

ANOTHER HARWOOD FRAMEWORK REPORT

Community

RHYTHMS

Five Stages of Community Life



The **Harwood** Institute

**This report was prepared for the Charles Stewart Mott Foundation
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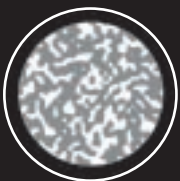
The Charles Stewart Mott Foundation, established in 1926, is a private philanthropy committed to supporting projects that promote a just, equitable and sustainable society. It supports non-profit programs throughout the United States and, on a limited geographic basis, internationally. Grantmaking is focused in the areas of civil society; environment; Flint, Michigan (its home community); poverty and education. In 1998, the Foundation made 550 grants totaling \$88 million.

The Harwood Group is a public issues research and innovations firm that is a catalyst for charting a different course for America's public life and politics. The Harwood Group works in four major platform areas: improving politics and public life; restriking social covenants; reconnecting the news media and society; and growing community strength. Some of The Harwood Group's noted reports in the area of growing community strength include: *A Work in Progress: Creating New Possibilities for Chattanooga* (1999); *Waiting for the Future: Creating New Possibilities for Youngstown* (1999); *Back to Basics: Creating New Possibilities for Flint* (1997); and *Public Capital: The Dynamic System that Makes Public Life Work* (1996). Other noted reports by The Harwood Group include: *The Harwood Barometer for Political Conduct* (1998); *Money+Politics: People Change the Equation* (1997); *America's Struggle Within: Citizens Talk about the State of the Union* (1996) and *Citizens and Politics: A View From Main Street America* (1991).

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I. Five Stages of Community Life



Sit back for just a moment and imagine yourself traveling throughout America, making your way from one community to the next, listening intently to the people you meet and watching carefully their efforts to rejuvenate their communities, grow them and expand them.

As you crisscross the nation, you will undoubtedly find different communities pursuing different paths — some announcing a so-called visioning exercise, others launching new downtown development plans or maybe a riverfront mall, and still others promoting a kind of civic boosterism, claiming that renewal “is here” on bus signs and from banners hanging from the street lights, long before such signs of life even genuinely appear.

Some of these initiatives will spark something important within a community. But too often you will hear people say that such initiatives came to town with great fanfare and left without leaving a lasting legacy. They will say that far too many efforts undertaken in the name of moving their community forward simply do not add up to anything meaningful. And they often will lament the fact that the direction and feel of the community remains the same — despite, or in spite of, the actions — and that people are losing faith and hope.

Five Stages of Community Life™

The Harwood Group’s work in communities reveals that there are stages of a community’s life and that each stage has deep implications for understanding your community and what it means for moving forward. These stages echo the development of all living things, such as a person or a plant or an ecosystem.

Only if you know and understand the stage in which your community rests, will you be better able to figure out what kinds of

approaches, strategies and timing best fit for seeking to move your community forward. Each stage brings its own set of challenges and opportunities. A community can accelerate its movement through the stages, but it cannot violate, or simply pass over, the hard work that needs to be done.

The problem in many communities is that too often we do not think about stages of community life, or are even aware of them, much less approach them strategically in terms of what they mean for our actions.

The Harwood Stages of Community Life™ emerges from over a decade of research and on-the-ground initiatives throughout the United States. Before these stages kick in, a community usually has been through a period of decline, lasting up to fifteen to twenty years (a topic we plan to say more about with greater precision and insight in the future). Such periods of decline can be seen in the community stories in this report.

Here is a brief description of each of the Harwood Stages of Community Life. As you read them, think about this: We find in our work repeatedly that most people operate as if their community is in the “Growth stage” and then wonder aloud why so many of their community initiatives seem to flounder or outright fail. It is no secret, at least as one understands the Stages of Community Life, that communities not yet in their Growth stage simply cannot support growth initiatives and strategies. The community does not have enough of what The Harwood Group calls Public Capital™, a framework we generated and which serves as a foundation for the Stages of Community Life (see box).



The Waiting Place

In the Waiting Place, people in the community often hold a deep sense that

“But too often you will hear people say that such initiatives came to town with great fanfare and left without leaving a lasting legacy.”



“We find in our work repeatedly that most people operate as if their community is in the ‘Growth stage’ and then wonder aloud why so many of their community initiatives seem to flounder or outright fail.”

things are not working right but cannot quite put their finger on exactly what it is or what to do about it; it is a kind of “felt unknown.” The situation has not reached an impasse, a breakpoint, at which people say, “enough is enough!”

Here in the Waiting Place, people in a community typically feel disconnected from who and how decisions are made on public concerns. The community finds itself fragmented into different groups or areas, with little interaction between them; that which does occur tends to be counterproductive. Indeed, community discussion about challenges is infrequent and often highly divisive, discouraging many people from even venturing out into the community to participate.

People in the Waiting Place believe that some kind of change is necessary, but negative norms of public life keep them locked into old patterns, such as finger-pointing and looking for ways to place blame. When talking about change, the common refrain you will hear from people in such a community is: “We can’t do it here,” or “I’ll take care of mine, you take care of yours.”

The result: a community that feels stuck, and one in which people often tell you that they are waiting for someone or something to make things right, to save them and their community.

But to make strides forward, communities in the Waiting Place must begin the process of *growing* their internal strength — the fundamental structures, relationships, leaders, networks and norms essential for a community to work effectively. Growing public capital takes time and nurturing. And while a community in the Waiting Place must grow its public capital, it must also move into some form of the Impasse stage.



Impasse

Here a community hits rock bottom. When you visit such a community, you can hear people saying such things as, “it can’t go on like this anymore,” or “enough is enough!” While in the Waiting Place there is a sense of simply “waiting”... in Impasse there is a noticeable sense of urgency in people’s voices. Things have crystallized for people and the need for action is clear. Often people are afraid that they are losing their future; they are tired of “waiting.”

In Impasse, people fear for their economic livelihood; feel isolated from others; mistrust runs deep; organizations are in an endless battle over money and who gets credit for doing anything. When we go to Impasse

About Public Capital

The Harwood Group’s research and projects in communities across America suggests that for a community to work effectively, there is a set of fundamental structures, relationships, networks and norms that need to be in place. Public Capital is what we call this rich, dynamic, complex system. There are mini factors that we have identified along with the conditions and characteristics that make each one work. By uncovering and gauging a community’s public capital, we can identify in which Stage of Community Life a community sits. And we can begin to think strategically about how to grow a community and what it will take. (See The Harwood Framework on Public Capital on page 34 of *Community Rhythms* for further background on public capital.)



communities, it is difficult for people to identify leaders *throughout* the community, especially ones with much credibility and trust. Often there is a profound feeling that ordinary people, and even trusted leaders, lack the power to make change.

A community in Impasse is at a decision point. The old way of doing public business is now in direct conflict with a yearning among people to move in a different direction. One option is to continue down the well-worn path of least resistance. It is a path that will probably lead to even deeper and wider gaps in a community already divided, where the usual routine spells gridlock, turf battles and people acting to further their own, not the community's, best interests. As a result, the community may find itself facing the future with the same — probably with even more serious — challenges.

The other path is much more difficult, but potentially much more rewarding to the community. It is a path where people declare that they want to break with the status quo: to move beyond Impasse and, in doing so, create a community where people build new ways to work together to address issues of common concern. This process of self-discovery in a community takes time. But when it does eventually occur, when a community is ready to move *beyond* Impasse, that the building of public capital can truly begin. Then it will become time for the Catalytic stage.



Catalytic

During this stage, a small group of people and organizations emerge to take risks and experiment in ways that challenge existing norms of how the community works. In addition, people within their community begin to discover that they share common

aspirations for their community and that they can, in small ways, start to make a difference.

The group of catalysts that develops act as a community's Centers of Strength™, sparking action in the community. The size of their actions, for the most part, is not the vital gauge for progress; rather, it is that their actions produce some semblance of results that give people a sense of faith and hope that progress is possible and that the community indeed has the capacity to act.

Many people in the community may not even recognize the emerging action at first. But when they do, they may mistake it for “more of the same” — reflexively reminding them of previous attempts, many of which may have failed, in years past; they will need to see much more activity before gaining confidence. Other people will declare that the community is on the verge of fully turning itself around, and assume a false sense that their work is done and their future is set; at that point people tend to revert back to their old norms of doing public business. Progress is killed; the Catalytic stage peters out.

As the Catalytic stage unfolds, it is essential that the Centers of Strength gain depth and purpose and that the number of them grow, but *slowly*. What is more, links and networks must be built between and among the Centers of Strength; for it is through these networks that new norms for how work gets done spread in the community; that there is the diffusing and linking of ideas and public action; and that new leaders throughout the community are identified and nurtured.



Growth

Over the course of this stage, Centers of Strength will be expanding; networks growing and spreading; a sense of common



Time and Community Rhythms

Somehow, it seems, we have created a stopwatch mentality in our society. I am sure you all face this time crunch every day. You must get your project done — and now! Your grant expires when momentum is just getting started. Indeed, you have to “solve” the most vexing public dilemmas in shorter time than a new car is designed.

But wait. Society has a rhythm of its own. Our lives have a rhythm of their own. Yet we keep being told by funders, by ourselves, by the colleges and graduate schools at which we are educated, that we as professionals should make communities fit our time lines, our grant schedules, our pronouncements of promised change that often serve only to create outlandish expectations and dashed hopes.

You cannot change society like you can switch stations on your television. It is not as if there is a remote control that we can click effortlessly to alter the rhythms of society. We need to come to understand the rhythms of society so that our programs and initiatives work with those rhythms, take advantage of them, even accelerate them.

For instance, when trying to develop a community’s public capital — how people talk, how they are connected to one another through informal networks, how different layers of community leadership form — we cannot expect significant change simply by creating a program and then declaring our work done some handful of months later, because we have declared it is time to do something new.

The evolution of a community takes times. The question I believe we must ask ourselves is this: Are we going to use a stopwatch to govern our work in society, or will we come to understand society’s natural rhythms and what they mean for our work? To be effective, we must catch these natural rhythms and understand them.

—Richard C. Harwood

Excerpt from a speech, *Moving from a Flat World to a Round World in Public Life*.

purpose and direction taking deep root. People within the community now see clear and unmistakable signs of how the community is moving forward and can see and feel and experience much greater leadership at all levels of the community — from the official level, to neighborhoods, within civic organizations and non-profits.

What is more, people also feel a different spirit in the community; and they talk about it. More people are working together, something people cherish. People’s confidence grows in themselves and in their

community to make good decisions and, importantly, to take risks; it is as if the community in the Growth stage has given itself permission to fail, expressing a strong faith that such “failing” will lead to insights into better ways to move forward. The community has much greater confidence and has generated a new story about itself.

But as the Growth stage nears its end, people will start to tire; networks will not have fully formed across and throughout the entire community and those that have may be fraying a bit; new groups will begin to form



to ensure their *particular view* is heard, possibly leading to a new round of fragmentation. After years of enormous work and vigilance, many people's energy and participation will begin to flag.

The challenge is how a community at this point in its development can move into its next stage of community life.



Sustain and Renew

A community in the Sustain and Renew stage must find ways to bring along new Centers of Strength, new leaders and a new cadre of citizens to be the spark plugs. Without them, the community will stagnate and possibly enter a new stage of decline.

When a community does make the transformation into the Sustain and Renew stage, it begins to take on especially deeply-rooted issues. It is not that these issues were unimportant before, but they may not have been a community's primary focus through the first four stages, or the community simply may not have been ready to deal with them. Also, by now, new challenges are on the horizon that need attention.

What's more, in this stage, a community finds that despite all its efforts, people and areas within the community may have been left behind. New emphasis on growing networks and links *throughout* the entire community, especially into poorer or "disconnected" or surrounding regional areas. The same can be true for developing and linking up leaders in these areas too.

And in the Sustain and Renew stage, a community seeks to ensure that the gains of a community's growth is shared by all; that the

“Communities have rhythms to them that we must come to understand so that our approaches, programs and initiatives — and the building of public capital — work with those rhythms, take advantage of them, even accelerate them.”

About Our Research

In *Community Rhythms*, five communities are profiled, each one serving as a case study for a particular stage of Community Life. Each profile illuminates what that stage looks and feels like. Our research captures a particular moment in time in the life of each community. By now, for the most part, some of these communities have changed.

Over a ten year period, The Harwood Group studied and explored the public capital (and refined our own frameworks) in a variety of communities. *Community Rhythms* looks at five of those communities: Greenwood, Mississippi (1996); Youngstown, Ohio (1999); Flint, Michigan (1997); Tupelo, Mississippi (1996); and Chattanooga, Tennessee (1999). The Harwood Group will conduct a progress study in Flint, Michigan in January, 2000.

In each of these communities, The Harwood Group, using its public capital framework, conducted telephone interviews with a range of leaders and through living room conversations with citizens to learn about how public life works in their community. We also conducted one to two mapping workshops in each community with leaders and citizens to ask them if the story we captured rang true and to fill any gaps. To learn more about the Harwood Public Capital Framework, see the last section of this report.



“A community’s progress is based on this foundation of smaller actions that continually spread and connect to one another.”

gains are not simply economic, but that the community is tending to its soul.

Rhythms of Community Life

Communities have rhythms to them that we must come to understand so that our approaches, programs and initiatives — *and the building of public capital* — work with those rhythms, take advantage of them, even accelerate them.

But while a community can accelerate its movement through the Stages of Community Life, it cannot violate, or simply pass over, the hard work that needs to be done in each stage. For as Five Stages of Community Life reveals, each stage has its own purpose; indeed, within each stage, different approaches must be taken to grow a community.

For example, Growth strategies for the most part will not work for a community in Impasse. Why? Because the community simply does not have the kind of support — structures, relationships, networks, norms, sense of purpose, in short the level of public capital — required to undertake and sustain such strategies.

We have come to believe through our work at The Harwood Group that what starts change, and then helps a community move through its stages of community life, is an ever-expanding core group of people and organizations that generate a sense of possibility and demonstrate that real action can be taken. A community’s progress is based first and foremost on this foundation of smaller actions that continually spread and connect to one another.

Such actions represent the difference between dropping a boulder in a lake, watching the

big splash and the *concentric* circles that emerge, which ultimately disappear, with a process of continually dropping pebbles in the lake and seeing the ripples start to connect and then overlap; indeed they *envelop* one another.

Of course, large civic efforts such as politics, public relations campaigns and visioning are vital — but we find they must be undertaken at *appropriate* times, when there is a clear need to coalesce community gains and spark a new and often different form of action forward. The dilemma is that too often such civic initiatives are seen as the “fix-all” — done in isolation and with the notion that undertaking them is all that is necessary. Such approaches *then* do more harm than good.

For it is this very process of overlapping, the enveloping, that forms the links and networks through which norms and values pass through a community and get shared; through which ideas spread; and from which leaders are born and nurtured. It is in these periods of convergence, when the ripples envelop one another, that communities build their public capital and can move forward.

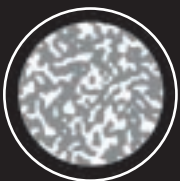
All of this building and action and linking and spreading takes time. We must be aware of a community’s rhythms and work with them. But when we do, we can witness genuine progress and feel a true sense of possibility that a different direction is in the offing and that communities can tap into and express their capacity to act.

Community Rhythms is about Five Stages of Community Life. We must *know* these stages, and then identify where our community is within them, in order to better figure out how we can grow our community.

— Richard C. Harwood



II. The Harwood Index



The Harwood Index

FIVE STAGES

The Harwood Index

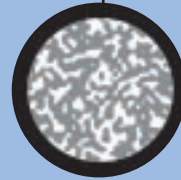
The Harwood Index is a new feature of our work on grading community strength. Communities can use the Index as a tool to help determine where they are at in the Stages of Community Life, to figure out how to move forward, and to plot their progress. (See www.theharwoodinstitute.org for more details.)

The Harwood Index plots five communities going through the Stages of Community Life. Other communities can use the Index as a tool to help determine where they are at in the Stages of Community Life. It is not intended as a scorecard to measure a community's success — instead, it is designed to be a touchstone for communities as they make decisions about how to move forward.

Each of the five communities were plotted on the Harwood Index based on where they were in the Stages of Community Life when we studied their public capital. While their placement on the Index may change over time, each one is an example of what a stage of community life looks like at a single point in time. They also offer insights into the implications for strategies for moving forward.

The Waiting Place

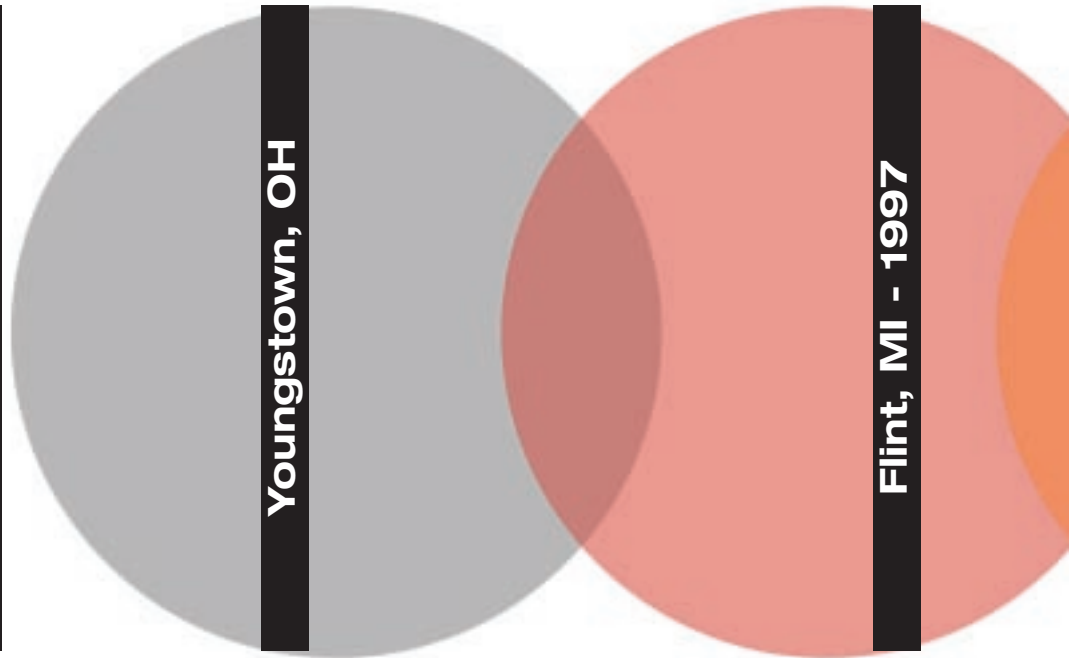
Impasse



Greenwood, MS

Youngstown, OH

Flint, MI - 1997



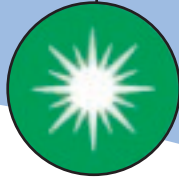
Wood Index

OF COMMUNITY LIFE

Catalytic

Growth

Sustain/Renew

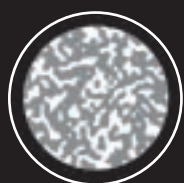


Flint, MI - 1999

Tupelo, MS

Chattanooga, TN

III. Five Community Stories



Greenwood, Mississippi

In Decline

“A lot of energy goes into keeping the community divided.”

This is a pre-Waiting Place stage — a period of decline a community usually goes through, which many last up to fifteen to twenty years. It is a topic The Harwood Group plans to say more about with greater precision and insight in the future. Our experience tells us that we will develop a series of community stages that precedes those revealed in this report.

People believe that it would take extreme measures — a natural disaster, closing the private schools — for Greenwood residents to look past their differences and come together as a community, even briefly.

Greenwood, Mississippi — A Community in Decline

Residents describe Greenwood, Mississippi in a matter-of-fact tone as “a divided community.” The population of this small, primarily agricultural town is deeply fragmented along racial and economic lines. The community is more than fifty percent African-American; and a significant portion of the town’s white students are enrolled in private schools. People describe a “clash” between public and private schools; there is little contact between the two systems and little support from the community for its public education system.

Residents also say the town’s leadership is mired in turf battles, focusing on personal agendas instead of larger community needs like jobs and schools. The depth of the town’s divisions, negative norms for public life and lack of hope for the future keep Greenwood from developing its public capital and finding ways to grow and move forward.

Greenwood is a community in a continuing state of **decline**. Its residents seem resigned to the idea that the differences that separate them cannot be bridged. Interactions in public life focus on protecting turf. Challenges are not dealt with until they are at a crisis point — keeping the community focused on basic survival in the here and now.

Residents of Greenwood say they have no feeling of belonging to a larger community. People told us it is a community of “two communities,” divided along economic and racial lines. And we heard about further divisions that separate individuals from one another based on social status. “People judge you by ... where you come from, the side of town you live on,” remarked one woman.

People are reluctant to do or to say anything that challenges these divisions. “A lot of

energy goes into keeping the community divided,” observed one man. We heard about a compact of “silence” that keeps interaction limited to a superficial level. One man told us that people in Greenwood have “been programmed over the years” not to talk to certain people and not to bring up issues that may make others uncomfortable. Much is taboo in Greenwood.

So people and groups in Greenwood go about their daily business with little focus on the community as a whole. They say that they have no incentive to engage and “no role models” to show them how or why they should do things differently. They appear resigned to the fact that “we’re just different” from each other.

People believe that it would take extreme measures — a natural disaster, closing the private schools — for Greenwood residents to look past their differences and come together as a community, even briefly. But people assert that coming together under duress would not result in lasting changes in how people and groups interact in Greenwood. “Bringing people in the same room doesn’t mean bringing people together,” observed one man. Meanwhile, the community continues to decline.

A Lack of Attachment

Intense divisions, mistrust and pessimism seem to keep Greenwood from forming any of the social and informal links that are the seedbed of a community’s public capital. By getting to know others in informal settings, people start to build trust with others and expand their contacts in the community.

People talk about different social gathering places throughout Greenwood but they speak of them with little enthusiasm — indeed, sometimes with great contempt. “The balloon festival is just about someone making money,” asserted one woman. Another added, “The spirit [of the community] is on the surface, but not at the core.” We did not hear any of the personal attachment or



affection for the community that we hear in the other communities.

In Greenwood, people tend to stick to small circles — socializing in private homes, individual churches or their Rotary Club. Our research suggests that there are few, if any, connections between people and groups in these smaller settings. And while these smaller settings do allow people to carve out a sense of some connection to others, people said that they still do not feel part of the larger community. What is more, they add, they are not interested taking the next step into the community. They do not want to get caught in the negative “politics,” anger, mistrust and personal agendas that dominate Greenwood’s public life. Even for those who do want to take that risk, there are no clear pathways. “If someone wanted to volunteer,” one person told us, “there’s no place for them to go.”

There is little support for any efforts to address challenges in the community; indeed, there is an attitude of not letting anyone or any group get out too far ahead of others. “We’re like crabs in a bucket,” explained one man. “If someone is in a position to make it, people try to pull you down, shift you back.” These norms further fuel people’s distrust of one another.

Residents of Greenwood also feel that their leadership does not focus on the genuine needs of the community — jobs and education — and instead see people and organizations fighting turf wars over personal agendas. “The present leadership is about hate and anger,” said one man. As a result, people feel that there is no one or no group that is truly trying to work for the good of the whole community. “I can’t think of anyone people could go to,” said one woman. They are deeply suspicious of the motives behind any new efforts or organizations.

The sense of purpose that exists in Greenwood is a negative one. People and

groups dig in their heels and declare, “Our way or no way.” And decline continues.

Greenwood’s Future

Overall, people see Greenwood’s ability to change the nature of public life and build public capital as a huge and overwhelming undertaking. Many people seem to hold little or no interest in attempting such an endeavor.

A number of people point to the Chamber of Commerce as one of the only examples of an institution in Greenwood that is trying to change how it does public business. The Chamber is urging others to focus on the town’s positive aspects and it is reaching out to people across the community in efforts to strengthen public life. But while people were somewhat hopeful about this work, there was still skepticism about its ability to succeed and fear that it could be quickly derailed by prevailing negative norms.

To make progress, people said that community efforts must start on an individual level — with parents and teachers setting examples for their children and students. They also talked about the importance of building what The Harwood Group calls a new “public story” for Greenwood, not focusing solely on negative stereotypes. They mentioned the newspaper as an important vehicle for doing this.

It is important for people and organizations in Greenwood to find some points of common ground so that can start to connect people, especially on a one-to-one and small group basis. It is from these individual, social contacts that a community can start slowly to build the networks and norms that strengthen its public capital and help move a community ahead.

But for now, Greenwood remains a community in decline.



**Youngstown,
Ohio**

**The Waiting
Place**

“We’re stuck.”

Youngstown, Ohio in the Waiting Place

People talk with great nostalgia about Youngstown, Ohio's prosperous past, when the steel mills offered lifelong employment and downtown was home to a vibrant cultural life. But the Youngstown of today looks very different. The mills have closed. Abandoned property is a serious problem. The city's population has been in steady decline for the last twenty years. People say that political corruption and organized crime are the norm. And as the city has declined, people see the suburbs around them flourishing. Years of growing frustration and mistrust have caused people to retreat from public life and to wait for someone or something else to come along and save the city.

People in Youngstown have a deep affection for the city and its family way of life. "I love this town tremendously," declared one man echoing the sentiments of others. But as people look around, they assert, as one woman did, that "it's not like it used to be." Some say the community's tendency to look backwards keeps it mired in the past, but there is at least a sense that it was not always this way in Youngstown.

While Youngstown shares much of the pessimism and fragmentation of a city in decline, there is a palpable sense of frustration. There is what might be called a "felt unknown" — people can sense that things are not working right, but they cannot put their finger on why. Many people feel that the city is "stuck."

In Youngstown, we heard people question why the city has not been able to turn around more quickly. "We should be changing," lamented one woman. They compare Youngstown to Cleveland and Pittsburgh, cities that also lost much of their industrial base, and say, as one woman did, "we should have rebounded."

People suggest that the city is not bereft of resources — they point to the university, the city's central location between Cleveland and Pittsburgh and its strong arts and cultural institutions — but they do not see much happening. "Simple things could happen ... but change isn't happening," said one man in a bewildered tone. Several people talked about feeling like there was a "plan" or a "conspiracy" to keep Youngstown from making progress. Others wonder what became of plans and initiatives to improve the city that were announced but never heard about again.

Youngstown is in a **Waiting Place** — wanting to move forward but unable to break its own internal gridlock. "I don't see a whole lot of hope," said one woman. Another said everyone is "waiting for the next man to do [something]." There is apprehension about future changes facing the city. The impending decision about whether the Lordstown General Motors plant will remain open hangs like a pall over the city. "We'll have to wait and see what happens," said one man.

"We Play Up the Differences"

A deep sense of mistrust and negative norms for engaging in public life pervade Youngstown. People say there is a widespread assumption that individuals and groups operate on their own agenda and for their own benefit. People constantly question who is really behind decision-making in the community, often assuming it is in the hands of a small group of self-interested people.

What is more, people say that there are no catalytic organizations or leaders that have the credibility and trust to convene a wide range of people. Public meetings quickly degenerate into bitter exchanges, focused on personal concerns, not the community as a whole. As a result, people said, few people are willing to take a risk and challenge the status quo.

While Youngstown shares much of the pessimism and fragmentation of a city in decline, there is a palpable sense of frustration.



There is also deep fragmentation along ethnic, economic and racial lines. People use the word “parochialism” over and over to describe the situation. “We have no history of looking for similarities,” said one man, “we play up the differences.”

As in Greenwood and Flint, people in Youngstown carve out a sense of community for themselves from a small circle of family and friends. They identify closely with their neighborhood or ethnic group and say they are more likely to describe themselves as a “northsider” or “from the south side” than as someone from Youngstown. While this is a sign of neighborhood pride, it also can be a barrier to creating networks — formal and informal — that span the community. People feel that they have little in common with folks from different groups or neighborhoods. One block watch captain talked about the difficulties in getting his neighbors to attend block watch meetings in other parts of the city: “People from different sides of town don’t want to meet — I don’t know why,” he said.

This parochialism extends to government agencies, non-profits and civic groups. There is a reluctance to working together, with many groups duplicating the actions of others. People interviewed had very little awareness of actions or leaders outside of their immediate neighborhood or professional circle.

But there are some isolated efforts to engage people in public life in Youngstown and some links are starting to emerge among organizations. There is an identifiable, small group of people who are more hopeful about the community, sensing that things are starting to turn around and that “Youngstown is a city that can be worked with.”

Churches, block watch groups and neighborhood associations engage people on a limited basis. The two most prominent community efforts on housing are the result of several churches coming together. Ministers and church members from the

different congregations have started prayer meetings to get to know one another and form connections. Block watches are scattered across the city and each side of town has a neighborhood association.

But this small group of folks quickly say that this feeling is not, as one said, “recognized generally yet ... people think there is nothing they can do about the way things are done.”

And leaders say that they have a difficult time motivating their neighbors to participate in community life — they say they are afraid to go out at night, others do not want to get near anything that involves politics and many simply do not think they can make a difference. So despite efforts to create new ways for people to get involved in community life, many folks are still reluctant to pursue them.

But it is this core group of people, whose optimism could almost be described as wildly out of sync with the general mood of the city’s residents, that start to move communities through the stages of community life. You will hear more about the role of core groups in the Flint “Extra” story and especially in Chattanooga’s story.

Youngstown’s Future

While a city in decline like Greenwood can only focus on the here and now — and largely the past — people in Youngstown talk about the need to address concerns that will impact the future of their community.

But they do not know how to get there. “We’re waiting for a knight in shining armor” to come and solve the city’s problems, declared one man. Indeed, Youngstown seems to be waiting for an intervention of some sort to help pull everyone together and push ahead. People define intervention differently — an infusion of government money, a community plan, a strong leader. But there is a sense that the city is just waiting.

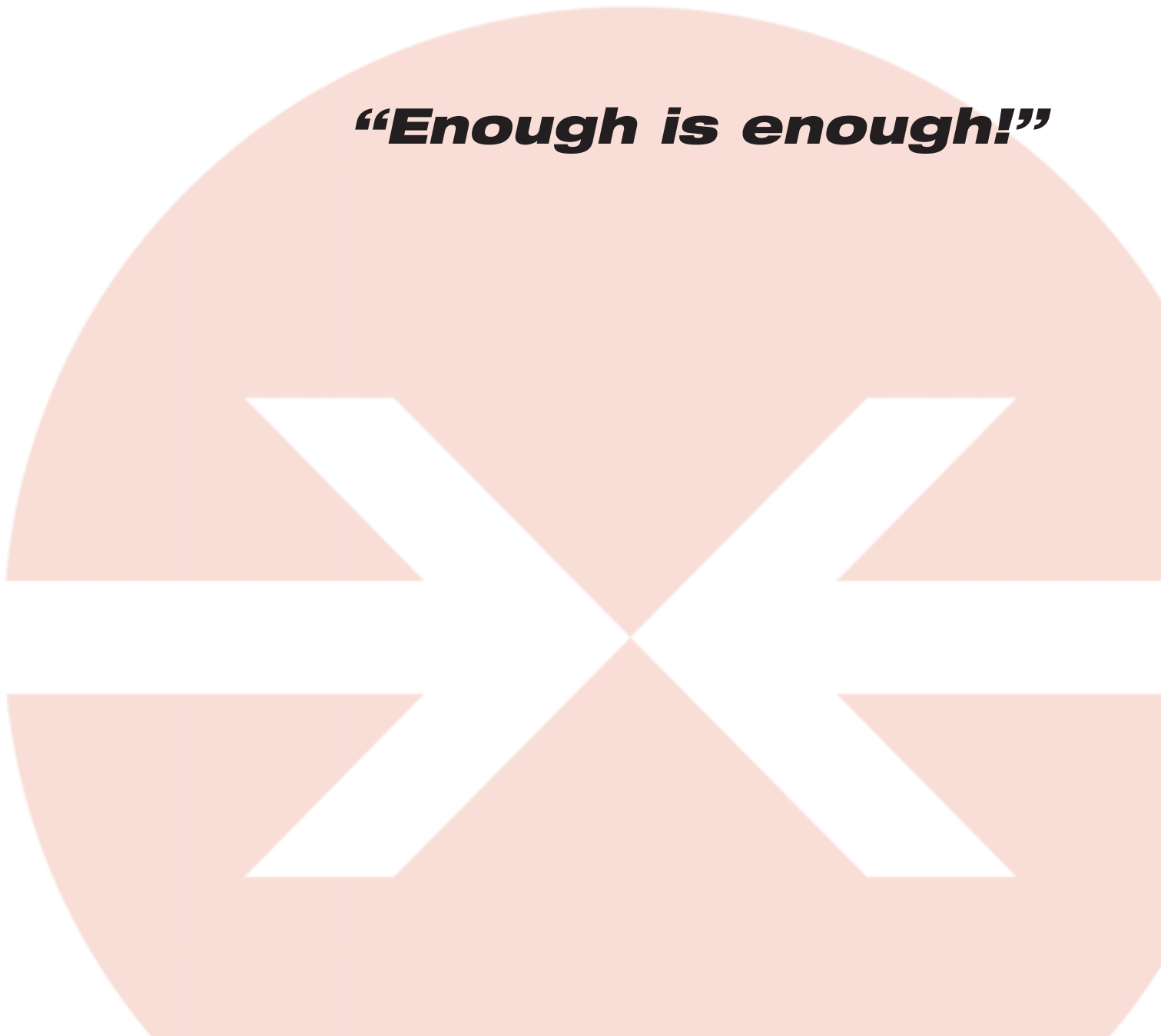


1997

Flint, Michigan

Impasse

“Enough is enough!”



Flint, Michigan at Impasse

Until the 1970s, Flint, Michigan was a growing and prosperous city. The area's economy was buoyed by an abundance of well-paying jobs at General Motors. People remember a city with well-maintained parks and nice homes, where the public schools provided a focal point for neighborhoods and everybody knew their neighbors.

Since that time, Flint has been shaken to its core by the loss of thousands of jobs and a frightening increase in crime. Like Youngstown, Flint has consistently lost population and growth opportunities to its suburbs. Race relations are strained. Residents express fear and anxiety about the city and its future.

We heard people in Youngstown talk about feeling “stuck” and sensing that something is not working, but they are not able to put their finger on it. In Flint, the challenges have crystallized and people see a clear need for action. We hear them talk with a great sense of urgency that they need to move past this point.

The Flint area is at an **Impasse**. People are saying, “Enough is enough!”

“We have to come together — forget about those lines, those barriers — and bond ... We need to pull together and become one strong voice in order to bring about change,” said one Flint resident emphatically.

One of the turning points in Flint is that people now believe that the role and responsibility of citizens in creating change is paramount. This is very different from what we hear in Greenwood and Youngstown, where people are waiting for someone else, “a knight in shining armor.”

Mired in feelings of helplessness and negativity for a long time, people are also starting to see that they need to look at the Flint area through a new lens if they want to

move forward. One woman described an enormous shift in how she viewed Flint over the course of several conversations with The Harwood Group. “The last time I was at the group meeting, I said, ‘No way would I stay in Flint. I would not buy the house I’ve rented for six years.’” But after talking to people in the group conversations and in her neighborhood, she began to see that others shared her concerns and aspirations. She developed a renewed sense of hope about Flint and its future. She concluded by saying, “Well, I just bought [the house] ... I’ve always been a fighter and I’m not going to stop now.”

People also believe that they need to set a different economic course for the community. They are starting to ask, like one woman did in a conversation with us, “People are going belly up in this town. Now why? What’s going on here?” One man said, echoing others, “Flint can no longer ... depend on General Motors. This basically is not a General Motors town anymore. We’ll never see those days again.”

“It didn’t used to be this way”

But make no mistake: as people want the community to break with its recent past, they are still deeply mired in it — frustrated and angry.

Instead, in Flint you can still hear the deep pessimism similar to what we heard in Youngstown and Greenwood; it pervades the community. “Each year it’s getting worse. It’s noticeably getting worse,” observed one woman. Another went still further: “I’d describe it as bleak, dark, black — anything that has to do with negativity.” As in Youngstown, people in Flint can remember a time when things were better — when people took care of their property, when they were not afraid to let their kids play outside. “It didn’t used to be this way,” said one woman.

A universal sense of isolation, divisiveness and disconnection permeates Flint. This disconnect makes it difficult for the



community to create and sustain the public capital it needs to address its challenges. As one woman pointed out, “If you don’t feel like you belong in your own little neighborhood, how on earth can you feel like you can go to a town meeting and feel comfortable?”

When asked to name leaders in their community, at any level, people found it difficult to do so. “There’s very few people trying to make Flint a better place,” one man concluded. Throughout our conversations, people were skeptical of leaders’ motives and say that most — especially elected leaders — do not act in the community’s best interests. The divisiveness of Flint’s leaders, who we heard rarely join forces to work together on community issues, further fuels people’s mistrust and skepticism.

In fact, we heard that not only do leaders act in isolation from one another, so too do Flint’s various civic, non-profit and other community organizations. People say that too many Flint area organizations and institutions preoccupy themselves with their own agendas and interests. They rarely reach out to try to learn what is important to those in the community. Instead of combining their strengths to respond to challenges, organizations are viewed as working against each other.

One man described it this way: “It would be like if you unwind the rope, each strand is not all that strong. That’s basically what you have when you have a bunch of different organizations all trying to do the same thing. But they end up coming down to all trying to do it their own way.” The result is continued gridlock, which further splinters the community. People suggest that too many civic groups and institutions have not “changed with the times.”

But one thing that The Harwood Group heard loud and clear is that despite their feelings of isolation and disconnection, residents of Flint do not excuse themselves

from the equation. They say that fear and frustration are keeping them from engaging in public life. They bemoan the failure of individuals to take responsibility to act. And they feel that their lack of participation is contributing to the area’s overall challenges.

Flint’s Future

Flint is at a decision point. One option is to continue down the well-worn path of least resistance. A path that might lead to even deeper and wider gaps in a community already divided, where the usual routine spells gridlock, competitiveness and people acting to further their own, not the community’s, best interests. As a result, Flint may find itself facing in the future the same — and even more serious — challenges than it does today.

The other path will be much more difficult, but potentially much more rewarding. Many people say the status quo is not working and they are ready to break the impasse: to create a community where people build new ways to work together to address issues of common concern. In choosing this direction, the Flint community has a genuine opportunity to move forward.

Like Youngstown, people in Flint want to tackle issues and concerns that will help them build a better quality of life and a future for their community. In addition to job creation, they talk passionately about children and youth-related problems. “I like helping the youth, because that’s going to be our future,” pointed out one woman. And while people in Greenwood lament that their political leaders are not creating the changes they want to see, people in the Flint area are talking about what each individual needs to do to move the community forward.

“Flint’s not dead yet ... the lights are still on,” claimed one young man. And there are small changes starting to happen across the community as individuals strive to do public business in a new way.

But one thing that The Harwood Group heard loud and clear is that despite their feelings of isolation and disconnection, residents of Flint do not excuse themselves from the equation.

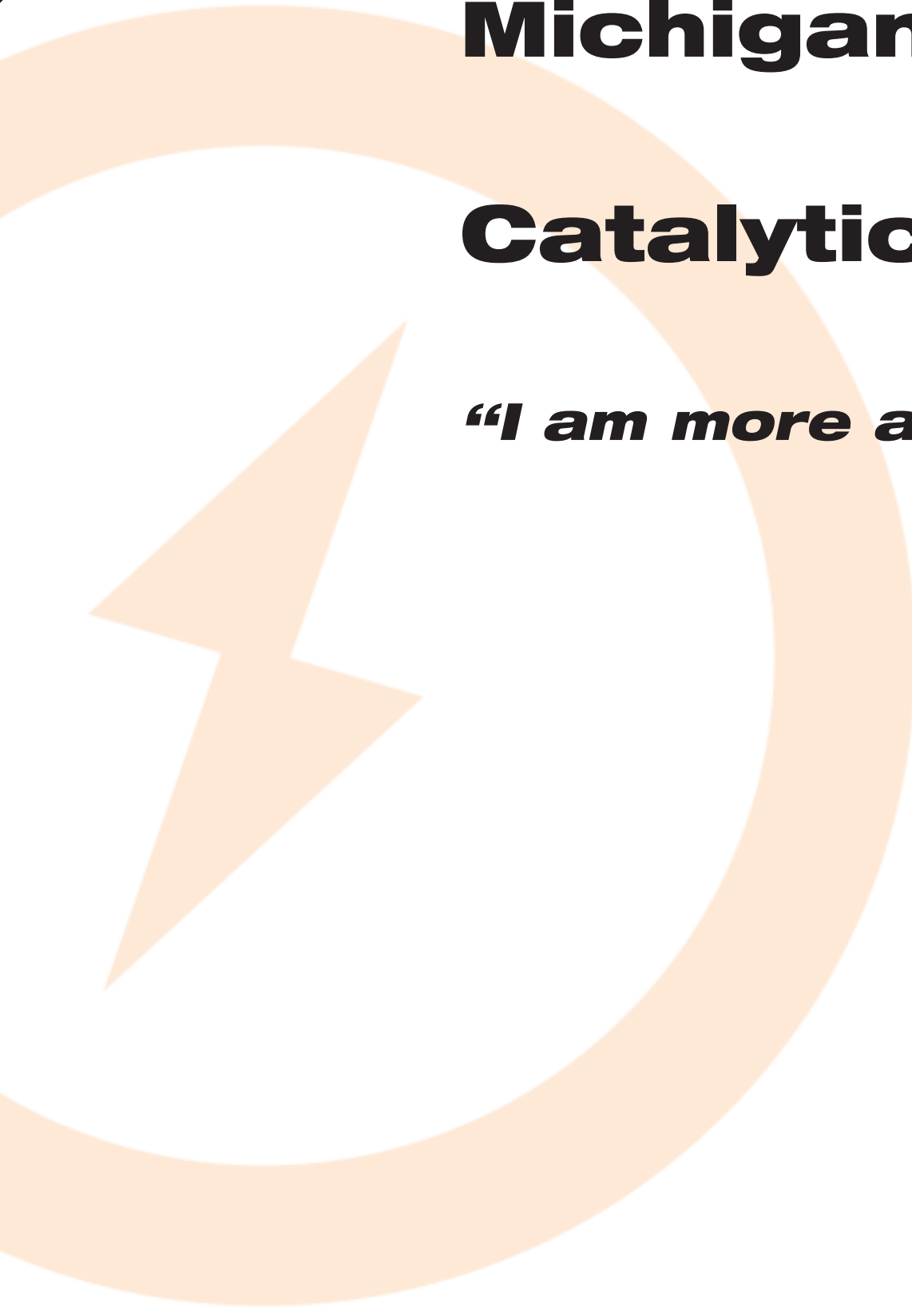




Flint, Michigan

Catalytic

“I am more active.”



“Extra”: Flint, Michigan — Entering The Catalytic Stage

Today, the Flint area finds itself at the beginning of the catalytic stage. Here is a brief update on the progress of Flint — a sense of how the catalytic stage of community life can start to play out.

In 1997, we heard the urgency in the voices of Flint residents when the city reached Impasse. People were ready, at least in their minds, to put aside some of their differences and start to come together as a community.

Now in 1999, there is a nascent and growing sense in Flint that ‘at least we are starting to feel some movement.’ From the feeling of impasse, there are new signs of action. Some actions happening are on an individual level and others are more formal as organizations start to connect with each other. These different actions across the community are not necessarily “coordinated”; but they are working in complementary ways, sharing a common sense of purpose and direction. And as new links and connections start to form between people and groups, the actions and new norms will be strengthened and spread further into the community.

Here are some of the types of actions taking root in the Flint today:

People are taking responsibility for creating a sense of community in their neighborhoods. During the Impasse stage, people in Flint said that it was vital for individuals to step up to the plate. We are starting to see people re-engage in Flint’s community life in the Catalytic stage. We have heard about numerous community garden, clean-up and beautification efforts in neighborhoods. There are lawn lighting projects where folks raise money so each home gets same the yard lights. People are organizing picnics and festivals so neighbors

can get to know each other. The city-sponsored Community Pride Day is in its third successful year. There is high demand for T-shirts that say “I am taking a step for Flint and Genesee County.”

People are seeing the importance of talking with each other about their community. People in Flint have repeatedly told us that folks need to ‘get together’ and have productive conversations about where they want to go as a community. With the *Take A Step* tool, created by The Harwood Institute for Public Innovation and funded by the Mott Foundation, people in the Flint area are starting to talk to each other. One church distributed *Take A Step* to every parishioner, a housing organization is using *Take A Step* as part of its new homeowner class curriculum. Over fifty block club leaders and representatives attend monthly meetings of a networking group called The Neighborhood Roundtable.

Citizen leaders are feeling re-energized and re-engaged in public life. We heard about one woman who got involved in her block club after a long period of non-involvement and is now president. A group of over thirty citizens that had been trained as “technical assistants” to help block clubs get grant money were not particularly active but now they are eager to lend their services in new ways such as helping groups use *Let’s Step It Up*, an action tool that builds off of *Take a Step*.

Citizen leaders are also trying to work through long-held grudges and disagreements. We heard about two feuding block clubs that got into the same room together and had a conversation about what each was up to. People who have clashed in the past are willing to participate in the same class of *The Place for Public Ideas*, a growing network of leaders and organizations, committed to Flint’s future. They told us that when they came together at *The Place*, they discovered that they share common aspirations for their community. And these leaders learned that even when they disagree,

Now in 1999, there is a nascent and growing sense in Flint that ‘at least we are starting to feel some movement.’ From the feeling of impasse, there are new signs of action.



they can stay at the table and keep moving forward.

Institutional and agency leaders are showing more interest in working with other groups and tapping into the community. There are more requests to participate in *The Place for Public Ideas* than there are available spaces. Leaders from different cultural organizations are trying to organize a unified millennium celebration. Leaders are showing more interest in learning from citizens to help them in their decision making. Many are organizing “focus groups” on their own or requesting access to community conversations led by The Harwood Institute for Public Innovation.

Flint’s Civic Brigade

The different people and organizations starting to take action are the beginning of, what we call, a Civic Brigade™ for Flint that will grow over time. As more and more people start to see and hear what is happening, they will become engaged and start to create new connections across the community.

Challenges still exist in Flint. Many residents still have little hope for the future and see the city as continuing to decline. The recent closure of General Motor’s Buick City has left some wondering if this is the final nail in the city’s coffin. The public schools and crime in some neighborhoods continue to be a great challenge.

But as The Harwood Group has heard from citizens across the country, people do not expect change to happen overnight. If it took years to go into decline, people say, it is going to take time to get out of it. We have found that a community’s Catalytic stage depends on the small steps taken by a small group of people that start a ripple effect into the community.





**Tupelo,
Mississippi**

Growth

***“Will you become part
of our community?”***

Tupelo, Mississippi in Growth Stage

During the 1940s - 1960s, Tupelo, Mississippi and the surrounding area went through a long process of transition from an agricultural to an industrial base. Today, Tupelo has a strong economy, low unemployment and is regarded as a model of economic development. It prides itself on being a “welcoming place.” It has won the National Civic League’s All-America City Award three times. Race relations, people say, are generally good. Residents are proud of the town’s long “heritage” of active citizen engagement, community leadership and shared goals. The goals and norms that leaders put in place in the past have laid the groundwork for the development of the community’s strong public capital today.

Today, Tupelo is in the **Growth** stage. Tupelo residents express a sense of optimism and energy that we do not hear in cities in earlier stages of community life.

When we asked people in Tupelo to describe their community, they were quick to say that it is “welcoming,” “inclusive” and “progressive.” They talk with pride about all that the city has to offer — both business and cultural opportunities. Their enthusiasm is infectious. Newcomers told us that they have never received such a warm welcome as they did upon moving to Tupelo. They talk about churches and civic groups extending invitations to new members, asking “Will you become part of our community?”

There is a buzz of talk and action across the community. Soccer games, organized pot-lucks and festivals are just some of the places that bring people together from across Tupelo. People take advantage of these opportunities to meet new folks and introduce people to one another. And talk often turns to community concerns. People told us that they feel free to express their opinions in these conversations. The town’s numerous luncheon and civic clubs and church groups are also places where people

come together to talk and learn about what is going on in the community. The number and variety of places for people in Tupelo to come together, which are missing from communities like Youngstown and Flint, serve a crucial role in creating networks and moving information throughout the community.

Over and over, people told us that public schools are the “hub” of community life. It is a widely held assumption that residents and leaders will engage each other on decisions pertaining to schools. In fact, we heard about how the superintendent recently left his job because the community felt that he was making decisions and taking action without giving citizens the opportunity to provide input and make sure the changes were for the good of the community.

People and organizations in Tupelo bring a positive and proactive attitude to community challenges. It is expected, people explained, that everyone will find a way to play a role in community life. And it is also expected that the “positive will win out.” As a community, people say, Tupelo strives to be inclusive and put family and children first. The focus is on finding solutions that benefit the community as a whole, not fighting turf wars.

But we also heard a growing sense of concern among people about whether (and how) Tupelo will be able to sustain its “community spirit” as the town grows and new people and new leaders come into the community. People talk about the community becoming increasingly diverse and new people “with ideas of their own” moving into town. Some describe Tupelo as experiencing “growing pains” as it struggles to deepen its public capital and engage new people in community life.

“A Work Together Attitude”

Strong norms for engaging in public life and wide-ranging community networks that spread and reinforce these norms are at the core of Tupelo’s strong public capital. People



describe a “peer pressure” from all sides that does not just encourage but sets an expectation for people and groups to find ways to be engaged in community life. These norms have developed over a long period of time. Said one man who grew up in Tupelo, “As someone who spent my formative years here, I can’t fathom not being involved.”

We also heard about a growing number of individuals who have connections to people and groups across the community. These Connective Leaders™ help create links between organizations and spread news and ideas across the community. These folks are also role models for others, reinforcing the expectation of community involvement. They talk about feeling a responsibility to “teach by example.”

People told us repeatedly that “a work-together attitude” was key to moving Tupelo to where it is today. They point not only to individuals working together, but organizations and leaders putting aside personal concerns to think about the community as a whole.

Tupelo has a strong network of catalytic organizations. People point to CDF, the local economic development foundation, CREATE, the community foundation, and the newspaper, *The Northeast Mississippi Daily Journal* as encouraging engagement in public life and promoting the efforts of other groups. CDF and CREATE not only play a vital role in the community by providing seed money for initiatives, but also by working, along with the newspaper, to bring together diverse groups of community leaders to take action on challenges. People told us that these catalytic organizations have credibility in their eyes, in large part, by seeking to engage a broad range of folks; then following through and helping the community succeed; and finally, promoting the community’s successes.

The newspaper also plays a vital role, we heard, as a “community messenger.” People

say that the paper has gone a long way to helping establish strong, positive norms in Tupelo — emphasizing that “what’s good for the community is good for you.” *The Journal* also helps highlight important issues or concerns in the community, spurring discussion on them. “If a [community issue] is in the newspaper,” one woman explained, “people know it’s important.”

Tupelo’s Future

But as Tupelo looks to the immediate future, people expressed concern about how to maintain and strengthen the community’s public capital. “As we grow as a city, we need to grow as a community,” observed one resident.

People in Tupelo told us that they want to go deeper — both in terms of the challenges they focus on and the levels of the community they engage. Tupelo has worked on economic development and social issues that focused on a more narrow aspect of community life. Now, they say they want to turn their attention to challenges that affect the community’s overall health, such as housing and single-parent families.

We discovered the same challenges in Chattanooga in the Growth stage. And as in Chattanooga, people in Tupelo are starting to see in this stage of community life that while they have strong norms and a large number of engaged citizens, there are still those that feel left behind, not listened to, or truly a part of the community’s progress. Residents of Tupelo are also starting to sense that they will need to develop new tools and strategies for achieving these goals. They told us they want to see the informal networks and leadership push deeper into the community and bring more diverse voices to the table.

But people in Tupelo are hopeful that if they can tackle these tough issues, “we’ll be leaps and bounds ahead of other communities.”

People in Tupelo told us that they want to go deeper — both in terms of the challenges they focus on and the levels of the community they engage.



Chattanooga, Tennessee

Growth

“A work in progress.”



Chattanooga, Tennessee — End of the Growth Stage

People recall Chattanooga, Tennessee’s downtown as a “ghost town” in the 1970s and 1980s. The city that had once aspired to be the “Pittsburgh of the South” went into slow decline starting in the 1960s. Years of industrial pollution began to take their toll on the environment. Jobs in the foundries and textile mills started to disappear. Racial tensions heightened.

Today, the modern Tennessee Aquarium and bustling Riverwalk anchor Chattanooga’s rejuvenated downtown. Tourism, not industry, drives the economy. The city is seen as a model for effective public-private partnerships and sustainable development. An abundance of catalysts, leaders and opportunities for community discussion are hallmarks of public life in Chattanooga; but citizens and civic leaders are now wondering how to sustain and renew their community.

Chattanoogans are clearly proud of the turnaround the city has made in the last twenty years. And like Tupelo, there is a sense of optimism and confidence in the voices of Chattanooga as they talk about their city. They describe the city as a “vibrant” and “friendly” community; the area’s natural beauty and the revitalized downtown areas are frequent touchstones as people talk about Chattanooga’s “unique” qualities. And Chattanooga’s pride does not rest solely on tangible accomplishments like the Tennessee Aquarium or Riverwalk. It is rooted also in the hard work, “the spirit of cooperation” and the community’s ability to come together and set a direction that made those things happen.

Unprompted, many people told us that Chattanooga has a “very different feel today” than it did in the 1970s. “We finally got a good attitude about ourselves,” said one man with a measure of relief.

Today, residents say, there is a greater sense of possibility about the future and faith that people in Chattanooga have the capacities and

resources for tackling challenges. Community-wide discussion about challenges and how to take action on them is the norm, they say. People expect to have the opportunity to voice their opinion or offer an idea on community decisions and challenges. Everyone we talked to was able to reel off a list of people and organizations that play leadership roles in the community.

Chattanooga moved quickly through its Catalytic and Growth stages. People talk about a flurry of talk and action in Chattanooga in the 1980s and 1990s. Revitalizing the downtown and re-creating the city as a tourist destination were the primary goals. And the city has seen tangible results from its efforts.

But as in Tupelo, we could hear in Chattanooga a quiet sense of concern from some folks about how the community will continue to move forward from this point.

But today, Chattanooga is at the end of the **Growth** stage. As a community, it has hit another **Waiting Place** as it struggles with how to sustain and renew the progress it has made. As in Tupelo, many in the community believe that some people and groups were left behind as a core group of active citizens led the city through the Catalytic and Growth stages. Now, the challenge is how to broaden and deepen the networks and public capital of Chattanooga.

A Community That Comes Together

“We’ve become a community that believes in coming together and setting new visions,” one man told us. And indeed, the “work together” ethic that we discovered in Tupelo also undergirds Chattanooga’s public capital. In both communities, one of the key contrasts to cities in earlier stages of community life is the ability of people and organizations to look at the community as a whole.

Both Chattanooga and Tupelo have been able to overcome some of the fragmentation that prompts mistrust and turf wars and keeps other communities at a standstill. By recognizing the interdependence of both their resources and challenges, people and organizations in these

During the Growth stage, Chattanooga’s civic leaders and engaged citizens worked to develop and spread new, positive norms for public life.



two cities find points of common ground as well as an imperative for coming together.

During the Growth stage, Chattanooga's civic leaders and engaged citizens worked to develop and spread new positive norms for public life. As a community, people say that they are "future-oriented" and look for ways to work toward their aspirations. This is in sharp contrast to the 1970s when, as one person described it, the city was "stuck in time" and people expected "someone else" — the mill owners, the wealthy elite, the politicians — to solve problems. The norm now, people say, is to look to each other first and ask — What do we want? What can we do?

We heard that there is now an expectation that organizations and leaders will engage with citizens in conscious community discussion. In fact, people describe public debate and discussion as a "way of life" in Chattanooga. But civic leaders note that establishing and spreading these new norms is a continual process. They talk about how lingering perceptions that the city is run by a small group of wealthy elites still crops up, reviving questions and feelings of mistrust.

Chattanoogaans also point with pride to their strong network of catalytic leaders and organizations. Over and over again, people cite, among others, businessman Jack Lupton, the Lyndhurst Foundation, the Chamber of Commerce and "old money families" as an invaluable resource for making things happen in Chattanooga. These organizations provide more than just funds, they help identify problems and find innovative solutions. They began playing this role early in the community's Catalytic stage.

Chattanooga is also working to create an "inclusive" leadership at all levels of the community. People say that the community response to the environmental crisis in the 1970s, the Moccasin Bend Task Force, and the Vision 2000 planning process were starting points for bringing a more diverse group to the table, giving people an opportunity to get to know each other, exchange ideas and take action on challenges facing the whole community.

One of the reasons that Chattanooga has made progress as a community, people explain, is the fact that its leaders are willing to take risks. These leaders are not afraid of "getting beaten up a little," observed one woman. Leaders and organizations state quickly that there are always a few dissenters, but that it is important not to let them hold up the whole process.

Chattanooga's Future

Chattanooga is now struggling with how to sustain and renew its work. Like Tupelo, we heard that Chattanoogaans want to tackle deeper issues — race relations, education and economic diversification. And they also want to reach deeper into the community. Civic leaders also stress the importance of reaching out to the African-American community and working in inner city neighborhoods where people have felt left out of the city's sweeping progress.

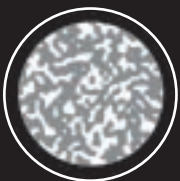
But in Chattanooga there are no clear decisions on when or how to move forward. "A consensus is building," said one man, "but we're not there yet." Some are anxious about the lack of urgency and wonder aloud how to spark it. We heard about how some community organizations routinely list diversity or race relations as a top concern in their annual planning, but then fail to make it a true priority. One person wondered aloud, "We've never had a crisis to help rally people quickly ... perhaps we need a crisis of economic development to spur people to take action."

Chattanoogaans are also questioning whether they have the tools to take their work further. Civic leaders are beginning to sense that the strategies and tactics that worked during the catalytic stage to get the ball rolling and engage a smaller group of people will not continue to bring them forward.

But, looking to past successes, people are optimistic about Chattanooga's future and its capacity to deal with new challenges. To do so, Chattanooga must figure out how to move to a stage of Sustain and Renew. For now, it has discovered a temporary Waiting Place.



The Harwood Public Capital Framework



The Harwood P

By looking at a community's "Public Capital," we are able to identify where the community is in the Stages of Community Life.

Developed by The Harwood Group, Public Capital is a framework for looking at the fundamental structures, relationships, networks and norms that need to be in place for a community to work effectively. There are nine factors of Public Capital. Each factor on its own seems simplistic. But, as the factors interact — which they must since they are interdependent — a rich, complex system emerges.

The Tangible Dimensions of Public Capital

An Abundance of Social Gatherings — that enable people to learn about what is happening in the community and begin to develop a sense of mutual trust. These gatherings form the seedbed for public capital. (sporting events, organized potlucks, community festivals)

Organized Spaces for Interaction — where people can come together to learn about, discuss and often act on community challenges. These spaces help a community begin to identify and tap existing resources— and at times, new resources— to address concerns. (churches, neighborhood associations, recreation centers, schools)

Catalytic Organizations — that help engage people in public life, spur discussion on community challenges and marshal a community's resources to move ahead. These organizations help lay the foundation for community action, but do not act as the driving force. (the newspaper, chamber of commerce, community foundations, non-profit organizations)

Safe Havens for Decision Makers — where a community's leaders can deliberate and work through community concerns in "unofficial," candid discussions. (chamber of commerce, civic clubs, non-profit organizations)

The Links Between the Tangible Dimensions

Strong, Diverse Leadership — that extends at all layers of a community, understands the concerns of the community as a whole and serves as a connector among individuals and organizations throughout the community. (Range: elected officials, ministers, teachers, neighborhood association members)

Informal Networks and Links — that connect various individuals, groups, organizations and institutions together to create a cross-fertilization effect of experiences, knowledge and resources. People carry and spread ideas, messages and community norms from place to place. (teachers talk education at church; bring insights from church to schools, business people raise issues at civic clubs, one group gives a presentation to members of another group)

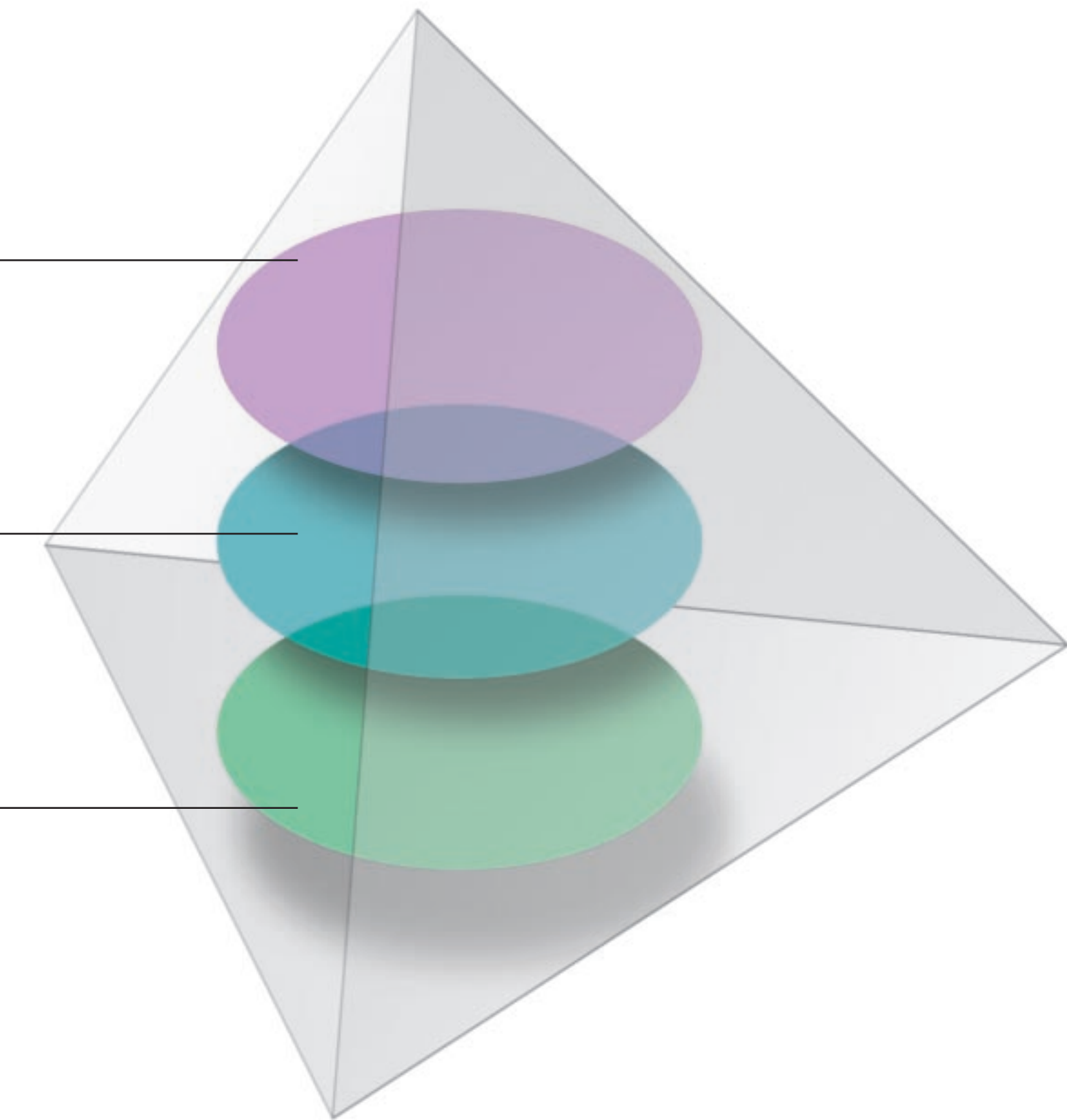
Conscious Community Discussion — where a community has ample opportunity to think about and sort through its public concerns before taking action. People play an active role in helping decide how the community should act. (Discussions about: development of new housing project, business or economic development, changes in school curriculum)

The Underlying Conditions of Public Capital

Community Norms for Public Life — that help guide how people act individually, interact and work together. These norms set the standards and tone for civic engagement. (put family and children first, take personal responsibility, connect self-interest to larger community interest, the positive tends to win out)

A Shared Purpose for the Community — that sends an explicit message about the community's aspirations and helps reinforce that everyone is headed toward a common goal. "We're all in it together"; "We want to grow as a community"; "We want our public institutions to thrive"

Public Capital Framework



Growing Community Strength

Visit The Harwood Institute's website at www.theharwoodinstitute.org or contact us at 4915 St. Elmo Avenue, Suite 402, Bethesda, MD 20814; (301) 656-3669 to learn more about our work on growing community strength.

Harwood publications include:



**Community Rhythms:
Five Stages of Community Life**



**Tapping Civic Life: How to Report
First, and Best, What's Happening
in Your Community**



**Public Capital:
The Dynamic System That
Makes Public Life Work**



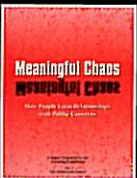
**Back to Basics:
Creating New Possibilities
for Flint**



**Planned Serendipity:
What Really Makes
Collaborations Work**



**A Work in Progress:
Creating New Possibilities
for Chattanooga**



**Meaningful Chaos:
How People Form Relationships
with Public Concerns**



**Waiting for the Future:
Creating New Possibilities for
Youngstown**