Urban Communities-Reimaged

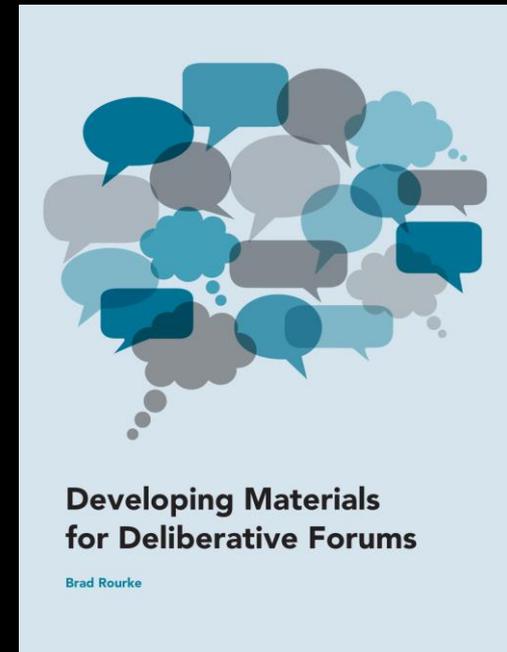**A Kettering Foundation Supported Project**

Angela Allen, University of Wisconsin-Extension
Patrick Proden, Oregon State University

Engagement Project

1. Produce and **ISSUE GUIDE** to Kettering Foundation/National Issue Forums:
   "URBAN COMMUNITIES REIMAGED"

1. **ENGAGE PARTNERS** to frame the guide with emphasis on **EXTENSION** partners
   a. Hold deliberations in urban communities
   b. Collect information in communities from community

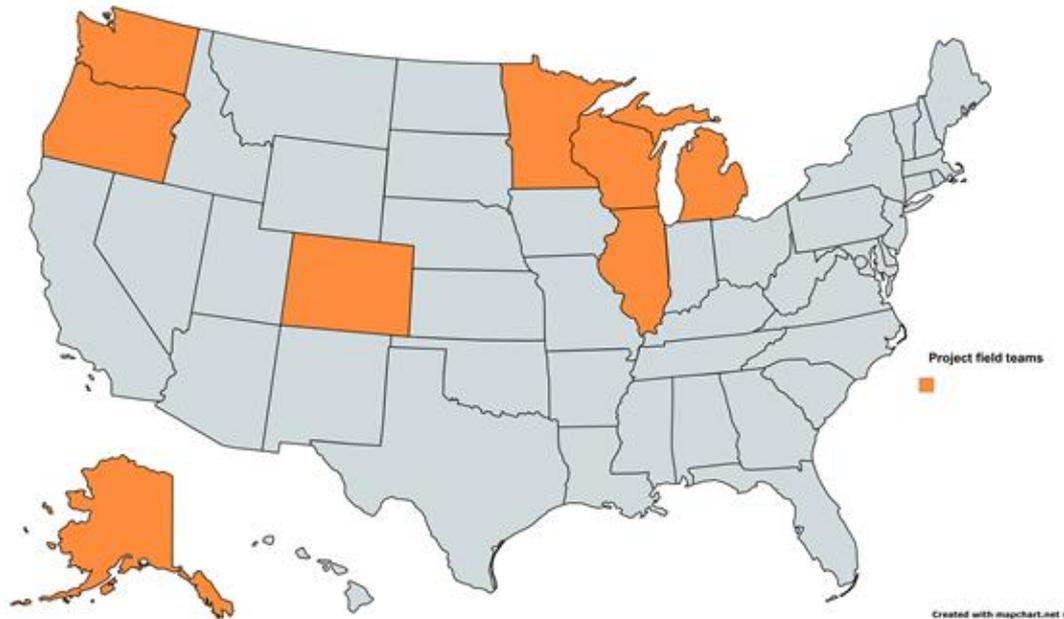2. Collect public concerns using new and different **CULTURAL ENGAGEMENT TOOLS**

1. Deliver a report to Kettering Foundation **NAMING AND FRAMING** the issues identified in the community conversations

Developing Materials for Deliberative Forums

Brad Rourke

NATIONAL ISSUES FORUMS
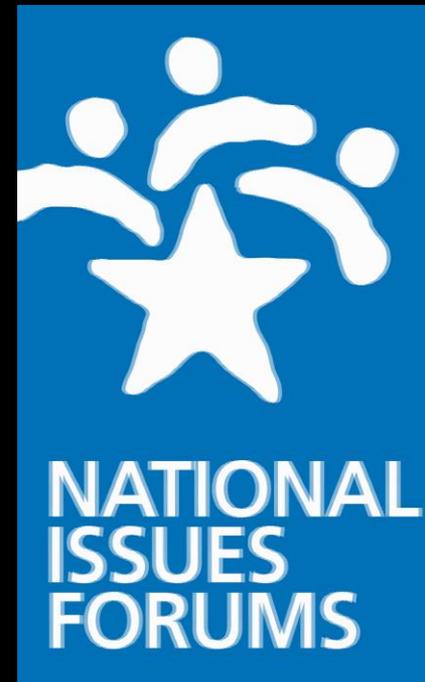
Project Field Teams

