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PUBLIC MANAGEMENT

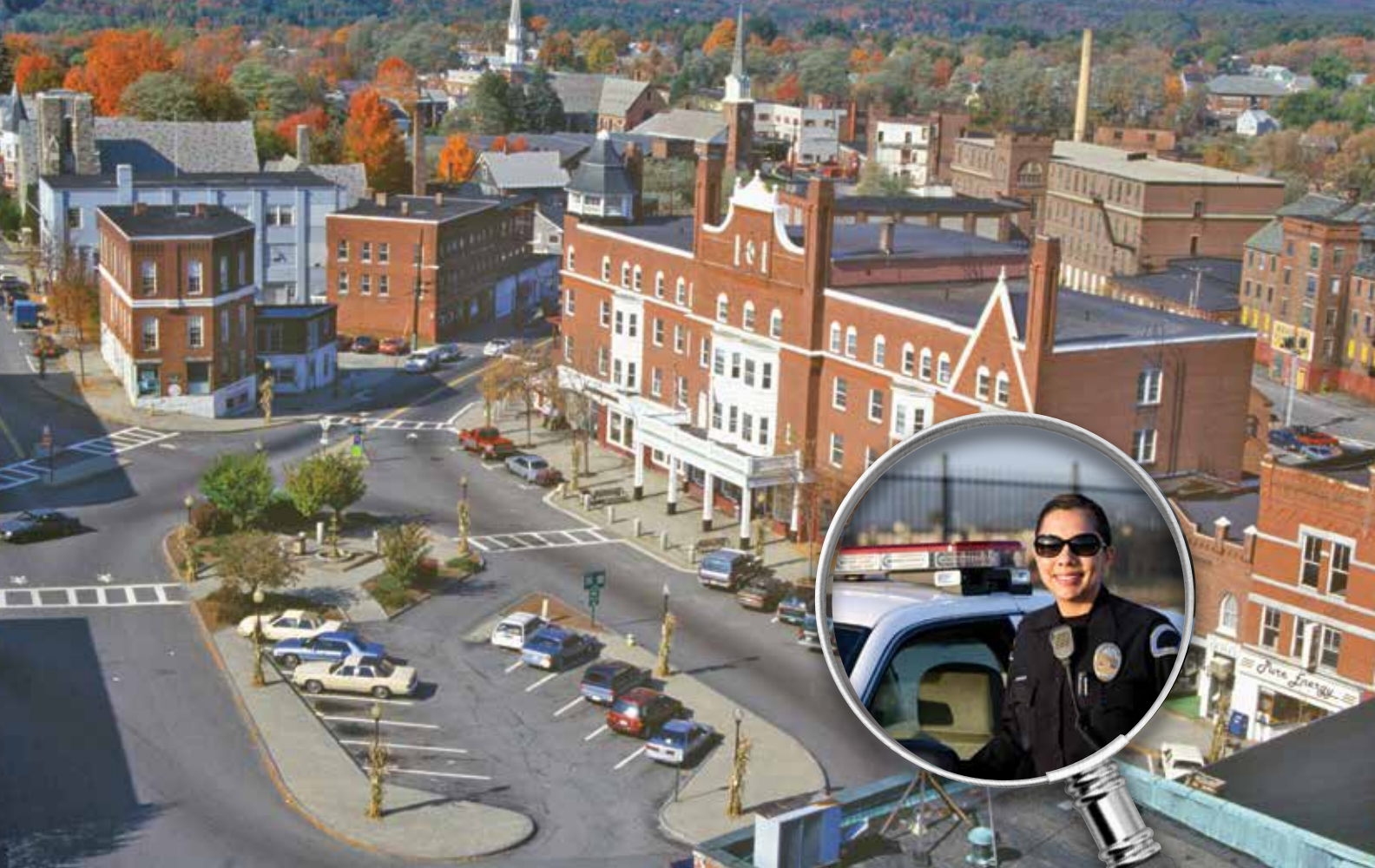
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Five Strategies Managers Use to Strengthen Their Community's Sustainability





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BY KEVIN DUGGAN, ICMA-CM

RESPONDING TO AN ETHICAL CRISIS

Three critical questions demand answers

For anyone who follows the news to even a modest degree, it is difficult to go a single day without reading or hearing about a report regarding someone caught in an ethical crisis. Invariably, the media will ask anyone even remotely associated with the reported ethical breach three questions. How individuals respond to these questions will often determine how the unfolding ethical problem will affect them.

People are oftentimes seriously challenged in responding to these questions because they can be extremely uncomfortable to answer. With more careful reflection in advance, it is likely that the questions will be much easier to answer.

Keep in mind the questions won't only come from the media. While you should anticipate these questions from the press,

also be prepared to respond to the same questions from employers, employees, community members, legal authorities, regulators, neighbors, and others.

The best way to feel confident that you will be able to answer these questions appropriately is to ask yourself the questions first—when you are deciding how to respond to an ethical challenge/dilemma. These questions are:

- What did you know?
- When did you know it?
- What did you do about it?

What Did You Know?

Whenever an ethical breach is disclosed, the immediate question is, "Who knew about it?" It may be obvious who is/are the central figure(s) in the ethical crisis,

PM

PUBLIC MANAGEMENT

Public Management (PM) aims to inspire innovation, inform decision making, connect leading-edge thinking to everyday challenges, and serve ICMA members and local governments worldwide in the pursuit of excellence in local governance.

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but the media and others are going to be interested in who else was involved to any degree.

In particular, organizational members, especially organizational leaders, will be asked about their knowledge of the alleged conduct. Whether fair or not, as soon as you become aware of a real or potential ethical breach, you become part of the issue and certain obligations are created. Organizational leaders, particularly the leaders of public organizations, are expected to act once they become aware of an ethical challenge.

And, even if you can confidently answer that you did not know of the ethical breach, you may then be asked, *why* didn't you know? In particular, leaders will be scrutinized by whether it would be reasonable to expect that with "due diligence" they would have known.

When Did You Know It?

As soon as you are made aware of even the possibility of an ethical breach, the "clock" starts ticking. How quickly you address, and in many cases disclose, the occurrence of the breach or possible breach is critical to how your conduct will be judged.

It is common for persons in authority to be judged as having responded too slowly to an ethical breach. This can be portrayed as the leader minimizing the importance of the issue, being ineffectual in responding, or worst of all, being part of a cover-up.

If the ethical issue becomes public prior to you disclosing your knowledge of the issue to appropriate parties, regardless of your intent to eventually disclose, many will conclude you were never going to address it and take action. This can be an extremely challenging issue since we are appropriately hesitant to accuse someone of an ethical breach prior to having adequate information or confirmation.

In some cases, it is appropriate to disclose the possibility of the breach to a limited audience (e.g., council/governing board, attorneys, appropriate investigative bodies) without making a public

disclosure while additional information is being gathered. When and to whom the information is disclosed, however, is a critical factor.

What Did You Do About It?

And, of course, once you get beyond what you knew and when you knew it, you will be asked what actions you took in response to your knowledge. Did you overreact? Did you minimize the conduct? Did you do anything at all?

Action(s) you take will be viewed as your determination of the seriousness of the conduct. Modest discipline may be viewed as not understanding and appreciating the seriousness of the conduct.

Your own sense of right and wrong can be challenged by judgments regarding the actions that you take. Taking strong action can be viewed by some as appropriate, while others may view your approach as unfair and as an overreaction.

It is critical to carefully reflect on the obligations you have to all your constituencies when considering the appropriate action to take. For those of us doing work in public view, we should not be naïve in regard to how our decisions will be judged by a wide array of audiences. We should never take comfort in the belief that our actions will remain sheltered from public view—they seldom will.

Often, otherwise honest and ethical organizational members and leaders become entangled in the unethical conduct of others. This can be the result of not taking the right action at the right time in response to the conduct of others.

There are reasons this occurs, including fear and uncertainty. One way to help avoid becoming the collateral damage of an ethical crisis is to ask yourself the three critical questions before someone else does. **PM**



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WHAT'S ONE THING YOUR JOB DOESN'T ALLOW YOU TO DO THAT YOU WISH YOU COULD DO?



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Being a township administrator means you are always in a fishbowl, and when you are married to a city manager it can mean an even larger fishbowl! For me, it's the simple things that I wish I could do like grocery shopping without being approached about the height of a neighbor's lawn; watching my kids play soccer without being asked the sign code for an upcoming fundraiser; or enjoying an evening out without being approached by a resident.

Finally, it's hard to take a walk in my own neighborhood and not notice a street sign that needs to be straightened or a curb that needs to be replaced.

You know there's too much local government in your life when your 4-year-old child says, "Mommy, I'll ride my bike to the catch basin and make sure I hear the water and wait for you to catch up!"



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The primary thing would be to "let down my guard." Recently, a neighbor left a voice mail that he needed to talk to me. Our daughters are friends, so I assumed it had something to do with them.

Instead, it was to pitch a product that my staff had reviewed as part of an RFP process and subsequently selected another vendor. I didn't know he represented one of the companies. So it can be difficult to find friends who can't be construed as seeking favor.

Another example: A current road project will affect traffic near my home. I had several individuals say, "You'll be affected, too. Why don't you do something?" To which I responded, "Yes, I'll be affected. That's exactly why I won't do anything to adjust the traffic plan."

In simplest terms, what I wish I could do is relax and know that I can go to a holiday party and not get hit with questions about politics or projects. It would be nice to just talk about the weather, what my kids are doing, and where I will go on my next biking trip.



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Having transitioned into my current position from the private sector, I have found that to be an effective servant of the people, I must live a more "guarded" lifestyle. Personal opinions, social participation, and the development of "meaningful" relationships seem to have been sacrificed in order to effectively serve as a city manager.

