 Together, we can create thriving, equitable, and resilient communities.



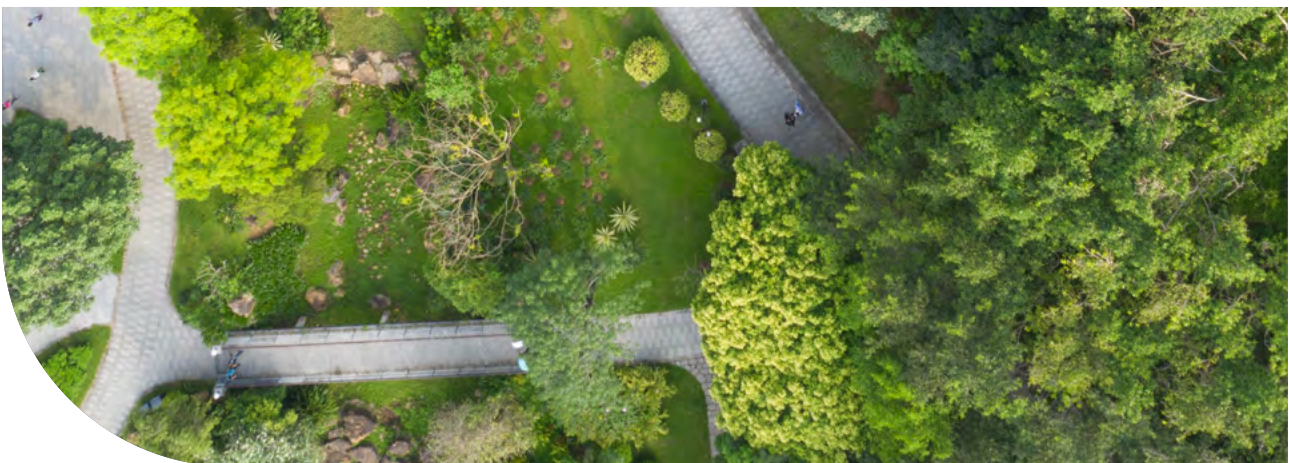
A Guidebook to Measure Community Connections

A Key Tool to Help Decision
Making and Strengthen
Our Communities



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I. Purpose

Today, few cities and towns measure community connections as a strategy to become more cohesive, resilient, and supportive environments for their members. **Assessing community connections is crucial to strengthen the following elements of a thriving community: social capital, equity, economic growth, educational attainment, health and wellbeing, arts and culture, community design and governance.** Community connections enhance overall quality of life and plays a key role in building resilience during crises, increasing civic engagement, promoting cultural inclusivity, improving educational outcomes, bolstering economic growth and ensuring community safety.

Building a Stronger Community

The Telosa Community Foundation has teamed with Polco, the leading community engagement/data analytics solutions firm, to create a new, easy-to-use tool that will help local governments, regional agencies, and community residents make better decisions that contribute to stronger communities.

We have created a tool and an accompanying guidebook to assist communities to assess their current status and better understand their areas of strength and those areas that warrant greater attention. The guidebook also provides information to help communities move forward to make significant strides strengthening

their connections. We present and draw on best practices and extensive data to help engage residents, improve community decision making, develop new policies and programs, access new funding sources, and evaluate their success. Benefits and actions also are presented to improve stakeholder contribution and collaboration.

For communities already using resources to improve community connections, our materials can be applied to help you refine, improve and enhance your overall process and results. For communities without access to tools and resources - our materials will help you get started to find specific ways to improve, build and grow your community connections. This approach is an opportunity to realize benefits - that are both real and tangible - for everyone.

We look forward to partnering with you to help you realize the full benefits of a stronger community. Every person in a community has a role in measuring, planning, and implementing all community connection elements. Together, we will create a model for how we can best live, work, and interact in our cities today and in the future.





About the Authors



The Telosa Community Foundation is a 501(c)(3) non-profit organization focused on the mission to create a more equitable and sustainable future. We are working to educate and inspire our community on what is necessary to realize a vibrant and thriving city. To that end, we are developing a blueprint and a new model for society based on the principle that as the city does better, all residents should do better. Since everyone contributes to the growth, everyone should participate in the gains. Community plays a critical role in creating greater access to opportunity and a higher quality of life. Therefore, we are learning and applying best practices on policies, programs, and possibilities from around the world to help existing cities and establish a new standard for future cities.

Polco is one of the leading government technology companies providing next-generation engagement solutions and data-driven insights that unite governments and residents for stronger, healthier communities. Polco's industry-leading surveys, government performance data, and interactive simulations engage residents and provide government leaders with clear insights that inform and help prioritize community decisions and build trust - all within a single award-winning platform. Thousands of government leaders rely on Polco to connect with constituents and make data-driven decisions that align communities, grow local economies,

and improve outcomes. Polco is an eight-time GovTech 100 company. For more information, visit <https://info.polco.us>.

[Antioch University](#) provides learner-centered education to empower students with the knowledge and skills to lead meaningful lives and advance social, racial, economic, and environmental justice. Through Antioch's [Center for Climate Protection and Community Resilience \(CCPCR\)](#), faculty and staff deliver applied research, consulting, and education and training. The Center's approach is solutions-oriented, pragmatic, participatory, and inclusive and is based on change leadership best practices and systems thinking. CCPCR focuses on stakeholder capacity with an explicit awareness of social and climate justice. The Center has worked with municipalities, regional, federal governments and agencies, local chambers of commerce, non-profits, academic institutions, and the private sector to foster equitable, sustainable and resilient communities.

Together, we have been conducting research, workshops, surveys, webinars, focus groups, drafting white papers, and incorporating feedback from our community. This work serves as a strong foundation for introducing our findings and our new tool to measure and assist cities as they strive to improve their community connections and social capital.



II. Background



What makes a thriving community?

Telosa is exploring the concept of constructing a new city to provide a blueprint for future generations by cultivating a suite of best practices for others to learn from. These best practices are intended to be shared widely, serving as a benchmark for sustainable urban and rural development, inclusive governance, and community engagement. Through this project, we aim to inspire and guide future community planning initiatives, ensuring they are grounded in efficiency, sustainability, and inclusivity to set a standard for urban and rural living and expand human potential.

Through our research, outreach, and engagement opportunities, we embarked on a project to understand the critical characteristics of a thriving city. This research can be accessed in the report [“Building a World-Class City: The Importance of Community Connections, Best Practices from Around the World”](#).

In addition, The Telosa Foundation partnered with Polco researchers and their myriad national datasets of resident opinions and public measures of community livability to identify the characteristics of cities where people want to live.

A summary of the characteristics of thriving communities we found important include:



Social Capital and Belonging: In thriving communities, residents have a strong sense of social cohesion and trust. <https://www.joinordiefilm.com/#newsletter> Social Capital is the relationships and connections among individuals such as social networks, the norms of reciprocity and trustworthiness that enable society to function effectively. 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 community with strong social capital encourages civic engagement where residents actively participate in local decision-making processes, community events, and volunteerism. This engagement fosters a sense of ownership and responsibility for the community's well-being.

Equity: A vibrant community embraces diversity and equity for all citizens and includes people from various backgrounds, cultures, and perspectives. Embracing equity enriches the community by promoting creativity, fostering tolerance, and creating a dynamic environment that celebrates differences. A sense of belonging must accompany a diverse and equitable city. Community members feel a sense of belonging when they feel invited, known, accepted, supported, heard, befriended, needed, and loved.¹ 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.

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.² 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.

Safety: The community is known for its safety and low crime rates, creating an environment where residents feel secure. Creating a safe community for all means that we have to address the social determinants of vulnerability. Social vulnerability determinants include insufficient essential resources, compromised physical safety, poor health, or hostile environments. Everyone has their own unique vulnerabilities, and each individual experiences these differently. To overcome unsafe conditions, a community can engage in a comprehensive approach that includes fostering collaboration and trust between residents, local

¹ Fang et al., 2022

² Avritzer 2003

governments, and law enforcement. Strategies such as enhancing community engagement, improving environmental design, conducting educational outreach, stimulating economic development, providing accessible services, involving youth in positive activities, and regularly assessing safety measures can collectively boost community safety and resilience. These efforts require a coordinated and sustained commitment to ensure long-term improvements in safety and quality of life.

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 strong local economy, and support for entrepreneurship enable residents to achieve economic stability and growth. 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 community's residents and sets a foundation for continued mutually beneficial relationships.

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. 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.

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.³ These elements celebrate and showcase a community's diverse histories, traditions, and talents.⁴ Additionally, cultural events and recreational activities can stimulate the local economy by attracting tourists, supporting local businesses, and creating jobs.⁵

Design and Environmental Stewardship: Urban and rural design is pivotal in establishing sustainable and resilient communities. Design principles must be applied in a measured and balanced way to maintain the community's character and general population size. Communities can consider implementing a range of thoughtful principles such as compact layouts, village centers, nature-based solutions (NbS), efficient public transport, bike lanes, and mixed-use development. This type of design reduces environmental impact, encourages active mobility, and mitigates climate-related vulnerabilities. Thriving communities are also resilient, adaptable, and equitable. They proactively address economic, environmental, or social challenges and work together to find innovative solutions that ensure their continued growth and well-being.

³ Putnam, 2000

⁴ Florida, 2002

⁵ Cohen, 2019





Community connectedness is not just about warm fuzzy tales of civic triumph. In measurable and well-documented ways, social capital makes an enormous difference in our lives... Social capital makes us smarter, healthier, safer, richer, and better able to govern a just and stable democracy.