8 state Cooperative Extension Field teams self-selected to participate:

- Alaska
- Illinois
- Colorado
- Michigan
- Minnesota
- Oregon
- Washington
- Wisconsin

Project field teams

Created with mapchart.net ©

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Oregon State UNIVERSITY

Framing the Conversation

- **Project focuses on the North Central and Western regions of the U.S. Cities such as, Cleveland, Detroit, Milwaukee, Minneapolis and Anchorage, Denver, Portland and Seattle.**

- Longer arc of work, year-long series of public deliberations and community celebrations using the finished guide.

- Embarking on a "framing process experiment."

- Integrating cultural engagement tools into the arc of public work.

- Building and Strengthening democracy networks.

- Creation of a deliberative issue guide about urban community development by and for urban citizens and residents, including those living in small towns, cities and metropolitan areas.

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The History

Part of the Extension Narrative & Story-tell....

'It is to the Extension department of [the land-grant] colleges, if properly conducted, that we must now look for the most effective rousing of the people on the land. . . . It is of the greatest consequence that the people of the open country should learn to work together, not only for the purpose of forwarding their economic interests and of competing with other men who are organizing, but also to develop themselves and to establish an effective community spirit'. (Commission on Country Life 1909/1911: 128)

There is a vigorous reciprocity in the Extension Service because it is with the people, as well as "of the people, by the people, and for the people."

Ruby Green Smith

Extension workers need to have faith in spiritual values and to recognize the human relationships that contribute to what the ancient Greeks called 'the good life.' They should believe that in the kind of homes, farms, and industries which are the goals of extension service 'man cannot live by bread alone'; that it is not enough for people to have food, shelter, and clothing—that they aspire also to find appreciation, respect for individuality and human dignity, affection, ideals, and opportunities. These are the satisfactions that belong to democratic living."

Ruby Green Smith, The People's Colleges, p. 544

The Importance of Story & Speak

Narratives remain our chief moral compass in the world. Because we use them to motivate and explain our actions, the stories we tell change the way we act in the world."

-William Cronon, "A Place for Stories" (1992, p. 1375)

So How Do We Tell Our Story?

- What is our story?

- What are—and what should be—our larger purposes in the 21st century?

- What roles do—and what roles should—Extension play in addressing the problems of democracy?

Our Identity Flows from Our Work

- **What we do:**
  - Provide information
  - Deliver "evidence-based" programs
  - Apply research
  - Solve problems
  - Transfer technology
  - Induce the adoption of innovations

- **What we don't do:**
  - "Social" work?   Service provision?   Advocacy? Organizing?   Arts and humanities?
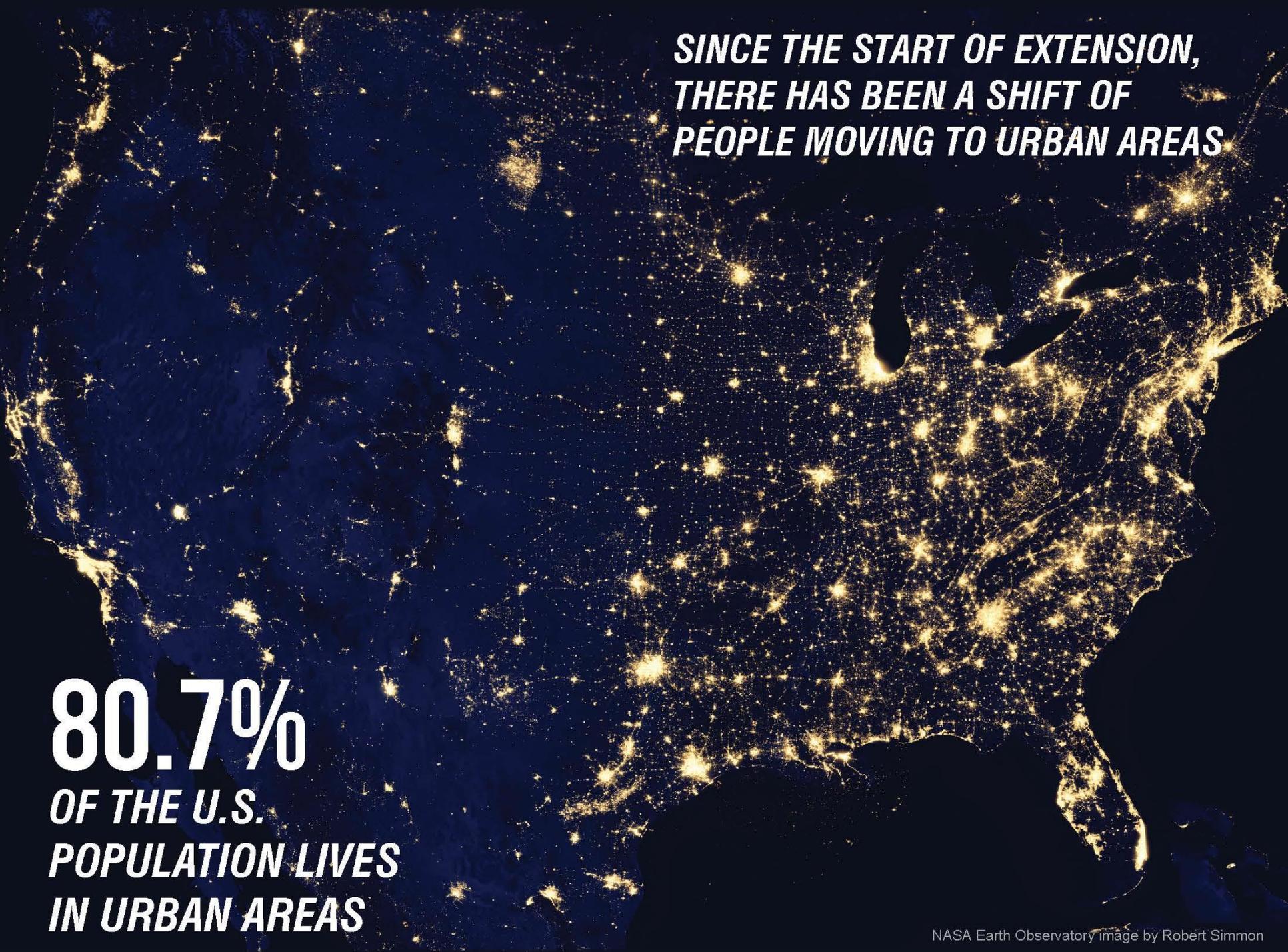
And From the Ways We Interpret it…….

- The "so what" question
  - What is the meaning and significance of who we are and what we do?

- And the "what for" question
  - What are our purposes and ends?
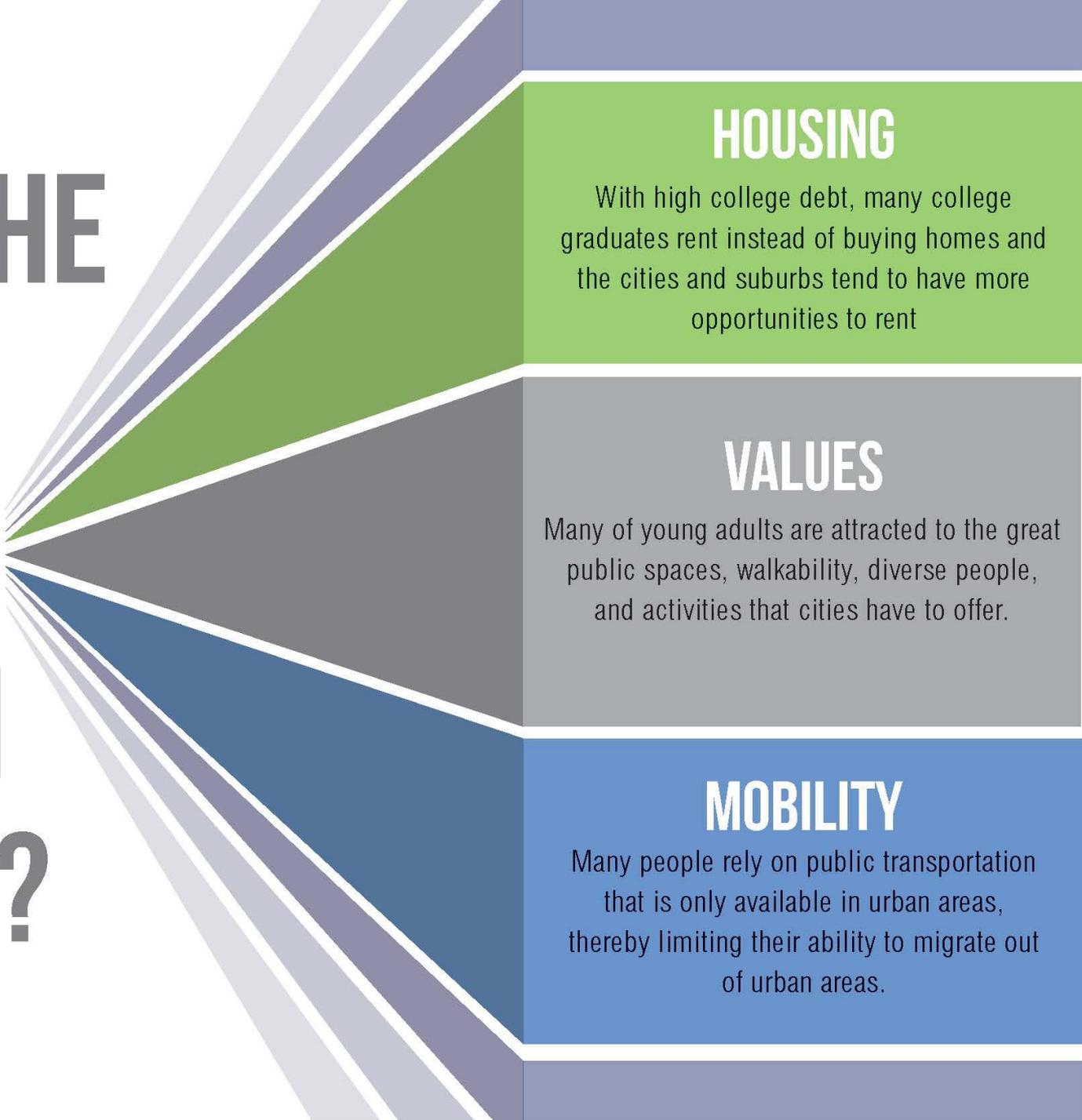   - Providing information, applying research, delivering programs, etc., are not ends

Why Urban?

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SINCE THE START OF EXTENSION, THERE HAS BEEN A SHIFT OF PEOPLE MOVING TO URBAN AREAS

80.7%
OF THE U.S. POPULATION LIVES IN URBAN AREAS

WHY THE SHIFT TO URBAN AREAS?

HOUSING

With high college debt, many college graduates rent instead of buying homes and the cities and suburbs tend to have more opportunities to rent

VALUES

Many of young adults are attracted to the great public spaces, walkability, diverse people, and activities that cities have to offer.

MOBILITY

Many people rely on public transportation that is only available in urban areas, thereby limiting their ability to migrate out of urban areas.

AN EFFECT OF THE SHIFT:

THE INCREASE OF SOCIAL AND ENVIRONMENTAL ISSUES

DISTRESSED ENVIRONMENT
DEGRADED WATER QUALITY
POOR AIR QUALITY
AGING INFRASTRUCTURE
CRIME
POVERTY
ILLITERACY
UNEMPLOYMENT
LIMITED FOOD ACCESS
UNAFFORDABLE HOUSING

"Urbanization has the potential to usher in a new era of well-being, resource efficiency and economic growth. But cities are also home to high concentrations of poverty."
-United Nations Populations Fund (UNFPA)

What's Different about Urban?

Complexity

What's Different about Urban?

Demographics

What's Different about Urban?

Urban-Suburban-Rural Interdependencies

UW Extension
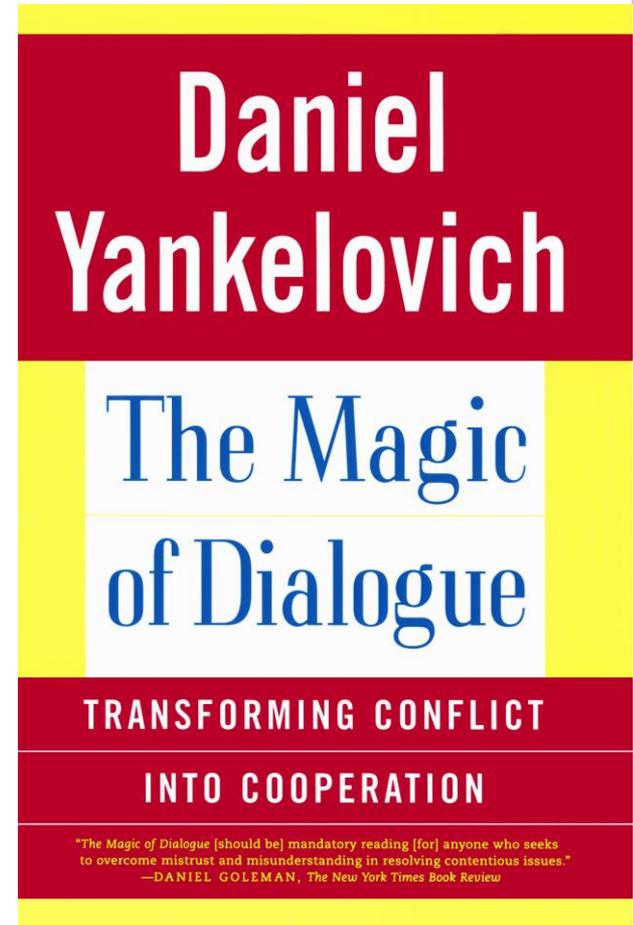Milwaukee County

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Q: HOW CAN LAND-GRANT UNIVERSITIES ADDRESS THESE ISSUES?

A: COOPERATIVE EXTENSION

Good Information is not enough...

An informed public is deeply grounded in our political tradition and essential for democracy to work...Yet scientists, like leaders in other fields have enormous difficulty engaging the public on critical issues... that can only be solved when good science, wise public policy and thoughtful public judgment all come together.


Daniel Yankelovich

The Magic of Dialogue

TRANSFORMING CONFLICT

INTO COOPERATION

"*The Magic of Dialogue* [should be] mandatory reading [for] anyone who seeks to overcome mistrust and misunderstanding in resolving contentious issues." —DANIEL GOLEMAN, *The New York Times Book Review*

Developing a plan for gathering concerns to solve with community

WICKED PROBLEMS

Horst Rittel and Melvin Webber, 1973.
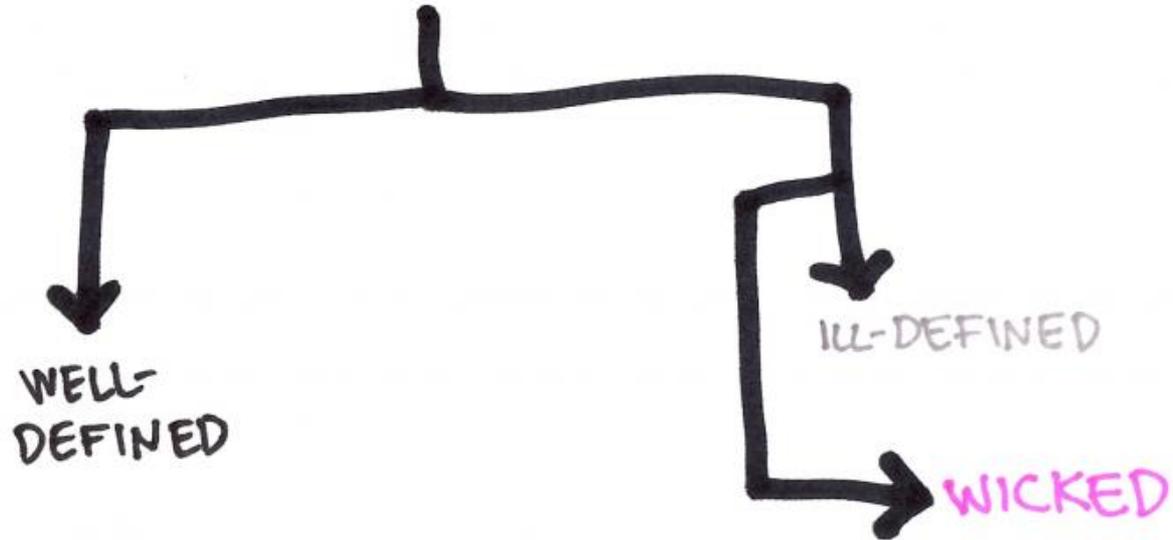
Public Deliberation:

A basic tenet of healthy democratic practice predicated on the idea that when citizens are closely involved in making decisions that affect them, it strengthens representation, transparency, accountability and can lead to citizen action and results.

Wicked problem: Origin

Horst W.J. Rittel (1930-1990)

THE UNIVERSE OF DESIGN

HORST RITTEL'S THEORIES OF DESIGN AND PLANNING

Why Horst W.J. Rittel Matters
Chanpory Rith and Hugh Dubberly

Horst Willhelm Jakob Rittel taught design and architecture for over 30 years, yet he never designed a building or otherwise practiced as an architect. (We might now recognize him as a design planner.) Even so, Rittel changed the field of design—linking design and politics—and started a line of inquiry which continues today in the field of computer programming and information science—design rationale.

What Rittel did

Rittel served as a sort of funnel transferring knowledge (developed during and just after World War II) from the sciences and engineering to the design professions. At the Hochschule für Gestaltung (HfG) Ulm, Rittel taught courses in operations research (OR) and cybernetics. At the University of California Berkeley, he also introduced ideas from cybernetics into his teaching. For example, his course notes show explicit references to feedback models and to Ashby's models of requisite variety. In his writing, Rittel also explicitly linked cybernetics, feedback, and the design process. If anything, the systems models of OR and cybernetics are more relevant to the practice of design today than they were when Rittel first introduced them.

Rittel was recruited to Berkeley in 1963 by William Wurster, Dean of the College of Environmental Design. The same year, Wurster also recruited Christopher Alexander. Together with Christopher Alexander, Bruce Archer, and John Chris Jones, Horst Rittel helped found the Design Methods Movement. He taught design methods courses at both Ulm and Berkeley, helped found the Design Methods Group (DMG) at Berkeley, and the DMG Journal.

The movement flourished from approximately 1962 to 1972. Its members advocated a systems view of design projects and introduced a range of methods emphasizing a rigorous, rational or scientific approach to designing. (Most models of the design process—for example: define, prototype, evaluate—trace their roots back to the Design Methods Movement.) Within just a few years, the movement found its assumptions under attack—particularly its claims of rationality and objectivity—and two founders, Alexander and Jones, both publicly repudiated the
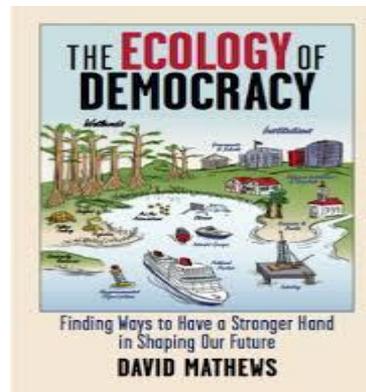
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Principles

- Leading with assets and opportunities.
- Working across disciplines and fields, geographies, cultures, classes, races, sexual orientations, economies, political views and philosophies, and generations.
- Learning from those with direct knowledge of the subject, often by hearing their stories.
- Collectively deciding the actions to take.
- Enabling individuals and organizations to take on the aspects of the work that they find most important through distributive leadership and reciprocal partnerships.
- Developing, testing, and refining our praxis through reflection and analysis.

Problems in Democracy

- Citizens aren't engaged: they're on the sidelines.

- Issues are approached and discussed in ways that promote polarization.

- People may get involved yet make poor decisions about what they should do, or which policies are in their best interest.

- People think they can't make a difference

- People may act, yet their efforts go in so many different directions that they are ineffective.

THE ECOLOGY OF DEMOCRACY

Finding Ways to Have a Stronger Hand in Shaping Our Future

DAVID MATHEWS

Problems in Democracy

- The standard remedy for this lack of coherence can be equally debilitating: a central agency is put in charge of coordinating civic efforts and then creates burdensome rules and regulations that drain the energy out of citizens' initiatives.

- People don't take time for shared learning from experience.

- Mutual distrust burdens the relationship between citizens and most major institutions, governmental as well as nongovernmental.

- Institutions doubt that citizens are responsible and capable

- And citizens see institutions as unresponsive and ineffective.

A single story, image, or thought doesn't give a complete picture of what is happening.

NAMING ISSUES
in Concerns Gathering

1. What is bothering you?

1. Why do you care?

2. How are you going to be affected?

3. What is sacred?

4. What can be improved?

6. What can be created?

NAMING AND FRAMING
DIFFICULT ISSUES TO MAKE
SOUND DECISIONS

A KETTERING FOUNDATION REPORT

Why do it this way?

1. It helps reach populations who are **reluctant to verbalize**.

2. It allows people to respond to a third party (the image or the map) when talking about problems and personal things that matter to them.

3. Breaks down the wall between the dominant/passive roles of facilitators/participants.

4. Can help decrease language barriers.

5. Produces a different kind of analysis that occurs mentally (or personally) first and verbally later.

6. Allows for a more comfortable distance between the issue and the response.

7. Helps alleviate "planning fatigue" … just too many meetings!

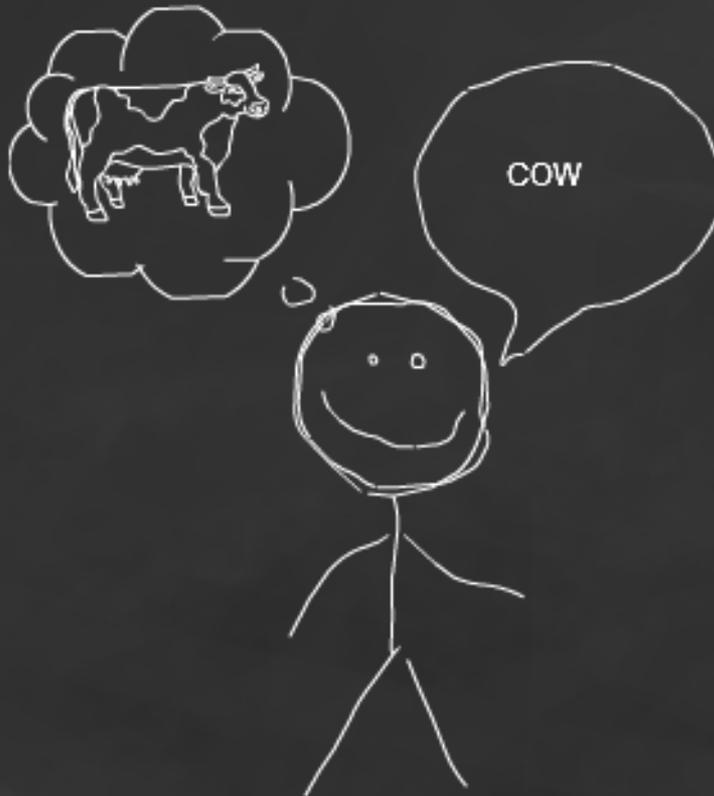# The Image of a Community

You're probably not imagining this
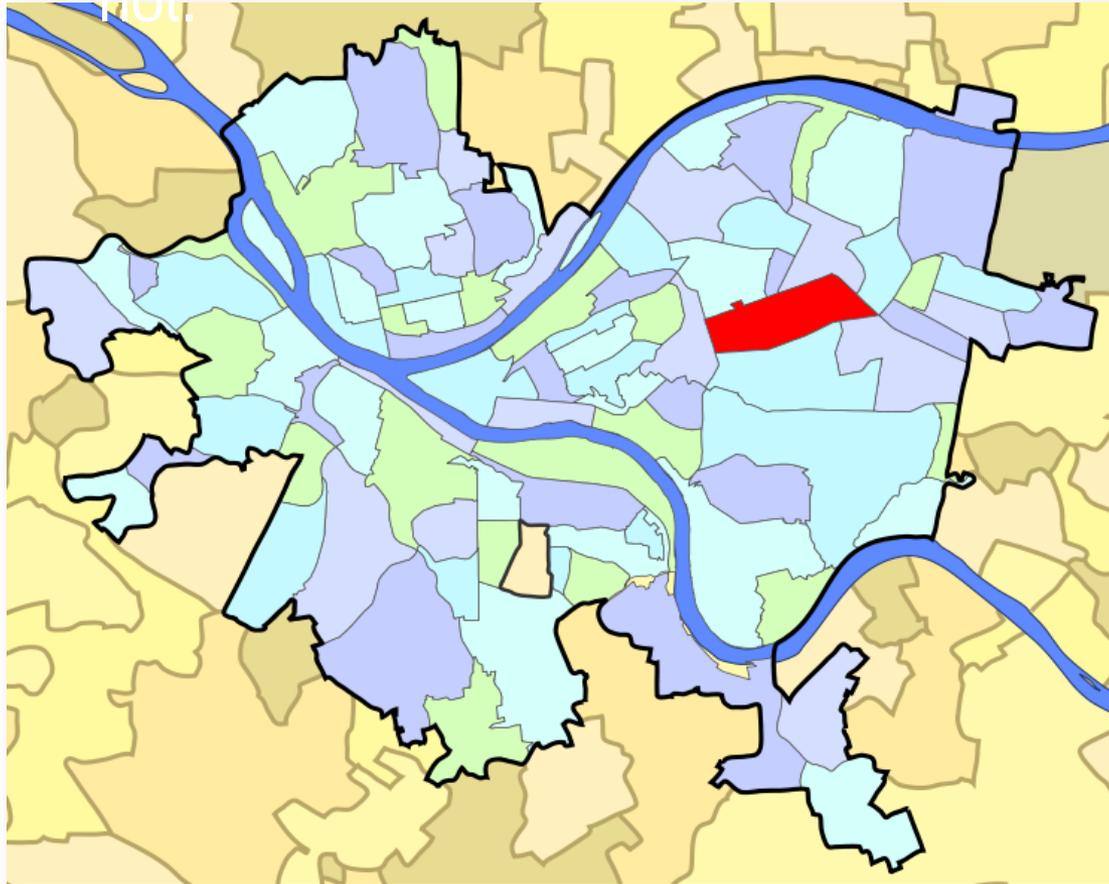
What you're imagining most likely looks a lot more like **this**
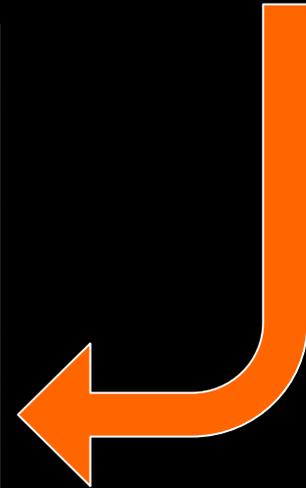
Every citizen has had long associations with some part of his city, and his image is soaked in memories and meanings.

---Kevin Lynch, *The Image of a City*

NOW LET'S TRY IT!

We picture words in our minds
We can picture a cow and can say cow.
Words turn into pictures and pictures turn into words.
This helps us to remember what we read and hear.

Questions to Ponder.....

- How might we invent and support new ways for community development to be approached in a way that links economic development with cultural development?

- What avenues of opportunity exist in the national land-grant university and cooperative extension systems for engaging arts, design, and humanities in service to pressing public problems?

- How can our collective efforts contribute to organizing and movement-building as part of a national strategy for holistic community development?

Social Justice and Cultural Impact

- Why exploring how cultural engagement methods like digital storytelling & Photovoice along with the public deliberation of urbanity defines urban communities through the intersection of applied practices that are only being forced to intersect at the neighborhood level (arts, community development).

- Intentional, educative public engagement beyond initiatives is critical & this project pilots examining how this is taking place & how this can be uplifted.

Cultural Engagement Strategies

- Focusing on-the-ground organizing on a select number of regions that have leaders in both colleges and cultural organizations in order to strengthen regional culture hubs.

- Regenerating the role Extension played decades ago in community arts and public humanities by producing the leading edge of scholarship on this topic.

- Supporting educational institutions to collaborate with community-based organizations in a manner that respects cultural knowledge and diverse ways of knowing. This includes encouraging colleges to support the flagship cultural organizations (e.g., Appalachia's Appalshop) and new networks (e.g., Art of the Rural) that bolster the field of civically engaged arts, design, and humanities.

- Helping build a transformative movement, with the goal of shaping new people-centered and community-centered policies based on the principles of equity and justice.

Research Questions

- Does involving broad national and state networks or focusing on state urban areas in the framing process lead to greater deliberative participation?

- To what extent can we link the issue of how urban America defines "community" to the work of Extension educators and engage them in hosting and moderating deliberative events? Does urban Extension educator involvement translate into doing work differently or taking on new roles as democratic agents in the community?

- How do we invite change in institutions? By engaging in a framing process based on urban issues emerging in part by the CES, will this lead to institutional change? To what extent does the level of institutional change through engaging framing as a process affect institutional routines? In which ways that promote/advance change?

- How do we approach this work to define community in urban America through CES so that citizens and stakeholders can re-create it later on? In other words, what democratic capacity is being built in this process?

Research Questions

- How can different "ways of knowing" be built into materials to support deliberation in ways that resonate with multiple audiences?

- How does cultural organizing encourage creative and inclusive community actions in urban places? Which are particularly effective and why?

- How can urban communities use deliberative dialogue to help identify wicked problems? How and what local action can be taken by government, NGOs, communities, and individuals to address these challenges and invoke actionable conversations ultimately leading to helping communities address issues at their appropriate intervention level?

- How can an 'Urban Issues' project leverage CES and impact the culture and routines of the Land-Grant colleges and universities of which Extension is a part?

Engagement Project
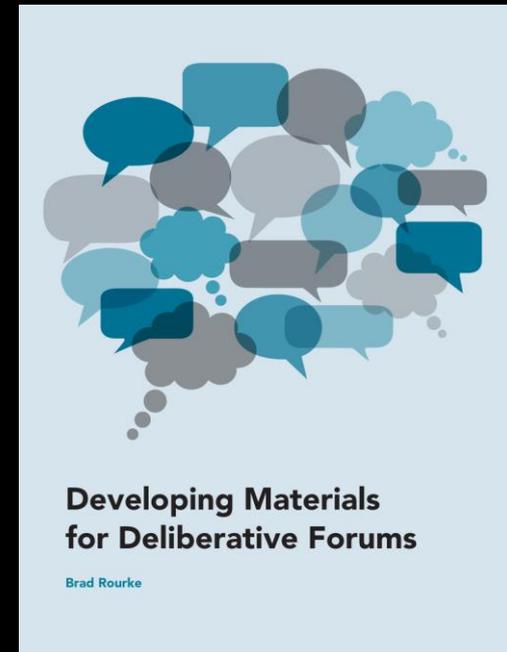
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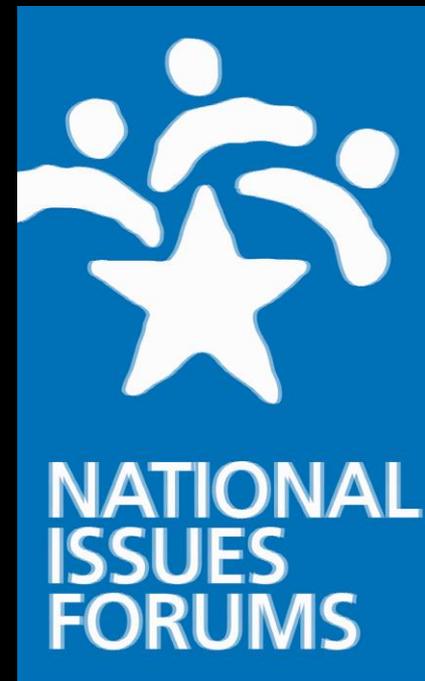
What is Our Ask?

- Become aware and involved at your state level with opportunities to convene community conversations and public engagement initiatives.

- Be an advocate for civic engagement

- Expose others to the 'Urban Communities, Reimaged' project, track the project and help us, help communities using the 'Urban Issues Guide'.

- If interested in the project, contact the PI and Co-PI in respective regions and let us know of your interest and ideas!

Thank You

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