While I love my profession and its ability to provide subtle influences for good through servant-leadership, the fact is that I must often work to protect my personal identity as it has become enveloped by my title.

It helps to have a great family and support network at home. It further helps to love the people I serve and to make a difference in their lives. Still, it would really be nice to be known by more than my 24/7 title.



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Being a city/town/county manager demands time and mental capacity. I find my devotion to my job constantly competes with my desire to spend quality time with family, especially my children. I wish I could help my school-aged children with their homework every day after work.

But very rarely am I able to do so. On those days I do happen to leave the office on time, once I arrive home, I often find myself either still having numerous things to process for the next day or having already reached my limit for any creative thinking or productive discipline. As a result, I completely rely on my supportive husband to fill the void.

Competing needs of my career and family seem to create a Catch-22 situation. Because of the demands of my job, I feel that I have to neglect my family from time to time. Yet, they provide motivation for me to become a better manager. **PM**

1 ENRICH YOUR COMMUNITY BY HOSTING INTERNATIONAL PROFESSIONALS

ICMA is seeking U.S. cities and counties to host professionals from East Asian/Pacific countries and provide them with opportunities to participate in local community engagement initiatives. The Legislative Process and Governance Professional Fellows Program, funded by the U.S. State Department, will also offer some U.S. hosts an opportunity for reciprocal visits to participating countries. Apply by January 16, 2015.

► icma.org/icma.org/profellowshost

2 GOOD PLACES TO LIVE

A community that supports the needs of all residents, regardless of age, physical ability, income, cultural background, race, or other factors is one where people want to live. To find out more on AARP's strategy to create livability, read *Is This a Good Place to Live? Measuring Community Quality of Life for All Ages*.

► icma.org/AARPlivable

icma anniversary

MOMENT IN HISTORY

A LEGACY OF LOCAL GOVERNMENT PROFESSIONALISM

Since its initial adoption by 31 cities in 1914, professional local government management has grown to become the most popular form of government among communities with populations of 2,500 or more. Today, nearly three-quarters of cities,

towns, and counties in the United States—in addition to a significant number of local governments around the globe—have established the position of professional manager. More than 150 million Americans—nearly half the U.S. population—live in communities with professional managers in place.

The legacy of success resulting from the professionalization of local government is well documented. Seventy-five percent of communities recognized with the National Civic League's coveted All-America City Award between 2007 and 2013 are run by professional managers. A February 2011 study by IBM Global Business Services found that local governments that operate with a professional manager under the council-manager form of government are nearly 10 percent more efficient than those operating under the mayor-council form, a testament to the value that professional local government management brings to communities everywhere.

Welcome to the next century!

ICMA's 100th anniversary is only the beginning! While this series of anniversary moments comes to a close with the December issue of *PM*, the many milestones in the history of ICMA, its members, and the professionalism

of local government management live on. Visit icma.org/anniversary from time to time and scroll through the anniversary timeline, where periodic updates will be added to keep the celebration alive.





By Katherine Takai

PURSUING SUSTAINABILITY WITH SOCIAL EQUITY GOALS

HOW MANAGERS CAN TAKE A COMPREHENSIVE, INCLUSIVE APPROACH

TAKEAWAYS

This article demonstrates:

- › How promoting social equity is fundamentally related to increasing community sustainability.
- › The critical role that local government managers play in advancing social equity in their communities.
- › Strategies to consider for integrating social equity into local government activities.

“How is social equity promoted in your sustainability program?”

When asked this question during case-study interviews in the summer of 2013, local government officials and community members commonly responded with “It depends what you mean by sustainability” or “It depends what you mean by equity.” ICMA’s Center for Sustainable Communities has defined sustainability as a comprehensive approach to improving livability and viability within a community or region.

This approach necessarily includes social equity, which refers to fair access to resources and opportunities and full participation in the social and cultural life of a community, as a central dimension for promoting livability and viability, now and into the future. In practice, however, social equity is often pushed to the fringe of the sustainability conversation.

Equity: The Missing Piece

Social equity is inherent in democracy, where each person has equal ability to influence the decisions his or her government makes and, therefore, equal access to the resources required to participate in the political process and make informed decisions. As communities grow and evolve, the voices of some groups of residents can sometimes go unheard and consequently unanswered.

Managed growth, for instance, can increase housing prices unless measures are taken to offset the effects of limiting the supply of housing or increasing land costs. In the environmental justice field, lower income and minority populations were found to be disproportionately exposed to pollution and environmental hazards.

Marginalized communities, often united by financial challenges, generally include minorities, individuals with disabilities, seniors, and other impoverished residents. Getting these groups involved and engaging a greater proportion of your community will expand the number of people contributing to gains towards such sustainability objectives and goals as increasing employment in green jobs and reducing greenhouse gas emissions and energy use.

Key Leadership Role

Local government plays a critical leadership role in protecting and enhancing the environment, economy, and social equity to increase the ability of communities to consistently thrive over time. Issues related to sustainability have

been increasing in importance since the introduction of sustainability to the worldwide stage by the Brundtland Commission in 1987, formally known as the World Commission on Environment and Development, and its prioritization by local government managers in 2007 by ICMA's Executive Board.

ICMA's 2010 sustainability survey indicated that a majority of local governments were engaged in such activities to enhance sustainability as recycling and improving air and water quality; however, few had formally and comprehensively integrated sustainability into policies and programs.

Still fewer local governments (38 percent) considered social equity to be a priority. Of the most common sustainability activities that local governments did engage in, only one—affordable housing—is directly related to social equity.

In June 2014, ICMA and Arizona State University (ASU) jointly released a study exploring the nature and extent of sustainable policies and programs aimed at advancing social equity in U.S. local governments. This study, titled *Advancing Social Equity Goals to Achieve Sustainability*, incorporated data from a follow-up survey of respondents to ICMA's initial 2010 sustainability survey, in addition to case studies of nine communities with leading practices in planning and implementing social equity initiatives.

The nine communities were Ann Arbor-Washtenaw County, Michigan; Arlington County, Virginia; Dubuque, Iowa; Clark County, Washington;

Lewiston, Maine; Manatee County, Florida; Fort Collins, Colorado; Hayward, California; and Durham, North Carolina. (The full report, including case studies, is available at icma.org/advancingsocialequity.)

This research investigated how local governments articulate social equity and link it to environmental and economic aspects of sustainability. Survey results showed that communities that rated as high performers in social equity tended to have larger minority populations, lower educational attainment and income, and lower housing value and homeownership rates.

Only two in five communities with high levels of social equity activities reported having explicit equity goals and targets. They were, however, more likely than communities with low levels of reported equity activity to 1) have developed a plan that clearly articulates social equity goals, 2) commit adequate resources to implementing that plan, and 3) assign staff to administer it. See Figure 1 for an example of this focused approach to promoting social equity.

Five Strategies for Integrating Equity

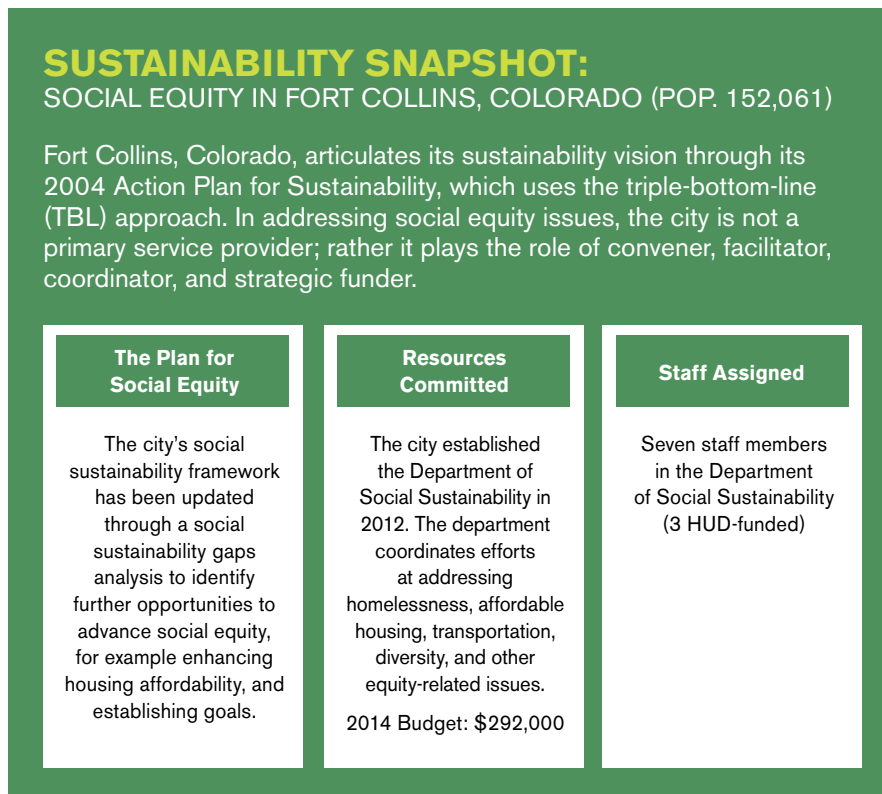
As a part of the ICMA/ASU research project, the practices of communities incorporating social equity into sustainability programs were identified. Variations on the strategies cited below were observed in communities across the nation. These strategies can guide other local government leaders seeking to enhance social equity in their own communities:

Strategy 1: Define and emphasize social equity as a part of a comprehensive sustainability plan. Leading practice communities set clear goals and corresponding measurable objectives. Clearly articulating what social equity means in your community and its importance helps mobilize support and resources.

