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Individual and Community

Creating Common Purpose

Individual residents naturally want personal freedom, and local governments want control over what happens in their jurisdiction. But regional trends such as economic change, traffic congestion, and land use patterns are constraining individual freedom and undermining local control. An adversarial environment among jurisdictions and special interests has created gridlock on important issues. Most people agree that the value of freedom for individual residents and jurisdictions is important, but so is the value of working together to take responsibility as a community for solving regional problems that affect everyone. The practical question is how to reconcile the competing values of individual and community to meet the challenges of today.

At the core of the American Experiment is the balancing act between two powerful concepts: the individual and the community. The Founders believed that both are critical ingredients to a successful society. Individual freedom and liberty are the wellsprings of creativity and initiative. Community duty and responsibility are the glue that allows individuals to live together peacefully

and productively. Or as Gardner (1995) put it simply, "Humans are social beings, and to discuss individuality without talking about the social system that makes it possible is to talk nonsense" (p. 86).

The American Experience: Resolving the Tension Between the Individual and the Community

Our nation's founders sought to create a framework that would prevent the individual and the community from overwhelming each other—resulting in neither freedom without responsibility nor duty without liberty. The resulting framework addressed two fundamental questions:

- How to balance competing interests (or factions) in a diverse society
- How to manage the growing complexity of interests of a geographically dispersed and economically diverse nation

They succeeded well enough to ensure the survival of the new nation and set the standard for subsequent generations. Every generation since has inherited this balancing act—some in times of war, depression, civic unrest, and social upheaval that have severely tested their ability to preserve both individual freedom and community responsibility.

Where individual freedom is guaranteed and flourishes, differences of opinion and clashes of freedoms are inevitable. The Founders understood and appreciated the realities of human nature and knew that any enduring American system had to find a way simultaneously to encourage the diversity of ideas while tempering the conflict among interests. They sought to preserve the benefits of pluralism while guarding against the danger of factions.

James Madison in *The Federalist Papers* offered perhaps the best articulation of the Founders' concern about the practical challenge

in balancing "the multiplicity of interests" in a diverse society. In *Federalist* No. 10, Madison introduced the challenge of *faction*, defining it as "a number of citizens, whether amounting to a majority or minority of the whole, who are united and actuated by some common impulse of passion, or of interest, adverse to the rights of other citizens, or to the permanent and aggregate interests of the community" (Quinn, 1993, p. 71). He identified two distinct dangers: the threat that some individual interests would overwhelm the rights of some citizens and the threat that factions could undermine the broader community interest.

At the same time, Madison recognized the reality that "the latent causes of faction are thus sown in the nature of man" and "have, in turn, divided mankind into parties, inflamed them with mutual animosity, and rendered them much more disposed to vex and oppress each other than to co-operate for their common good." In fact, "liberty is to faction what air is to fire." However, this reality did not lead Madison to argue for removing the causes of faction: "It could not be a less folly to abolish liberty, which is essential to political life, because it nourishes faction than it would be to wish the annihilation of air, which is essential to animal life, because it imparts to fire its destructive agency" (Quinn, 1993, pp. 70–73).

The challenge then, as Madison defined it, is that "the *causes* of faction cannot be removed and that relief is only to be sought as a means for controlling its *effects*." What effects? In *Federalist* No. 62, he observed that "liberty may be endangered by the abuses of liberty as well as by the abuses of power." Alexander Hamilton described another effect in *Federalist* No. 6 when he noted the tendency for neighboring states to be natural enemies unless bound together voluntarily in the common cause of a republic, "extinguishing that secret jealousy which disposes all states to aggrandize themselves at the expense of their neighbors" (Quinn, 1993, pp. 55, 73, 137).

The Founders answered the *challenge of competing interests* by creating a constitutional framework that preserved liberty generally but also constrained liberty in specific instances in which the liberties of some would overwhelm those of others, or when the effects

of factions would compromise the broader community interest. Defining exactly where those lines are drawn is a continuous process of refinement.

Just as the competition of interests in a pluralistic society is inevitable, so is the complexity of a problem-solving environment in a dynamic world. However, an important distinction exists between the competition of interests and the complexity of the problem-solving environment. The former deals with individual differences and often conflicts, and it requires a better understanding of underlying values among participants in order to develop creative solutions or even compromises that allow for some degree of progress.

With the latter, the challenge is less about resolving major differences and conflict and more about finding new ways to mobilize a multitude of sometimes similar, often complementary interests into solving a shared, but complex, problem. It is about transforming a multitude of independent agents into a whole that is greater than the sum of its parts.

For the Founders, meeting the *practical challenge of complexity* meant creating a nation out of thirteen independent states. The first attempt, in the Articles of Confederation, failed to reconcile competing interests but—just as important—collapsed under its inability to manage the growing complexity of a geographically dispersed and economically diverse nation.

This growing complexity of interests was magnified by the growing complexity of state lawmaking. State constitutions varied greatly and were regularly altered, creating a sense of confusion and chaos within and between states. As one observer from Vermont wrote in 1786, laws were "altered—realtered—made better—made worse; and kept in such a fluctuating position, that persons in civil commission scarcely know what the law is" (Wood, 2002, p. 142). Altogether, the complexity of the problem-solving environment exposed the inherent weakness of the Articles of Confederation and drove the Founders to develop a national constitution that would be able to manage complexity.

In *Federalist* No. 37, Madison recognized the complexity of the problem-solving environment when he grappled with how to partition powers between national and state governments. He identified three specific challenges: "indistinctness of the object, imperfection of the organ of conception, and inadequateness of the vehicle of ideas." In other words, he described a problem-solving environment in which the problem will be hard to define, the problem solvers will be imperfect in their abilities to solve the problem, and "vehicles" to describe and advance solutions will be inadequate. Despite theses obstacles, Madison argued for moving ahead, to manage complexity as well as possible, acknowledging the obstacles, but "with a deep conviction of the necessity of sacrificing private opinions and partial interests to the public good" (Quinn, 1993, p. 104).

Thus the Founders created the Constitution not only to manage differences among factions but also to manage complexity in a diverse and dynamic nation. In fact, according to Michael Meyerson, author of *Political Numeracy* (2002), the Constitution is a document that sets up a *complex adaptive system* driven by feedback. Complex adaptive systems are based on simple rules that recognize the need for constant change and improvement and provide a framework for an open society.

For more than two centuries, the Constitution has managed to adapt repeatedly to an extraordinary array of small alterations and grand upheavals, both external and internal, while at the same time maintaining coherence under change. The Constitution in general and the Bill of Rights in particular are relatively short and simple principles or rules. However, their application over time is parallel to the concept of iteration or feedback. As we see with chaotic systems, the smallest changes can lead ultimately to quite significant developments through a process of dynamic adaptation. The Constitution provides simple rules that act as the framework for complex, nonlinear systems. Elections, legislation, and judicial decisions all act as self-correcting mechanisms.