- Robert D. Putnam

Community Connections as a driver of thriving communities

How can we co-create a connected, vibrant, and strong community that is safe, welcoming, and inclusive?



As part of Telosa’s research on thriving communities, it became apparent that social capital and belonging characteristics were fundamental to a community’s success. Community connections are crucial to strengthen the key elements of a thriving community: social capital, equity, economic growth, educational attainment, health and wellbeing, arts and culture, community design, and governance.

Community connections and social capital are essential to improving the quality of life for residents and increasing access to opportunity. Martin Luther King Jr. understood the importance of community connections and the role they play in day-to-day living. He eloquently stated, *“We are caught in an inescapable network of mutuality, tied in a single garment of destiny. Whatever affects one directly affects all indirectly”*. Community connections and social capital are key to creating vibrant, equitable, and resilient cities.





Taking inspiration from the voluminous scholarly work of thinkers such as Robert Putnam, Jane Jacobs and Elinor Ostrom, we have identified factors that lead to strong community connections, such as social bonds and social capital. While many cities and organizations measure social capital, these tools often exclude indicators that measure the various elements of social connections. Social capital is one crucial component of social connections. However, social connections also include an emphasis on physical places (placemaking) and other forms of infrastructure in a community that supports bridging social capital.

According to research, when a community has poor connections, weak social bonds, and less social capital, the impact is felt in every aspect of community life. Younger people have lower rates of academic achievement, higher truancy, and greater discipline problems. These cities also have higher rates of crime and vandalism. Residents also experience more health problems, greater loneliness, and less life satisfaction levels. They are also less prosperous and see greater turnover of local talent and businesses. Lastly, areas with poor community connections have a less informed citizenry, less civic engagement across the board, and greater dissatisfaction with their local governments.

Community is about working together for the greater good, where everyone has the opportunity to succeed. A connected

community is at the core of strong, vibrant cities. However, in recent decades, we have witnessed communities in the United States being pulled apart and weakened by growing racial and ethnic tensions, political polarization, and rising wealth and income inequality. To reverse these negative trends, we need to work to restore our community cohesion and our belief that we are “all in this together.”

While there are many areas of livability that can be strengthened to create vibrant communities, we narrowed the scope of our work in this assessment and guide to hone more into social connections, focusing on putting people first. It is our belief that by improving community connections, other areas of liveability will grow more vibrant.

In addition to the overall benefits to communities, we present the benefits of community connections by population sector (residents, governments, the business community and nonprofits) in the appendix and this companion table: [Benefits of a Connected Community](#).



Why Measure Community Connections?

To further the advancement of community connections, this tool was created to empower cities to take concrete steps to make measurable improvements in strengthening their bonds, networks of reciprocity, and sense of inclusion and belonging among all community members. We have combined both qualitative and quantitative research to create a tool essential to understanding the strengths and weaknesses of a community's connections. This assessment tool breaks the core components of community connections into specific categories and develops



an analytical framework to measure each. As a follow-up to the assessment, this guidebook presents case studies and best practices to enable communities to address areas of concern and achieve better results.

Our assessment objectives are to provide the tools so that communities can:

- ▶ Convene a diverse set of community stakeholders
- ▶ Assess community strengths, challenges and opportunities
- ▶ Learn best practices to select strategies to spark actions to move communities forward
- ▶ Implement new services, programs, and policies
- ▶ Adopt a continuous improvement process to continue addressing and reinforcing community connections

On a national level, the assessment's goal is also to create a strong benchmark database on community connections, which will help provide comparative metrics for cities and counties and facilitate further research into national trends and best practices.

In addition, an important use of these assessment data will provide a persuasive presentation to groups and organizations

that might provide financial support for projects and programs that will increase your community connectedness.

Demonstrating community need and support for new initiatives is a critical component of grant writing and fundraising.

Community Betterment Through the CCI



“What gets measured, gets done. - Peter Drucker



How is this Tool Different from other Community Assessment Tools?

This tool was developed based on Telosa's research on thriving cities and was augmented with Polco's national data sets based on thousands of communities across America. It is a unique, proprietary blend of objective data and subjective, interactive information gathering. Our research has shown that only by combining the empirical data with the sentiments and direct feedback of a population can we truly achieve an accurate assessment of the community connections. In the analyses, we created models of community livability with a specific emphasis on social connections and strengths. (For more information on the analysis, please see [Modeling Quality of Life and Community Connections](#).) These analyses, paired with the literature review on thriving cities conducted by the Telosa Foundation, provided a good background and a strong foundation, which we have distilled into a measurable and actionable decision-making tool for creating a connected community.

As stated in the Purpose, this tool includes indicators that measure the various elements of social connections and social capital often pursued. However, this tool moves beyond these traditional measures to include an emphasis on physical places (placemaking) and other levers to build social connections through land use. It also digs more deeply into elements of diversity and equity and the cleavage that typically divides society (like race, class, or religion).

“Little by little, bit by bit, family by family, so much good can be done on so many levels.

- Elinor Ostrom



Further, this assessment tool and process is holistic since it includes and can be used by all sectors of a community. The inclusion of a framework where diverse voices and community stakeholders work together to build community connections creates social ties between those with and without power or authority, enabling them to gain access to resources, jobs, ideas, and information. It also combines the essential empirical data that indicates levels of connection with the 'human factor' of subjective, interactive community input. We have assembled a comprehensive social connections and social capital index, along with information gathering methods to gain even greater insights from all stakeholders and specific action steps to meaningfully improve community connections.

This index and assessment process also was created with the ability to increase the quality and quantity of data utilized to make decisions and monitor progress. Communities can increase the strength of the assessment in two ways:

The use of stakeholder assessments/surveys: The tool can be provided online, in person, or mailed to individuals who cannot attend in-person convenings. This will broaden the reach of the assessment to better utilize crowdsourcing principles and hear from a broader range of community members. Additional information is provided later in this handbook on the use of surveys.

The use of secondary data: Much public data exists related to community connections and these data serve as a helpful starting point in your discussion. These same data also will serve as a way to monitor progress.

Example Community Connection Indicators to Use in Assessment and Evaluation

- ▶ Local Voter engagement Level
- ▶ Adult residents who collaborated with neighbors to improve their neighborhood or community
- ▶ Gini income equality coefficient (0 to 1)
- ▶ White to non-white geographic segregation (0 to 100)
- ▶ Ration of BIPOC persons' poverty rate to white persons' poverty rate
- ▶ Number of Social Associations per capita
- ▶ Walkability index score (0 to 20)
- ▶ Violent crime rate
- ▶ Mental health providers per 1,000 residents
- ▶ Access to healthy foods index (0 to 10)

For more information on the use of public indicators to strengthen your assessment, please visit <https://info.polco.us/gpal>.

III. The Community Connections Index (CCI)

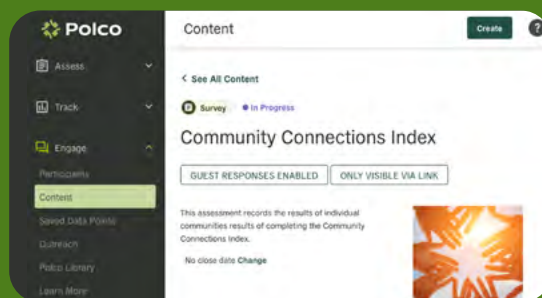
“When we seek for connection, we restore the world to wholeness. Our seemingly separate lives become meaningful as we discover how truly necessary we are to each other.

- Margaret Wheatley

The Community Connections Index (CCI) is a novel comprehensive measurement tool of community connections and social capital. Assessment tools can help communities accurately picture the ties among their people, organizations, and public institutions. We developed the CCI with communities of all shapes and sizes in mind. We built upon our strengths in assessing conditions specific to community culture.

By breaking community connections into measurable, actionable components, we empower cities to identify the constituent parts of strong communities and take specific steps to achieve the empirically demonstrable benefits of enhanced community connections and corresponding action items.

The assessment tool is provided as both a hard copy PDF as well as an online tool. Each version is in the appendix and presented below:





IV. Description of the CCI Dimensions

The CCI is based on the six vital facets of a connected community: social belonging, equity and inclusion, civic participation, social engagement, strong institutions, and placemaking.

A description of each is included on the following page.