In Washtenaw County, Michigan, for example, local officials have identi-

DEFINING SUSTAINABILITY AND EQUITY ARE THE CRITICAL FIRST STEPS TO PROMOTING BOTH WITHIN YOUR COMMUNITY.

FIGURE 1



Source: *Advancing Social Equity Goals to Achieve Sustainability*, 2014, published by ICMA, Washington, D.C.

fied the maintenance and expansion of their social safety net to be a major priority and funding area. This measure furthers social sustainability, as it protects, maintains, and restores access of citizens to basic resources, such as food and energy.

A number of organizing themes can be used to address challenges of cultural or political sensitivity. In Arlington County, Virginia, for example, smart growth is the long-standing commitment that continually enforces attention to housing, neighborhood conditions, transportation, energy conservation, and economic development.

Strategy 2: Integrate social equity into sustainability plans through an inclusive process. Leading practice communities invite input from a wide variety of community members and emphasize engaging stakeholders from marginalized communities.

In Lewiston, Maine, for example, inclusive resident engagement in

planning has played a critical role in improving the quality of public projects and relationships between the public and city government, as well as increasing the overall quality of life for community residents. The use of open and transparent processes that engage relevant stakeholders increases resident buy-in to local government initiatives and increases the ability to meet the needs of all members of a community, which are components critical to social sustainability.

Resident engagement initiatives in Dubuque, Iowa, have allowed community leaders to better prioritize and address critical challenges. In order to carry out the goals of the original Sustainable Dubuque Task Force, the Sustainable Dubuque Collaboration was created in 2011 to coordinate community education and engagement among members to achieve goals through collecting data and monitoring progress.

Strategy 3: Collaborate with local nonprofits, universities, private sec-

tor partners, and other local governments to achieve common goals.

Benefits of collaboration include greater effectiveness and efficiency by streamlining efforts. In Washtenaw County, Michigan, the county and its largest city, Ann Arbor, combined community development departments into a single county-based office resulting in such benefits as improved capacity to win grant funding, increased economies of scale through centralized administration of programs and services, and increased sharing knowledge in community development efforts.

In Lewiston, Maine, the city initially convened a network of social service, educational, and other governmental partners to meet an immediate need for serving a rapid influx of Somalian refugees. “This takes a lot of partnerships; no one entity can do it all,” said Lewiston City Administrator Ed Barrett, “Effective partnerships take time. You need to form common goals and a common language.”

Strategy 4: Set equity goals that specifically address the needs of marginalized members of the community. This strategy ensures that ramifications of specific choices can be thoughtfully considered ahead of policy development and implementation. One of the 12 principles of the Sustainable Dubuque framework is establishing a community that values systems, policies, and engagement to ensure that all residents have access to healthy and safe lifestyle choices.

City staff members advance this goal through a community-oriented policing program, availability of healthy local food, and support of neighborhood associations.

Strategy 5: Use data and establish performance measures to track progress towards social equity objectives. Leading practice communities share progress to provide evidence as to whether social equity objectives are



being achieved. This strategy ensures transparency and accountability.

Cleveland, Ohio, has an interactive dashboard specifying goals and priority areas, as well as any available indicator to demonstrate whether the city is meeting its targets; it also integrates information from a number of city agencies in a user-friendly format.

The use of performance indicators for measuring progress in equity initiatives was most prevalent in community health, where such relevant data as obesity rates and access to food was more readily available. In Manatee County, Florida, the health department uses data and mapping to determine where farmer's markets and stands are most critical to address the county's priority issue of food deserts.

Standardized performance measures for social equity are in early stages of development. On a national scale, the STAR Community Rating System (<http://www.starcommunityrating.org/>)

offers a single, consensus-based framework for sustainability with principles and corresponding outcomes focused on equity. As of August 2014, this framework was being used by 82 communities in the U.S.

Bringing It Home

Findings from the ICMA/ASU *Advancing Social Equity Goals to Achieve Sustainability* study also highlighted local government managers' role in taking their sustainability programs to the next level as they expand and deepen efforts by promoting social equity within their communities. What is the key to accomplishing this? Find the rationale that works and engage in your community.

Advancing social equity through local government action requires innovation and leadership, along with an adeptness to modify the message for political sensitivities and align it with community priorities. Survey results indicated that whether or not a local government prioritizes social equity explicitly, it almost always prioritizes issues related to equity like job creation, housing, and community wellness.

This suggests that social equity activities can be mobilized around these issues to provide a foundation for commanding broader support and expanding equity activities.

Examples from local governments across the country have demonstrated the capacity of these initiatives to improve the lives of those most in need within their communities. In Durham, North Carolina; Lewiston, Maine; and Manatee County, Florida, neighborhood-level efforts toward revitalization have reduced homelessness, improved the quality and availability of affordable housing; and given residents a greater voice in local decision making.

Progress in these areas has increased the ability of these local governments to offer residents opportunities to meet their basic needs and to contribute to improvement of the local economy, environment, social cohesion, and cultural vibrancy for generations to come.

Defining sustainability and equity is the critical first step to promoting both within your community. Sustainability is a complex concept with multiple dimensions and is dependent upon a strong economy, inclusive society, and sound environment. Equity is an essential component of sustainability that has been viewed as one of three pillars of sustainability, alongside environment and economy, and as a key consideration to be made in decisions affecting both the environment and the economy.

Each community must collaboratively examine its own circumstances, find its own rationale for including equity, and identify goals that best match its values. As issues associated with the overshadowing of equity in sustainability gain greater traction around the world, local government managers have the opportunity to champion critical strategies for enhancing their local governments' long-term livability for all residents now and for generations to come. **PM**

ADVANCING SOCIAL EQUITY THROUGH LOCAL GOVERNMENT ACTION REQUIRES INNOVATION AND LEADERSHIP, ALONG WITH AN ADEPTNESS TO MODIFY THE MESSAGE FOR POLITICAL SENSITIVITIES AND ALIGN WITH COMMUNITY PRIORITIES.

ENDNOTES

1 Willis, Michael. "Sustainability: The Leadership Difference We Must Provide." *PM Magazine*. June 2012, Volume 94, Number 5.



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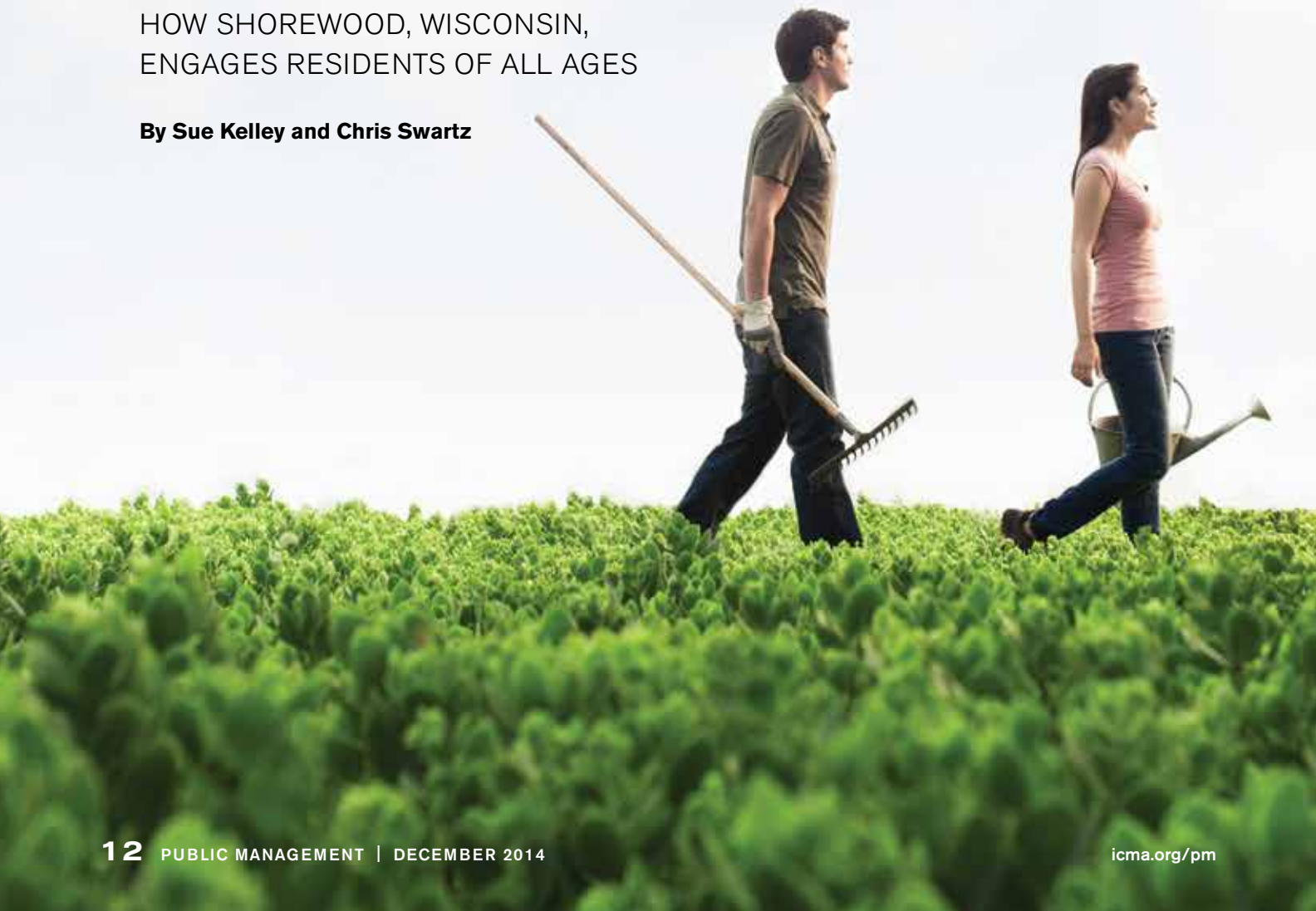
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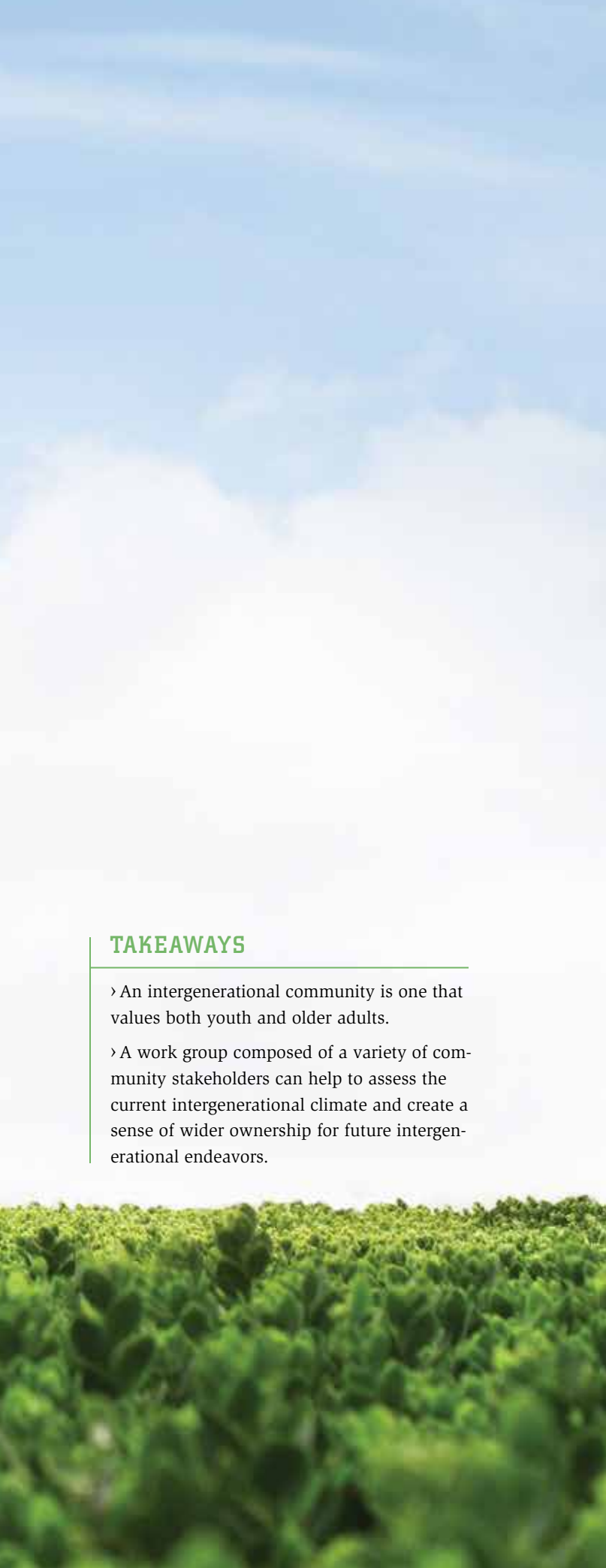