In short, the framers created a chaotic Constitution that is well suited to the changing nature of our complex political and economic environment. As Jay Harris, former publisher of the *San Jose Mercury News* commented, "The genius of the Constitution lay in what the framers did not attempt to do—they had a clear grasp of the general ideas and left the details to later interpretation" (2002). The beauty of the Constitution is its elegant simplicity. It is a simple set of rules for governing complex behavior.

The Founders established the framework for problem solving for future generations but did not solve all the problems in their time. They did not address the issue of slavery, which led to the great division of the Civil War. In his Gettysburg Address, Abraham Lincoln finally connected the promise of equality in the Declaration of Independence (that all men are created equal and have certain unalienable rights) with the idea of the national Union of "We the People" created by the framers of the Constitution. Lincoln makes clear that lives were lost in the Civil War to ensure that everyone had a place in America's future and that the Union "of the people, by the people, for the people, shall not perish from the earth." Out of the Civil War, America redefined its social compact based on core values of freedom, equality, and opportunity for all.

A half century after Lincoln, Herbert Croly in *The Promise of American Life* ([1909] 1989) gave the turn-of-the-century Progressive movement a rationale in his famous formula of seeking Jeffersonian ends (equality and opportunity) through Hamiltonian (centralized) means. This rationale justified the creation of a strong central government to compete with the increasingly centralized economy dominated by the large monopolistic industries of that era, known as "trusts." This general formula has endured for almost a century through wars, depression, the New Deal, and the Great Society. However, the creative tension between the individual and the community resurfaces as times change and new circumstances force us to consider new ways to address this issue.

The Tension Today: Practical Challenges to Address

Among the important challenges that today's civic revolutionaries experience in balancing the values of the individual and the values of the community are the following:

- *The challenge of community building:* from forced compromise to free choice
- *The challenge of competing interests:* from conflict to complementarity
- *The challenge of complex environments:* from chaos to cohesion

Alone, the compromise of federalism (the framework that provided a separation of powers between the national and the state governments) created by the Founders of the Constitution, and subsequent refinements, may not fit our current situation very well. The national government may simply be too far removed from the real problems facing individuals and communities today. In many respects, a government that was designed as a workable model for a nation of a little more than three million people has become more of a distant bureaucracy that is ill equipped to solve the increasingly complex problems of today.

Current circumstances suggest that the Croly formula may no longer be viable. In fact, the reverse may be necessary: Hamiltonian ends (vital economy and community) through Jeffersonian means (decentralization). We may need a more distributed model based on regional networks or compacts forged through cooperation and bargaining among leaders at the neighborhood, city, region, state, and national levels. A distributed model may be the way we need to resolve the tension between individual interests and community responsibilities.

Gardner (1970), who spent much of his life working to resolve the creative tension between individual freedom and liberty and community responsibility and duty, suggests a balance between these values:

> The significant question is not whether the individual should be completely free of his society or completely subjugated. It is a question of what are the ties and what are the freedoms. The ties must be the life-giving ties of shared values, a sense of community, a concern for total enterprise, a sense of identity and belonging, and the opportunity to serve. The freedoms must be the freedom to dissent, to be an individual, to grow and fulfill oneself, to choose in some measure one's own style and manner of serving the community [p. 46].

In his writings, Gardner grappled with how to resolve the tension. Through his actions, he promoted practical efforts that offered individuals creative opportunities to serve the community. To the end of his life, he sought ever better ways to engage people in their community, to define through action the relationship between individual freedom and liberty and community responsibility and duty.

Addressing the creative tension between the individual and the community is not an academic exercise, but rather an exercise that offers specific, practical challenges. For the Founders, these challenges were as real and practical as they are today. The major challenges that the Founders faced—and that leaders continue to face today—are how to make the following shifts:

- *From forced compromise to free choice:* how to create an environment in which people voluntarily choose to exercise their freedom (rather than unwillingly compromise their freedom) to build a community of place, believing that they will gain more in social benefits than they give up in individual liberty

- *From conflict to complementarity:* how to turn competing interests into working relationships based on complementary values and roles
- *From chaos to cohesion:* how to transform complex problems into manageable tasks and channel independent efforts into collaborative action based on simple but elegant guiding principles

The struggle of the Founders over the competition of interests is relevant to us today. Across the country, communities and regions are struggling with factions. Jurisdictions fight over transportation, land use, and other issues whose impacts cross political boundaries. Special interests often dominate political discourse and government decision-making processes. Bureaucracies fight for the preeminence of their narrow agendas. The framing of problems and the range of possible solutions become extreme or fixed as advocacy groups battle to sell their "remedy" to their "grievance."

Gardner (1970) believed that to preserve and advance the broader community interest, factions would have to revolutionize their communication: "The advantages of pluralism are diminished if the various elements of the society are out of touch with one another. . . . Communication in a healthy society must be more than a flow of messages; it must be a means of conflict resolution, a means of cutting through the rigidities that divide and paralyze a community" (pp. 36–37). It is important to note that Gardner distinguished between communication whose purpose is to win and communication that results in problem solving.

Despite the proven effectiveness of the Constitution as a vehicle for managing complexity, each generation must address anew the practical challenge of turning a complex array of individual initiatives into collaborative action. How do decentralized systems that return power to the individual and small communities through devolution work together to create networks of responsibility to address common regional concerns? Can this work be done with the

hierarchy of traditional government structures? Or can centrality of purpose really be achieved through decentralization of means?

The answer to the practical challenges of community building, conflict, and complexity is *common purpose*. The objective is to achieve a "productive balance (perhaps *tension* is a better word) between pluralism and a concern for the shared purposes of all segments of society. Pluralism without a concern for common purposes moves toward chaos and the anarchic play of vested interests" (Gardner, 1970, pp. 33–34). In effect, achieving common purpose is a process of working through this tension toward a productive balance.

Complexity of interests, without regard to one another, can lead to a "tragedy of the commons," a classic zero-sum result that can worsen the situation. Elinor Ostrom, in *Governing the Commons* (1991), has suggested that the solution is that the parties need shared information and self-organization. No requirement exists for decisions imposed from the outside (hierarchy) or for private-property rights (markets). Between hierarchies and markets are networks of mutual relationships based on shared responsibility. What is key to making networks function is shared information as well as shared responsibility (both individual responsibility and group responsibility).

Defining a common purpose and creating the appropriate vehicle to advance that public good was the practical challenge that faced the Founders and subsequent generations. What seems to be necessary are new kinds of *networks of responsibility*, like those that helped build this country at its founding. We need to create networks in ways that reengage citizens in their own communities and across communities.

