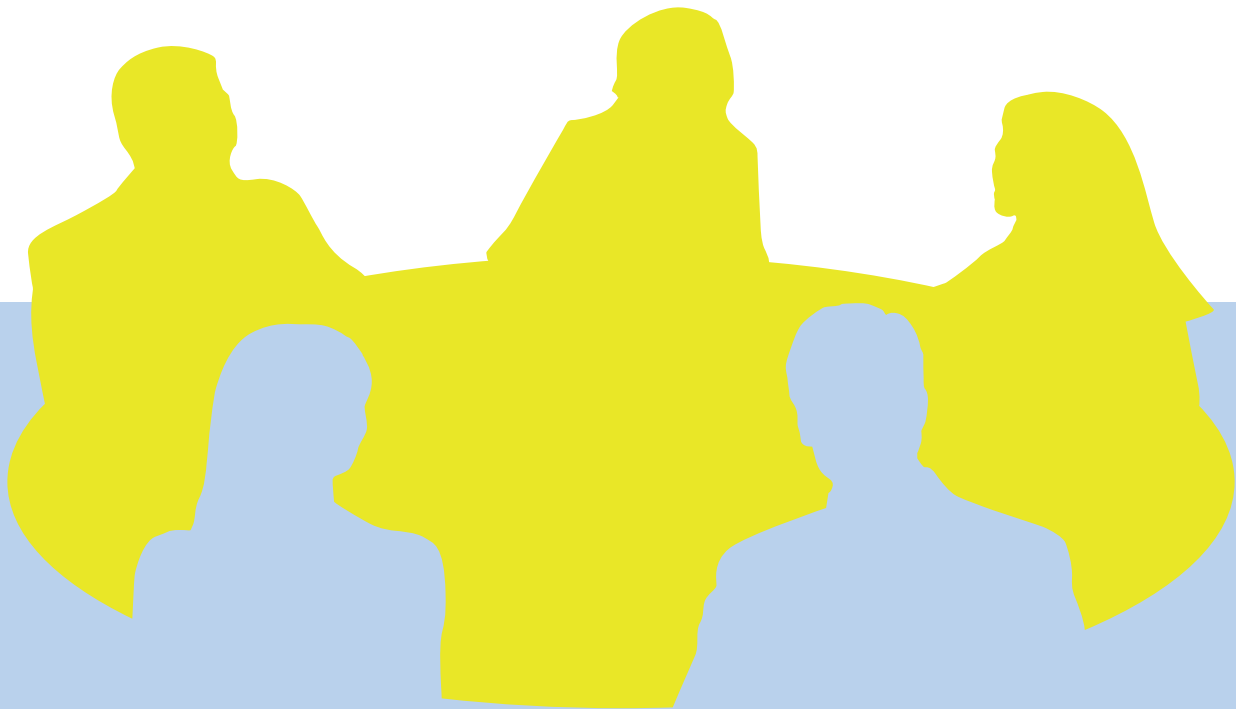


Inventory:

# Citizen Engagement Projects in California

A Report by Common Sense California



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## Foreword

In one of his more memorable statements, California Governor Arnold Schwarzenegger proclaimed in his 2007 State of the State Address: “We are the modern equivalent of the ancient city states of Athens and Sparta. California has the ideas of Athens and the power of Sparta.” One can only hope that in saying California has the “power of Sparta” the governor meant this in an economic sense, but regarding the “ideas of Athens” it is safe to say that he was referring to this state’s tremendous scientific, cultural and entrepreneurial brainpower. But it could also be added that Californians also possess a unique understanding of the Athenian ideal of democracy.

The engagement of citizens in their self-governance has historical roots in California that pre-date statehood. In 1846, four years before California would gain that status, a group of Americans gathered in Sonoma to wage the “Bear Flag Revolt,” declaring California to be a “Republic” even as they stood on foreign soil. Since then, Californians have frequently worked for a greater voice in the public policies that affected their everyday lives. From the Progressive Era in the early 1900’s when citizens (Republicans and Democrats) formed a political party that pushed and won significant political reforms, through the rest of the century in passing a series of landmark referendums, Californians have made historic changes in the way it governs itself. Interestingly, Governor Schwarzenegger’s own rise to office can be owed to the democratic reforms established a full century earlier.

At the same time, the Progressive reforms of the 20th century have left many wondering if these direct democratic changes have actually improved policy-making by empowering the “voices” of informed citizens. With the confluence of several factors in just this last decade, California’s leaders at all levels of government are looking for ways to engage their citizens in deeper conversations about important policy decisions. The dramatic evolution of communications and information technology is certainly one contributing reason. Easier access to information about even the most local policy decision combined with an ease of connectivity to others has made the intentional inclusion of citizens a new prerequisite for leading in the 21st century.

Once again, Californians are taking a forward role in demonstrating what this new citizen-centered leadership might look like. From statewide deliberations about healthcare policy involving thousands of Californians to town-wide con-

versations about affordable housing involving dozens, leaders from the governor to school superintendents are practicing citizen engagement to form more creative policy decisions, and, just as importantly, provide “spaces” for citizens to practice “self-governance.”

Common Sense California presents this “Inventory of Citizen Engagement Projects” to both inform and encourage Californians. We hope this report shows the wide variety of issues which have been addressed through citizen engagement at almost every level of government, but also inspires those who may have believed that the distance between citizen and government was too great to bridge.

While this research report is not exhaustive, it is the most complete compendium of California’s citizen engagement projects ever assembled.

Pete Peterson  
Executive Director  
Common Sense California

## About Common Sense California:

Since our founding as a multi-partisan and non-profit organization in 2006, Common Sense California (CSC) has worked to engage the citizens of this state in the policy decisions that affect our everyday lives. It is our firm belief that in today's world of easy access to information, and easy connectivity to others, California's municipal and education leaders are seeking ways to involve the citizens in their communities in the important issues they confront. Done legitimately, the benefits to this new kind of leadership range from better, more creative policy solutions to better, more engaged citizens who are doing the hard work of self-governance.