BUILDING INTERGENERATIONAL COMMUNITIES

HOW SHOREWOOD, WISCONSIN,
ENGAGES RESIDENTS OF ALL AGES

By Sue Kelley and Chris Swartz





TAKEAWAYS

- › An intergenerational community is one that values both youth and older adults.
- › A work group composed of a variety of community stakeholders can help to assess the current intergenerational climate and create a sense of wider ownership for future intergenerational endeavors.



Neighbors who live on Menlo Boulevard in Shorewood, Wisconsin, drop in to plant flowers on a spring day.

The move toward building intergenerational communities is being driven by a number of factors, including longer life expectancy, desire of older adults to age in place, changing family patterns that result in generations living apart, and growing awareness of the importance of age-friendly communities. Intergenerational communities are those that value young people and older people alike; they provide opportunities for the generations to interact and to get to know one another.

Intergenerational activities have been a part of the village of Shorewood, Wisconsin's culture since it was incorporated in 1900. As a tight-knit community where neighbors live in close proximity to one another, it is common for generations to be working alongside each other simply because it is the way things have been done.

At the same time, Shorewood has undertaken intentional efforts to ensure there are opportunities for people of all ages to feel valued and to contribute to the life of the community. As a result of Shorewood's efforts, it has been recognized as one of four "Best Intergenerational Communities 2014" in a nationwide competition sponsored by Generations United, with funding from the MetLife Foundation. (For information on the competition and results, visit <http://www.gu.org/OURWORK/Programs/BestIntergenerationalCommunities.aspx>.)



About Shorewood

Located along the shore of Lake Michigan just to the north of the city of Milwaukee, Shorewood is home to 13,192 residents in an area of 1.5 square miles.

It's known as a highly walkable community, with 64 miles of sidewalks throughout the village linking residents with four schools; bus stops; an incorporated business improvement district that includes grocery stores, pharmacies, health care providers, shops, and restaurants; and three parks. Shorewood is said to be "just two feet from everything," and it is minutes away from cultural and recreational icons in Milwaukee where Shorewood residents visit and volunteer.

Lake Michigan and the Milwaukee River are located at Shorewood's eastern and western borders. On the north, it is bordered by the village of Whitefish Bay and on the south by the city of Milwaukee. The University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee shares this southern border.

Shorewood is home to a diverse population and is the most densely populated local government in the state of Wisconsin. It is a community filled with people who desire to be connected—to each other and to the institutions in the community. Promoting quality of life is at the top of Shorewood's priorities list.

Knowing the Important Issues

While pride in the school system has always been at the heart of the community, Shorewood has worked hard to ensure that it is a vibrant community for people of all ages to live.

The Milwaukee County Department on Aging conducted a survey of older residents in 2008. In answering questions about the senior-friendliness of the village, respondents expressed a desire to remain in Shorewood as they age, along with a desire to become more involved in volunteer efforts.

Following the survey, the Shorewood Connects partnership was launched as a community organizing effort to bring together public and private stakeholders dedicated to increasing the age-friendliness of the community. As one of four original Shorewood Connects work groups, the Intergenerational Work Group serves as the intergenerational glue that brings together the village government, school district, and business improvement district, along with youth and seniors.

The initiatives of Shorewood Connects, including the fall and spring yard cleanup days, the Neighborhood of the Year competition, and more recently, the Senior-Friendly Business Certification Program, all serve to build and strengthen connections among residents.

Recognizing the value of the Shorewood Connects initiative to the village's quality of life in alignment with Shorewood's Vision Plan, the village board provides funding for a paid facilitator to coordinate activities and to purchase a small amount of promotional materials. The 2014 village budget includes \$7,715 for the project.

The work group decided at the start to seek a balance in intergenerational activities so as not to cast older adults as helpless and youth as helpers. Creating an inventory of intergenerational programs was one of the first activities of the work group. Here is a sample of the findings:

- Shorewood's school district benefits from having older volunteers help in the schools and at school events.
- In 2013, one of the elementary schools collaborated with older adults at the Senior Resource Center on an art project, creating an opportunity for conversation while students and seniors worked together.
- The Shorewood Men's Club and Shorewood Women's Club both fund scholarships for high school students, and they welcome youth volunteers at their fundraising events.
- Shorewood Intermediate Middle School hosts a recognition event for veterans on Veterans' Day.

- The Shorewood Senior Resource Center holds an annual essay contest for sixth graders on the topic of important older people in their lives.
- Student volunteers from nearby University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee share their expertise in technology by offering assistance to seniors in the use of cellphones, computers, and other electronic devices.

Some intergenerational activities have a service component, including yard cleanup days, while others are more social in nature. Social activities include:

- The Shorewood Public Library, in choosing its "Shorewood Reads" book, purposely picked a book read by students in English classes at the high school. The resulting book discussions included both high school students and older residents.
- The Annual Shorewood Men's Club Chicken Barbecue features an array of bands that cover the musical interests of the young and the old.

RESOURCES

Here is information that can be helpful to managers in communities seeking to jump-start intergenerational activities and projects.

Website: Generations United at <http://www.gu.org>.

Website: The World Health Organization at http://www.who.int/ageing/age_friendly_cities_network/en.

Website: AARP at <http://www.aarpinternational.org/events/agefriendly2012>.

Book: *Under One Roof: A Guide to Starting and Strengthening Intergenerational Shared Site Programs*, Generations United 2005.

- The Shorewood Community Fitness Center offers a Silver Sneakers program as well as youth programming. On any given day, older people and teens are working out at the fitness center, side by side.
- The Shorewood Recreation and Community Service Department programs include the intergenerational community choral arts program and the Senior Citizen Pass, which allows older adults free admission to high school sporting events and performances.

The Annual Shorewood Public Library Summer Celebration is run by two groups primarily composed of seniors (Friends of the Library and the Shorewood Women's Club), along with the Library's Teen Advisory Board.

- Plans are already under way to connect a new senior housing development, Harbor Chase (groundbreaking was held in July 2014), to Shorewood schools and to the Shorewood Senior Resource Center.

As a community known for a high level of civic engagement, intentional efforts have been made to include youth representatives on these village committees:

- Conservation Committee.
- Library Board.
- Pedestrian and Bicycle Safety Committee.
- Recreation and Community Services Advisory Committee.
- Shorewood Community Fitness Center Advisory Committee.

In addition to developing a host of new activities referenced earlier (Neighborhood of the Year competition, fall and spring yard cleanup, and Senior Friendly Business Certification), Shorewood Connects has also raised awareness about integrating intergenerational practices into other programs and activities.