Individuals value freedom, but they also seek community. Matt Ridley (1997), an evolutionary biologist, has observed that most people are happy to accept that selfish behavior is "natural," whereas good deeds require self-sacrifice. But he finds that our cooperative instincts may have also evolved as part of our nature: by exchanging

favors, we can benefit others and ourselves. In reaching his conclusion about the importance of cooperation, he provides the following prescriptions:

> The collapse of community spirit in the last few decades and the erosion of civic virtue are caused not by the spread of greed but the dead hand of Leviathan. The bureaucratic state makes no bargain with the citizen to take joint responsibility for civic order, engenders no obligation, duty or pride and imposes obedience instead.
>
> The roots of social order are in our heads, where we possess the instinctive capacity for creating not a perfectly harmonious and virtuous society but a better one than the one that we have at the present. We must build our institutions in such a way that draws out those instincts. Preeminently this means the encouragement of exchange between equals. Just as trade between countries is the best recipe for friendship between them, so exchange between enfranchised and empowered individuals is the best recipe for cooperation. We must encourage social and material exchange between equals for that is the raw material of trust and trust is the foundation of virtue [p. 265].

Gardner (1990) believed that to create common purpose, we must focus on shared values. He suggests a path forward: "Every successful society we know about has created a framework of laws, unwritten customs, norms of conduct and values to channel behavior toward purposes it deems acceptable. Social commentators have an understandable impulse to focus on our disagreements over values. But if we care about the American Experiment, we had better search out and celebrate the values we share" (p. 75). In fact, promising experiments nationwide are trying to create new ways to channel individual initiative into collaborative action based on shared values.

Promising Experiments: Creating Common Purpose

Civic revolutionaries can create common purpose between the individual and the community in the following ways:

- Forging common ground through dialogue that leads to action
- Mobilizing complex interests through new networks

In the face of clashing freedoms and factions, civic revolutionaries are experimenting with new approaches. They are creating common purpose out of competing interests and complex environments. They are searching and finding shared or complementary values among diverse interests, rather than accepting that different interests mean different or conflicting values. They have taken different paths, used different methods, and focused on different issues, but they share the belief that common ground can develop through mutual understanding and collaborative action.

Forging Common Ground Through Dialogue That Leads to Action

A growing number of communities and regions are employing *dialogue* to find a realistic common ground, fully recognizing choices and consciously making whatever trade-offs are necessary. These places are experimenting with a mode of interaction that differs significantly from the traditional pattern of discourse between competing interests: *debate*. Daniel Yankelovich, one of America's leading social scientists and public opinion experts, explains the difference between debate and dialogue in his book *The Magic of Dialogue: Transforming Conflict into Cooperation* (1999). Whereas the goal of debate is to defend one's position and critique the opposition, the goal of dialogue is to establish mutual understanding through a process that suspends judgment, reveals assumptions on both sides, and includes diverse perspectives through empathetic listening. This process replaces the adversarial dynamic of debate

with a collaborative one that builds trust, an essential quality that helps shift people's orientation from an individual to a community point of view.

In most regions today, debate continues to be the primary mode of interaction in public settings, from legislative bodies to city council meetings. For leaders who are baffled at why well-intentioned civic engagement efforts produce more conflict than consensus, they should consider that it might be because the community is using debate—not dialogue—to address the issues. Debate is about winning. It is an approach that is well suited to special interests that have decided on a fixed position and are trying to prevail over other interests, but it can get in the way of finding creative solutions to difficult problems or of finding common values that can serve as the basis for common action. On complex regional issues, Yankelovich suggests that people care as much about values as about facts and want the opportunity to discuss them in a thoughtful way.

The use of dialogue or bargaining is proving to be effective in addressing the tension between individual and community interests. Promising experiments from San Diego, California, and Charlotte, North Carolina, are described here.

San Diego Dialogue

In the late 1980s, San Diego experienced significant economic and social changes. With the downsizing of the defense industry, the region lost thousands of jobs. Residents were disenchanted with the political process, the lack of regional planning, and the deteriorating quality of life. At the same time, waves of immigrants who were crossing the border put pressure on public services and became an increasingly contentious issue. Malin Burnham, chair of the University of California San Diego Foundation and longtime civic leader, recalls the tension: "You could feel the conflict within the region and the frustration caused by inadequate long-range planning. Most organizations were concerned with today's problems and their own survival. We needed an organization to fill this gap."

A group of civic leaders asked the University of California-San Diego (UCSD) to set up an independent organization—San Diego Dialogue—to help put facts on the table and bring the community together around regional challenges. The university was a natural home for neutral convening. "People said the university could serve as the honest broker. When you don't have established companies or large foundations, a university like this can be the vital partner," explains Mary Walshok, associate vice chancellor of UCSD. With the divisions that existed in the community, it was critical for San Diego Dialogue to be independently funded, free of politics, and a source of objective research on regional issues.

San Diego Dialogue began with twenty-five to thirty diverse leaders and eventually increased to a hundred. They came from business, civic, and educational backgrounds and had a common agenda: a commitment to creating a better place. At the first focus group, the Dialogue asked, "Who are we, where are we going?" Participants realized that the San Diego region did not stop at the border—things like crime, pollution, and culture transcended state lines. According to Burnham, "We couldn't be effective and have a long-range view without a regional approach. We quickly came to describe our region as including at least some part of the Tijuana area." Walshok adds, "We started out thinking that the future was north—Orange County and Los Angeles. It was a great surprise when we figured out that we needed to look south. Today 35 percent of the Dialogue is about Mexico. Here's what we do. We poll leaders on issues. We develop a research agenda. We produce in-depth analysis on key topics. We have dialogue sessions on finding new solutions."

How did San Diego use the process of dialogue to address the tension between individual and community? It helped the region build trust and break old habits that discouraged real problem solving. Richard Barrera, executive director of the Consensus Organizing Institute and a leader in the Hispanic community, observed at a May 2002 forum of the Alliance for Regional Stewardship:

> At a meeting of business leaders and school principals, the conversation began with us telling them all the things they were doing wrong. The principals then, patiently, said, "Let us describe what's going on." They talked about having 70 percent turnover rates and fifty or so languages spoken by students. People got quiet. What started as a clear agenda shifted. We began talking about the principles of community building very pragmatically. We also talked about leadership and the challenge of a constantly changing community, where you can't talk to one person and trust that they represent everybody else. You have to have lots of conversations and do a lot of listening—not with a set agenda but by allowing an agenda to emerge, taking it slowly.

Through patient listening, dialogue fostered a deeper understanding of issues and created new relationships in the region. Barrera notes that the process of building connections has helped break down borders between groups. Conversations began to focus on community solutions rather than on individual grievances. The power of dialogue in San Diego has led to specific breakthroughs: improving border-crossing infrastructure, university-industry collaboration, education, and land use and transportation, as well as larger issues of regional governance. The economic transformation of San Diego in recent years has been significantly aided by these improvements, including the development of new biotechnology and communications industries.