Dimension	Description	A Connected Community
 <p>Social Belonging</p>	<p>In connected 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. This also facilitates overlapping networks of reciprocity and mutual assistance which provides greater economic success, enhanced safety and security, and reinforces the social safety net.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Strengthens a sense of community • Promotes civic pride • Builds collaborative relationships, trust, and reciprocity • Enhances safety and security
 <p>Equity and Inclusion</p>	<p>A connected community embraces diversity and includes people from various backgrounds, cultures, and perspectives. For community members to feel a sense of belonging, they need to experience just treatment and feel they are contributing and valued members. When everyone is valued, then each person feels much more valuable to the group and is much more likely to interact and contribute more to the community.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provides a livable community for all • Attracts residents from all backgrounds • Reveals, challenges, and dismantles injustice in current community systems • Creates just structures and cares for residents from all backgrounds
 <p>Civic Participation</p>	<p>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. It also creates a mutually reinforcing feedback loop in which citizens are better informed and, therefore, help the group solve community problems more effectively.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Supports resident engagement in local governance, community organizations, and volunteer activities, shaping the future of the community • Welcomes residents into community decision-making • Empowers local leadership

Dimension	Description	A Connected Community
 <p>Social Engagement</p>	<p>A connected 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. Active community organizations and groups help facilitate connections, advocacy, and social initiatives. Being socially engaged is also extremely valuable to the physical and mental health of residents while making the community more resilient.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Encourages social connections through clubs and social organizations <li>• Contributes to healthy neighborhoods and neighborliness <li>• Provides amenities such as parks and a community center
 <p>Strong Institutions</p>	<p>Strong organizations form the backbone of community livability. Access to essential services and resources, such as quality education, health and wellness, public transportation, parks, and businesses, is vital for a thriving community. Ensuring equitable access to these resources enhances the quality of life for all residents.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Establishes a strong local government that provides quality services that facilitate trust and collaboration <li>• Employs just and trustworthy law enforcement to ensure the safety and well-being of all residents <li>• Has vibrant local businesses that create local jobs, support economic stability, build long-term economic vitality, and donate resources back to improve community livability <li>• Builds on robust educational institutions that empower residents to grow, acquire new skills, and become workforce-ready. <li>• Cared for by high-quality health care providers to ensure all residents have access to quality physical and mental health services and amenities
 <p>Placemaking</p>	<p>Urban design is pivotal in establishing connected communities. By incorporating principles like compact layouts, green infrastructure, efficient public transport, and mixed-use development, land-use planning creates communities where people gather, interact, and build relationships.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Provides public spaces where people want to gather, connects homes, jobs, services, and recreation on a human, walkable scale <li>• Creates vibrant economic centers where people want to spend time <li>• Utilizes arts, culture, and recreational opportunities to create a sense of place and belonging

Who Can Use the Index?

The CCI was developed as a participatory tool whereby community stakeholders convene to discuss the current state of community connections and identify important pathways for improvement. One of the most significant ways that the CCI catalyzes and supports change is through a dialogue and learning process. The potential for impact is greatest in settings where groups of people with diverse experiences and perspectives use the CCI to individually assess the status of their community and then engage in dialogue with each other about how and why they came to their responses.

Common stakeholders include:

- ▶ Local governments who want to mobilize the community to improve community cohesion, civic engagement, and public trust
- ▶ Economic and community development professionals who want to build social capital and improve community livability
- ▶ Chambers of Commerce and other local associations who care about community spirit and community attractiveness
- ▶ Nonprofits and associations who work for the public good
- ▶ Academic researchers and Extension professionals are interested in understanding the linkages between community connections and other elements of community livability, such as education, economics, the natural environment, and more.
- ▶ Residents interested in strengthening their communities and improving the quality of life in their jurisdiction.

A critical note is that the best assessments and decisions are made with a group of diverse and representative voices. The CCI will be the most accurate and actionable if members from multiple segments of the community participate.

What Types of Questions Does the CCI Answer?

The CCI is a community-oriented tool for evaluation, planning, and dialogue geared toward organizational and community change. The CCI invites community members to answer questions such as:

- ▶ What are we doing well to support community building and social capital?
- ▶ Are our residents engaged, and what can we do to improve these connections?
- ▶ Are our local institutions strong, and how can they work to instill trust?
- ▶ Is our community diverse and equitable?
- ▶ Does our land use planning support a sense of place and bring people together in meaningful ways?

While this first version of the tool is geared toward community dialogue, future versions will build on the index with the additional input of stakeholder opinions and public data to support data-driven decision-making. The tool also can be used as a survey that can be used with your residents. The surveys can be used in combination with a community dialogue or as a stand-alone

assessment. The most impactful way to generate actionable insights is to combine the assessment tool with the community dialogue. This allows for greater breadth and depth of ideas and through more participation in the process, there is greater buy-in and ongoing engagement to improve community connections.

When to Use the Assessment Tool?

The CCI is both an evaluation and planning tool and was developed for communities to use for a variety of purposes. This section describes how to use the CCI from the early stages of a project to the final stages of implementation and action planning. Organizations can plug into this process at various stages and modify the use of the tool to suit their needs and working culture.

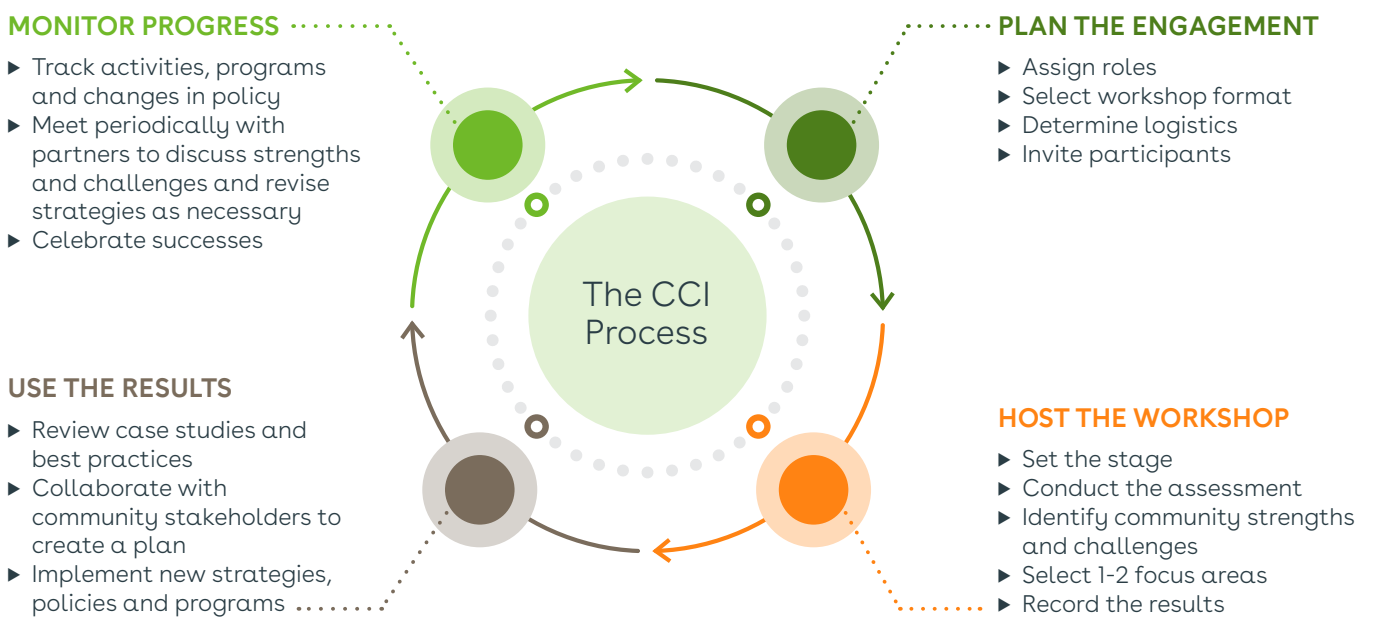
Cities and towns can use the assessment tool for strategic planning or budgeting, specifically, during their Community Visioning process, Comprehensive Land Use Plan, Community Development Plan, or Capital Improvements Plan. Communities are encouraged to use the CCI in projects such as writing annual plans, developing community policies, developing resident training programs, applying for grants, and identifying other external opportunities. The assessment tool can also be used to assist with other community rating systems that are used to measure and certify other aspects of community sustainability and livability. For example, the [LEED for Cities and Communities](#) framework provides municipalities and planned cities, with a certification for achieving benchmarks toward

sustainability, net-zero and equity objectives. The CCI assessment can provide additional data points to inform the Quality of Life section in the LEED rating system. If you are a community using the [USDN STAR Communities Rating system](#), the CCI assessment tool aligns with many of the characteristics they outline as a sustainable community. The CCI tool could help with many of the STAR rating system recommended [checklist items](#). The CCI can also be used if your community is committed to the United Nations' [Sustainable Development Goals](#) or the [Social Progress Index](#).

Collaborating organizations can use the CCI as common ground in framing measures of success and implementation. This shared framework allows diverse organizations to align their goals and strategies, ensuring that all partners are working towards a unified vision. By leveraging the CCI tool, they can establish consistent metrics for evaluating progress and outcomes, which facilitates more effective coordination and collaboration. Moreover, the tool provides a standardized approach to measuring community connections, making it easier to identify strengths and areas for improvement.

IV. The CCI Implementation Process

The CCI can be administered and used in a number of ways. We provide information in this section on a number of optimal strategies for administration. The four basic steps of the assessment process include planning, hosting, using, and monitoring the results. Communities can plug into this process at various stages and modify the use of the tool to suit their needs and culture. In the planning section below, the host will decide which initial format to select for their community based on resources and staff capacity. The key steps are outlined in the figure below.



Planning the Community Engagement Process

A successful CCI community engagement process requires careful planning and thought. The CCI process was designed to be both an effective and efficient assessment methodology that increases the likelihood of representation from a variety of stakeholder groups.

“Cities have the capability of providing something for everybody, only because, and only when, they are created by everybody.”

- Jane Jacobs,
Death and Life of
Great American Cities

Assigning Roles

For each of the basic steps listed above, a person or set of persons should be assigned to ensure all logistics are covered. Questions such as the following will need to be decided upfront.

- ▶ Who will facilitate the convening?
- ▶ What other support will be needed for the convening?
- ▶ Where and when should the convening take place?
- ▶ Who will set up the venue in terms of tables, chairs, flip charts, markers, name cards, and projection ability?
- ▶ Who will check people in?
- ▶ Can you provide childcare on-site for a certain number of participants?
- ▶ Who will take notes and summarize the findings?
- ▶ Who will ensure participation is diverse and represents all stakeholders?
- ▶ Who will be responsible for the invitations and RSVPs?
- ▶ Who will ensure the meeting spaces are reserved, and materials and refreshments are available?