This is best illustrated when a member of a group asks the question, "How can we do this intergenerationally?" As an example, the Elder Services Advisory

Board recently discussed purchasing artwork for a meeting room used by the Senior Resource Center.

After discussion, the board decided to approach the Shorewood High School Art Department regarding a student competition, with a scholarship from the Senior Center going to the winning student who will be selected by a panel of Senior Center members.

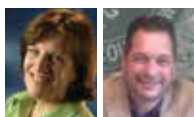
Lessons for Other Communities

Calling attention to what is already happening in a community is a good place to start. Looking for ways to expand intergenerational opportunities will follow if there is sufficient community interest and an entity that assumes responsibility for this task, along with funding support to ensure that communication flows and the project keeps moving.

Most communities already have intergenerational programming with such traditional partners as schools, senior centers, daycare centers, and senior residential facilities. There are also potential nontraditional partners that should be considered too, both public and private, including libraries, businesses, community foundations, community organizations, recreational organizations, and others.

The extent to which there is interaction and respect between the generations can lead to mutual support on such voter issues as school referenda and the allocation of resources for senior programs and activities. An investment in quality-of-life efforts can also yield results in terms of attracting new residents and businesses that are seeking a place with a strong sense of community and community pride.

In short, intentional planning to cultivate a culture where intergenerational interactions become the norm will result in an engaged, caring community. **PM**



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By Joshua Franzel and M. Nicolas Firzli

INFRASTRUCTURE INVESTMENT

HARNESSING LONG-TERM CAPITAL
FOR LOCAL DEVELOPMENT

GIVEN THE CONTINUED DISCUSSIONS IN WASHINGTON, D.C., STATE CAPITALS, AND COUNCIL MEETINGS ABOUT THE EXPENDITURES NEEDED TO MAINTAIN AND UPDATE INFRASTRUCTURE SYSTEMS, WHAT OTHER SOURCES OF INVESTMENT SHOULD LOCAL GOVERNMENT MANAGERS BE KEEPING THEIR EYES ON NOW AND IN THE FUTURE? PUBLIC PENSION FUNDS, WITH THEIR NATURAL PREFERENCE FOR LONG-TERM INVESTMENTS AND TRADITION OF “CAPITAL STEWARDSHIP,” COULD BECOME KEY INVESTORS IN THIS SOCIALLY BENEFICIAL ASSET CLASS.

In the wake of the 2008 economic downturn, considerable attention has focused on the topic of local government infrastructure investment in the United States, often with an eye toward ensuring adequate funding for maintenance and multimodal expansion. This discussion includes varying opinions regarding the current state of infrastructure assets,¹ the roles and relationships of the public and private sectors, and key priorities going forward.

Underpinning local government infrastructure financing are sizable portions of the \$3.7 trillion municipal bond market,² as well as roughly \$220 billion in direct capital outlay by local

governments annually,³ and \$61 billion in transportation grants from the federal government to states and localities,⁴ among other sources.

While these sources constitute the primary way local infrastructure is funded, it is also important to note the growing role of public pension funds and U.S. sovereign wealth funds in both direct and indirect infrastructure investment (see Figure 1 for a snapshot of the allocations used by several of the funds mentioned in this article). Some nonfederal, public pension and sovereign funds invest relatively small portions of their total assets—typically 5 percent or less—into infrastructure projects outside of municipal bonds, while many others have not yet entered the infrastructure space.

This variation may be linked to the sponsoring government allowing these types of investments (or not), fund officials identifying a useful role for the asset class within their overall asset allocation, or funds having the in-house organizational capacity needed to invest directly in infrastructure assets, or, at the least, to effectively monitor the work of specialized third-party asset managers.

In the context of this article, our definition of public funds will include all public pension, sovereign wealth, and reserve funds at federal and local

(regional, state, and municipal) levels. In the United States, the connections between public fund assets and infrastructure investments and needs are receiving increased attention from government officials (e.g., U.S. Rural Infrastructure Opportunity Fund and Build America Investment Initiative), a range of think tanks and nongovernmental organizations,⁵ and also private institutional investors, among others.

This article focuses on the increasing role public funds play in helping provide part of the additional financial resources needed for infrastructure, including at the local level.

Pension Funds

While about half of the \$3.7 trillion (Quarter 1, 2014) in assets held by state and local pension funds are in domestic and international equities, about a quarter are in such fixed-income investments as corporate and foreign bonds (\$381 billion), U.S. Treasuries (\$206 billion), federal agency and government-sponsored enterprise securities, for housing and farm credits⁶ (\$206 billion), short-term credit (\$51 billion), mortgages (\$8 billion), and municipal bonds (\$400 million).⁷

For more than a decade, in the aggregate, these pension funds increased their overall allocations into alternative and non-listed investments, a portion of which are infrastructure investments, from 5 percent to about 17 percent.⁸ This unprecedented increase was driven by the belief in expected benefits ranging from increased diversification, potentially superior risk-adjusted returns over long periods, the need for asset versus liability cash-flow matching and, after 2007, the quest for yields in a low-interest rates environment.⁹

Here are examples of U.S. state and local public pension systems that had or currently have holdings in infrastructure:¹⁰

- The Dallas Police and Fire Pension System (DPFP) had an infrastructure asset allocation of 3.4 percent (\$108 million) in 2012. The 2012 DPFP An-

TAKEAWAYS

- › There continues to be the need for increased public and private investment in local infrastructure.
- › While the more traditional funding mechanisms often are the focus of elected and appointed officials, the media, and the private sector, it is important to note the role pension and other public funds play in investing in the many forms of infrastructure.

nual Report noted these investments included hospital and water treatment plant projects in Asia and managed highway lanes in Texas.

- The Maine Public Employees Retirement System (Maine PERS) had an infrastructure asset allocation of 3.3 percent in 2014 (\$419 million). These investments were in renewable energy, toll roads, seaports, airports, and telecommunications infrastructure projects, among others, in the United States and internationally. This was reported in a Maine PERS “Asset Allocation,” June 30, 2014, and a Maine PERS “Private Investment Markets Summary” dated March 31, 2014.
- The Pension Trust Fund of the District of Columbia, managed by the District of Columbia Retirement Board, had 1 percent (\$86 million) of its assets in infrastructure investments in 2014. It has partnerships with firms that invest in ports, natural gas pipelines and distribution, transmission cables, waste services, bridges, toll roads, and rail, among other infrastructure assets, primarily in North America. This was reported in the D.C. Retirement Board’s “Quarterly Summary June 30, 2014” and the D.C. Retirement Board’s “Private Investments Summary as of December 31, 2013.”

Also, several U.S. states have established non-pension trust funds to receive and invest revenue from severance taxes, and related taxes/fees, from natural resources. Eight of the larger non-pension U.S. funds manage \$123 billion in assets.¹¹ According to its 2013 Annual Report, the Alaska Permanent Fund (\$50 billion in total assets) had about \$900 million in transportation, water, waste, and other infrastructure investments in the United States and internationally.

The Permanent Wyoming Mineral Trust Fund (\$6.1 billion in total assets), among other investments, provides loans to irrigation, municipal pipeline treatment plants, airports, and other similar projects in Wyoming, as reported in the

“Wyoming State Treasurer’s Investment Report, Fiscal Year 2013.”

Canadian Investment

By investing early on in non-listed assets (private equity, real estate, infrastructure, forestry, and commodities) both domestically and abroad, Canadian public pension and sovereign funds have attracted attention on both sides of the Atlantic: “They own assets all over the world, including property in Manhattan, utilities in Chile, international airports, and the high-speed railway connecting London.... They have won the attention both of Wall Street firms, which consider them rivals, and institutional investors, which aspire to be like them. These giants are Canada’s largest public pension-fund groups.”¹²

Aside from Japan, Norway, Brunei, Singapore, and Gulf nations, Canada is the only large developed jurisdiction where public sector pensions hold more assets collectively than their private sector peers: \$798 billion out of \$1.4 trillion for the pension sector as a whole.¹³ Interestingly, this means that Canadian public pension funds, including local funds, possess the equivalent of the sixth of all

to alternative and non-listed assets¹⁵ (i.e., excluding listed stocks, bonds, and money market instruments), a remarkably high figure by both international and North American standards.