Recently, the ChoiceWork Dialogue approach developed by Daniel Yankelovich and his company, Viewpoint Learning, was used to help San Diego leaders determine how regional land use, transportation, and housing issues might be addressed more effectively and be better aligned with public priorities. Like many regions, San Diego has been exploring different governance options for more integrated approaches to growth issues, including a directly elected regional

model such as Portland Metro, an appointed model such as the Twin Cities, and a more ad hoc model such as Denver. A commission was created by the legislature to study the issue and recommend one plan to consolidate regional organizations and another plan to coordinate their activities. ChoiceWork Dialogue contributed to this process by engaging representative groups of citizens in a structured discussion of the issues and options as well as the trade-offs that each would require. After wrestling with the issue over the course of an eight-hour dialogue, participants broadened their views from a focus on their needs in individual communities to a desire for more regional solutions. Viewpoint Learning is now using its new public-learning model in other communities in California, including Orange County.

ChoiceWork Dialogue is based on an insight about how the public reaches judgment on difficult or emotion-laden issues. The conventional model holds that public opinion is formed through a simple two-stage process: information leads to public judgment. However, when issues involve conflicting values and hard choices, a complex process of "working through" intervenes between information and resolution—and issues can remain stuck at that stage for months, years, or decades. ChoiceWork Dialogues are designed to help participants progress through the four critical steps of the working-through stage: (1) taking in the facts, (2) connecting the dots, (3) facing up to conflicting values, (4) shifting from an individual to a community-based point of view. They help people move beyond their initial impulse to avoid hard choices and disagreeable realities, encouraging them to come to grips with difficult issues in dialogue with one another and to work together to reconcile their views with their deeper values.

For San Diego and elsewhere, Daniel Yankelovich (1999) argues that dialogue is essential for transforming conflict into cooperation. He believes that "increasingly we find ourselves facing problems requiring more shared understanding than in the past. . . . The traditional top-down style of leadership in semi-isolation from others is increasingly out of vogue. It is being replaced by what I have come to think of as 'relational leadership' with others rather than handing

down visions, strategies and plans as if they were commandments from mountaintops" (p. 13). Like Gardner, Yankelovich understands the need for a new form of communication to identify common, underlying values that move past traditional, adversarial debate on issues. Even when interests are based on conflicting values, dialogue can be a way of developing better mutual understanding and can set the stage for bargaining without rancor. In this more diverse, less hierarchical world, decision makers need to learn to argue less and dialogue more so they can learn and act more effectively.

Charlotte Voices & Choices

A different example of how dialogue can lead to new forms of regional action is demonstrated in Charlotte, North Carolina. In 1995, four regional organizations—Foundation for the Carolinas, the *Charlotte Observer,* Carolina's Regional Partnership (now Charlotte Regional Partnership), and the Urban Institute of University of North Carolina-Charlotte—cosponsored a Citistates report for the Charlotte region. Written by national journalists Neal Peirce and Curtis Johnson, a Citistates report provides an independent assessment of the region's major problems and opportunities—most notably, the impacts of growth—through a series of in-depth articles published in a major local newspaper. In this case, the sponsor was the *Charlotte Observer.* Peirce and Johnson (1995) suggested that Charlotte needed "multiple forums—regionwide and locally—to put the decisions about your physical growth, your educational future, your parks, towns and neighborhoods, into the hands of thousands of citizens." Their recommendation ultimately led to the creation of a new platform for civic engagement, Voices & Choices.

The Citistates report provoked a spirited civic dialogue on the impacts of growth. Mary Newsom, associate editor of the *Charlotte Observer,* recalls the public's response: "The public reaction was incredible. We got several hundred phone calls, a lot of letters, a lot of just regular folks saying, 'You guys are right on target.' There was a dramatic increase in the talk about trying to manage growth." Newsom also describes how the report challenged individual

notions and opened new avenues for discussion: "After the report, one of our most conservative local politicians said, 'Maybe that outer-belt highway is a mistake.' Indeed we had a semipublic debate about that issue. Until recently, even to question the outer belt was the civic equivalent of going to a dinner party and mooning the hostess. The Peirce report made it OK to question those things."

Voices & Choices (originally called Central Carolina Choices) formed to facilitate further regional dialogue and engagement across the region. In 1997, the Mecklenburg County Commission asked Voices & Choices to facilitate an environmental summit that would focus the region's attention on economic and environmental sustainability issues. In preparation for the summit, Voices & Choices developed three different growth scenarios for the region and held numerous town hall meetings to discuss the scenarios with residents. The grassroots effort encompassed the fourteen-county region of Charlotte and engaged more than five hundred diverse residents—community members, business leaders, and environmental activists—over four months. Betty Chafin Rash, founding executive director of Voices & Choices, notes the shared vision that began to emerge: "Through dialogue, we found remarkable consensus on a vision for the future. We may have held different views on how to get there, but we agreed on where we wanted to go." Common ground was being forged one conversation at a time.

The community engagement efforts culminated in a regional environmental summit held in November 1998, where more than 550 people worked together to craft a regional vision and establish priorities. By the end of the summit, participants had affirmed the need for regional cooperation and recognized the connections between environmental health, economic sustainability, and quality of life. Rash describes the event: "The summit was significant in that, for the first time, so many diverse stakeholders came together to focus on the environmental challenges of our region. I saw business leaders, chamber executives, government officials, planners, environmentalists, community activists . . . a true cross section of the region. All fourteen counties were represented. Most people left

wanting to stay engaged in some way. The challenge was how to keep them engaged." The success of the environmental summit rested, in large part, on the ongoing efforts of the local media, community groups, and civic leaders to raise awareness and encourage discussion of environmental issues.

Beyond finding common ground through dialogue, Voices & Choices was successful because it effectively transformed dialogue into action. "Concern about regional problems had been building for several years," according to Bill Spencer, former president of the Foundation for the Carolinas. "The dialogue was already there in local communities across the region. Voices & Choices helped move the dialogue from opinion to plans for action." The key is to maintain the momentum with actionable next steps. Following the summit, Voices & Choices formed six action teams in the areas of land use, open space, transportation, air quality, water quality, and resource recovery and recycling. Hundreds of citizens participated on the teams, which deliberated from May to December 1999 and ultimately recommended more than 150 action items. A final report was issued in early 2001, detailing the committees' action items and one principal recommendation: an integrated land use–transportation plan with an open-space commitment under the guidance of a regional body.