Put simply, CSC works with municipalities and non-profits in two "spaces" and in three ways. First, we focus most of our efforts at the city/regional and K-12 policy areas. While we have supported statewide citizen engagement efforts in the past (<http://www.californiaspeaks.org>) we are best equipped to come alongside cities, regional governments, and school districts as they earnestly attempt to engage citizens in the policy decisions they face. From school regionalization and performance improvement questions in the K-12 "space" to affordable housing, long-term visioning, and budgetary decisions in the city/regional "space" the types of issues encountered in these two areas are almost limitless.

Secondly, we connect with these "clients" in one or more of the following three ways:

### **1 Matchmaker/Consultant:**

Common Sense California has relationships with most of the major practitioners in the field of citizen engagement around the country. Through knowledge of the specific strengths of the various methodologies, we serve as a "matchmaker" between municipalities and these professional firms.

Additionally, we also know that creative leaders around the state develop some of the best citizen engagement campaigns at the grassroots level. Common Sense California can connect these people with others who might be looking for a more "home-grown" solution to their particular policy challenge.

## 2 **Sponsor:**

CSC works both directly and indirectly to support citizen engagement projects financially. First, Common Sense California devotes a significant portion of its annual budget to grant making. Through its “Common Sense Grant” program, CSC offers communities financial support up to \$25,000.00 in order to carry out a legitimate engagement project. Through its relationships with community and statewide foundations, CSC has also brought outside funding to bear when it has been necessary.

## 3 **Promoter/Advocate:**

Common Sense California believes that citizen engagement produces better policy solutions and better citizens. To this end, the leadership of CSC promotes the field of citizen engagement through speeches, op-eds, and other opportunities.

## Part I: Statewide Projects

|                      |   |
|----------------------|---|
| <b>Location:</b>     | Statewide – 8 different sites   |
| <b>Issue:</b>        | Health Care Reform – “CaliforniaSpeaks on Health Care Reform”                 |
| <b>Methodology:</b>  | AmericaSpeaks’ “21st Century Town Meetings”                                   |
| <b>Link to more:</b> | <a href="http://www.californiaspeaks.org">http://www.californiaspeaks.org</a> |

On August 11, 2007, one of the largest non-electoral citizen engagement events in California history took place with “CaliforniaSpeaks on Health Care Reform.” The one-day engagement involved 3,500 Californians who met at eight different sites from Eureka to San Diego. All sites were computer and video-networked from the headquarters site in Los Angeles. A statistically representative group of participants was pre-selected through random number dialing and direct mail. The event was attended by Governor Schwarzenegger (who went to two sites), Assembly Speaker Fabian Nunez, Senate President Pro Tem Don Perata, and Minority Leader Mike Villines.

Throughout the eight-hour day, attendees were gathered at tables of 6-10 people and participated in a series of facilitated conversations about each of the four health care reform proposals that would go before the State Legislature in September. The AmericaSpeaks’ “21st Century Town Meeting” format involves trained facilitators at each of the tables with a single laptop. Each participant has a keypad for entering of individual responses to a number of survey questions that are asked throughout the day. The laptops are used to transcribe results from table deliberations.

The format of the discussions ran through each of the different plans with a factual overview of the plan and a set of “pro’s and cons” listed. All participants were given booklets describing each of the plans, which were used as a basis for the day’s conversations.

The day was the culmination of several months of very dedicated work by AmericaSpeaks and the several foundations that supported the effort. In compiling the information that was used in the day’s discussions, AmericaSpeaks convened a multi-partisan group of health care experts and political leaders that participated in “stakeholder” meetings, formulating the foundations of the booklets and discussions.

At the conclusion of the day's deliberations, AmericaSpeaks compiled the results of all the surveys into a report, which was disseminated to the press and was presented to Legislative leaders and the governor in the fall of 2007.

**Location:** Statewide

**Issue:** CALTRANS Statewide On Call Public Outreach and Engagement Services Strategic Planning with Expert Assistance (MIG)

**Methodology:** Participatory Planning Process

**Link to more:** <http://www.migcom.com/projects/view/101>

After receiving a community-planning grant from CalTrans, MIG, a planning and design firm based in Berkeley, worked with geographically diverse communities, such as San Luis Obispo and Chalfant, which is a 500-person community located in Miono County. MIG was hired as a planning consultant by Caltrans and other partner agencies and developed a public engagement plan to guide outreach and engagement activities that were involved in the SR 46 East planning process. The public engagement goals included high quality input and participation, diversity (wineries, freight shippers, and environmental groups), education (informing the community about the current project), accuracy, and impact. The Study Team incorporated responses through the public engagement process and will incorporate feedback regarding participation. A project like CALTRANS Statewide On Call Public Outreach and Engagement Services is usually more complicated since it involves agency partners, a community that is willing to participate in the transportation planning processes, as well as dealing with multiple jurisdictions.

Population growth, both locally (San Luis Obispo) and statewide (California) has led to increased congestion on Route 46 East. There are individuals who feel strongly about improving the traffic problems within the region, such as "46 East for the Future" process, which focused on creating public interest to assist partner agencies, such as Caltrans and San Luis Obispo County in the development of a 20-year improvement strategy.

MIG worked with the CalTrans project in an efficient manner to address all the issues. MIG used visioning exercises, developed guiding principles, and identified potential areas of concern along with possible solutions for any potential problems. In addition MIG helped CalTrans with significant decisions in respect to access management, road and safety improvements, and traffic appeasing projects.



- Location:** Statewide - Bay Area, Central Valley, Inland Empire, and Southern California.  
**Issue:** Bridge California's Disconnect (citizens/state and local government)  
**Methodology:** Viewpoint Learning – Choice Dialogues  
**Link to more:** <http://www.viewpointlearning.com/publications/reports.shtml>

In the spring of 2004, Viewpoint Learning, along with the William and Flora Hewlett Foundation and the James Irvine Foundation developed a statewide research project to provide local and state governments with the values of average Californians regarding key issues like fiscal and policy challenges (health care, infrastructure, K-12 education, and transportation). The method used to conduct this research was Viewpoint Learning's Choice Dialogues. The 15 Choice Dialogues carried out across California consisted of 30-40 randomly selected citizens from all sorts of diverse ethnic, socio-economic and political backgrounds. All together more than 500 Californians participated in the 8-hour long Choice Dialogues. The Choice Dialogues explored what average Californians expect from their local and state government for themselves, and what tradeoffs they were willing to support in order to achieve their expectations. The Choice Dialogues were followed up by Stakeholder Dialogues uniting elected leaders with participants of the Choice Dialogues. This led to a Proxy Dialogue, which is an innovative media format that allows greater access to more citizens. The Choice Dialogues centered around two choices for California's future policy decisions that emphasize the market and individual choice, and those that emphasize fairness and community wellbeing.