Infrastructure and real estate alone, excluding private equity, commodity, forestry, and hedge funds, typically account for approximately two-thirds of their average allocation to alternative and non-listed assets, which represents roughly more than 20 percent of their overall asset mix.¹⁶

Relative to the United States, the research and consultancy firm Prequin in a February 2014 analysis noted that “As of Q1 2014, U.S. public pension funds, which invest in infrastructure, had an average current allocation of 1.9 percent and a target allocation of 4 percent. On the other hand, Canada-based public pension funds had an average current allocation of 5.9 percent and a target allocation of 8 percent. Stated simply, Canada-based public pension funds on average plan to invest more, and actually do invest more than their U.S. counterparts.”¹⁷

Several Canadian public pension and sovereign wealth funds have sizable

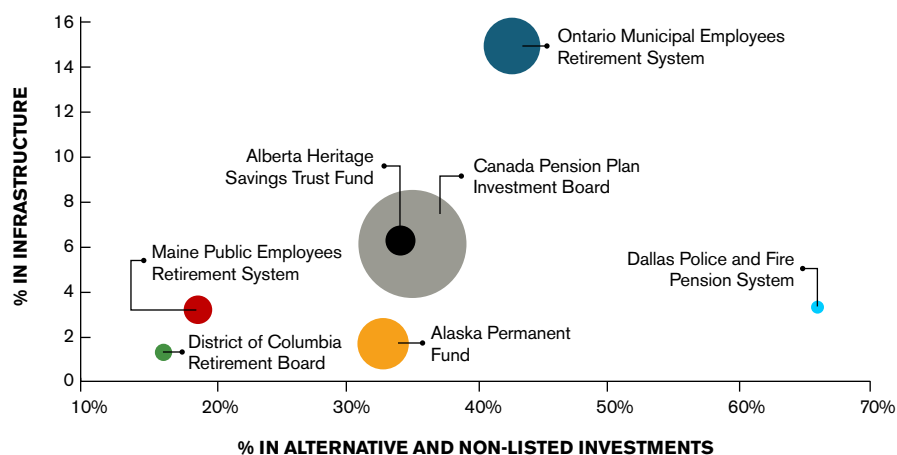
IT IS IMPORTANT TO NOTE THE GROWING ROLE OF PUBLIC PENSION FUNDS AND U.S. SOVEREIGN WEALTH FUNDS IN BOTH DIRECT AND INDIRECT INFRASTRUCTURE INVESTMENT.

assets held by their U.S. public pension peers, a remarkable feat considering Canada’s economy is 11 times smaller than the United States in GDP terms.¹⁴

Large Canadian public pension funds at both federal (e.g., Canada Pension Plan Investment Board, Public Sector Pension Investment Board) and provincial level (e.g., Ontario, Quebec, Alberta, British Columbia) generally allocate *at least* a third of their total investments

holdings in infrastructure. Firzli and Bazi have previously analyzed the investment policy of Canada’s largest provincial public pension fund, the Ontario Municipal Employees Retirement System, which co-owns—with the Ontario Teachers’ Pension Plan—some of the UK’s most valuable transportation and energy distribution assets. Notably the 67-mile HS1, the high-speed rail that connects the UK’s Channel Tunnel to London.¹⁸

FIGURE 1. Public Funds: Infrastructure versus Overall Alternative and Non-Listed Investments. (Circle size represents size of fund.)



Source: Information based on 2012–2104 fund documents referenced in this article.

Another key example is the Alberta Heritage Savings Trust Fund. This fund, managed by the Alberta Investment Management Corporation (AIMCo), a hybrid public pension and sovereign wealth asset management organization, collects and invests a portion of the province’s oil revenues.

According to its 2013–2014 Annual Report, the fund had an infrastructure asset allocation of 6.3 percent (C\$1.1 billion) at the end of FY 2014 (3/31/2014), with 18.4 percent of assets allocated to real estate (C\$ 3.22 billion) and 2.2 percent to timber or a 26.9 percent overall allocation to real assets.

The fund invests both directly in assets (more than 50 percent of the total and most new investments) and through externally managed mandates.

The Alberta Heritage Savings Trust Fund has a clear predilection for high-income, developed jurisdictions recognized as having stable political, legal, and fiscal regimes (for example, U.S., United Kingdom, Belgium, Denmark, and Chile) in such steady sectors as traditional transportation, with midsize stakes in central, hub airports located near capitals (Copenhagen or Brussels), and small to midsize stakes in various toll roads and U.S. energy infrastructure companies investing locally in

central Canada, notably in the strategic pipelines bringing Albertan oil to Seattle and the Great Lakes.

Over the years, the fund has invested in several infrastructure and private equity assets directly dependent on the fortunes of the Albertan oil sector, the backbone of the province’s economy and a rather volatile boom-and-bust industry.

To those who have criticized such pro-cyclical investments in the past, the Alberta Heritage Savings Trust Fund has argued that “this is not an aid project, this is an investment,”¹⁹ insisting that, to avoid any potential conflict of interests that may arise, the province’s finance minister himself is never told about a financial choice until the decision has already been made by the fund’s investment officers. **PM**

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BY MIKE CONDUFF, ICMA-CM

TURN YOUR RETREAT INTO EXCELLENCE

An organizational process can build institutional capacity

Translating council values, quality-of-life expectations, and community outcomes into organizational action plans is the hallmark of excellent local government managers and a key component of good governance.

Fostering a culture within the organization that focuses on these plans and builds capacity is especially valuable. When coupled with mid-level/next-generation training and succession planning, a strong foundation for true high performance is built.

I recently experienced this type of organization firsthand in Durango, Colorado. City Manager Ron LeBlanc and the management team, which includes his assistants Sherri Dugdale and Mary Beth Miles, convert the results of the council's hard work at its retreat into specific programs for the organization to accomplish, complete with milestones and deadlines.

They convey this spreadsheet as an information document to councilmembers to keep them updated, but importantly, do not ask them to approve it. These are activities within the purview of the staff to take or that lead to action items that will ultimately appear on a formal council agenda.

Building Organizational Support

In order to improve organizational aptitude and to gain the largest possible amount of internal support for this process, they have also created what they call their "core team." This is a group of some 30 individuals—just under 10 percent of the employees—drawn from all departments. With a nice mix of tenured and relatively new employees, the core team has these objectives:

- Turn city council's vision and executive team objectives into action.

- Enable the executive team to achieve a high level of performance.
- Facilitate communication flow—up and down.
- Create a depth of leadership and understanding citywide.
- Build interdepartmental relationships.
- Contribute to succession planning.
- Enhance effectiveness through streamlining.
- Eliminate duplication.
- Build and support initiative-taking by employees.

As part of the combined executive team—largely the chief management officer and department heads—and the core team retreat this year, a process was used to clarify expectations from all parties: what the core team needed from the city manager and executive team; what the city manager needed from the executive team and the core team; and what the executive team needed from the city manager and core team.

Designed to be semi-anonymous (no one was required to take ownership of any of the stated needs), the results were used to conduct a series of conversations ultimately leading to a list of agreements among the parties.

Fabulous Leadership Example

While this type of open and transparent process might seem to have an element of risk for the city manager, it also demonstrates a commitment to make personal changes in response to organizational performance needs. Despite best intentions, front-line supervisors and employees rarely get to see or interface as much as they would like with the manager.

And, as can be expected, in the absence of information or firsthand

knowledge, it is easy for rumors and misperceptions to flourish.

No matter how many memos or e-mails are sent, cascading council outcomes into organizational activities is always a challenge. Opening up pathways for the employees—who actually end up doing the work—to have input into the process builds individual as well as institutional capacity.

It sets a fabulous example of leadership. LeBlanc puts it this way: "We are only as competent as our people enable us to be, so in Durango, we want to seek every mechanism that encourages that competency. If that means I need to do something different or better, then I am certainly willing to do so. But first I have to know what that is."

With this type of top-to-bottom leadership, Durango often performs at a level that belies its population (18,000) or employee head count (320). By comparing itself to organizations significantly larger, the execution and implementation bar is set intentionally high, and employees stretch to reach it.

As councilmembers see this high level of performance, they are more willing to invest their energies in the job that only they can do, which is developing outcomes, and allow the city manager and staff to manage the activities necessary to bring these outcomes to fruition.

Here is the process that Durango uses:

- Conduct a regular council retreat that leads to consensus on key outcomes.

Continued on page 28



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BY JEFF DAVIDSON

GETTING MORE DONE

Ways to leverage resources more efficiently

As another calendar year approaches, in the face of shrinking government budgets, better use of the resources you already have available represents a tremendous productivity initiative and time management technique.

When, for example, is the last time you reviewed the resumes of staff members? Going further, when is the last time you reviewed their original employment applications, which provide information on their background, education, training, and expertise? It pays to tap into staff background information to leverage their strengths.

Resource Roster

A variety of resource areas that you might not have recently considered, which might be at your immediate disposal, are listed here and grouped by categories.

Tap the skills of current and prospective staff:

- Find experts among your staff.
- Research staff backgrounds, including software skills and other key capabilities.
- Empower administrative staff.
- Hire interns, especially tech-savvy recent grads.
- Consult other departments and committees.
- Recruit members of other departments.
- Retrain managers and staff.
- Hire retirees.
- Recall former employees (not just retirees).
- Retain temporary workers.

Consult with specialists:

- Involve people who know your agency.

- Network with colleagues inside and outside of your organization.

Work with volunteers:

- Find volunteers in your community with skills new to your office.
- Bring in peers and networking groups.
- Seek mentors.
- Involve friends and family.
- Tap online networks.

Capitalize on relations with vendors and customers:

- Pose questions to vendors.
- Review the skills of business customers.
- Establish partnerships.

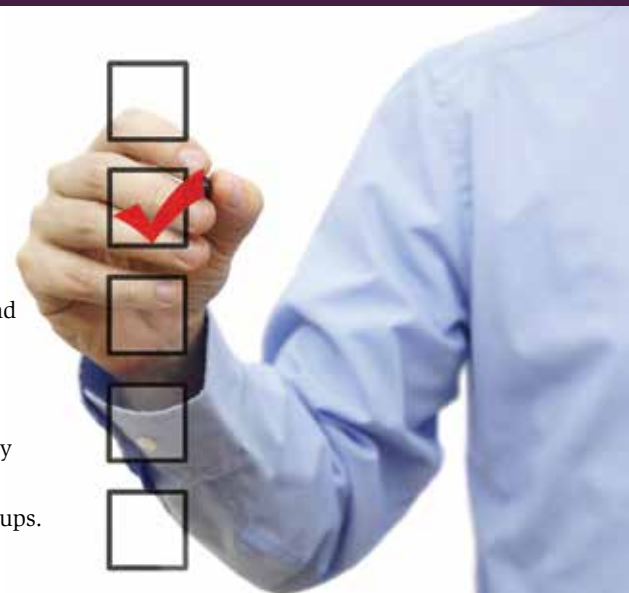
Draw upon the services of professional and other governmental agencies:

- Scout programs offered by state and federal agencies.
- Research all other government agencies with applicable programs.
- Become more involved in professional networks and organizations.
- Explore the services of professional and industry associations.
- Learn about local university partnership with business.