Currently, Voices & Choices is working toward implementing the regional plan while continuing to engage citizens. Some early achievements include the passage of a half-cent sales tax increase to finance a comprehensive regional transportation system. The system will cost almost $3 billion, uses regional funds to leverage three times the amount in federal and state funds, and will consist of a mix of rail, bus, and streetcar lines. The system will explicitly include significantly better service to disadvantaged, predominantly African American and Latino neighborhoods, a result that would likely not have happened without Voices & Choices dialogues. Furthermore the Business Committee for Regional Transportation is supporting the creation of a regional planning alliance and the notion of a true regional transportation authority. Most recently,

city and county officials are planning to connect their separate greenway projects into a new four-county, 150-mile Catawba Regional Trail.

Voices & Choices is an example of a regional stewardship initiative that has used dialogue to connect leadership with grassroots citizens to address complex regional issues in more effective ways. Although many would agree that more work is necessary in this complex bistate region to promote boundary crossing along racial, income, and political lines, the critical first step has been taken by creating a platform for understanding and reconciling competing interests through dialogue.

Mobilizing Complex Interests Through New Networks

To move from competing interests to complementarity, a growing number of communities and regions are experimenting with new kinds of problem-solving alliances, teams of diverse interests that traditionally have not worked together, to create and implement solutions. In Silicon Valley, for example, an uncommon alliance between environmental groups and developers was formed to address a severe housing shortage while business and education leaders teamed up to wire every school in the region. In other places, leaders are creating cohesive networks—within and across communities—to tackle a complex issue of shared concern. In Detroit, the faith community mobilized its participants to tackle transportation issues. In California, facilitated by the California Center for Regional Leadership, a coalition of regional organizations from throughout the state worked collectively to influence state policy.

The Housing Action Coalition

The Housing Action Coalition (HAC) was formed by the Silicon Valley Manufacturing Group (SVMG) in 1993 to advocate for affordable housing for the Silicon Valley region. The lack of relatively affordable and accessible housing has been a chronic concern

to Santa Clara County residents and employers. It threatens not only the area's overall quality of life but its economic vitality as well. The lack of affordable housing contributes to continued urban sprawl and the destruction of natural resources and results in increasing traffic congestion, air pollution, and difficulties in attracting and retaining employees.

The idea for the Housing Action Coalition originated with Don Weden, planning director for Santa Clara County. At the time, housing projects were easily defeated in city council meetings because public input often opposed projects on the basis of increased traffic congestion, neighborhood crowding, or other unwelcome changes. Without a broader, community voice in support of specific housing projects (that is, projects that would benefit the region as a whole), Silicon Valley would continue to neglect its housing needs.

Don Weden approached SVMG and said, "What we need is something like a housing action coalition to advocate for homes people can afford." The idea fit well with SVMG's "smart-growth" agenda, and Carl Guardino, president and CEO of SVMG, helped form the Housing Action Coalition with others from the community, including representatives from the city of San Jose, Hewlett-Packard, the Home Builders Association, and the Greenbelt Alliance. Drawing on builders, environmentalists, labor organizations, apartment interest groups, real estate organizations, major employers, faith groups, the Sierra Club, and the League of Women Voters, Guardino organized a coalition that knit together different interests in a common cause. "The first six months were rocky. It took several months to get people off of their soapboxes and onto common ground."

The coalition developed a set of general goals and specific criteria for housing proposals that it could support and adopted those goals and criteria in 1993. The general goals adhere to smart-growth principles: they discourage urban sprawl; promote the use of public transit; provide for mixed uses within a neighborhood; promote

affordability, innovative community design, economic development, and sustainability; and minimize the cost of city services. The specific criteria help HAC members decide which housing proposals to support by detailing the location, density, affordability, design, size, and safety features that must be in place. As an example, housing proposals must have an overall density of at least fourteen units per acre and must be located within an existing urban service area. Once HAC gets behind a project, it mobilizes its membership to attend public hearings, where typically such housing proposals are killed by NIMBY ("not in my backyard") attitudes.

To date, the coalition has successfully advocated for more than thirty-two thousand new homes, many of them transit oriented and about half of them affordable to low- and moderate-income earners. The coalition has successfully advocated for high-quality, higher-density housing that uses land efficiently and keeps costs relatively low. Coalition members speak on behalf of future residents and burst myths about the likely effects of new housing on the quality of existing neighborhoods. The coalition today includes more than 150 individuals from local companies, the Home Builders Association, the Sierra Club, the Association of Realtors, Valley Transportation Authority, the City of San Jose, and the Greenbelt Alliance, among others.

Early on, HAC members decided that the group would only support development projects, not oppose them. According to Guardino, "The decision to be a positive voice in the community for housing builds a system of trust both internally [within HAC of diverse interests working together] and externally [in relation to the Silicon Valley community]. We knew that there was no way we would have the support of the developers or the cities who approached HAC for various projects if we shut them down and didn't support them. It had to be positive."

Looking ahead, the greatest challenge to HAC is keeping the coalition together. People come to the table from very diverse

perspectives, some from business and others from a nonprofit perspective. According to Shiloh Ballard, HAC program manager, "Ultimately, this coalition is a place where we all agree, if an issue is too contentious, we will take it off the table. It means that we have a broad membership and that our focus is very narrow." HAC's narrow focus delivers tangible results, which allows HAC to hold the interest of its diverse membership. "It is part of the [Silicon] Valley makeup that we want to solve problems rather than whine about them, and that's one of the chief reasons for the success of the HAC. . . . People stay involved in the HAC because they are making a quantifiable difference."

Silicon Valley's NetDay Initiative

The rapid spread of the Internet in the mid-1990s created a natural interest in wiring schools. The cause became a priority of then President Clinton and then Vice President Gore, and regions across the country took up the charge. Many efforts fizzled out, however, never reaching scale or leaving behind wiring and technology that made little difference in educational performance. This was not so in Silicon Valley, however, where armies of volunteers successfully connected nearly every public school and at least 75 percent of classrooms in each school to the Internet over a period of three years.

The regional effort in Silicon Valley turned out differently for several reasons. Success hinged more on the application of social innovation than on physical technology. The catalyst was Smart Valley, a regional initiative that emerged out of a participatory civic process called Joint Venture: Silicon Valley. Smart Valley mobilized an alliance of technology workers, venture capitalists, community leaders, school administrators, and thousands of volunteers around NetDay, an ambitious three-day event to wire public schools. In addition to creating new collaborative partnerships, Smart Valley used a few simple organizing principles to manage the project's complexity. The key ingredients were the following:

- *Flexible, self-organizing teams.* To manage the volume of volunteers interested in becoming involved, Smart Valley created a flexible network infrastructure. Volunteers registered on a Web site and specified the day and the task that most matched their interests and abilities. They were assigned to a nearby school with the most need and received updates electronically. Anyone with ten or more volunteers was eligible to come to a training session as a team leader and received more direct support. Smart Valley encouraged people to expand the system and modify it for their use. In this way, more than twenty thousand volunteers were mobilized and distributed to schools regionwide—in wealthy and disadvantaged neighborhoods alike.

