on the “quality” of learning and the incorporation of technology into classrooms and not just the “quantity” of learning and exam preparation.

Arts, Culture and Recreation

- **Green Spaces:** Singapore has integrated green spaces throughout the city to improve the environment and offer residents opportunities for recreation, relaxation, and community interaction.
- **National Arts Council (NAC):** NAC supports various arts and cultural initiatives, including community arts programs and events that bring people together through creative expression.
- **National Gallery Singapore** oversees the world's leading public collection of modern art from Singapore and Southeast Asia. It comprises over 8,000 works from the 19th and 20th centuries in all media, including painting, sculpture, printmaking, photography and video.

Design and Environmental Stewardship



- **Urban design:** Singapore incorporates several innovative aspects that have contributed to its community-building and economic growth. One of the most notable aspects is its concept of a "**City in a Garden**," which prioritizes green spaces, sustainable infrastructure, and a high quality of life.
- **Sustainable Infrastructure:** Singapore's focus on sustainable infrastructure, such as water management systems and energy-efficient buildings, demonstrates the importance of incorporating eco-friendly technologies that contribute to both community well-being and economic efficiency.
- **Urban Resilience:** Singapore's emphasis on disaster preparedness and environmental sustainability demonstrates the importance of designing for resilience against challenges such as climate change and natural disasters.
- **Gardens by the Bay:** This iconic green space in Singapore offers not only a recreational area but also educational programs on environmental conservation and sustainability.
- **Clean and Green Singapore:** The Clean and Green Singapore program encourages community participation in keeping the environment clean and green through initiatives like tree planting and clean-up campaigns.

Success / Failures

- Singapore has been excellent in generating economic growth. It is one of the most outstanding examples of development in the 20th century.
- Singapore has utilized wise land-use policies and Land Value return to not only develop in an efficient and effective way, with extremely limited resources, but also generate revenue to reinvest back into the community.
- They also provide a high quality of life with safe, walkable streets and parks, clean, comfortable, affordable housing and world class education and health care.
- Singapore struggles in a few areas such as inclusion in government decision-making. The ruling political elites maintain a grip on power that is frequently criticized as heavy handed.
- They also struggle with immense income inequality which creates tension. This trend has been fueled by the shift from manufacturing and shipping to financial and other services. Even though they provide high quality services and clean, affordable housing for their citizens with lower incomes, there is a widening chasm between the very wealthy and the rest.



Telosa Best Practices

Telosa has much to learn from Singapore about creating prosperity through an open, welcoming business environment and extensive job training and skills upgrading. They also have outstanding education and health care systems we can learn from. Their use of Land Value Return has yielded tremendous benefits in smart development for all citizens and generated resources to be reinvested. When planning, they frequently look at timeframes far beyond five or ten years and consider the implications of their actions over a 50 or 100 year timeframe. Lastly, they have a very responsive government that has consistently met the needs of people of all backgrounds, ethnicity, and incomes and a very successful urban planning approach that has made them one of the most sustainable, green cities in the world.

Overall, by focusing on sustainability, community engagement, inclusive design, and a holistic approach to economic growth, Singapore is demonstrating a model to create thriving communities with strong economies.

Singapore Additional Reference Information

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Vision 2030, The Singapore Way - CEO Insights Asia

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Raleigh, North Carolina - Education and Lifelong Learning



Vision

Raleigh's vision is often described as a "City of Innovation," and it seeks to be a leading center for innovation, technology, education, and culture.

Goals

Raleigh's goals align with its vision and include several key initiatives:

1. **Economic Development:** The city focuses on attracting and retaining businesses, with an emphasis on technology, healthcare, and the creative sector. Raleigh seeks to create a favorable business environment that stimulates economic growth.
2. **Education and Research:** Raleigh continues to invest in education and research institutions, including partnerships with universities and organizations that contribute to innovation and knowledge.
3. **Technology and Innovation:** The city supports technology-driven industries, innovation hubs, and startups, with the aim of becoming a recognized center for technological advancement.