Harness leadership tools:

- Recognize your own responsibility and accountability.
- Enhance your own leadership skills.
- Develop and consult frequently asked questions.
- Use virtual and informal networks.
- Make better use of data you've already gathered.
- Take better advantage of Internet and library resources.
- Use the most appropriate tools and technologies

Employ technology wisely:



- Employ a variety of e-mail signatures, letters, and reusable templates.
- Enact flexi-place (virtual office) policies.
- Communicate by teleconferencing and Skype-type meetings.
- Acquire better and faster technology.
- Use the full version of key software.
- Maintain a simple and short list of goals.
- Undertake more comprehensive online searches.
- Automate with available equipment.

Draw upon your own wisdom:

- Prepare for contingencies.
- Assemble the right team.
- Know whom to consult.
- Befriend such information purveyors as librarians.
- Be able to say no. Make more effective choices.

Get More Organized

Becoming more organized, in general, represents a second front on the path to effective time management by better use of resources. Take this quick quiz to see where you stand:

- Is your desk at work or at home piled horizontally with reports, papers, and files? Nobody can manage a horizontal pile.
- Do you have trouble finding a particular item in your desk that you use

often? Maybe it needs to be left on your desk.

- Do you feel that you could be organized if you only had more space? More space is seldom the answer; filing or getting rid of what isn't important is.
- Do you have piles of newspapers and magazines at home that you don't have time to read? If you're attempting to read these publications cover to cover, good luck. Clip out what looks important or interesting, and recycle the rest.
- Do papers clutter your desk for at least a week? A desk is not a filing cabinet.
- Do you ever find something at the bottom of a pile that you didn't know was there? Beware: You're liable to lose anything! Break down your piles now.
- Do you sometimes spend five to 10 minutes or more looking for a letter or document that you need? The search should take no more than 45 to 75 seconds. More than that and, well...you're wasting everyone's time.

Recognizing that getting better organized in and of itself is a "resource" worth cultivating, here are some ideas to help you benefit from your own organizational skills:

- Organize documents for optimal use.
- Train others to respect your time.
- Work away from the office to avoid distraction.
- Find a quiet room or place within your facilities.
- Limit distractions as often as practical. **PM**



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Signed: Beth Payne, Editor

BY SHEILA MCGINLEY

CIGNA STUDY TRACKS SHORT-TERM DISABILITY CLAIMS

20 years of data highlight workforce productivity challenges

An analysis of 20 years of Cigna's short-term disability claims shows that absences related to obesity, treatment for skin cancer, and herniated disc surgery increased significantly from 1993 to 2012.

The study also found a reduction in absences related to depression coupled with an increase in prescribed antidepressants, which may signal an underlying problem of presenteeism.

Presenteeism, defined as sick or distracted employees who choose to work anyway, accounts for 39.4 percent of the total cost of obesity to employers¹ and as much as 75 percent of lost employee productivity from U.S. employers.²

These and other health trends identified by the Cigna study are important for local government to consider when structuring an integrated wellness and absence management program to improve health and workforce productivity.³

"Employers who focus on productivity as an outcome will succeed in the future. Though medical advances have helped improve the quality of life for many people, lifestyle and behavioral factors remain key drivers of absenteeism," said Robert Anfield, MD, chief medical officer for Cigna's disability insurance unit. "Employers must address these triggers earlier with intervention, vocational rehabilitation services, and wellness programs."

Workforce Productivity Challenges

The U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics reports that American businesses lose an average of 2.8 million work days each year due to unplanned absences, costing employers more than \$74 billion.

The most frequently approved short-term disability claims, both 20 years ago and today, remain musculoskeletal disorders, which make up 25 percent of

all non-maternity absence. While some diagnostic categories in this grouping benefit from medical advances, others are impacted by changing demographics and underlying health.

"The aging workforce and a trend toward growing waistlines has made some medical conditions more dominant factors for short-term disabilities than they were 20 years ago," said Anfield. "For example, arthritis and tendonitis-related absences have both increased more than 50 percent since 1993."

The study, however, found significant changes in short-term disability rates for obesity, cancer, depression, and herniated discs that highlight the impact of medical advances on absence and productivity.

Herniated Discs. As new techniques have improved the efficacy of back surgery, the number of procedures has gone up and the average amount of time out of work has decreased. Simultaneously, these medical advances have led to an increase in the number of eligible candidates for surgery and an overall net increase in lost productivity time.

Cigna data show a 45 percent increase in work absence for herniated discs, which represents the most significant increase in short-term disability claims among sedentary occupations during the 1993 to 2012 period.

Local governments should consider implementing programs that target specific conditions. For those individuals who may not need surgery, you may want to take a fresh look at the employee's workstation and other factors that can contribute to back and muscle issues. For those who require surgery, vocational rehabilitation programs are designed to help individuals successfully reenter the workforce.

"The rise of vocational rehabilitation services and improvements in return-to-work programs over the past 20 years helped individuals return to work faster," Anfield said. "Employers need to understand that as medical treatments improve, the number of employees in need of programs to help them stay at work or return to work increases."

Obesity. Over the past 20 years, the number of obese Americans has doubled. At the same time, short-term disability claims related to obesity have increased by 3,300 percent, according to Cigna's study. Many of these absences can likely be attributed to the increasing effectiveness and popularity of bariatric surgeries. This rise in the percentage of obesity claims, however, does not reflect the impact of such chronic conditions linked to obesity as diabetes and some musculoskeletal conditions.

Absence isn't the only worry when it comes to obesity. Individuals suffering from obesity may avoid changes in lifestyle, which can lead to an increase in physical and mental challenges, such as the onset of depression.

Although bariatric surgery has improved the lives of many people, it can only be as effective as the healthy lifestyle changes the individual adopts after surgery. In some cases, individuals who fail to change habits find the success of the surgery won't last long. Employers that provide resources and coaching, such as employee assistance programs (EAP) and vocational rehabilitation services, can help employees become more productive and enjoy long-lasting health.

Cancer. According to the American Cancer Society, this year there will be an

estimated 1.7 million new cancer cases diagnosed.⁴ Among different types of cancers affecting short-term disabilities, the biggest spike during the 20-year period of the study was due to skin cancer—now five times more prevalent than in 1993. Skin cancer is the leading cause of cancer for individuals in the 25 to 29 age group as sun exposure and tanning represent significant risk increases.

Overall, cancer screening and advances in medical treatment have reduced the number of cancer-related deaths and the duration of cancer-related disability claims. More survivors are now able to return to work, but employers should implement absence management strategies that integrate wellness programs, disease management programs, and vocational rehabilitation services to meet the needs of cancer patients. Cigna's study showed that a combination of these programs helped 97 percent of survivors rejoin the workforce.

Employers should also anticipate that caregivers who look after family members

with cancer will require family and medical leave (FML) time. The stress and other demands placed on a caregiver may carry a mental and physical toll. Nearly 80 percent of FML absences can also become a short-term disability event.⁵

According to Cigna's own study, getting a head start on engaging employees who are on FML can lead to nearly seven fewer days away from work, when an integrated disability and FML administration strategy is in place.

Depression. Twenty years ago, depression was the third leading cause of a short-term disability. Today, Cigna's claim data shows it as the fifth leading cause. While related absences have been reduced slightly, depression still has a major impact on employers' bottom lines. In fact, according to a National Institutes of Mental Health's disability study survey, depression is the leading cause of disability in the U.S. among those ages 15 to 44.

More than one-fourth of Americans ages 18 and older suffer from

a diagnosable mental disorder in a given year.⁶ Since 1993, the use of antidepressant medications increased from 37.3 percent to 74.5 percent.⁷ As the underlying causes of depression are left untreated, the condition can have a significant impact on individuals' health and their workforce contributions, underscoring the importance of an employee assistance program to help people with behavioral health needs to access care.

About the Study

Cigna examined 20 years of short-term disability claim data, which provides some indicators of what has changed and what has stayed the same. Cigna's data included information on industry,

Continued on page 28



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BY KAREN THORESON AND PAMELA MUSE

MANAGE LIKE A FUTURIST

Adapt the tools of strategic foresight to community planning

If you knew your community's future, what would you do? You would know and anticipate challenges, maximize opportunities, and mitigate expenses. You would probably run a more prepared, agile, and responsive local government.

Most of us use some sort of foresight all the time—monitoring the weather forecast to prepare for the next day or creating alternative scenarios for a future retirement. Professional futurists use various tools to develop preferred scenarios, and these same tools can be learned and incorporated into an organizational or community strategic plan that works for your local government.

Author Rebecca Ryan, who is the resident futurist at the Alliance for Innovation and founder and co-owner of a consulting firm, is driven by her love of cities and counties and the Alliance for Innovation's community of local governments. She has developed a program that helps staff in forward-looking organizations to think like a futurist and adapt the tools of strategic foresight to propel their communities into a future they desire and can influence.

According to Ryan, local governments can apply six key steps to their planning regime:

Frame the Issue. A manager can ask, What is the domain he or she is trying to understand? Here, the domain is defined quite specifically by what, who, and when. A domain question, for example, might be, "Will there be enough sufficiently trained public administrators to manage our cities and counties in 2030, when the last baby boomer manager has retired?"

Scan. This step involves surveying the trends and forces that may shape

the future of the domain question. Key trends might include:

- How might social trends, like birth rates, aging in place, or increased urbanization, impact that domain?
- How will technology impact the public administrator's role?
- What environmental factors might change the issues local government's face?
- Will the economy change so drastically that local governments can survive?
- How will politics—both local and global—impact the places we live?
- Will governance structures adapt and change as our communities evolve?