- *An integrated approach for technology donations, standards, and implementation guidelines.* Smart Valley worked with companies to negotiate donations of compatible equipment and with technical experts to set uniform standards for implementation. Smart Valley then assembled a step-by-step guidebook to ensure effective implementation of wiring and technology.

- *A commitment to capacity development.* Recognizing that donations and willing volunteers would be ineffectual if schools did not have the capacity to make use of them, Smart Valley also tried to build organizational capacity. Every school district was required to name a project manager, create a district technology plan (with assistance from community experts), and plan for what would happen after NetDay. Smart Valley also hosted a series of expert workshops to train project managers and team leaders. "The most valuable thing for most school districts," reports Karen Greenwood, project director of NetDay, "was the assistance they received with planning and training."

The Silicon Valley NetDay Initiative was successful because it created an infrastructure well suited to complexity, meshing together volunteers, donations, and capacity-building assistance in a flexible, yet disciplined, fashion.

To channel individual initiative into collective action, some civic revolutionaries are pursuing their work through voluntary networks for action. In a growing number of communities across the country, new models of community-to-community mobilization have emerged, with the express purpose of participating in regional decision-making processes. These efforts seek to unite dispersed local interests around a shared purpose, linking with regional interests in common cause.

Detroit's MOSES

To win support for a regional transportation equity campaign, an organization called Metropolitan Organizing Strategies Enabling Strength (MOSES), a faith-based network affiliated with the Gamaliel Foundation, mobilized an uncommon coalition of urban and suburban interests to improve public transportation options in the Detroit region. With its strong ties to the city, MOSES had historically taken on urban issues such as drug enforcement and access to public facilities. MOSES decided to take up the issue of regional transportation because "it is a unifying issue that brings both city and suburban congregations together. Better regional public transit benefits people across geographical boundaries. It cuts across age, race, and income by improving access to jobs, health care, and education," according to Vicky Kovari, a member of MOSES.

Detroit is now the only major city in America that does not have a rapid transit system. Part of the problem is structural: the state constitution stipulates that at least 90 percent of state transportation dollars must be spent on roads and bridges (leaving only 10 percent that can be spent on public transportation). In the past few years, however, state spending on public transportation has hovered closer to 8 or 9 percent of the total transportation budget. With three in ten residents too poor to own a car, the lack of

public transportation was posed not only as an equity issue but also as one that has negative impacts on suburban retailers, who draw their workforce primarily from the city.

To bridge the deep divisions between Detroit's urban population (which is 85 percent African American) and its suburban population (which is 80 to 90 percent Caucasian), MOSES reached out to congregations outside the city of Detroit. They held thousands of what they call "one-on-ones" and gave group presentations in suburban cities. The goal was to understand the views of their counterparts and to find common, or at least compatible, interests for changes in the prevailing transportation system in metropolitan Detroit. As a result, MOSES was able to create a network of multiple interests, whose membership was one-third suburban. Bill O'Brien, the executive director of MOSES believes that "the secret of success is bringing others in the same room. How big is the room? Larger than we thought because it has the cities, suburbs, and farms in it" (Bonfiglio, 2002).

MOSES created a campaign mechanism that built in roles for the business community, including the Detroit Metro Chamber of Commerce and the Big Three automakers, as well as mayors, labor unions, and legislators. Through a series of public meetings organized by MOSES and other regional actors, momentum has begun to build for a regional transportation agenda. In November 1999, MOSES brought leaders to the first-ever regional meeting on transportation, attended by eight hundred citizens, all three county executives, and other local elected politicians. In 2000, it successfully lobbied to pass an appropriations bill that increased public transit funds by $50 million. Two years later, MOSES rallied five thousand people—a cross section of urban and suburban residents, business leaders, faith leaders, young and old—to meet with gubernatorial and congressional candidates to express their support for a regional transportation plan. This public support was instrumental to the passage of a state bill to create the Detroit Area Regional Transportation Authority (DARTA).

"Our power comes from being able to mobilize hundreds and thousands of people," says Kovari. "No other organization around here can do that. People were amazed that we could get five thousand urban and suburban residents to turn out for our public meeting—especially in a region as segregated as Detroit. We are serious about using power to make our voices heard." MOSES leaders start by building relationships with the community through their one-on-ones. Delegations spend a significant amount of time doing outreach in the community and training every member to become a leader. The result is extensive and inclusive networks that can be mobilized around a common purpose.

The bill to create DARTA was vetoed in December 2002 by John Engler, the outgoing governor of Michigan, but thanks to the persistent efforts of MOSES and other community organizations, a revised bill is being reconsidered in the new legislature. The coalition continues to grow, as the dispersed interests of faith communities, environmentalists, labor, and business unite across urban-suburban lines to work toward an improved regional transportation system.

California Center for Regional Leadership

If solving problems at the regional level presents a complex set of challenges, then imagine the considerable complexity of organizing competing interests in California, the most diverse and populous state in the country. That is exactly what the California Center for Regional Leadership (CCRL) encountered when it began to organize a network of twenty-one collaborative regional initiatives (CRIs) throughout California. CRIs—civic organizations or partnerships led by people from business, government, education, and the community—are at the forefront of a new type of governance that is regional in scope, collaborative in nature, and grounded in the interdependence of economy, environment, and social equity. Initially supported by the Irvine Foundation's Sustainable Communities Program, CRIs are self-organizing systems that have emerged from the bottom up in response to complex regional problems.

CCRL was established to support, facilitate, and promote innovative solutions among the CRIs. In addition to helping each CRI become more effective, CCRL plays an important role in connecting these groups into an effective coalition that influences California state policy. By identifying statewide issues that are important to regions—such as tax reform, infrastructure planning, and economic strategy—CCRL found a common agenda to bring to legislators in Sacramento.

In particular, CCRL was instrumental to the California Assembly Speaker's Commission on Regionalism, initiated by Speaker Robert Hertzberg in 2000. Nick Bollman, president and CEO of CCRL, was appointed chair of the commission, which included thirty-one commissioners from California's many different regions. The need for the Speaker's Commission on Regionalism arose because, according to Hertzberg, "California has had the same fifty-eight counties since 1907 even though the state has transformed itself over and over again. That's why it is no surprise that California's government structure is outdated and poorly equipped to deal with many of the issues of the day. If government is going to provide Californians with the services they deserve, it is going to have to change. If government is going to be effective in this mobile new economy, it is going to have to start to think regionally."