As a result of many corporate scandals and problems of civil society organizations, there was a high amount of mistrust shown by Californians during the Choice Dialogues. The research for these Choice Dialogues found several ways to reduce citizen mistrust for the government and improve the relationship between citizens, state and local government, as well as develop necessary public support for important fiscal and policy issues, such as infrastructure, K-12 education, and health care. The following methods of research were useful in reducing citizen mistrust of government and improving their relationship with one another: focus sharply on accountability and tangible outcomes to rebuild confidence, set high but achievable standards and goals, then develop and publish metrics that report success or failure in meeting them. During these dialogues researchers figured that participants who focused on a single policy issue were likely to work through tradeoffs more effectively and ultimately achieve publicly supported outcomes. Californians who engage policy issues in this fashion are an important factor for bridging the disconnect and rebuilding trust in California.

Nine of the Choice Dialogues focused general policy issues, such as health care, K-12 education and transportation, while the other six dialogues focused on infrastructural issues, such as water and K-12 school facilities. As the Choice Dialogues continued, the deeper values of citizen participants became more apparent on core policy issues. In the beginning of the Choice Dialogues many participants upheld strong political beliefs, but were willing to put them aside in order to find solutions for California's policy issues. Instead participants focused more on the importance of common sense, efficiency, personal and community responsibility, and value for money and fairness, rather than their own political ideology.

During the Choice Dialogues the participants strongly supported a public-private partnership in building and maintaining transportation systems. In addition participants strongly encouraged more efficient use of already existing transportation infrastructure, such as carpooling. Participants desired more accountability for their tax money used towards infrastructural development or improvements. In the K-12 education discussion, participants were worried that educational dollars were not being distributed properly and wished for more funds to go to the students in the classrooms and less to administration. Similar to the transportation dialogues, participants found accountability an important issue. In regards to water policy, participants of the Choice Dialogues requested they know the allocation of water, along with how water fees and taxes were being used. As a result of the health care dialogues, participants generally supported a universal health care coverage plan and would even be willing to pay more taxes in order to implement the system. However the participants agreed that in order for there to be universal health coverage certain conditions needed to be applied: 1) extra tax money by citizens be used exclusively to expand access to health coverage, 2) no one gets "free ride", and 3) accountability and transparency were improved so citizens could be sure that money was being spent properly.

Throughout all 15 Choice Dialogues it became apparent how dramatic the mistrust of the average citizen was towards the government. This was shown through participants' requests for greater accountability and transparency and increasing support for public/private sector partnerships as a means of establishing checks and balances. The large disconnect between citizens and leaders (on both parts) has also led to a lack of citizen engagement. Citizens believe politicians possessed complete control over budgeting and decision-making, while leaders felt that citizens "want it all" but were unwilling to deal with the

trade-offs (i.e. universal health coverage will lead to citizens paying more taxes). Citizens view leaders as negotiating solely with special interests and partisan-ship groups, while leaders find citizens ignorant of policy issues, possessing very little knowledge of policy making. Until the issues of rebuilding citizen trust for government and uniting citizens and leaders together are addresses, there seems very little chance for any substantial improvement in policy issues, such as health care and K-12 education.

As a result of the Choice Dialogues, leaders have realized helpful tips to engage citizens more effectively, as well as increase citizens' trust in government.

- Location:** Statewide – Sacramento, San Francisco, Fresno, Riverside, Los Angeles, San Diego.  
**Issue:** Health Coverage for all Californians  
**Methodology:** Viewpoint Learning – Strategic Dialogues (business/civic leaders) and Choice Dialogues (public)  
**Link to more:** <http://www.viewpointlearning.com/publications/reports.shtml>

In 2005, there were 6.6 million Californians uninsured, while health care costs rose by over 10%. This made it more difficult for employers and individuals to afford the cost of health care coverage. In order for there to be sustainable health care reform in California, both the private sector (businesses) and the public sector will need to collaborate to create better policy. Viewpoint Learning, an organization that engages different perspectives of a representative sample of citizens and other stakeholders regarding crucial issues in dialogue, joined together with the California Endowment, to work on a research project aimed at uniting business and civic leaders, as well as the general public, in creating alternate solutions for health care reform.

The first step taken was conducting two Strategic Dialogue sessions with selected business, civic and non-profit organization leaders, health care professionals, and insurance executives in both Northern and Southern California, which focusing on solutions to California's health care crisis. The second step consisted of six day-long Choice Dialogues with a randomly selected sample of approximately 30-40 Californians composing a diversity in ethnicities, socio-economic situations and political views, which focused on the issues of what type of health care system the citizens wanted to see implemented. During the Strategic Dialogues the primary interest of the businesses and civic leaders to

establish a method to achieve universal health coverage for all Californians.

The first option discussed was individual mandate, which required individuals to buy insurance and providing assistance for those who can't afford premiums; the second was a government-sponsored plan for preventive and catastrophic care; and the third was government-sponsored comprehensive. The citizens' Choice Dialogues resulted in a strong majority supporting comprehensive coverage. Even though it was not a perfect solution, it was the highest ranked and citizens were willing to make the necessary trade offs. The citizens designed four scenarios of their own for solving California's health care crisis: use the employer-based system to cover all Californians; require all Californians to have health insurance; have the state provide the basics, the rest is up to you; and comprehensive public insurance coverage for all Californians.

The question of who is a Californian was raised considering California has many undocumented illegal immigrants. Most participants in the citizens' Choice Dialogue reasoned that the health coverage system should include undocumented immigrants, but only those who contribute to California (i.e. pay taxes and contribute to the state's economy). 77% of the participants agreed that health insurance coverage for children was "absolutely essential;" whereas, 20% of the participants believed it was "very important." As for preventive care, 53% of the participants found it "essential" and 31% of the participants found it "very important." All the participants in the Choice Dialogue agreed that the costs of their efficient health coverage system should be distributed across all sectors (employers, government, and individuals).