USING STRATEGIC FORESIGHT IS NOT FORTUNE TELLING AND DOES NOT REQUIRE A CRYSTAL BALL.

Forecast. Create alternative scenarios applying the trends and forces you have just scanned. What would happen if you only watch and do nothing? What pro-active actions could be taken to influence the 2030 outcomes? What disruptions might occur to dramatically influence the domain? Are those disruptions likely to be positive or negative?

Vision. What is the preferred future for your domain? What specifically do you want that future to look like (i.e., construct your own reality)? What are the success factors that could help you achieve it? What are metrics of success and how would they be identified and monitored?

Plan. Working backwards from your date in the future, what milestones

would need to be achieved, strategies put in place, and feedback loops established to achieve the vision?

Act. What should you do now to make your vision happen? Who else do you need to enlist to help you make it a reality?

The term *futurist* isn't new. In fact, the *Oxford English Dictionary* identifies the earliest use of the term *futurism* in English as early as 1842. The term, however, is fairly new in the world of local government professionals. That is why the Alliance for Innovation is now hosting workshops, led by Ryan, to teach staff across North America how to apply the tools of futuring in planning for their communities.

Planning for the future is an important role for local governments. In some sense, our job is to ensure that the community is not only safe, attractive, and viable for today's residents, but also for the many generations to come. It is essential that a community act today while envisioning how that community will function 100 years from now.

Strategic planning can help you accomplish your near-term goals and is obviously a critical tool to help get that done. But for the long-term vision, futuring can become an ongoing discipline that's integrated into your overall community planning.

Using strategic foresight is not fortune telling and does not require a crystal ball. Predicting a single future is, in fact, not possible and more so, probably irresponsible. But anticipating the future and trying to imagine how to make that positive future a reality is the job that public employees signed up for. Learning to manage like a futurist can help you do that. **PM**



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Council Relations

Continued from page 20

- Develop organizational priorities that lead to the accomplishment of or progress toward these outcomes.
- Involve as many parts of the organization as practical in this staff process.
- Keep the council informed, without ceding operational decisions to them.
- Be willing to challenge the manager's own assumptions about his or her value-add to the process.
- Build organizational capacity and grow future leaders within the team.
- Check in regularly to make sure perceptions reflect reality. **PM**

Active Living

Continued from page 25

occupation, plan design, diagnostic categories, and such outcomes as average duration, return to work, and total absence. The data was broken into 267 diagnostic categories.

For more about the study, visit <http://newsroom.cigna.com/20-year-disability-study>. **PM**

ENDNOTES

- 1 Integrated Benefits Institute Analysis 2012.
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7 Depression treatment rates increase over past decade, but psychotherapy declines, *Archives of General Psychiatry*, 2010.

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BY ROCCO LONGO, ICMA-CM

LOOKING BACK

Bittersweet memories of those early years

I began my career in the late 1970s and was energized about becoming a city manager. I was hired for my first job, however, 30 days out of graduate school as a development director and remained in that capacity for six years.

During my sixth year I decided I was ready to begin seeking a city manager position. When I went on my first interview for a city manager position I did not get that job, though I did learn that other credentials might enhance my opportunities.

I became a certified building inspector as well as a certified emergency management technician, obtained a license to operate a sewer plant, and passed a test to operate a water treatment plant. The certifications were definitely beneficial when I interviewed for the second time in another community several months later, and I got the job.

The mayor told me the position was created by vote of the council and could change at any council meeting. This change was by ordinance, not by charter. There wasn't any guarantee for tenure and no contract. Fortunately, the mayor was extremely supportive of the position.

In addition, I would have to accept an \$8,000 pay cut from \$26,000 as a development director to \$18,000 to accept the city manager position. I was married with no kids, the risk was worth taking.

I remember that my dad, a 44-year employee in a central New Jersey factory, didn't think it was such a great idea. It was a huge risk to say the least, especially the \$8,000 pay cut. I was finally offered the job and accepted the position as the community's first city manager.

Early Challenges

The city had a \$1 million budget with a

deficit of some \$150,000, a small staff, and no shortage of problems. Walking in the city hall door, I was handed an envelope from the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA). I thought, this is nice, I'm getting a congratulatory note.

Instead, the envelope contained a summons from EPA for several violations at the sewer treatment plant, and the city was subject to a \$1,000-per-day fine. Some welcome it was, and it was definitely not a situation to take lightly.

I started the job and discovered there was a core of energetic and enthusiastic residents who wanted positive, productive change in their city government. This wasn't the case for everyone, though.

... THIS CITY STILL HAS THE COUNCIL-MANAGER FORM OF GOVERNMENT, AND I HAVE MANY THINGS TO REMEMBER FONDLY WHEN I CONSIDER MY FIRST MANAGEMENT POSITION.

Not long after I started working, I had to decline doing a few "favors" for several councilmembers. It wasn't long before a newspaper headline urged: "Dump the City Manager and the \$18,000 Salary and Let's Fix up the Downtown." I was advised that it was not a personal issue against me, it was just a better way to proceed.

Now that was funny, again more when I think it about today than at the time. To put this in perspective, the \$18,000 would not cover the development of specifications to fix up the downtown because the central business district needed a lot of attention.

And, of course, it was personal.

Leading by Example

So I did the best I could, knowing council votes could be 9 to 2. I engaged open door management style

and provided leadership by example. I spent a day working in each department. I worked with public works, police, fire, and all office departments and tried to gain credibility, wherever and however possible.

Being a community that was located near a body of water that had combined sanitary-storm sewers, the city had considerable residential sewer problems. For an extended period of time I received calls to come and observe sewer drains backing up in basements. (That was not funny then, but it is now.)

Many of these calls were made at 3 a.m. Perhaps the homeowners were afraid the raw sewage would be gone when I got to work at 7 a.m. The good news is that, one by one, with the help of a dedicated and cooperative public works department, the problems were resolved.

I did gain credibility and was a grand marshal in the annual community fall festival parade. I was not exactly happy that I was asked to be the grand marshal; it was actually easier watching sewers backing up.

Proud Moments

I was proud of authoring a \$500,000 grant award to help fix up the downtown. That truly was the point that made the position credible and worth keeping. The two councilmembers who wanted to use my salary to fix the streets did not get reelected.

I never responded publicly, never said a word, and never entered any debate. I just did my job. I was lucky to work with a great and supportive mayor, including his entire family and relatives, to provide the foundation I needed to "hang in there."

What I am most proud of, however, is that this city still has the council-manager form of government, and I have many things to remember fondly when I consider my first management position. **RM**



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Town Administrator
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rlongo@townofmarshfield.org



Civic Heroes

They're ordinary people who accomplish great things. They understand that communities thrive when government works with the people, making it easier to open and run a business, obtain a permit or license, find important information, and engage in the civic process. They envision a better way of utilizing resources to improve the community, champion improvements and drive change throughout their organizations.

Accela works with hundreds of agencies worldwide, led by civic heroes who transform everyday processes to help their communities thrive.



Cleveland, Ohio, speeds urban renewal with innovative demolition program

Cleveland Building Commissioner, **Tom Vanover**, and his team are leveraging the Accela Civic Platform to contend with a rising number of vacant and distressed homes.

Their automated solution tracks every step from violation notice through asbestos survey, demolition, and cost recovery, speeding the transformation of blighted neighborhoods. And revitalizing the city.

Read the case study to learn how Cleveland is managing a 70% increase in demolition contracts.

www.accela.com/Cleveland

Accela helps make CIVIC HEROES



Omaha, NB handles twice its building permit volume after hailstorm without increasing headcount



Westminster, CO eliminates SSOs and Reduces water main breaks by 77%



Lenexa, KS doubles licensing volume and gets businesses up and running faster

Read the Civic Heroes booklet today

www.accela.com/heroes

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"We're breaking records for permits and construction, but to get there you need to pull the weeds." **Tom Vanover**, Building Commissioner

REGIONAL SUMMITS 2015

Mark your calendars! Plan to attend and send your staff to these unique offerings in your region.



2015 REGIONAL SUMMITS

ICMA members and state officers are invited to attend the Regional Summit in their region to network with colleagues, participate in a professional development opportunity in the form of an ICMA University workshop, discuss ICMA issues and programs, and provide feedback to the ICMA Executive Board and staff. ICMA Executive Director Bob O'Neill with Felicia Logan, director of leadership development, will lead an ICMA University workshop on a topic of importance to local government management.

2015 REGIONAL SUMMIT DATES

SOUTHEAST

Asheville, NC
Grove Park Inn
March 12–13

WEST COAST

Portland, OR
Red Lion Hotel on the
River at Jantzen Beach
March 26–27

MIDWEST

Evanston, IL
Hilton Orrington/Evanston
April 2–3

MOUNTAIN PLAINS

Omaha, NE
Doubletree by Hilton
Omaha Downtown
April 9–10

NORTHEAST

Windsor, CT
Windsor Marriott Airport
May 7–8

2015 YOUNG PROFESSIONALS LEADERSHIP INSTITUTES

MANAGERS! Send Your Staff to the YPLI!

The Young Professionals Leadership Institute precedes each Regional Summit on Tuesday and Wednesday. Managers are encouraged to invite assistants, assistant managers, and those who are beginning their career path in local government to attend this special leadership skill building institute. The cost is \$99. For more information, visit, icma.org/YPLI.

SOUTHEAST

March 11–12

WEST COAST

March 25–26

MIDWEST

April 1–2

MOUNTAIN PLAINS

April 8–9

NORTHEAST

May 6–7

For more information, visit icma.org/SUMMIT and icma.org/YPLI

ICMA