Selecting an Initial Format

The CCI can be administered using several methodologies, depending on the time and resources available. We suggest several different administration method options below but encourage organizations to adopt a methodology that best meets the community's goals and objectives. We also encourage communities to consider facilitating various engagement opportunities and convenings if possible. The formats below require different levels of resources and staff capacity.

Traditional Workshop style: Participants are invited to attend a meeting where the group works through the assessment as a single team. The participants should be many of the major stakeholder groups in your community to ensure a representative sounding of opinions. This type of traditional workshop can be large or small. We recommend ensuring all community stakeholders are represented to get a more accurate assessment of the community.

World Cafe style: Employing a "World Cafe" style involves convening a large number of participants at the same time and engaging them in several rounds of small-group discussions. Participants rotate through different tables, discussing their ideas and assessments. Throughout the process, discussions with the larger group are shared. (For more information on the World Cafe method, please see [The Word Cafe](#).)

Meeting in a Box style: "Meeting in a Box" is a public engagement method designed for community groups, neighborhoods, or other special interest groups to gather at a convenient meeting time and location to share their opinions. Participants use this guide to conduct the meeting(s). The number of meetings and participants vary by community sub-group. At the end of each meeting, a host submits the summary information back from the workshop for synthesis with other meetings held across the community. Meeting in a Box is the most intensive assessment method and has the potential to reach hundreds to thousands of participants, but it requires significant work from the planning committee.

Engagement Method	Number of Participants	Time Spent Meeting	Benefits
Traditional Workshop	5-100 participants	2 hours	Efficient and requires the least resources
5-100 participants	More than 30 participants at a single meeting but with rotating tables	2.5 hours	Useful for exploring the topic from multiple perspectives, and building connections between various stakeholder groups
2 hours	5-12 participants in a series of meetings	1-2 hours per meeting	Useful for encouraging a variety of community groups to host their own meetings at times convenient for each group

If possible, it is advantageous to consider facilitating multiple engagement methods for the assessment. This will take more time and require additional resources and staff capacity. However, employing multiple methods is crucial for several key reasons:

- ▶ **Diversity of Perspectives:** Different methods can engage a broader cross-section of the community, including various age groups, cultural backgrounds, and socio-economic statuses. This ensures that the assessment reflects the diverse needs and desires of the entire community, not just a vocal minority.
- ▶ **Accessibility:** Not everyone has the same opportunities or abilities to engage in one type of community event. While some may prefer face-to-face meetings, others might find online surveys or social media platforms more accessible. In addition, multiple face-to-face events ensures that people with different preferences, disabilities, or scheduling conflicts can still contribute.
- ▶ **Richer Data and Insights:** Using a variety of engagement tools can provide a richer set of data. For example, workshops might generate qualitative insights about how people feel about their community, while surveys provide quantitative data on community preferences. This blend of data types can lead to more informed decision-making.

- ▶ **Building Trust and Transparency:** Employing varied engagement strategies can help build trust between community members and the host organization. It demonstrates a commitment to inclusivity and transparency, showing that the host organization values and seeks out all voices in the community.

In all formats, we suggest participants be asked to take the first 10 minutes of the convening to complete the assessment without conversation - recording only their own opinions of their community. In the later discussions, participants will share their responses and attempt to come to a group rating of each domain as well as offer suggestions for improvement. Asking participants to complete the tool before the discussions creates an easy way to begin the conversation and also may help lend a voice to those less inclined to talk aloud.

We also encourage individual resident assessments/surveys with any of the workshop formats. The assessment can be provided online, in person, or mailed to individuals who cannot attend in-person convenings. These data will provide additional information on your community's social health. Social media blasts, in addition to online emails and press releases, can be used to cast an inclusive net in your community. Sample invitations are provided here: [Survey Invitations for CCI](#).

Determining Logistics

If you are conducting a **workshop or world cafe** where participants convene at a specific date and time, the meeting logistics should be determined at project start. (For the Meeting in a Box format, the various community groups can set their own times.) Meetings receive the largest attendance if they are:

- ▶ Held on a weekday rather than a weekend
- ▶ Hosted in the evening rather than during the workday
- ▶ Take place on Tuesday, Wednesday, or Thursday
- ▶ Convene at a centralized, neutral location such as a library or community center.
- ▶ Catered to provide some form of refreshments, ideally a meal substitute
- ▶ A venue that can accommodate childcare and allows for food and refreshments.

If you are hosting a traditional workshop and have key individuals in mind, start planning early to ensure these folks can attend.

For a **meeting in a box** event, you are relying on the facilitators to set up the meeting based on their knowledge of who they are inviting and what the time and location should be. This can include a meeting at a workplace during lunch, your home, a community center, a restaurant, a community club location, or anywhere with space for 5-12 people to gather and share dialogue. The host will supply the meeting materials described further in the following sections.

Inviting Participants

A successful CCI workshop, world cafe, or meeting in a box event involves diverse groups of people, including representatives from various backgrounds and interests. The first step is to organize a local group of champions—stakeholders who will help you persuade the greater community of the project's value later on. This may include your local government, nonprofits, your business community, and residents from a wide range of demographics.

Invitations may take the form of in-person contact, phone calls, email, mail, or social media. Sample social media and email invitations are presented Here. It is important to send an invitation at least twice and even three times (based on the response) to increase the likelihood of participation.

It is important to note that the participation of some community members may require accommodations e.g., ADA accommodations, child care, transportation tokens, etc.). Further, to increase the participation of vulnerable and nonprofit service employees, the host organizer may need to provide incentives such as gift cards or activity vouchers.



Setting the Stage

The workshop and world cafe environment play an important role in the quality of the discussions and the results gleaned from them. Below are a number of key factors for ensuring success.



Facilitation

The facilitator is critical to the success of the workshop, world cafe, or meeting in a box event. This facilitator should have:

- ▶ Strong facilitation skills and the ability to summarize and synthesize themes and ideas
- ▶ A good understanding of the CCI and what questions will be asked
- ▶ The ability to feel comfortable in the role of a moderator and guide rather than an expert or decision-maker.
- ▶ Understand the principles and values of participatory decision-making

Room Optimization

For the dialogue to be meaningful in all types of engagement formats, the room should be set up so that participants are facing each other and can talk comfortably, such as round or rectangular tables. If you are using a World Cafe Model, you will need a series of smaller tables, ideally round, to create the mood for cafe conversations. The setting should encourage a learning and sharing environment so that every participant feels their voice is welcome in the process. For a Meeting in a Box style format, the host should ensure the location is not too loud and fosters an atmosphere conducive to normal sound levels for conversation and listening.

Media

You may choose to work through the assessment using computers or print out hard copies of the assessment and questions for each table of participants. If you are conducting a Meeting in a Box or World Cafe style workshop, you will need to bring flip charts, butcher block paper, or pads of paper and pens for use during brainstorming.

For Meeting in a Box, the host will need to create multiple packets for each facilitator to host a small gathering. This is usually referred to as a Meeting in a Box kit that the facilitator can download or pick up from the primary host organizer before running a meeting. The facilitator will also need to return the kit with all the notes and information collected to the host organizer after their meeting. The kit will include instruction sheets for the facilitator, discussion questions for the participants, a template agenda to follow, feedback questionnaires for participants, pens and markers, flip chart paper, post-it notes, and stickers.



Hosting the Workshop

A successful convening will model the vision for a connected community. The facilitator must ensure all participants feel they belong in the process and their input is valued. They must also create a space where participants actively listen to each other, ask thoughtful questions, and learn from each other's perspectives. There are many resources and strategies to strengthen facilitation skills that are recommended. While these topics can result in lengthy discussions, the facilitator can use different strategies and tactics to ensure all voices are heard. A seminal resource for improving facilitation skills is the "Facilitators Guide to Participatory Decision-Making".¹ The guide outlines several facilitative listening skills that are crucial for effectively honoring all points of view during community engagement processes. Key techniques include:

- ▶ **Respecting Diverse Communication Styles:** This involves acknowledging and adapting to the various ways participants express their thoughts and feelings.
- ▶ **Paraphrasing:** Restating what others have said to ensure understanding and clarify communication.
- ▶ **Drawing People Out:** Encouraging quieter participants to share their ideas and contribute to the discussion.
- ▶ **Mirroring:** Reflecting back the speaker's words or sentiments, which can validate their contribution and encourage further discussion.
- ▶ **Encouraging:** Motivating all participants to engage and express their opinions openly.
- ▶ **Balancing:** Ensuring that all voices are heard equally, which may involve managing more dominant participants while drawing out quieter ones.
- ▶ **Acknowledging Feelings and Validating:** Recognizing and legitimizing the emotions and viewpoints expressed by participants.
- ▶ **Empathizing:** Demonstrating understanding and sympathy for the speaker's perspective.
- ▶ **Intentional Silence:** Using pauses effectively to allow space for thought and reflection.
- ▶ **Summarizing:** Bringing together different viewpoints reinforces understanding and progress in the discussion.

These techniques are designed to create an inclusive environment that facilitates effective and equitable participation, leading to more thoughtful and collaborative decision-making.

In addition, a strong workshop is based on a well-thought-out agenda. The facilitator will play an important role in keeping the discussion on track and meaningful. Creating an agenda that provides enough space to talk without creating a workshop requiring significant commitment is critical to optimizing participation and value. We have provided three sample agendas to customize and use based on the three formats we presented above. Feel free to customize for your community based on your stakeholders' commitment and time constraints. Sample workshop agendas for traditional, world-cafe, and meeting in a box administrations are provided [Here](#).