After fourteen months of study, commission outreach meetings in eight regions across the state, a hundred presentations, and fifteen newly commissioned research papers, *The New California Dream: Regional Solutions for Twenty-First Century Challenges* was issued in January 2002, with more than a hundred policy reform recommendations addressing a wide variety of issues: the economy, workforce, social equity, state-local finance reform, growth, schools, the environment, regional collaboration, state government reform, and building a new regional civic culture. Today significant outcomes have been realized as a result of the report. These include

- Reinvigoration of the California Economic Strategy Panel, a public-private entity established to advise and

lead state government on policies that will support the competitiveness of California's economic regions

- Consolidation of workforce investment programs into a single state agency, to bring greater coherence to state strategies supportive of improved worker preparation for the dynamic needs of regional economies
- Adoption of new state-planning legislation (AB 857), which requires state agencies to adopt explicit goals and strategies, and in a manner integrated across the spectrum of agencies, to achieve regional planning goals: urban infill; protection of open space, habitats, and working landscapes; and more efficient use of the land wherever development occurs (including new towns and suburbs)

Through the speaker's commission and the network of connected CRIs, CCRL has helped mobilize complex interests into a common, actionable strategy. As Bollman puts it, "The twenty-first century governance model for California requires that the state government become an authentic and reliable partner to California's diverse regions. This requires in turn that regional leaders understand and embrace the long-term needs and interests in their regions and act together to bring the state to the regional table. Though there is much more to do, working together the regions and the state have begun to head in that direction. Stay tuned."

Insights from the Field

Every region and community must find its own way, its own resolution of the creative tension between individual freedom and liberty and community responsibility and duty. At the same time, civic revolutionaries in every region and community can benefit from the experiences of others. With growing experimentation in American

regions, some insights from the field are useful to consider, organized in the following sections according to the practical roles for civic revolutionaries—to discover, decide, and drive change.

Discover: Building a Compelling Case for Change

Start by considering both the competition of interests and the complexity of the problem-solving environment. What civic revolutionaries have found is that the tension between individual and community interests is a product of two important but different challenges. Competition of interests requires new forms of communication and commitment to seek out any underlying shared values, which could serve as the basis for agreement. A new kind of communication is responsible for breakthroughs in places such as San Diego, Charlotte, and Silicon Valley, where civic revolutionaries did not assume that different interests meant different values. They may, but if one begins with the assumption of irreconcilable differences, one will end up with a self-fulfilling prophecy.

The complexity of the problem-solving environment requires a new kind of networking of interests—one that breaks down "silos" (barriers separating interests) and leverages the efforts of like-minded leaders. Assume that many people do share values about moving the region forward, and create a civic "space" where they can congregate, as civic revolutionaries in Silicon Valley and Detroit have done. In California, the statewide "network of regional networks" provides a diverse set of examples for how to provide new forums for complex, but often common, interests to congregate and learn about one another, setting the stage for collaborative action.

Diagnose your situation, using a variety of methods to frame challenges and possibilities for change. In many regions, such as Sacramento, Jacksonville, and the Washington, D.C., region, civic revolutionaries have championed indexes of economic, environmental, and social indicators that help put the facts on the table, frame challenges in a more integrated fashion, and stimulate a new kind of conversation about the future. In places such as Indianapolis, they have used

comparative analyses of other regions to give people a sense of context about where the community stands and to instill a sense of competition and urgency for change. In regions such as Portland, the Sierra Nevada counties of California, and Pittsburgh, they have done public opinion surveys to quantify data that are otherwise unavailable or to gauge public values and attitudes. In many places, such as Atlanta and Columbus, they have taken intercity visits to learn about the experiences of other places. In regions such as San Diego and Cincinnati, they have also invited practitioners and experts to their community to provide outside perspectives on regional challenges. All of these approaches can help frame current realities and possibilities for change.

Build a database of potential civic revolutionaries and identify the key bridge builders. One of the most important roles for civic revolutionaries is discovering allies. There are many different ways to recruit, and civic revolutionaries in Richmond, Virginia, offer a useful example: begin with your immediate network and identify people who could be potential civic revolutionaries, people who have shown a flair for working through tensions between competing values, are dissatisfied with the status quo, and are open to new ideas from within your region and beyond. Then ask each individual in your immediate network to do the same, further building the database of potential civic revolutionaries. By going to the third level of networks, you are probably going to tap into a pool of people who are not visible, well-known leaders; perhaps they are younger or are leaders of certain communities (for example, racial, neighborhood, issue specific, industry, professional). From this exercise, identify key bridge builders, those who have extensive networks that reach into multiple communities of interest.

Break from traditional patterns of civic engagement to diagnose real needs and discover real allies. What is clear from experimentation across the country is that one cannot expect to get new results from traditional processes. We have more than enough forums for debate that lead to winners and losers in American society and too few arenas for

dialogue that lead to a real exchange of views, collaborative action, and positive-sum outcomes. Create a new arena for dialogue as has been done in Charlotte, San Diego, and other places, initially to help diagnose the situation facing the region or interpret the index, survey, or other analytical work that tries to put the facts on the table. Use this initial work to recruit like-minded civic revolutionaries to the core team that is championing change. Such a forum can also provide an open learning environment for considering the experiences of other places and how they might apply in your community or region.

A number of tools and techniques are now available to support new patterns of civic engagement, including visualization tools, simulation, geographic information systems and modeling techniques, and other community process tools. Although many tools and techniques are available, civic revolutionaries need to customize and experiment through trial and error to arrive at the civic process that best fits their region. Beware of letting the tools drive the process. Too often, high-tech tools can complicate or distract from the process of real exchange among participants. A 2000 report for the California Center for Regional Leadership, *Informed Regional Choices*, found that although civic organizations had a need and a desire to use new participation tools, many faced practical barriers to their effective use, including a lack of the following:

- Awareness of and readiness to use new tools both in the organization and among constituents
- Resources to enable use of tools, at a moment in time and sustainable over time
- Feedback systems to improve choices and uses over time, internal learning systems and peer-to-peer systems
- Technical readiness, especially telecommunication infrastructure
- Feedback to suppliers for continuous tools improvement

The most important lesson learned from regional experiments with civic engagement is that tools must be connected to effective community problem-solving *processes* to be effective. Tools should help amplify and extend what is already an effective process design.