## Part II: County/Regional Projects

|                      |  |
|----------------------|--|
| <b>Location:</b>     | San Mateo County   |
| <b>Issue:</b>        | Long-term Housing Solutions  |
| <b>Methodology:</b>  | Threshold 2008 – Countywide Assembly (Deliberative Poll), Online Dialogue, and Community Conversations   |
| <b>Link to more:</b> | <a href="http://www.threshold2008.org">http://www.threshold2008.org</a> ,<br><a href="http://www.wilkasgroup.com/san-mateo-county-has-opened-the-dialogue-about-housing">http://www.wilkasgroup.com/san-mateo-county-has-opened-the-dialogue-about-housing</a> |

In 2002, civic leaders formed a group known as the Housing Nachos to address the shortfall of housing in San Mateo County. The Nachos conducted citizen engagement events in 2003 and 2004. The event in 2003 was a ChoiceDialogue, and in 2004, the event was a Stakeholder Dialogue. Viewpoint Learning facilitated both of these events. The Housing Nachos have now formed Threshold 2008 to further the discussion.

Threshold 2008 combines three different citizen engagement approaches in its methodology. The Countywide Assembly utilized the Deliberative Polling technique developed by Dr. James Fishkin of Stanford University. The Online Dialogue and Community Conversations are tools developed and facilitated by Viewpoint Learning.

The Countywide Assembly took place March 15-16, 2008 and included a statistically representative sample of 238 residents of San Mateo County. Participants received balanced information, engaged in discussions among small groups, and consulted with experts. The results showed that participants became more attuned to the housing crisis in San Mateo County and were willing to sacrifice job growth for a lower number of commuters. The participants also stressed the desire for more regional authority and public consultation in housing matters.

In May 2008, over 400 residents and workers in San Mateo County discussed their views on affordable housing in facilitated "Online Dialogues." These dialogues ran for two weeks. Participants learned about the pertinent issues and made tradeoffs in regards to the housing dilemma. The process included small group discussions in which participants contributed at their convenience during the two-week period. "Community Conversations" will commence in June

and July 2008. These conversations will engage citizens at the local level at 50 scheduled sites around the county. Viewpoint Learning will train fifty moderators to conduct these conversations and will also create and provide information kits specifically designed for this issue.

The perspectives and conclusions gathered during all three phases of civic engagement will be reviewed by the public and city officials in a report that is set for release in September 2008.

**Location:** Riverside County  
**Issue:** Riverside County Integrated Planning  
**Methodology:** Strategic Planning with Expert Assistance (MIG) – Participatory Planning Process  
**Link to more:** <http://www.migcom.com/projects/view/103>

In 1999 the Riverside County Integrated Planning (RCIP) was established to focus on the integration of land use, transportation, conservation planning and future development in Riverside County. RCIP aimed to achieve economic growth and long-term development in Riverside County through an environmentally sound process. The Riverside County Integrated Project was a stakeholder-driven process that involved collaboration among builders, farmers, government officials, and property owners to create a long-term plan for Riverside County, incorporating significant issues of conservation, land-use and transportation. Since Riverside County is one of the fastest growing and largest counties in the nation, considering its population is expected to double in the next 15 to 20 years, an effective planning process covering core issues of the community was imperative. Riverside County hired MIG as a member of the consulting team for the Riverside County Integrated Planning. As part of the consulting team for the RCIP, MIG prepared discussion guides and interactive exercises with the intention of engaging a wide-range of community members in discussing and identifying issues within Riverside County.

MIG assisted Riverside County in facilitating and graphically recording twelve community-based workshops in various parts of Riverside County. During the first phase, facilitated a workshop among key decision-makers to process the results of the community workshops and develop vision concepts to be used in future phases of the project. Finally, in 2003, a General Plan was adopted in Riverside County that mapped the County's land use designations for the

unincorporated areas, developed a consistent set of land use categories for the County, and updated the existing Community Plans.

**Location:** San Diego Region  
**Issue:** Future of San Diego Regional Airport  
**Methodology:** Viewpoint Learning – ChoiceWork Dialogues (county residents)  
**Link to more:** <http://www.viewpointlearning.com/publications/reports.shtml>

San Diego International Airport, also known as Lindbergh Field, has been in existence for over 75 years and has served as San Diego's primary airport. However, due to an increase in population and growing demand for air travel, another airport was necessary to sustain the current demand. Unfortunately with cases of infrastructural development, many city and county citizens' feel a strong sense of NIMBY'ism ("not in my backyard.")

In March and April 2004, the San Diego County Regional Airport Authority (SD-CRAA) sponsored six Viewpoint Learning eight-hour long ChoiceWork Dialogues amongst 35-45 randomly selected San Diego County residents from all ethnic, political and socio-economic backgrounds. In ChoiceWork Dialogues citizens' use dialogue, rather than debate after spending the first half of the 8-hour day familiarizing themselves with the possible scenarios, pros and cons; and spend the last half of the day discussing trade offs for their scenarios.

Over the six dialogues a total of 224 San Diego County residents discussed their opinion about the current airport in Lindbergh Field and the necessity of another airport in San Diego. The participants were asked to evaluate "what kind of airport they wanted" in four scenarios designed by aviation experts, economists and the SDCRAA: improve Lindbergh Field as much as possible; supplement Lindbergh Field with a second airport; close Lindbergh Field and replace it with a single airport; or build an "Aeroplex." During the six dialogues it was almost immediately decided by the participants that building a new airport was a necessary solution. Initially they agreed that the scenario, which supplemented Lindbergh Field with a second airport was very efficient; however, eventually majorities in five out of the six groups decided that maintaining Lindbergh Field would be financially draining in the long run, leaving future generations with the current issue and thus Lindbergh Field should eventually shut down. The benefits of airport development would be improved public transit, more jobs,

lower air fares, and additional housing. The downfalls were noise concerns, increased traffic around the site, and building on open space, which raised issues of NIMBY'ism.

Participants of Session 4 demonstrated a mistrust towards government-regulated decisions. Once citizens felt government officials were manipulating them, they voted down any options towards resolving the issue. During this session facilitators pushed participants to express what they would support if airlines rejected a supplemental solution, which led participants to feel mistrust towards all options. They felt they were being pressured into an undesirable alternate solution.