¹ Kaner et al. 2014

Assessing Community Strengths and Challenges

Participants in the workshops will give each of the 6 dimensions a score and be asked to answer a number of qualitative questions related to the domain.



A connected community values **Equity and Inclusion** and embraces people from various backgrounds, cultures, and perspectives. When everyone is valued, then each person feels much more valuable to the group and are much more likely to interact and contribute more to the community. A connected community:

- Provides a livable community for all
- Attracts residents from all backgrounds
- Reveals, challenges, and dismantles injustice in current community systems

Creates just structures and cares for residents from all backgrounds

	1	2	3	4
To what extent does our community make residents from all backgrounds feel welcome?	Our community is <u>not welcoming</u> to residents from all backgrounds	Our community is <u>slightly welcoming</u> to residents from all backgrounds	Our community is <u>moderately welcoming</u> to residents from all backgrounds	Our community is <u>very welcoming</u> to residents from all backgrounds
What do we do well in terms of inclusivity?				
Who is missing from our community? Whose voices are not heard?				
What can we do to be more inclusive and welcoming?				

These responses will be used at the meeting end to identify the key focus areas. The discussions around these questions also will serve to facilitate greater understanding of the perceptions and experiences from participants from a variety of backgrounds.

Identifying Community Focus Areas

While this workshop has numerous benefits to stakeholders and the community at large, the primary goal is to identify 1-3 critical focus areas to move forward on. Thus, it is important to ensure you end the workshop with these areas identified.

Thinking back over our responses to the assessment, in what 1 or 2 areas should we choose to move forward this year?

- | | |
|---|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Social Cohesion | <input type="checkbox"/> Social Engagement |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Equity and Inclusion | <input type="checkbox"/> Placemaking |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Civic Participation | <input type="checkbox"/> Strong Institutions |

Recording Your Results

The results of the final group decisions should be recorded online during the workshop on the Polo platform ([CCI Results](#)) or captured on the hard-copy tool and entered after the discussion using the same link. Responses from the individual surveys should be collected and reviewed at the end of the workshop. The information may give greater context to the group decisions, and many open-ended comments may help with future action planning.

Using the Results

After the group engagement, the most important step is to use the results to make changes to improve community livability.

Common Uses of Assessment Results

While there are specific actions communities can take within each CCI domain, there are activities that are useful for all. Communities can use the results of the CCI to support many new initiatives, ranging from designing new programs, developing partnerships, to changing land use regulations. A number of potential uses are listed in the figure below:



Social Belonging

Communities can increase social belonging through the promotion of communication and dialogue, sponsoring of social events and activities, participation in civic activities, and welcoming new residents and members of diverse population groups. Empowering community stakeholders to take ownership of their community will foster a stronger sense of unity and pride.



Equity and Inclusion

Communities should ensure fair treatment, equal opportunities, and respect for all residents regardless of their background, identity, or beliefs. Address systemic issues such as poverty, discrimination, and inequality in your community by raising awareness, mobilizing support, and advocating for policy change. This work can include anti-discrimination measures, affordable housing policies, fair labor practices, investments in education and community development, and initiatives that support marginalized groups, immigrants, and refugees. It also involves addressing basic needs and promoting well-being by strengthening the social services to residents in need, such as food assistance, housing support, healthcare services, and counseling.



Civic Participation

Communities can catalyze to strengthen community engagement and participation by organizing events, workshops, and forums that bring residents together to discuss issues, share ideas, and collaborate on solutions. This also includes increasing volunteerism, community service, and civic participation by providing opportunities for residents to get involved in local initiatives and projects. Activities may include organizing a neighborhood cleanup, starting a community garden, building a new open space trail, or coordinating a fundraising event for a shared cause.



Social Engagement

Communities can increase social engagement through the organization of social events and festivals, encouraging volunteerism, facilitating networking opportunities and providing public spaces where people can congregate. Welcoming residents from different backgrounds, cultures, and identities and celebrating their traditions fosters cross cultural appreciation and relationships.



Strong Institutions

Community institutions can build trust and transparency by communicating openly with residents, addressing their concerns, and delivering quality services and products. Local governments, in particular, should take the lead by demonstrating accountability and responsiveness in decision-making processes and involving residents in shaping policies and initiatives that affect their lives.



Placemaking

Land use is an essential tool in strengthening social ties and cohesion. Develop and maintain public spaces such as parks, community centers, and libraries that serve as gathering places for residents of all backgrounds. These spaces can facilitate social interaction, recreation, and cultural exchange, serving as hubs for community interaction. In addition, changes to community design through zoning ordinances and comprehensive plans can create density, walkable neighborhoods, and multi-use spaces, creating strong physical motivators for resident connection.

For actions specific by community stakeholder group, please see the [CCI Actions Matrix](#).
(see appendix)

Creating a Plan

Overall, communities have a broad range of responsibilities and tools at their disposal to effect positive change in communities, working closely with residents, local government businesses, nonprofit organizations, and other stakeholders to address regional challenges and pursue shared goals. The power of the CCI is its ability to catalyze new ways of thinking and behavior. A deliberate and intentional commitment to use and revisit the results will bring the strongest levels of community change. Creating an action plan will move initiatives closer to the highest degree of intended impact. An **action plan** typically includes a goal of suggested actions or strategies, identifies who is responsible for implementing the action, and consists of a timeline for its implementation. The plan can be created by a single organization or in a more collaborative framework involving a diverse group of community stakeholders. An example of a simple action plan is provided here ([Sample Action Plan](#)).

Plan creation with a larger group of stakeholders often works best, beginning with a Next Steps Workshop (NSW). Much of the information provided in the section on how to host the CCI assessment meetings holds true for the NSW. The format can be a single meeting, a World Cafe, or Meetings in a Box. You can invite the same participants or hold the workshop on the same day following the completion of the index as a continuation of the work. A sample agenda is provided [Here](#).

Financing and Resourcing Your Plan

Depending on the scope and scale of your planning project, a diverse set of resources will be required to finance actionable plans. All new initiatives require some level of resources whether that be in the form of staffing or actual funds. However, this can be done in phases if only smaller resources are initially available.

No matter how ambitious your initial plans are, it is most likely that a “funding mix” will be required. For example, initial resources can be made available from smaller sources such as local governments and small foundation grants. As capacity is built, more substantial planning funds can be applied for through grant writing to acquire larger sources building on the earlier ones. These later phases often require more complicated analysis, design, and other technical expertise building on the earlier work.

State and Federal planning grants as well as private foundations provide an array of funding Plan for a phased plan development and “stacked” funding from a mix of public and private funding and resources. Public-Private Partnerships (“PPPs”) are another strategic approach to implementation and currently a very effective and expedient approach. This strategy leverages available public federal or state funds that often require local matching funds with private sector funds from the development community.



Some potential funding resources are included in this document: [Potential Funding Sources for Moving the CCI Forward](#)

Developing and Supporting Champions

Few community initiatives move forward without the leadership of community champions. Identifying residents, business members, and other community stakeholders at project start can help with advocacy, representation, mentorship, and the identification of additional resources.

Monitoring Your Progress

Once there is consensus on the actions to be taken and action plans in place, monitoring changes as they are implemented will be essential to determine whether they have the desired effects. Periodic reviews of the plans will ensure participants stay focused and motivated. Celebration of small successes is a necessary step in all change management initiatives.

You are where you are today because you stand on somebody's shoulders. And wherever you are heading, you cannot get there by yourself. If you stand on the shoulders of others, you have a reciprocal responsibility to live your life so that others may stand on your shoulders. It's the quid pro quo of life. We exist temporarily through what we take, but we live forever through what we give.

- **Vernon Jordan**

The CCI itself should be administered periodically as well to continuously monitor the social health of your community. Depending on the resources dedicated to community change, the index should be administered at one-, two-, or three-year intervals. Changes in the index should provide a true assessment of the work completed.

Sharing Your Journey

Much of this work will be new for many communities, and thus, creating learning resource groups is essential. Please make sure your community contributes to the body of knowledge on what works in building community connections by sharing your assessment data on the Polco platform ([CCI Results](#)).





VI. Conclusion

Strong community bonds and social connectedness is about much more than volunteering, bake sales, and town hall attendance. It is about the fundamental ways that the people of a town or city relate to each other, cooperate together, and contribute to a better quality of life for everyone. Through the CCI, community officials will be empowered to assess these connections between their citizens and create a dialogue with all stakeholders about the best ways to enhance and improve community connections. A vast body of research

has demonstrated that improving social bonds and social capital will make us physically and mentally healthier, our communities safer and more prosperous, and our government more stable and effective. This process and approach can help your community identify areas for improvement, drive new ideas and innovations, open new funding opportunities, and bring people together for a shared purpose. These are ambitious goals towards a more thriving, flourishing community, but all very realistically achievable, if we work together.

Community connections have the power to make cities stronger and more vibrant.