Decide: Making Critical Choices in Experimentation

Create a decision-making framework. There is great risk in diagnosing needs, opening up new ideas and possibilities, and exciting new allies without any framework to make decisions about what to do next. It is a formula for frustration or, even worse, cynicism. The design of the decision-making framework should be inclusive, not top down. Civic revolutionaries should build it together and agree to the final formulation. Based on the rich diversity of experience from around the country, such a framework can be based on a few simple guidelines or decision-making criteria or a series of decision-making steps. Important lessons include

- *Clearly defining the scope of decision making.* Reframe and connect issues based on the diagnosis of community challenges, the diversity of regional voices, and the discovery of innovations from other places. You cannot be all things to all people or "solve world hunger" overnight, nor do you want to aim too low, just moving organizational boxes around or endorsing what would likely happen anyway. So the challenge is in defining the scope of decision making to be big enough to make a difference, but bounded enough to get something done.
- *Articulating a few breakthrough choices.* Within the scope of decision making, agree on what the breakthrough choices are, key decisions that represent bold experimentation with new approaches rather than tinkering with the status quo. One way to identify key breakthrough points is to map a *story of change,* linking a chain of actions that could lead to major results.

However, do not try to make thousands of tactical decisions up front, setting out detailed tasks or an elaborate plan. Instead focus on the few fundamental choices that will shape the environment for later decisions that must be made in implementation.

- *Creating a road map for decision making.* Provide a discipline and timetable for coming to decisions, rather than a well-meaning but open-ended process of weighing alternatives that puts off decisions as long as possible. Give people a sense of expectation for forward movement. Instill a sense of urgency by creating a pattern of *task, deadline, event.*

Define simple rules or operating principles that can transform the complexity of interests into the commonality of purpose. Complexity without simple rules quickly devolves into chaos and confusion. However counterintuitive it might seem, the agreement to simple rules or operating principles for collective action can channel complexity into impressive results. Of course, a critical difference exists between arriving at a set of simple rules that have great weight and utility and following a set of simplistic guidelines that are little more than wishful thinking. To agree on a set of simple rules to cope with complexity (like the Constitution) requires time and sometimes difficult interactions to discover underlying values and articulate workable guidelines for joint action.

Remember that common purpose is not the same as consensus. Many regions have engaged in visioning processes or consensus-seeking efforts that produced either vague goals or limited least-common-denominator actions that made little difference. Consensus is important, but gradients of agreement can be defined that offer an acceptable degree of consensus, allow for creative but generally consistent interpretations, and enable a networked effort to move forward. For example, in Sacramento, regional Hewlett-Packard manager Larry Welch introduced such guidelines into efforts to

choose the best mix of economic, social, and environmental measures of regional progress.

Civic revolutionaries in regions such as Chicago, Boston, and Denver have agreed to operating principles that channel complexity in a common direction. In some places, such as Chicago, these principles define desired behavior (for example, taking availability of affordable housing and access to public transit into account in corporate location decisions). One of the models for these kinds of approaches is the Sullivan Principles, which emerged as an answer to opposing apartheid in South Africa specifically and defined a set of actions for individual companies to adopt in their operations in countries around the world.

In other regions, such as Boston and Denver, the "terms of engagement," or guidelines for action, are embedded in a more comprehensive compact for change. In these cases, and similar examples across the country, much effort is focused on creating the most powerful and useful set of guidelines, rather than on getting the implementation details just right. Charles Euchner of Harvard's Rappaport Institute for Greater Boston describes what is emerging in his region as a system "that would establish a relative handful of simple but strong rules to guide the innumerable decisions of individual actors—and then back off and let those individuals create their own order and rich networks rather than trying to impose a single order. The state would establish clear rules and processes for highways, transit, housing, open space and economic development. Those rules and processes would establish the parameters for policy for local government but would otherwise leave local government alone" (Euchner, 2002, p. 28). In these regions, it is not about creating regional government, but rather about new forms of regional collaboration that are both disciplined and open to innovation.

Drive: Mobilizing Allies for Change

Create new networking vehicles to initiate change. New platforms, not new organizations per se, are indispensable. Channeling individual initiative into collective action requires new platforms—networks,

campaigns, projects—that can be widely owned and are adaptable in design and implementation. Civic revolutionaries in regions such as Detroit and Silicon Valley developed new kinds of problem-solving "platforms"—structured like campaigns—to network complex interests. New vehicles that are not organizations per se also help limit the natural opposition of existing organizations and their benefactors. They initiate change immediately, and if designed effectively, they offer an alternative to traditional approaches in a relatively short amount of time. They also tend to stimulate a conversation about organizational restructuring as the energy and results generated by the new approach begin to ripple across the region. In contrast, starting with formal organizational restructuring, without an emerging alternative, is unlikely to succeed.

What these new vehicles have in common is that they are network models, operating somewhere between hierarchies and markets. Both researchers (for example, Oliver Williamson, Elinor Ostrom, and others) and practitioners have found a strong rationale for networks in the kind of complex problem-solving environment of our time. Hierarchical, market, and network approaches work best under different conditions:

- *Hierarchies.* In stable environments, hierarchical forms of organization make sense because they can reduce transaction costs through formal vertical integration within the organization.
- *Markets.* In fluid environments, market forms of organization make sense because maximum flexibility and creativity are required to try out many approaches and move quickly from failures to new experiments.
- *Networks.* In complex environments, networks make sense because they can direct the creative power of markets toward common purposes by using simple rules and trust relationships typical of hierarchies.

In today's environment, the network model that channels a complex array of efforts in a common direction works much better than a hierarchical model that attempts to allocate roles and focuses on a single strategy. In fact, we have entered a new era of networked or distributed governance, which requires a combination of dialogue, simple rules for guiding complex action, and new networking platforms to mobilize action.

Mobilize networks of people, not committees of organizational representatives. Focus on budding civic revolutionaries and their interests, aspirations, and expertise, not on their organizational positions. Although organizational roles are important considerations, experience shows that people drive revolutions, often going way beyond their job descriptions to experiment with new approaches. Even if they are not in a formal position of organizational leadership, or one of several board members, they can use their influence with formal organizational leaders.

Civic revolutionaries have networks, and every person in their networks has networks. Understanding and mobilizing these networks is the key to driving change. Civic revolutionaries have to be modern-day community organizers—but often operating at the regional level. As MOSES in Detroit has demonstrated, such a mobilization requires careful preparation and extensive bridge building before taking action. In Austin, the linked mobilization of networks of established business and civic leaders and emerging entrepreneurial leaders—beyond the usual organizational advocates—was instrumental in passage of major funding for regional transportation improvements.

What Success Looks Like: Common Purpose

Common purpose is what reconciles the competing values of individual and community. Although the experience varies from region to region and community to community, a point exists at which individual freedom and liberty mesh with community duty and responsibility around a common purpose that delivers mutual

benefits. As this chapter has shown, there are many pathways, strategies, and techniques to forge common purpose. But what does success look like?

- People voluntarily exercise their freedom to build a community of place, believing that they will gain more in social benefits than they give up in individual liberty.
- Competing interests form working relationships based on complementary values and roles.
- Complex problems transform into manageable tasks, and independent efforts are channeled into collaborative action based on simple but elegant guiding principles.