The positive result of the ChoiceWork Dialogues was that they created solutions for San Diego's airport crisis and the citizens who participated in the dialogues discussed key issues on air travel and regional development. During the Choice-Work Dialogues experts, politicians, and stakeholders provided their technical contribution, and citizen participants represented citizens' beliefs and priorities.

- Location:** San Mateo County
- Issue:** Future of Housing in San Mateo – Housing Crisis
- Methodology:** Viewpoint Learning – ChoiceWork Dialogues (San Mateo county citizens) and Stakeholder Dialogues (civic and business leaders, elected officials and experts)
- Link to more:** <http://www.viewpointlearning.com/publications/reports.shtml>

The housing prices in San Mateo County have drastically risen causing many residents, including individuals employed in the area, to relocate to cities with more affordable housing. The housing crisis in San Mateo County has resulted in businesses, hospitals and schools having difficulty recruiting professional workers, as well as increasing traffic since many employees must commute long distances to their jobs.

In 2001 the housing situation in San Mateo County had become so pronounced that a group of civic leaders from a variety of perspectives, formed a group, which came to be known as the "Housing Nachos." They gathered to discuss ways to improve the situation. The Housing Nachos agenda consisted of: 1) to develop an environment that encourages housing at all income levels and



2) to create a new method of addressing the complex regional challenges of meeting this goal in San Mateo County, in addition to engaging and informing the community regarding San Mateo County housing crisis. The Housing Nachos desired to facilitate dialogue among city managers, county residents, elected officials, employers, the faith community and philanthropic leaders. They brought in Viewpoint Learning, an organization that specializes in dialogues, education, facilitation, and public engagement.

The Housing Nachos and Viewpoint Learning facilitated four daylong ChoiceWork Dialogues with citizens representing diverse members of San Mateo's community. After the four day-long ChoiceWork Dialogues, there were two additional "Stakeholder Dialogues" that expanded the housing crisis dialogue to incorporate civic and business leaders, elected officials, and housing and environment advocates. In the spring and summer of 2003 randomly selected citizens across San Mateo County participated in another set of four eight-hour long "ChoiceWork Dialogues" sessions, in which they discussed the pros and cons of four scenarios to ameliorate the housing crisis. The four scenarios consisted of the following directions: continue on our current path, rely on the market, invest in existing communities, and improve governance in the county. The citizens decided they wanted to maintain specific policy considerations, such as: preserve open space, density over sprawl, re-development, levying taxes with conditions (meaning taxes get spent on capital improvements, while possessing accountability), and regional solutions require regional engagement.

In the winter of 2004 Viewpoint Learning with funding from Peninsula Community Foundation conducted two Stakeholder Dialogue sessions with advocates for housing and the environment, civic and business leaders (elected and official), and county residents. The Stakeholder Dialogues were similar to the ChoiceWork Dialogues since they were highly structured and based on dialogue, rather than debate. These conversations produced two outcomes: 1) a desire to further a citizens' vision for the future of their county and how to address the housing shortage 2) agree on a small number of high priority, high leverage goals that if achieved would move the county closer to this shared vision.

In the morning session, the Stakeholder Dialogues focused on finding common ground between the citizens' scenario and their own perspectives, then evolve that thinking into a shared vision. The participants spent the afternoon identifying and fleshing out a number of high-leverage goals to achieve that vision. After much discussion the participants of the Stakeholders Dialogue decided that three specific goals to improve the housing crisis in San Mateo County were re-

define zoning regulations to increase development along transit corridor; define and implement a regional approach; and engage and educate county residents, citizens and stakeholders alike on the urgency of the situation, potential solutions, tradeoffs and roadblocks.

The ChoiceWork and Stakeholder Dialogues were very successful in reaching a community consensus on how to solve the housing crisis in San Mateo. The ChoiceWork and Stakeholder Dialogues were composed of diverse members of the community with various perspectives, which resulted in each participant bringing valuable information and uniting the group together to reach specific goals to improve San Mateo County's housing crisis. The ChoiceWork and Stakeholder Dialogues were very important in addressing the desires of individuals within the private and public sectors, and employees. The citizen participants informed the business, civic and expert leaders, as well as vice versa.

## Part III: City Projects

|                      |   |
|----------------------|---|
| <b>Location:</b>     | Anaheim   |
| <b>Issue:</b>        | Downtown Improvements   |
| <b>Methodology:</b>  | Strategic Planning with Expert Assistance (MIG) – Participatory Planning Process            |
| <b>Link to more:</b> | <a href="http://www.migcom.com/projects/view/40">http://www.migcom.com/projects/view/40</a> |

In 2003 in order to assist in the redevelopment of Downtown Anaheim, MIG, an engagement/design/planning firm based in Berkeley, prepared construction documents and conceptual plans for many of their projects, such as a memorial interactive fountain at the intersection of Center Street Promenade and Lemon Street, parkway and median landscape improvements at the major east/west and north/south axes, and Holiday Tree Plaza and Disney Travel site improvements. Many of these decisions were made based on feedback from citizen engagement events held throughout the city.

The construction costs for the improvements assisted by MIG exceeded over \$2 million. In addition to the landscape and hotel improvements in the Anaheim area, MIG designed the City Hall Plaza renovations to create a usable outdoor venue and a Veterans' Memorial Plaza. For the City Hall Plaza project MIG collaborated with a well-known artist who designed the monument. MIG prepared the construction plans for the front entry and adjacent Friendship Plaza at Anaheim City Hall. In addition MIG provided improvements, such as accent palm plantings with uplights, accessible ramps and railings, enhanced retaining walls, historical security lighting, landscape upgrades, and a new enhanced pavement. With input from area residents, MIG ensured that the renovations would not destroy any part of the existing Mito Square, which is the Japanese Sister City garden located literally in the center of the project zone.

**Location:** Napa  
**Issue:** Napa River Flood Protection and Watershed Management Plan  
**Methodology:** Strategic Planning with Expert Assistance (MIG) – Participatory Planning Process  
**Link to more:** <http://www.migcom.com/projects/view/69>

In order to alleviate the destruction from any possible flood or watershed disasters, the City of Napa brought in MIG to facilitate and form a “Community Coalition” of more than 20 community-based organizations to develop a local flood protection and watershed management plan. MIG’s Napa River Flood Protection and Watershed Management Plan takes environmental factors of the region into consideration and is environmentally sensitive. In addition MIG’s plan was created in a manner to be financially feasible for the residents of Napa County. For this project MIG collaborated with the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, Sacramento District, and the Napa River Flood Control District. MIG took the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers’ existing flood control plan into consideration while further developing recommendations for a comprehensive flood protection plan.