VII. Resources for Inspiration



Social Belonging

Case Studies and Examples

[Greater Louisville Inc.'s City Champs Program: Text A Detroit](#)

 [Telosa: How Milton Keynes, UK Created Social Belonging](#)

 [Telosa: Reston, Virginia - Importance of Social Belonging at the Outset](#)

Local women organize to network and provide funds for community projects

[100 Women Who Care](#)

[100+ Women Who Care Tucson to reach \\$1 M mark in giving](#)

People organize to improve health and help one another live a healthy life style

[Miami Beach Bootcamp](#)

Local library organizes book clubs and reading groups for people of all ages

[The Library Has Book Discussion Groups for Everyone - Greenwich Library](#)

Local organization in Denmark provides space and logistics for people to meet and exchange ideas, share experiences

[The Human Library Organization](#)

Dutch Nursing homes provide free rent to college students who interact with residents

[Dutch nursing home offers rent-free housing to students | PBS News Weekend](#)

Dutch provide innovative housing solutions by placing housing for elderly near schools

[How the Dutch Lead the Way in Senior Housing Innovation](#)

Non-profits develop innovative housing solutions for special needs individuals

[Getting Creative: Models for Filling the Housing Gap](#)

Webinars

 [Polco: How Local Government Leaders Can Overcome Polarization](#)



Telosa Asset



Polco Asset

Articles, Books, Guidebooks and Blogs

Baumeister, R. F., & Leary, M. R. (1995). The need to belong: Desire for interpersonal attachments as a fundamental human motivation. *Psychological Bulletin*, 117(3), 497-529

Perkins, D. D., & Zimmerman, M. A. (1995). Empowerment theory, research, and application. *American Journal of Community Psychology*, 23(5), 569-579.

Putnam, R. D. (2000). *Bowling Alone: The Collapse and Revival of American Community*. Simon & Schuster.

Add Upswing and Our Kids



Equity and Inclusion

Case Studies and Examples


[Seattle, WA Executive Order](#)

[Healdsburg, CA: Reach Underheard Groups With This Proven Strategy](#)

 [Telosa: Reston, Virginia - A History Rooted in Inclusivity](#)

 [Polco: Buffalo Grove's Simple Strategy to Reach Diverse Voices](#)

Webinars

 [Polco: Housing Impacts on Aging in Place and How You Can Drive Solutions](#)

 [Polco: How Virginia Makes Positive Impacts on Housing for Aging in Place](#)

Articles, Books, Guidebooks and Blogs

Fang, Clara, Jessica Hench, Christa Daniels, and Abigail Abrash Walton. [Centering Equity in Climate Resilience Planning and Action: A Practitioner's Guide](#). *Climate-Smart Communities Series, Vol. 3*. Antioch University New England 2022. 10.25923/765q-zp33

[Equitable Development as a Tool to Advance Racial Equity](#)

[Planning with Diverse Communities](#), American Planning Association



Civic Participation

Case Studies and Examples







[Documentary on Robert Putnam's 50 Year study of Community](#)

[We Will Chicago](#)




[NYC Participatory budgeting](#)

[Taiwan Open Government Action Plan](#)

[Austin's Neighborhood Partnering Program](#)

-  [Polco: Gardena Gets Community Input on How To Reduce Homelessness](#)
-  [Polco: How Dane County Excels in Online Community Engagement](#)
-  [Polco: How Decatur, Georgia, Built a Culture of Engagement](#)
-  [Polco: Eagan Enhances Livability Through Community Engagement](#)
-  [Polco: How Fort Knox Used Community Input to Better Life on Base](#)
-  [Polco: Largo Successfully Allocates ARPA Funds Based on Residents' Critical Needs](#)

Webinars

-  [Polco: How To Engage Residents in Housing Solutions](#)
-  [Polco: How Resident Feedback Can Help You Build Community Resilience](#)
-  [Polco: How Small Communities Can Help Leverage Resident Feedback](#)

Articles, Books, Guidebooks and Blogs

[National League of Cities Promoting Youth Participation](#)



-  [Polco: Three Ways Local Governments Are Reinventing Community Engagement](#)



Social Engagement

Case Studies and Examples

[Bhutan's Gross National Happiness Index - National wellbeing beyond GDP](#)

-  [Telosa: Raleigh, North Carolina - The Raleigh Neighborhood Exchange](#)
-  [Telosa: Milton Keynes, United Kingdom - Social Development Program](#)

[Citizen Lab](#): various case studies to explore

Articles, Books, Guidebooks, and Blogs

[USDN Digital Sustainability Conversations: How local governments can engage residents online](#)

[Inclusive Community Engagement Playbook C40](#)



Strong Institutions

Case Studies and Examples






Local Government

[Route 50: Trust in Government and Opportunities to Rebuild It](#)




[Route 50: How Trusted are State and Local Governments](#)

[Taiwan Open Government Action Plan](#)


[Pittsburgh 311: \(Citizens Hotline\)](#)

-  [Polco: How Laguna Beach Established a Baseline for Local Government Performance](#)
-  [Polco: Foresight Specialist Rebecca Ryan on How Governments Can Plan for the Future](#)
-  [Polco: Strengthening Trust in Local Government](#)
-  [Telosa: Singapore - Effective Government and Services](#)
-  [Telosa: Copenhagen, Denmark - Robust Social Programs](#)

Public Safety

-  [Polco: Papillion Proves Community Policing Works](#)
-  [Polco: How Edmond Drives High Resident Satisfaction with Public Safety Services](#)
-  [Polco: Media Influence and Trust In Police Among the Black Community](#)

Webinars

-  [Polco: Building a Stronger Police Force with Help from Your Residents](#)

[Cops and Barbers Program, Charlotte, NC](#)

[Santa Rosa CA Fire Department's Fire Prevention and Safety Education Programs](#)

[New York City: South Bronx Community Connections](#)

Sampson, R. J., Raudenbush, S. W., & Earls, F. (1997). Neighborhoods and violent crime: A multilevel study of collective efficacy. *Science*, 277(5328), 918-924.

Education

-  [Polco: Higher Education Budgeting: Engaging Stakeholders To Make Tough Tradeoffs](#)

[The Upswing: How America Came Together a Century Ago and How We Can Do It Again - October 13, 2020](#)

[The Economic Benefits of Educational Attainment](#)

[Chicago Cook Workforce Partnership](#)

[TechHire San Francisco](#)

[Innovate Raleigh](#)

[Aspen Institute Guide](#)

[Pittsburgh Promise](#)



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[San Francisco Preschool for All Program](#)
[The Harlem Children's Zone \(HCZ\) - New York City](#)
[Local learning ecosystem, Paris, France](#)
[10 reasons why Finland's education system is the best](#)
[Oakland Natives Give Back](#)
[How Partnerships connect Communities and Schools](#)

 [Telosa: Raleigh, North Carolina - Importance of Education and Lifelong Learning](#)

Becker, G. S. (1964). *Human Capital: A Theoretical and Empirical Analysis, with Special Reference to Education*. National Bureau of Economic Research.

Health / Wellness

[Harvard's 80 year study of happiness, longevity and community](#)

[How New Park Amenities Improved Fate Residents' Health](#)

[The Economic Value of Health Benefits Associated with Urban Park Investment](#)

Kawachi, I., Kennedy, B. P., & Glass, R. (1997). Social capital and self-rated health: A contextual analysis. *American Journal of Public Health, 87*(9), 1491-1498.

Maller, C., Townsend, M., Pryor, A., Brown, P., & St Leger, L. (2008). Healthy nature healthy people: 'contact with nature' as an upstream health promotion intervention for populations. *Health Promotion International, 23*(1), 45-54.

Marmot, M. (2005). Social determinants of health inequalities. *The Lancet, 365*(9464), 1099-1104.

Makridis CA, Wu C (2021) How social capital helps communities weather the COVID-19 pandemic. *PLoS ONE 16*(1): e0245135. <https://doi.org/10.1371/journal.pone.0245135>

Non-Profits

[Tulsa Community Foundation](#)



Placemaking

Case Studies and Examples

 [Telosa: Milton Keynes, UK - The Importance of Design and Environmental Stewardship](#)

 [Telosa: Reston, Virginia - Developed Using a Masterplan](#)

Public Spaces

[The Economic Benefits of Sustainable Streets](#)

[Portland, Maine: Congress Square Park](#)

[New York City: South Bronx Community Connections](#)

[Portland, leader in community gardens](#)

[Boston, Fenway Victory Gardens](#)

[The Underline Miami FL](#)

[Copenhagen](#)

[Superkilen Urban Park](#)

Cohen, R. (2019). *The Economic Impact of Local Parks*. National Recreation and Park Association.

Mixed-Use Development

[Buffalo Green Code](#)

[Reston VA](#)

[The BeltLine Project - Atlanta, Georgia](#)

Higher Density Development/15 Minute Cities

Frumkin, H., Frank, L., & Jackson, R. (2004). *Urban Sprawl and Public Health: Designing, Planning, and Building for Healthy Communities*. Island Press.

Public Art

[Pittsburgh Cultural Trust and Cultural District](#)

[Peterborough, NH Night Market, Public Art Exhibition, and Emerging Artists Exhibition](#)

[Keene NH Walldog Murals](#)

[The Woodlands is Home to One of the Largest Outdoor Art Collections in the Nation](#)

Florida, R. (2002). *The Rise of the Creative Class*. Basic Books.

Stern, M. J., & Seifert, S. C. (2008). From Creative Economy to Creative Society. *Social Impact of the Arts Project, University of Pennsylvania*.


 [Telosa: Portland, Maine - See How They Have Created a Thriving Arts and Cultural Scene](#)

Maker Spaces

[Copenhagen Makerspace](#)

[National League of Cities: Discovering Your Maker Economy](#)

Mobility

 [Polco: How Can Government Leaders Build a More Walkable City?](#)

 [Polco: Where Residents Love To Ride the Bus: Public Transportation in Skokie](#)

 [Polco: Cape Coral: How a City Built Without Sidewalks Won an Award for Mobility](#)

Historical Preservation

 [Polco: Coronado Keeps History Alive Through Cultural Preservation](#)



Telosa Asset



Polco Asset

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Major Benefits of Connected Communities (and use of CCI)

The overall benefits of a connected community are presented in the guidebook. In this table, additional benefits, specific to each community stakeholder group are presented.