4. **Sustainability:** Raleigh works to reduce its environmental impact through initiatives related to clean energy, conservation, and sustainable urban planning.
5. **Quality of Life:** The city places a strong emphasis on enhancing the quality of life for its residents by providing access to cultural amenities, recreational opportunities, healthcare, and affordable housing.
6. **Community Engagement:** Raleigh encourages active community engagement and participation in decision-making processes. The city values feedback from residents and stakeholders.
7. **Public Transportation:** Raleigh aims to improve its public transportation system to reduce congestion, provide convenient transit options, and promote sustainable mobility.
8. **Social Inclusion:** The city promotes social equity, inclusivity, and affordable housing to ensure that all residents have access to opportunities and resources.
9. **Cultural and Creative Initiatives:** Raleigh supports cultural events, festivals, and creative initiatives that celebrate its cultural diversity and artistic expression.
10. **Environmental Stewardship:** Raleigh seeks to protect and preserve its natural environment, green spaces, and natural resources for future generations.

Background

- The city of Raleigh is named after Sir Walter Raleigh (1552 – 29 October 1618), an English statesman, soldier, writer, and explorer. One of the most notable figures of the Elizabethan era, he played a leading part in English colonization of North America, funding the first expeditions to what is now the coast of modern-day North Carolina.
- Following the American Revolutionary War when the U.S. gained its independence, the area was chosen in 1788 as the site of the state capital of North Carolina. Its central location protected it from attacks from the coast.
- Raleigh was later incorporated in 1792.
- Raleigh is one of the few cities in the United States that was planned and built specifically to serve as a state capital. Raleigh is an early example in the United States of a planned city.
- With the opening of the Research Triangle Park in 1959, Raleigh began to experience a population increase, resulting in a total city population of 100,000 by 1960.



- In the Tech 2022 Innovation Index report - National Metro Comparison that was released by the NC TECH Association, Raleigh was ranked 8th in overall Tech Metro and 2nd for Innovation out of 110 metro areas.

Facts and Figures

- It is one of the fastest-growing cities in the United States.
- The population of Raleigh is 476,587 (2022 census). It is the second-most populous city in North Carolina, after Charlotte. Metropolitan area population of 1,413,982 (42nd largest in the U.S.)
- The city of Raleigh occupies a total area of 144.0 square miles.
- Raleigh is known as the "Smithsonian of the South," "The City of Oaks," "The Triangle," and the "Live Music Capital of the South."
- It's known for its universities, including North Carolina State University. Due to the number of technology and scholarly institutions around Raleigh, Chapel Hill, and Durham, the area is known as the Research Triangle.
- In the first decade of the 21st century, Raleigh was featured prominently in a number of "Top 10 Lists," including those by Forbes, MSNBC, and Money magazine, due to its quality of life and favorable business climate.

Social Capital and Belonging

- **Quality of Life:** The city boasts a relatively low cost of living compared to other tech hubs, making it an attractive place to live for young professionals and families. Access to amenities, outdoor activities, and a moderate climate enhances residents' quality of life.
- **Cultural Diversity:** The city's growing diversity has enriched its cultural fabric, creating opportunities for cultural exchange, events, and celebrations that bring the community together.
- **Community Engagement:** Residents actively participate in local organizations, volunteer groups, and neighborhood associations. This engagement fosters connections, shared goals, and a sense of belonging.
- **Family-Friendly Environment:** The city's family-friendly atmosphere and strong education system contribute to a sense of stability and a tight-knit community.
- **Raleigh Neighborhood Exchange:** The Raleigh Neighborhood Exchange program fosters community engagement and strengthens social capital by bringing together residents from different neighborhoods to share ideas, resources, and best practices for building stronger communities.
<https://raleighnc.gov/community/services/raleigh-neighborhood-exchange>

Access to Effective Government and Services

- The **Office of Strategy and Innovation** helps set strategy and supports ongoing cycles of continuous improvement for greater service delivery by collecting and connecting talent to spark new ideas. The Office leads city strategy and transformative projects like Bloomberg Challenges, Big Ideas, and Smart Cities initiatives. It also performs legislative and policy analysis, and maps the organization's vision and values in a way that creates innovative solutions.
- **Raleigh's Open Data Program:** Raleigh has an open data program that provides residents with access to various datasets and information about the city's operations. This initiative promotes transparency, accountability, and citizen engagement in government decision-making.
- **Resilience and Recovery:** Raleigh's efforts to recover from challenges, such as natural disasters, demonstrate the community's resilience and ability to come together to overcome adversity.

High Quality Jobs and Economic Opportunity

- **Technology and Innovation:** The city's focus on innovation and technology-driven industries has created a sense of dynamism and forward-thinking, attracting entrepreneurs and fostering a spirit of entrepreneurship.
- **Economic Growth:** Raleigh is part of the Research Triangle Park, a hub for technology, research, and innovation. The presence of major universities, tech companies, and research institutions has led to job opportunities, economic growth, and a dynamic business environment.
- As of 2011, Time ranked Raleigh as the third **most educated city** in the US based on the percentage of residents who held college degrees.
- **Local Businesses:** Raleigh's support for local businesses, including restaurants, cafes, and shops, fosters economic interdependence and contributes to a sense of community pride.
- **Innovate Raleigh:** Innovate Raleigh and the Chamber of Commerce work to promote innovation, entrepreneurship, and economic development in the region. They support startups, foster collaboration among businesses, and help create high-quality job opportunities.
- Raleigh has one of the most successful CBUSA (**Custom Builders USA**) chapters in America. It empowers members to strike a balance between competing and collaborating with access to a network of similar businesses to make real growth happen. <https://cbusa.us/>



Quality Education and Lifelong Learning

- By creating a **world-class education hub**, Raleigh has attracted top academic talent to the city. This serves as a positive feedback loop in attracting top tech businesses and spin off companies from the research conducted at the universities.
- In 1976, the Raleigh City and Wake County schools merged to become the Wake County Public School System, now the largest school system in the state and 19th largest in the country.
- **Educational Institutions:** Raleigh is home to several prestigious universities, including North Carolina State University. These institutions attract students, researchers, and academics, contributing to a culture of learning and intellectual engagement.
- **Wake County Public Libraries:** The Wake County Public Libraries offer a wide range of educational programs, resources, and events for residents of all ages. These libraries promote lifelong learning and provide access to educational materials.

Arts, Culture, and Recreation

- Raleigh is well known for its quality and quantity of free museums and has often been referred to as the “Smithsonian of the South.”
- Raleigh offers a range of cultural and entertainment options, including art galleries, music venues, theaters, and festivals.
- Access to **cultural facilities** like the Durham Performing Arts Center, the North Carolina Museum of Art, the Contemporary Art Museum Raleigh, and the North Carolina Symphony.
- **Green Spaces:** Raleigh places emphasis on parks, greenways, and recreational areas. These spaces provide opportunities for outdoor activities, exercise, and social interaction.
- **Raleigh Arts:** Raleigh Arts is a city department that supports the arts through grants, public art installations, and cultural programs. It enhances the cultural vibrancy of Raleigh by providing opportunities for artistic expression and community engagement.

Design and Environmental Stewardship

- Raleigh is known for its tree-lined avenues and a commitment to preserving its natural environment.



- Raleigh is known as the "City of Oaks" for its many oak trees, which line the streets in the heart of the city.
- **Raleigh Greenway System:** Raleigh's extensive greenway system includes a network of trails and parks that promote outdoor recreation, environmental stewardship, and a well-designed urban environment. These green spaces contribute to the city's quality of life.

Success / Failures

- Raleigh has also been able to attract leading technology companies, such as Red Hat, Cisco, IBM, and SAS because of the tech talent emerging from the universities, as well as the high quality of life and lower cost of living.
- The substantial, consistent tax base has funded the construction of concert halls, parks, and other recreational facilities which enhance the quality of life even further.
- They have reinvested back into the community to alleviate some of the wealth and income inequality that has arisen between the highly paid corporate professionals and the traditional agricultural residents.
- City design that incorporates nature and green space contribute to a higher quality of life.
- Raleigh has a higher than average crime rate.

Telosa Best Practices

- **Collaborative Environment:** The Research Triangle area encourages collaboration between academia, research institutions, and businesses, fostering a culture of cooperation and shared progress.
- Raleigh is known for having a **thriving job market**, an affordable cost of living and diverse communities.
- Overall, the city's emphasis on education, innovation, cultural engagement, economic growth, and quality of life contributes to its reputation as a **vibrant and thriving community**.

Raleigh, NC Additional Reference Information

Strategic Plan for the City of Raleigh

[Strategic Plan | Raleighnc.gov](#)

City of Raleigh, NC - FY21 - FY25 Strategic Plan

[City of Raleigh FY2021- FY2025 Strategic Plan](#)



Raleigh, NC Strategy and Innovation - a service unit of the City Manager's Office
[Strategy and Innovation | Raleighnc.gov](#)

In Depth: America's Most Innovative Cities
https://www.forbes.com/2010/05/24/patents-funding-jobs-technology-innovative-cities_slide.html?sh=18d801ed5c4c

Tech Innovation Index - National Metro Comparison - NC TECH Association
[Tech Innovation Index](#)

Raleigh Chamber
[Raleigh Chamber](#)

Portland, Maine - Arts, Culture, and Recreation



Vision and Goals

Portland's vision is based on six interconnected themes: Portland is **equitable, sustainable, dynamic, secure, authentic, and connected**.

These themes emerged out of over four dozen stakeholder meetings, five City-wide community forums, and a survey effort which resulted in over 2,000 responses. They were influenced by new residents as well as those with Portland roots that stretch back centuries, business and neighborhood interests, emerging and traditional industries, grandparents and students, renters and homeowners, shapers and makers.

Background

Portland, Maine, is often considered a good example of a city with a strong sense of community. Its close-knit atmosphere, active engagement, and shared values contribute to this perception. Portland's relatively small size allows for a tighter sense of connection among residents. Portland has been a leader in sustainability and equitable climate resilience in the United States. The city's approach to sustainability has been to engage with citizens, making equitable



and inclusive climate action a community activity and collaboration across city government. Portland's visitors can immerse themselves in a rich cultural scene reminiscent of major metropolitan cities, but with the added charm of a more accessible and manageable scale. Within a ten-minute stroll, you'll find an array of cultural treasures, dance, music and other community events.

Facts and Figures

- Population of 68,408 (2020).
- Size - 69.4 square miles (44,416 acres).
- The city of Portland was incorporated on July 4, 1786.
- In 1820 Maine was established as a State with Portland as its capital.
- Portland is a resilient city that has been destroyed and burned down four times in its history.
- Well known for its marine industry, arts, architecture, growing culinary scene, and Microbrewers.
- Recognized for serving the freshest lobster and seafood and has earned a national reputation for top restaurants, craft beer, and award winning chefs.

Social Capital and Belonging

- Portland residents are known for their active involvement in local affairs. Participation in local government, community groups, and initiatives contributes to a shared sense of responsibility.
- Residents take pride in Portland's rich history. Historical preservation efforts and a focus on local heritage help build a shared identity and sense of place.
- Community-focused media outlets help disseminate information, highlight local stories, and connect residents with each other's experiences.
- Portland Maine is known for its integration of placemaking guidelines to create spaces in Maine that build social capital. Placemaking includes projects, programs, or initiatives that "inspire people to collectively reimagine and reinvent public spaces as the heart of every community. Strengthening the connection between people and the places they share, placemaking refers to a collaborative process by which we can shape our public realm in order to maximize shared value." [Project for Public Spaces](#)

Access to Effective Government and Services

- Portland has a citizens initiative, which is a grassroots process in which citizens gather petition signatures to force the Maine Legislature to either act on an issue or put it before the voters.



- Portland has joined a growing number of cities and counties in Maine that will allow voters to rank candidates in order of preference beginning in the 2024 November election.
- The City of Portland has a digital town hall and gathering place: [Engage Portland!](#) is the City's hub to share, discuss, inform, and collaborate on creating sustainable solutions for important issues, challenges, and opportunities in the community.

High Quality Jobs and Economic Opportunities

- The city places a strong emphasis on supporting local businesses. This focus promotes a sense of economic interdependence, local pride, and a unique community character.
- Portland relaunched its **Business Assistance Grant Program for Job Creation** with grants of \$10,000 per full-time job created, up to \$20,000 per business. The purpose of the \$300,000 program is to create jobs for low- and moderate-income individuals by providing startups and existing businesses with grants that can be used for rent, utilities, payroll, equipment, inventory, and other expenses.
- Portland, Maine, has less than one-tenth of San Francisco's population, but it's home to multiple companies that have raised tens of millions of dollars in funding for start-ups. Backing these early-stage companies with support and resources is a collection of organizations such as the [Maine Technology Institute](#), the [Finance Authority of Maine](#), [Scratchpad Accelerator](#) in Bangor, [Maine Center for Entrepreneurs](#), [Maine Venture Fund](#), and [Startup Maine](#).

Education and Lifelong Learning

- The presence of universities and educational institutions in Portland fosters an environment of intellectual engagement and lifelong learning, contributing to a vibrant community.
- Portland Adult Education (PAE) empowers adult learners to achieve their educational, professional, and personal goals. PAE offers programs designed to prepare Greater Portland area residents for a better, more fulfilling life. They are a wide-ranging community program that brings people and resources together for academics, English for speakers of other languages, and job skills training or personal enrichment courses.

Arts, Culture, and Recreation

- The city hosts a variety of events throughout the year, such as festivals, farmers'



markets, and cultural celebrations. These events bring people together and encourage interaction.

- The city of Portland created and runs [Creative Portland](#), the go-to resource for all things in the ARTS. As the City of Portland's official arts agency, their mission is to elevate the artists, makers, and cultural institutions that make the city by the sea one of a kind.
- The city has a thriving arts and cultural scene, with galleries, theaters, and music venues. Cultural offerings contribute to a shared cultural experience.
- Portland's diverse neighborhoods have distinct personalities and often host their own events, creating micro-communities within the city.
- Access to outdoor activities like hiking, biking, and water-related sports encourages residents to engage in healthy and social activities.
- Portland centers immigrant community voices through the [The Greater Portland Immigrant Welcome Center](#) which provides programming, classes, employment and case management, networking opportunities, and other services designed to help New Mainers, of all professions, overcome barriers to enter the US workforce.

Design and Environmental Stewardship

- ReCode Portland is creating a new, unified development code to serve Portland for the 21st century. The new code will be more user-friendly, will advance the goals of the city's comprehensive plan, [Portland's Plan 2030](#), and will better equip the City to address needs in areas such as housing, design, preservation, conservation, the working waterfront, energy, and transportation. The code evaluation focused on key issues for the city, like how the code could encourage more equitable housing creation, foster climate change resilience, and support transportation choice.
- Portland created its first **Climate Action Plan** with an aim to decrease carbon emissions by 80 percent by 2050 (compared to 1990s levels), plus a goal of transitioning to 100 percent clean energy for municipal operations by 2040.
- The Portland planning department recently updated its technical design manual for parking. Any parking lot with 10 or more spots needs to have faster-[charging level 2 EV chargers](#) at 25 percent of the parking spots.

Success/Failure Factors

- Strong sense of community and neighborhoods with low crime rates.
- Access to natural resources and seasonal outdoor activities (oceans, mountains, rivers, etc.).



- Quality education.
- Leading restaurants and vibrant cultural scene.

Drawbacks

- Home prices and rentals have become increasingly unaffordable.
- Career development has been challenging.

Best Practices for Telosa

While Portland, Maine, is often praised for its strong sense of community, it's important to note that no community is without challenges. As with any city, Portland faces its own unique issues and dynamics. However, its emphasis on local engagement, shared experiences, and a vibrant community life has contributed to its reputation as a place with a strong and closely-knit community. Portland has successfully integrated nature into community development and has included a range of healthy outdoor recreational opportunities. In addition, Portland has a vibrant nightlife, diverse food and cultural scene with a high quality of life for residents.

Portland, ME Additional Reference Information

The City of Portland - Municipal Climate Action Plan

<https://content.civicplus.com/api/assets/2095292c-5c8a-41a1-bda8-4bc749ee8316?cache=1800>

The City of Portland - Climate Resilience

[Climate Resilience | Portland, ME - Official Website](#)