The Napa River Flood Protection and Watershed Management Plan employs a “living river” approach to flood control, which combines ecology and engineering, natural landscapes and constructed diversions, unfettered freedom and controlled management.

MIG’s Napa River Flood Protection and Watershed Management Plan eventually led to the revitalization of Downtown Napa and the project became an award-winning national model for integrated flood protection and watershed management. MIG’s project received national coverage for its revolutionary solution to flood control and even received the 1998 National Planning Honor Award from the American Society of Landscape Architects. The revolutionary solution to controlling possible floods and watershed management included removing the existing system of dikes and levees, allowing the river to run free.

In order to financially support MIG’s Napa River Flood Protection and Watershed Management project, Napa County residents voted to fund the project by passing with a two-thirds majority a measure to raise the sales tax within Napa County. Napa County residents, ranging from their city officials to farmers to winemakers to environmentalists to business owners all found common ground in the project and supported its implementation even if that meant an increase in the sales tax.

**Location:** San Francisco  
**Issue:** Citywide Policy Priorities – “SF Listens”  
**Methodology:** AmericaSpeaks’ 21st Century Town Meeting

A leader renowned for his innovative and creative approach to policy-making, San Francisco Mayor Gavin Newsom, wanted to get the informed voice of San Franciscans regarding policy priorities for his new administration. In March and April of 2005, he kicked off a series of three townhall-style meetings called “SF Listens.”

Working with AmericaSpeaks from Washington, DC, Mayor Newsom engaged 500 citizens in conversations about their most important policy issues. The AmericaSpeaks’ “21st Century Town Meeting” methodology involves the use of individual voting keypads and laptop computers placed at each table. Through the three-hour meetings, San Franciscans were asked policy questions and then given the chance to deliberate with fellow residents before being asked to offer their opinions both collectively (at each table) and individually.

The issues discussed ranged from public safety and economic development to homelessness and housing. Results did vary between the three different San Francisco communities in which the conversations were held, but common responses played an important role in Mayor Newsom’s policy portfolio.

**Location:** Lancaster  
**Issue:** Master Plan for Parks, Recreation and Arts  
**Methodology:** Townsquare – Online tools for community engagement  
**Link to more:** <http://www.migtownsquare.com/Content/10064/preview.html>

In 2006, the City of Lancaster, like many areas of California predicted large growth over the next fifteen years. In order to meet the needs of its residents in the future, Lancaster developed a master plan for its parks, recreation, and arts. The master plan included: an analysis of current and future demographics of the City, an inventory of current park and recreation facilities, recreation classes and cultural arts opportunities. The civic engagement element involved a series of interviews and focus groups with local decision-makers and interest groups, phone surveys, plus an assessment of Lancaster as compared to similar cities.

Community involvement was elicited through a variety of forums and opportunities.

The 2006 Lancaster Poppy Festival afforded the residents an opportunity to engage in the planning process through an interactive survey and recorded interviews. Additional community involvement included telephone surveys, focus groups, and comments posted on the project website.

Townsquare provided tools to complement traditional community outreach methods. These online tools include a document manager, an email notification administration, a news and events coordinator, and a content manager. All of these tools were designed to make the process more accessible to more people and easier to view and edit for the organizers

**Location:** Morgan Hill  
**Issue:** Morgan Hill's City Services and How to Fund Them  
**Methodology:** Viewpoint Learning – Choice Dialogue  
**Link to more:** <http://www.viewpointlearning.com/publications/reports.shtml>

In 2005 the City of Morgan Hill was running a structural budget deficit and was spending its reserves or savings account to provide essential City services, such as administration, park maintenance, police and fire, and recreation. The community, including the city government, decided the best solution to the current finance crisis was to get the public more involved in the decision making process. In January through April of 2006, over 330 citizens of Morgan Hill participated in a series of Choice Dialogues (developed by Viewpoint Learning), to discuss City services and how to fund them.

The citizens who participated in the two-and-a-half hour facilitated conversations spent time learning the budget tradeoffs facing Morgan Hill. The conversations consisted of facilitators educating the participants, and reporting small group discussion. After hearing each other's opinions and examining the assumptions that underlie them, the purpose of these facilitated conversations was to find a solution that was acceptable to the majority of the participants.

In the facilitated conversations, 87% of participants supported City services at a level that required more revenue. After expressing their opinions to one an-

other, the participants were asked whether their vision for Morgan Hill included minimal government services at a minimal cost, preservation of the current level of service, or enhancement of Morgan Hill as a community with consequent increases in taxes.

Only 13% of participants supported minimal government services at a minimal cost. The rest of the participants supported preserving the current level of services (54%) or enhancing Morgan Hill as a community (33%). As for options on how to increase City revenue, 66% of participants supported a development tax, 58% supported increase the sales tax through retail development, with less than 15% supporting a sales tax, parcel tax, lighting and landscaping assessment, fire suppression assessment district, or a utility users' tax. When the participants were surveyed on how to reduce current costs, 34% supported cuts to administration, which had a net annual cost of \$1.1 million, 31% supported cuts to recreation, which had a net annual cost of \$1 million, 18% supported cuts to park maintenance, which had a cost of \$0.6 million annually.

There was no real support for reducing fire or police services, which required 82% of the City's General Fund discretionary resources at current service levels. Instead when participants were surveyed on which City services they wish to see enhanced, 71% of the participants chose police service as their first or second priority, and 55% of participants chose increased after-school and summer programs as their first or second priority.

Since the Community Conversations, Morgan Hill's financial situation improved. Increases in property tax and sales tax revenues have helped lower the City's structural budget deficit, even though it has not completely eliminated it. In addition, the City Council is considering reducing the size of the Redevelopment Agency, which would increase General Fund revenues, which covers core city services, such as administration, park and street maintenance, public safety, by approximately \$800,000 a year. The City Council realized their budget deficit problem is a long-term issue and requires continuing assistance and dialogue with the community to prioritize significant City services.

**Location:** Sacramento  
**Issue:** Development Project  
**Methodology:** Townsquare – Online tools for community engagement  
**Link to more:** <http://www.migtownsquare.com/Content/10044/preview.html>

Greenfair Village is a redevelopment project in 30-acre section of Sacramento. In the summer and early fall of 2006, the organizing partners of the project, which included New Faze Development, Pacific Municipal Partners and a Project Advisory Committee (PAC) conducted a series of public engagement opportunities throughout the community. In total, 140 area residents attended the evening meetings and reports were compiled for each session. In these workshops, the aforementioned stakeholders, particularly the PAC presented attendees with a set of "Development Principles" that were then to be used by residents in their discussions about the final design of the project.

Design "elements" discussed by the participants ranged from "parks, open space," "pathways and linkages," streets, and various housing options. Responses from the residents helped to form the final design of the project. In particular residents expressed opinions on housing density and traffic planning. Through the entire process a website was developed and utilized as a "sounding board" and organizational foundation for the civic engagement campaign, alerting residents to meeting times/dates as well as informing them of the project's progress.

**Location:** Rancho Cordova  
**Issue:** Vision Process – "Build a City"  
**Methodology:** Public Charrette  
**Link to more:** <http://www.town-green.com/projects.php>

Rancho Cordova was incorporated in 2004. In a uniquely expansive planning process, the entire city was designed through a Charrette public engagement process. A set of twelve "Guiding Principles" was developed and elements from land use to economic development to open space to cultural resources were matched against these.



Results from the Charrette process revealed opinions relating to the creation of a “future urban form” that was also used as a basis for future planning and construction decisions. Everything from streets to parks to downtown placement was developed through the Charrette methodology, which gathers residents and “experts” in planning, policy and design together over several days to create then refine ideas for development.

**Location:** Menlo Park  
**Issue:** Solving Budget Crisis – “Your City/Your Decision”  
**Methodology:** Community Focus’ “Participatory Budgeting”  
**Link to more:** [http://www.communityfocus.org/case\\_study\\_menlo.html](http://www.communityfocus.org/case_study_menlo.html)

In 2005, the City of Menlo Park realized that unless major changes were made in its budget structure it would go into a \$2.9 million deficit in the 2006-07 fiscal year. The obvious choices were available to city officials – from service reductions to revenue enhancements, but what was unique was the approach these leaders took to the problem: involving the citizens of Menlo Park in a very creative process called “Participatory Budgeting.”

Naming the campaign, “Your City/Your Decision,” the city brought in Community Focus as the lead practitioners. The campaign entailed two distinct segments: information gathering, followed by community deliberations. In Phase I, actual city budgets were printed and mailed to each resident of Menlo Park with instructions as to how they could use the information provided to balance the city budget by themselves. Residents mailed the budget packets back to city staff, which took their input and formulated several representative deficit-closing strategies – each with different levels of service cuts and/or revenue growth measures. Over 1,600 residents mailed in their responses to the budget exercise.

In Phase II, the city gathered residents in “community workshops” to discuss the various deficit reduction themes and offer their opinions on which one(s) they thought best addressed the gap. About 225 Menlo Park residents attended these workshops with over 90% of them resolving on a combination plan of service cuts along with increased taxes. The average results of these workshops was to gain \$1.57 million through cost cuts and \$1.31 million via increased revenues to close the \$2.9 million deficit.

**Location:** San Diego  
**Issue:** Community Water Fluoridation  
**Methodology:** Viewpoint Learning – Choice Dialogue  
**Link to more:** <http://www.viewpointlearning.com/publications/reports.shtml>

Between June 2005 and May 2007 Viewpoint Learning conducted a series of eight Choice Dialogues sessions that focused on the issue of whether the City of San Diego should fluoridate its water. Sponsored by Dental Health Foundation of California and U.C. Berkeley, the community discussions were attended by 294 participants, randomly selected to represent diverse ethnic, political and socio-economic backgrounds. During the eight Choice Dialogue sessions participants filled out extensive questionnaires regarding their opinion, and the sessions were videotaped. In each session the participants developed a vision for oral health in San Diego (priorities/tradeoffs); the second half consisted of participants examining their vision as well as studying advocacy materials [both favoring/opposing CWF (community water fluoridation)], which showed how pressures of actual campaigns affected the decision-making process. The participants surveyed the materials given according to credibility and importance, as well as their earlier opinion about whether or not to fluoridate.

After all eight dialogues it became clear that out of the 294 San Diegan participants, while 64% initially supported community water fluoridation (CWF), by the end of the dialogues support for CWF fell to 49%. During the dialogues 48% of participants could be categorized as “consistent supporters” of CWF, while 35% of participants could be categorized as “consistent opponents” of CWF leaving 17% of participants as switchers to their original opinion. Consistent supporters of CWF argued water fluoridation works, water fluoridation benefits the young, the old and the medically undeserved, and water fluoridation is cost-effective. Consistent opponents of CWF argued that people already get enough fluoride, we shouldn’t add unnecessary chemicals to our water and fluoridation violates personal choice. Although many participants realized that water fluoridation was not sufficient enough for maintaining healthy teeth, by the end of the day 82% of participants agreed that “fluoridation is especially helpful to the young, the old, and people without dental care.” Roughly two-thirds (63%) of the participants agreed that CWF violated an individual’s right to chose their own lifestyle, but 76% of participants felt the community possessed the “right to make public health decisions, even if some object” especially if the rights being violated have an beneficial impact on the community as a whole.

As for the scientific evidence concerning fluoridation for dental care, the limits of information and the critical role of trust were very significant issues for the participants, which was shown through their responses.

Choice Dialogue scenarios helped public health experts engage the participants on a controversial issue such as CWF through the realization that information alone would not build support for change — experts cannot “sell” a change like CWF as a product. Choice Dialogues demonstrated that maintaining trust was the most significant factor for building public support for a public health issue such as implemented community water fluoridation.

In the final questionnaires, just like the initial questionnaires, consistent supporters backed CWF and consistent opponents opposed CWF, while switchers changed their position at the end of the day. In both final and initial questionnaires 249 of the 294 participants could be classified as supporters or opponents of CWF out of which 119 participants were consistent supporters, 88 were consistent opponents, 35 switched from support to opposition and 7 switched from opposition to support.

**Location:** Chula Vista  
**Issue:** Chula Vista’s Housing Problems (Green Development)  
**Methodology:** PlaceMatters – Civic Engagement (Visualization/Impact Analysis/Scenario Analysis)  
**Link to more:** <http://www.placematters.org/node/62>

PlaceMatters is a design and planning organization that believes in effective and informed citizen engagement. They make certain that communities and organizations achieve processes that involve citizen engagement, such as public involvement and support, which result in sustainable communities. In order to reach their goals, PlaceMatters ensures an understanding of tradeoffs during decision-making, shares outcomes of on-the-ground projects with others in the deliberative democracy field through their conferences and information on their website, and uses innovation decision-support tools, as well as public engagement techniques.

Through the coordination with partners like Global Energy Center for Community Sustainability (GEC) at the Gas Technology Institute and U.S. Department of Energy, PlaceMatters designed a comprehensive and innovative community-

scale model for the 15,000-acre Otay Ranch development in Chula Vista, California, which is a city south of San Diego. The reason for the development in Chula Vista was to ensure housing for a city with a growing population. The transit-oriented development includes 3-6 villages and provides housing for 70,000 additional residents in 23,732 new dwelling units within the next 15 years. The development also plans to have a mixed-use village uniting a unique campus that will be shared by five area colleges and universities, including two from Mexico.

PlaceMatters' Planning Collaborative used CommunityViz to analyze impacts, create land use alternatives while at the same time maximizing efficiencies through the integration of power generation technologies. PlaceMatters combined American Forests' CityGreen software with CommunityViz in order to provide citizens and municipal officials with a well-educated analysis of both built and green infrastructure.

The goals that PlaceMatters set for the Chula Vista development project included minimizing energy consumption in buildings, transportation and water systems; maximizing the use of cost-effective renewable energy resources, maximizing the reliability and security of energy services to the community, as well as critical facilities and functions, and reducing energy-related emissions from both on and off site sources.

**Location:** Sacramento  
**Issue:** Sacramento Downtown Strategic Action Plan  
**Methodology:** Strategic Planning with Expert Assistance (MIG) – Participatory Planning Process  
**Link to more:** <http://www.migcom.com/projects/view/27>

Downtown Sacramento aspired to re-establish itself as the region's center of commerce, civic identity and distinct urban experiences. In 2005 Sacramento was experiencing low unemployment, high job growth and a demand for new office development, which resulted in a necessity of a proper redevelopment of the city's downtown. In order to achieve a successful reemergence of Downtown Sacramento an organization known as the Downtown Sacramento Partnership was created. The Downtown Sacramento Partnership (DSP) is a nonprofit organization with the sole focus of establishing a vibrant business, cultural, and entertainment center through unification with both the private and public sectors.

The Downtown Sacramento Partnership was started by key business, community and government leaders, who engaged in dialogue with one another to improve and upgrade the conditions of Downtown Sacramento.

In order to create an effective and efficient Strategic Action Plan to guide future development of Sacramento's downtown, the Downtown Sacramento Partnership hired nationally acclaimed planning firm MIG (Moore Iacofano Goltsman). MIG's planning process, which includes significant civic involvement, focused on two important goals: building trust and establishing a transparent process. The Strategic Action Plan included a development framework that connected Sacramento's assets with key opportunity sites to create development, as well as a mixed-use, pedestrian, transit-orientated Downtown, which would serve as the core center of the city. MIG continues their work with the Downtown Sacramento Partnership and the area's residents to consistently guide the city with future implementation efforts.

**Location:** Richmond  
**Issue:** General Plan Update  
**Methodology:** Townsquare – Online tools for community engagement  
**Link to more:** <http://www.migtownsquare.com/Content/10047/preview.html>

Every city in California constructs a General Plan to steer its future development. In every General Plan, there are seven topics that must be covered, ranging from land use to public safety. Richmond's 2008 General Plan will also include economic development; education; public facilities and infrastructure; and arts, culture, and historic resources.

The City of Richmond is using many techniques to engage the public in creating this document. The City is holding ongoing community meetings, small group discussions, and meetings with the City's youth. The City is also utilizing a "Plan Van" to bring the discussion to the streets. There have also been discussions with the neighborhood and civic associations. The City is also promoting outreach and education about the General Plan to others in the community.

Townsquare, which is an online engagement and planning tool, complements traditional community outreach methods. The software includes a document manager, an email notification administration, a news and events coordinator, a

survey creator, and a content manager. All of these tools are designed to make the process more accessible to more people and easier to view and edit for the organizers.

**Location:** Chico  
**Issue:** Development of Downtown Access Plan  
**Methodology:** Public Charrette involvement and planning  
**Link to more:** <http://www.town-green.com/projects.php>

In 2006, The City of Chico needed to re-design their 230-acre downtown area in order to accommodate heavier traffic patterns, parking, and development. Using the Charrettes engagement model which is a 4-7 day process involving both citizens and stakeholders from the design, business, and planning fields, the City used public input to customize their plan for the people of Chico.

Elements such as improved “circulation” routing for bicyclists, pedestrians, and emergency vehicles were developed through the process. Chico is also a college town, so parking considerations for students and greater bike accessibility to the Downtown area were also elicited through the engagement project. Aside from the design elements, policy ideas were also discussed, as a new parking permit policy was developed by citizens working with government representatives.

This participation project also invited citizens to participate in constructing – literally and figuratively – a future vision for Chico, looking ahead to future growth in the Downtown area.

**Location:** Lincoln  
**Issue:** Plan to Re-Use Wastewater Treatment Facility  
**Methodology:** Public Charrette  
**Link to more:** <http://www.town-green.com/projects.php>

In 2006, the City of Lincoln wanted to engage its public in the decision of what to do with a 193-acre tract on which was situated the Lincoln Wastewater

Treatment Facility (WWTF). The City sought civic input on how to turn the site into a marketable property, the proceeds from its sale would then be used to build a new wastewater facility.

A Charrette engagement method was used to involve Lincoln's citizens along with stakeholders in the planning process. Citizens participated in a four-day Charrette, which included not only a conversation about what to do with the particular site, but also how the surrounding homes and infrastructure could be incorporated into a larger plan. Like all Charrettes, this facilitated conversation included both residents along with city officials, planners, architects, business leaders, open space and housing advocates in a multi-day evolving plan process.