Benefits	For Residents	For Governments	For the Business Community	For the Nonprofit Community
Social Capital and Belonging	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Increased feelings of stability, belonging, and care Enhanced feelings of ownership and stake in the community Increased opportunities for volunteerism and ability to make a difference Greater ability to share voices in community decision making Enhanced shared sense of purpose and shared sacrifice Increased feeling of inclusion Greater diversity - residents from myriad backgrounds Increased friendships and social supports 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Greater community cohesion, unity, and civic pride Decreased polarization Better and more well accepted community decisions, policies and programs Greater transparency, and enhanced communication to create an informed citizenry Increased trust Improved ability to deliver services, solutions, and a high quality of life to residents 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Facilitation of shared connections and interests, resulting in fair and continued mutually beneficial financial relationships Creates strong networks of reciprocity Greater sense of belonging which attracts and retains residents (customers) Improved community livability attracts and retains businesses and employees Improved friendships, social supports and mental health for employees 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Increased facilitation of shared connections and interests results in a stronger social safety net Greater number of volunteers and frequency of volunteerism Increased fundraising opportunities Improved ability to partner and mobilize on emerging community problems
Equity	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Greater inclusion, equity and sense of belonging Stronger community ties Increased safety and reciprocal networks of assistance Decreased systemic inequities and social injustice Increased empathy, understanding and fair treatment Increased access to jobs housing, education and healthcare Greater diversity - residents from myriad backgrounds 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Greater trust between the government and traditionally underserved groups Increased ability to tackle social issues such as homelessness, poverty, housing and health care disparities Greater ability to provide effective services and programs that benefit the whole community 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Enhanced innovation and creativity through the inclusion of diverse staff in the workforce More motivated workforce who see opportunities and know that their contributions will be recognized and rewarded 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Enhanced innovation and creativity through the inclusion of diverse staff and volunteers Increased ability to tackle social issues such as homelessness, poverty, housing and health care disparities Expanded reach and impact of services
Effective Governance	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Increased quality of government services Greater stewardship of public dollars Improved quality of community decision making 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Improved ability to deliver services and quality of life to residents Greater trust Resident participation in government requests (e.g. water conservation, emergency response) Increased resources (e.g. sales tax, mill levies) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Increased quality of government services to serve the business community Improved quality of policies and programs related to industry and economic development 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Stronger collaboration with governance to increase program strengths and reach
Vibrant Economies	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Broader based, shared prosperity in the community More and better paying jobs Appreciating property values Increased school funding Enhanced vitality of neighborhoods(ie entertainment, businesses, recreation opps, more expansive social services) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Increased sales tax and property taxes Improved workforce alignment Increased GDP Growing population 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Broader based, shared prosperity in the community Increased sales Loyal customers Increased ability to attract and retain talent Improved business retention Greater workforce alignment Enhanced environment for greater risk taking, innovation and entrepreneurialism Greater ability to plan for long term growth 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Stronger collaboration with business community to increase program strengths and reach Increased prosperity of residents, businesses and local government leads to increased donations Greater fundraising due to a connection between donations and positive outcomes Strengthened community-based business networks vital in nurturing local talent, ensuring a skilled workforce, and provide for building new skills

Safety	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Increased safety • Greater awareness and safety considerations 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Decreased crime • Improved relationships between law enforcement and residents • More law abiding residents • Increased resident involvement in community policing • More equity in income and jobs 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Increased safety in downtown and commercial areas leading to increase patronage and sales • Attracts business and customers from neighboring areas • Less vandalism 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Added safety for staff and volunteers • Increased ability to expand program impact and reach
Education and Lifelong Learning	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Strengthened foundation for the current and next generation of the community - Education, jobs, increased potential for youth • Greater ability to adjust career paths due to changing technologies • Higher graduation rates • Improved child welfare and education/life-long learning, • Less truancy, fewer discipline problems 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Decreased crime and impacts on criminal justice system • Decreased need for social services • Fewer disconnected youth • Decreased downtime from mid career job changes 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Greater workforce alignment • Increased skills-building and mentorship opportunities to foster better employee talent • Increased innovation and entrepreneurship • More highly skilled and paid workers 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Better skilled employees and volunteers • Stronger collaboration with educational institutions to increase program strengths and reach
Arts, Culture and Recreation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Increased opportunities to attend art and cultural events • Greater opportunities for recreation and leisure time activities • Improved knowledge and appreciation for art, culture, and history • Greater participation and contributions from local artists 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Improved community design, attraction and excitement • Increased sales tax • More pride and engagement in the local community • Increase in tourism dollars • 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Increased tourism • Increased opportunities to develop microbusinesses • Enhanced vibrancy of downtown/commercial areas 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Increased opportunities to showcase local initiatives • Greater visibility of the nonprofit world • More fundraising event opportunities
Design and Stewardship	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • More active and sustainable neighborhoods and vibrant downtown areas where people want to live and spend time • More walkable, open, greenspaces • Cleaner communities • Shorter commutes • Greater assistance both in disaster relief and help for those in need • Increased property values due to greater livability and opportunity • Increased levels of pride in ones community 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Lower reliance on vehicle travel and related governmental services and expenditures • Greater support and cooperation in preservation and sustainability initiatives • Increased emergency preparedness 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Increased consumerism and tourism • Increased resilience of city (and customers) to withstand natural disasters and emergencies • Increased opportunities for businesses to raise their profiles in the community 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Enhanced environment for volunteers, donors and employees • Increased resiliency / support system (natural disasters, etc.) • Greater safety nets
Health and Well-being	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Happier, healthier, more active, engaged lifestyles • Improved mental and physical well-being • Increased walkability and opportunities for fitness 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Fewer expenditures on health care and social service programs • More civic engagement 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Happier, healthier workforce • Decreased absenteeism • Greater work productivity 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Happier, healthier workforce and volunteer pool • Decreased absenteeism • Greater participation

Actions to Improve Community Connections by Community Stakeholder Group

Actions	For Residents	For Governments	For the Business Community	For the Nonprofit Community
Social belonging	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Participate in a community meeting Volunteer time to an organization working on community betterment Attend a local school, religious, non-profit, sporting or cultural event 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Organize events and activities geared at common and shared interests Host cultural festivals and events, public art initiatives Create attractive public spaces for events and gatherings 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Participate in community organizations and meetings that provide social bonds and networks of reciprocity (i.e. Rotary Clubs) Recognize employees for contributions and special occasions 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Organize events and activities geared at common and shared interests Host cultural festivals and events, public art initiatives Honor community members for noteworthy efforts for local improvement
Equity and Inclusion	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Actively engage with all members of the community with special outreach to the traditionally underserved residents Support programs and policies that foster equity and inclusion Volunteer time or resources to assist residents in need 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Develop and implement policies to promote equity Increase services to assist community members in need. Be intentional in outreach to diverse communities Host cultural festivals 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Pursue inclusive recruitment strategies, equitable career development opportunities, employee resource groups (ERG's), and adaptive employee feedback mechanisms Partner with local education institutions to attract and provide work skills to residents from diverse backgrounds 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Pursue inclusive recruitment strategies, equitable career development opportunities, employee resource groups (ERG's), and adaptive employee feedback mechanisms Provide services and programs through greater funding aimed at decreasing disparities in access to jobs housing, education, child care and healthcare
Civic Participation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Volunteer Vote Participate in a community meeting Share opinions with local government Support local organizations and clubs aimed at community betterment 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Provide opportunities for residents to participate in community decision making through town halls, social media and surveys Provide increased visibility/interaction with elected officials and staff Form working groups/task forces/boards to help make important community decisions Promote volunteer opportunities 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Participate in the Chamber of Commerce and other economic clubs to strengthen business community Provide mentorship programs with young, mid-career and older residents. Support business incubators and accelerator programs. Host a "support your local business" weekend 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Increase the number, quality, and variety of volunteer opportunities Host a voter registration drive Collaborate with government, private sector, and other nonprofits to identify shared interests
Social Engagement	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Participate in local activities and events Spend time at parks, libraries and other public places Join local associations and clubs Host neighborhood block parties 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Bring people together through social activities, events, festivals and programs 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Participate in/sponsor community events to increase social engagement (e.g. Art Walks, Farmers Markets) Create opportunities for employees to interact socially outside of work Actively support, advertise and sponsor local events 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Participate in/sponsor community events to increase social engagement (e.g. Farmers markets, Concerts in the Park)



Placemaking	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Share your time and voice in community visioning sessions Spend time in public places Visit your downtown Support local artists and makers Support sustainably policies and take part in initiatives to maintain and preserve the natural environment Volunteer or dedicate resources to causes that support the natural environment Do your part through recycling, water and power conservation, using alternate modes of transportation, etc. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Engage constituents in community visioning sessions, surveys, focus groups, participatory mapping, scenario planning, charrettes, design competitions, and online platforms Establish areas for gathering, working, and recreation among community members to create authentic relationships Apply for placemaking grants Pursue placemaking policies, zoning, regulations, site design, and other strategies Create maker spaces in the community Review all policy actions and spending to ensure they support sustainability and resilience Pursue green building practices Employ blue/green infrastructure 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Share your time and voice in community visioning sessions Support microbusinesses and entrepreneurs Build a vibrant downtown Support local artists and makers Host or support events and festivals to promote local art, culture and history Pursue green building practices Implement sustainability and resilience policies for their individual businesses 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Share your time and voice in community visioning sessions Apply for placemaking grants Support local artists and makers Host or support events and festivals to promote local art, culture, and history Partner with local government to support sustainability and resilience by identifying the biggest threats and the best evidence-based programs to fund and allocate volunteers
Strong Institutions: Governance	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Be a good citizen – vote, stay informed, attend town meetings, share your opinions with city leaders, etc. Volunteer to support a local government service or program (e.g neighborhood watch, community clean up, etc.) Use public amenities such as parks, trails, and libraries Attend local festivals and events 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Provide quality services Build strong partnerships with other levels of government, nonprofit organizations, businesses, and academic institutions Ensure transparency, accountability, and integrity in all operations 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Partner with your local government on shared goals such as economic development, workforce housing, downtown revitalization, workforce alignment, etc. Volunteer to or provide donations to support a local government service or program (e.g community clean up, local festivals, etc.) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Partner with your local government on shared goals such as food security, health services, housing, etc. Volunteer to or provide donations to support a local government service or program (e.g community clean up, local festivals, etc.)
Strong Institutions: Public Safety Services	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Create a household emergency plan Participate in neighborhood watch programs and actively report suspicious activity 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Provide adequate funding for law enforcement as well as initiatives to address crime prevention and community policing Promote proactive public safety policies, develop robust emergency preparedness and response plans 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Work with local law enforcement to improve safety in downtown and commercial areas (e.g. vigilance, reporting) Implement safety features at property such as adequate lighting and alarms, cameras Meet code enforcement standards by keeping properties well maintained, free from weeds, graffiti 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Develop programs to support vulnerable members of the community Provide shelter for those experiencing homelessness Provide services that help prevent criminal activity and incarceration such as mental health counseling, substance abuse therapy, reconciliation/mediation services, etc.
Strong Institutions: Business Community	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Be active members in the business community and local clubs, networking organizations Support development of a community foundation Buy Local products and services 	<p>Create a conducive environment for business growth and entrepreneurship</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Create policies and a regulatory framework to attract and retain businesses Pursue active economic development to assist business funding/grants, employee development events, job fairs, and community collaboration. Pursue Tax Increment Financing (TIF) districts and other business improvement initiatives Create small Business Incubator programs, Buy Local Campaigns, etc. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Support Farmers Markets, participate in Buy Local campaigns (add Raleigh Durham example) Educate residents on supporting the business community, support community volunteers/ company match programs Sponsor mentoring and training programs, internships 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Pursue programs that increase economic resilience Engage and collaborate with all businesses Engage with schools and academic institutions Identify and fund the most beneficial projects Support a Young Professionals Network
Strong Institutions: Educational Institutions	<p>Community Members</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Participate in school organizations such as PTOs 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Create a workforce development program Invest in public libraries for lifelong learning centers 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Create employee training and internships, establish mentorship and coaching programs 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Partner with educational institutions for community education opportunities




<p>Strong Institutions: Educational Institutions</p>	<p>Community Members</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Participate in school organizations such as PTOs and district advisory committees • Participate in school board meetings • Volunteer in schools • Support tax initiatives to increase school funding <p>Students</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Participate in extracurricular activities such as sports, clubs and organizations aimed at school betterment • Pursue internships, mentoring and coaching programs • Study, contributing to a stronger academic reputation for the educational institutions 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Create a workforce development program • Invest in public libraries for lifelong learning centers • Develop community education programs • Partner with school districts and educational institutions in community 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Create employee training and internships, establish mentorship and coaching programs 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Partner with educational institutions for community education opportunities • Focus research and development on identified community issues
<p>Strong Institutions: Health Providers</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Stay active – make use of community fitness and recreation amenities • Pursue healthy eating options • Seek preventive health services and counseling 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ensure healthcare services are accessible to residents • Create recreational spaces and facilities • Provide public health services (if in government’s purview) • Enact policies and zoning regulations that promote food security (e.g. protection of farmland, allowance of community gardens and farmers markets, and allowance of food microbusinesses such as food trucks) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Create employee wellness programs • Promote microbusinesses to support food security (e.g. farmers markets, food cooperatives, shared community kitchens) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Develop and deliver programs and services related to health and mental health • Plan programs to increase community food security (e.g. farmers markets, community gardens, food coops, community kitchens) • Develop innovative programs to incorporate the elderly to feel more valued and an important part of the community


Community Connections Index



Community Connections Index

 <p>In a connected community there is a strong sense of Social Belonging 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 connected community:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Strengthens a sense of community • Promotes civic pride • Builds collaborative relationships, trust, and reciprocity • Enhances safety and security 				
To what extent does our community demonstrate social belonging and inclusion?	1 Little to none sense of social belonging	2 Slight sense of social belonging	3 Moderate sense of social belonging	4 Strong sense of social belonging
What do we do well in terms of social belonging?				
What are our biggest challenges related to social belonging?				
 <p>A connected community values Equity and Inclusion and embraces people from various backgrounds, cultures, and perspectives. When everyone is valued, then each person feels much more valuable to the group and are much more likely to interact and contribute more to the community. A connected community:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provides a livable community for all • Attracts residents from all backgrounds • Reveals, challenges, and dismantles injustice in current community systems • Creates just structures and cares for residents from all backgrounds 				
To what extent does our community make residents from all backgrounds feel welcome?	1 Our community is <u>not welcoming</u> to residents from all backgrounds	2 Our community is <u>slightly welcoming</u> to residents from all backgrounds	3 Our community is <u>moderately welcoming</u> to residents from all backgrounds	4 Our community is <u>very welcoming</u> to residents from all backgrounds
What do we do well in terms of inclusivity?				
Who is missing from our community? Whose voices are not heard?				
What can we do to be more inclusive and welcoming?				
How equitable is our community to residents of all backgrounds?	1 Our community is <u>not very equitable</u> for residents from all backgrounds	2 Our community is <u>slightly equitable</u> for residents from all backgrounds	3 Our community is <u>moderately equitable</u> for residents from all backgrounds	4 Our community is <u>very equitable</u> for residents from all backgrounds
What do we do well in terms of equity?				

In what areas are we most unjust? What population sub-groups experience the greatest challenges?				
What are our biggest challenges to equity?				
 <p>A connected community encourages Civic Participation, 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. A connected community:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Supports resident engagement in local governance, community organizations, and volunteer activities, shaping the future of the community • Welcomes residents into community decision making • Empowers local leadership 				
How would we rate our community in terms of civic engagement?	1 We have a <u>very low amount</u> of civic participation	2 We have a <u>slight amount</u> of civic participation	3 We have a <u>moderate amount</u> of civic participation	4 We have a <u>strong amount</u> of civic participation
What do we do well in terms of civic participation?				
What are our biggest challenges related to civic participation?				
 <p>A connected community fosters Social Engagement, an environment that is neighborly and consists of strong support networks, such as community centers, clubs, and social organizations. These networks and amenities allow residents to connect, share experiences, and assist one another. A connected community:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Encourages social connections through clubs and social organizations • Contributes to healthy neighborhoods and neighborliness • Provides amenities such as parks, community centers, libraries and open space 				
How would we rate our community in terms of social engagement?	1 We are <u>not very</u> socially engaged	2 We are <u>slightly</u> socially engaged	3 We are <u>moderately</u> socially engaged	4 We are <u>very</u> socially engaged
What do we do well in terms of social engagement?				
What are our biggest challenges related to social engagement?				
 <p>A connected community uses urban design to develop a sense of place. Through Placemaking, community is built and strengthened through compact layouts, green infrastructure, efficient public transport, mixed-use development, and shared public spaces where people gather, interact and build relationships. A connected community:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provides public spaces where people want to gather • Connects homes, jobs, services and recreation on a human, walkable scale • Creates vibrant economic centers where people want to spend time • Utilizes arts, culture, and recreational opportunities to create a sense of place and belonging 				
How much does our community design instill a sense of place - facilitating social connections and cohesion?	1 Our community design <u>does not instill</u> a sense of place	2 Our community design provides a <u>slight</u> sense of place	3 Our community design provides a <u>moderate</u> sense of place	4 Our community design provides a <u>strong</u> sense of place

What do we do well in terms of placemaking?				
What are our biggest challenges related to placemaking?				
 <p>A connected community is built on Strong Institutions. Access to essential services and resources, such as quality education, health and wellness, public transportation, parks, and businesses, is vital for a thriving community. A connected community consists of:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Local governance provides quality services that facilitate trust and collaboration • Law enforcement ensure the safety and wellness of all residents • Local businesses create local jobs, support economic stability and build long-term economic vitality • Educational institutions, libraries, and workshops empower residents to grow, acquire new skills, and become workforce ready. • Health care providers ensure all residents have access to quality physical and mental health services and amenities. 				
How would we best describe our institutions?	1 Few of our essential institutions are strong	2 Some of our essential institutions are strong	3 Most of our essential institutions are strong	4 Nearly all or all of our essential institutions are strong
Which of our institutions are strong?				
Which could be stronger?				
Do residents of all backgrounds have access to our institutions?				
What is our biggest challenge to building strong institutions?				

Thinking back over our responses to the assessment, in what 1 or 2 areas should we choose to move forward this year?

- Social Cohesion
- Equity and Inclusion
- Civic Participation
- Social Engagement
- Placemaking
- Strong Institutions

Are there any other areas we should pursue outside this list? Yes/No

If Yes, please describe: