



BY CITIES OF SERVICE

BOLOGNA
BOSTON
FORT COLLINS
HAMM
HELSINKI
HUNTINGTON
MEXICO CITY
SAN JOSÉ
SANTIAGO DE CALI
TULSA

2018

Dear Friends:

It is a pleasure to welcome you to the Cities of Service Engaged Cities Award inaugural celebration.

One of the most valuable resources any city has is its people. When local governments collaborate with residents, together they can harness their collective knowledge and experience — and deliver results. The Award’s 10 finalist cities represent some of the most effective strategies for cultivating people’s ideas and transforming cities. Tapping into the creative power of their citizens, they have advanced progress on key civic issues, from making streets safer, to increasing citizen participation in the budget-making process, to creating more inclusive government policies.

Now, with the Engaged Cities Award, Cities of Service aims to drive even greater progress by providing the finalists and cities around the world with the opportunity to share best practices and promote the importance of partnerships between governments and the public they serve.

We hope you are inspired and appreciate all your support.

Sincerely,

Michael Bloomberg
Founder
Bloomberg Philanthropies & Cities of Service

Tom A. Bernstein
President
Cities of Service Board of Directors

THE CITIES OF SERVICE ENGAGED CITIES AWARD

The Cities of Service Engaged Cities Award shines a light on cities collaborating with citizens to meet today’s most pressing local challenges in new and creative ways.

We believe citizen collaboration is a force for good. Local government works better when it is open to the ideas and talents of citizens. City residents have deep expertise in their own lives and what is best for their families and their communities — and this expertise can be used to deliver better services and solve public problems.

Cities of Service celebrates the diverse and creative strategies of the 10 Engaged Cities Award finalists, which combine bold mayoral leadership and the reach of city hall with the

insight and talent of residents to address a wide array of challenges. The citizen contributions in these cities take many forms, from defining and prioritizing problems to generating ideas and volunteering their time, creativity, and expertise. These strategies are models for other cities around the world to learn from, adapt, and improve upon.

Cities of Service received more than 100 applications from cities in the Americas and Europe for the inaugural Engaged Cities Award. The 10 finalists were selected based on key selection criteria, including significant work with citizens to tackle a public problem, clear evidence of impact, and potential to apply the strategy to other problems and geographies.

FINALISTS

Bologna, Italy
Boston, Massachusetts
Fort Collins, Colorado
Hamm, Germany

Helsinki, Finland
Huntington, West Virginia
Mexico City, Mexico
San José, California

Santiago de Cali, Colombia
Tulsa, Oklahoma



BOLOGNA, ITALY



Bologna adopted new regulations allowing residents to partner with the city to revitalize public spaces. The regulations spurred the city to establish district laboratories, where city staff and residents connect to develop citizen ideas and co-design initiatives.

Virginia Farina, the mother of a young girl, thought the areas between the street and sidewalk along Via Lombardia in her neighborhood could be made into a garden where children could play and neighbors could stop and meet with one another.

During Bologna's first ever participatory budgeting process, she brought up the idea in her local Laboratorio di Quartiere, where citizens can meet with city staff and explore their ideas. Each year the city sets aside 1 million euros to fund citizen proposals, which are voted on by residents. The laboratory connected Virginia

to other community groups developing greenspace in the neighborhood. An expert from the city helped her learn what was possible and refine her proposal.

"We try to connect the people to the city and to other resources," explains Michele D'Alena, who coordinates the laboratories. "It's an opportunity to listen to people and hear about their concerns and their ideas, to work with our citizens to make our city a better place."

To Virginia's surprise, her proposal won. But the process isn't over. Like all of the initiatives

that begin in a laboratory, it is a collaborative design effort from beginning to end. Virginia is now working with a city architect to design the greenspace where her daughter will soon get to play.

"I didn't expect to be a leader," she says, "but now I'm a leader in my community."

PROBLEM

A center of resistance to fascism during World War II, Bologna has a deep history of civic engagement. Since that time, however, much had changed. The large youth population of the city was disengaged, and trust in the political process was low, evidenced by a 30 percent drop in voter participation in 2014 compared to the previous election. Italian law dictated that immigrants from outside the country were not allowed to vote in the city until they had lived there for 10 years, further depressing engagement.

STRATEGY

It started small. Three citizens wanted to repaint a park bench in their neighborhood, but just this simple task required them to call five separate city departments. Bureaucracy was preventing citizens from improving their own city. This realization led Bologna to change the way it governs the urban commons — its shared physical, cultural, and creative resources.

The city began by adopting the "Regulation on public collaboration between citizens and the City for the care and regeneration of urban commons." This new regulation allowed citizens, informal groups of people, and private organizations to enter into contracts, or pacts, with the city to revitalize urban commons, such as public spaces, abandoned buildings, and green areas. The city provides what the citizens need — from materials and tools to business and financial planning assistance — and the citizens provide their time and their skills.

The city also created a dedicated team to manage the collaboration, the Ufficio per l'Immaginazione Civica or Office of Civic Imagination, and partnered with the University of Bologna to create six Laboratori di Quartiere, permanent district citizen-engagement laboratories. The laboratories serve as hubs

of collaboration and innovation, where city staff connect with residents and co-design initiatives driven by the talents and ideas of citizens. In addition to the pacts, the city has a number of tools to develop citizens' ideas that are unearthed through the laboratories, including a participatory budgeting process and IncrediBOL, a competitive program that supports creative startups with free space from the city or consulting services from staff and partners.

IMPACT

The new regulations and infrastructure enabled a wave of citizen-driven projects that have transformed the city. More than 400 collaboration pacts have been implemented, including the cleaning of 15,000 square meters of city walls and the renovation of 110 city benches. As a result of the collaboration between citizens, city government, businesses, and nonprofit organizations, citizen-led efforts have gone beyond physical improvements. Outcomes range from new services to small businesses to public spaces reimagined as cultural institutions, such as a former market turned into a concert hall used by hundreds of local musicians.

The city has helped creative citizens develop a publishing house and a children's clothing brand, and supported a cooperative of residents as they transformed an empty greenhouse complex in a park into a co-working space, start-up incubator, childcare center, café, garden, and entertainment space open to the public.

Citizen engagement is now on the rise. The laboratories have involved thousands of residents, and more than 14,000 people voted in the first participatory budgeting process. Bologna has once again become a city that is committed to governing for citizens, with citizens.



BOSTON, MASSACHUSETTS



Boston engaged citizens to share data online about unsafe streets and developed a competitive gaming app that encouraged residents to improve their driving behaviors, with the goal of decreasing traffic-related fatalities.

Deirdre Manning thought she was a good driver. She had never been involved in an accident or received a ticket in her life. But she was a busy mother with a demanding job, and was often on the phone while shuttling her 16-year-old daughter around Boston. When her daughter got her learner's permit, Deirdre realized she wasn't setting a good example. So she downloaded the Boston's Safest Driver app onto her phone to find how good she really was and which habits she should be passing on to her daughter.

She was surprised at first by some of the behaviors that reduced her score, like cornering too quickly. She began to pay a lot more

attention to the subtly changing speed limits throughout the city, and she stopped texting while driving.

It was harder than she thought. "It was a humbling experience," she said. "I had to put my ego in the backseat and let other cars pass me."

In 2017, Deirdre was awarded the prize for Boston's Safest Driver. Like many Bostonians who have used the app, her improved driving is making Boston's streets safer and she is a better example for her daughter.

PROBLEM

Boston had a long-standing reputation as a city filled with terrible drivers. That reputation was somewhat justified: It had a high level of crashes per capita, and had been ranked "worst city to drive in" by Allstate Insurance based on the frequency of insurance claims. Mayor Marty Walsh launched a Vision Zero initiative to eliminate traffic deaths by 2030, but many residents were unaware of the city's efforts. Policy changes like lowering the speed limit could only go so far. Drivers needed additional incentives to alter their behavior.

STRATEGY

The city's Vision Zero Task Force, which includes city agencies and community members, helped develop the Boston's Safest Driver app. Working with multiple partners, they built a competitive game that assesses driver behaviors, like harsh braking and phone distraction, and increases self-awareness of driving habits. Participants received a score based on their actions and were ranked



against other drivers in the metro area. They could also compete against their friends. Each week, the city awarded prizes to the best drivers, and the mayor crowned Boston's Safest Driver at the conclusion of the competition at a ceremony in City Hall in January 2017. Drivers were also encouraged to contribute to the crowdsourced Safety Concerns map, where thousands of people logged unsafe streets and intersections.

IMPACT

In the pilot alone, more than 3 million miles were logged on 274,000 driving trips. For the top 25 percent of active users of the app, phone distraction dropped by 47 percent, speeding dropped by 35 percent, and harsh braking was reduced by 37 percent. Users reported an increased awareness of Vision Zero efforts, and the city was able to collect data about driver behavior to guide policy decisions.

The competition is part of a multidimensional approach to the issue of driver safety. Although Boston may not be the safest driving city in the country (yet), it has seen a decrease in traffic deaths over the past two years. The city plans to work with large employers and other partners to expand participation in Boston and the surrounding metro area, and other cities and states are starting to use the app as well.



FORT COLLINS, COLORADO



Fort Collins transformed its budget process in response to rising costs and a desire to include the community in decisions about how their tax dollars were spent. The city launched a citizen education program and incorporated citizens into budget review teams to create a budget that aligned with community priorities.

For years, residents of Fort Collins had requested increasing bus service to include Sundays and holidays. TransFort, Fort Collins' transportation arm, did not believe ridership could support the increase, however. Other transportation projects had taken priority. During the 2016 budgeting process, citizens raised the issue again in meetings and surveys, but again the city did not have the funds to include additional bus service in the budget.

Thanks to a transparent budgeting process, several community groups learned that the

funding was not likely and spoke up. The downtown business association was concerned about lost business, and some residents said they weren't able to get to work on Sundays. Councilwoman Kirstin Stephens recalled sitting in packed city hall meetings and disability rights advocacy groups telling her, "We don't disappear on Sundays. We just stay at home."

The city council heard the residents' united voices and began looking for partners to help them better meet the needs of their citizens. The city was only able to raise half of the

funds needed to expand bus service, so they approached Colorado State University, already a partner in other transportation initiatives. The city council presented a proposal to the student body, which voted to contribute toward the service with student fees. The university contributed the remainder. The additional service began in August of 2017, and ridership has increased steadily. As a result of this success, the city was named "Large Transit System of the Year" at the 2017 Colorado Association of Transit Agencies Fall Transit Conference and Expo.

PROBLEM

While the cost of providing city services was rising, revenue remained stagnant and the price of government services was fixed in the minds of much of the public. The city needed to educate residents about the financial challenges the city was facing, reduce spending, and still provide high-quality services.

STRATEGY

Fort Collins launched Budgeting for Outcomes (BFO), a collaborative budgeting process to responsibly allocate funds and align resources with community priorities. With input from a scientific community survey and other sources, the city created a strategic plan. The plan, in turn, guided budgeting priorities. The city also formed cross-departmental budget teams that include citizen volunteers. The teams evaluated and ranked every funding proposal made by city departments.



The city also created other avenues for citizens to provide their input. Using online and in-person approaches like mobile budget booths and online budget simulations, the city worked with staff, volunteers, and partners to target a variety of communities, including low-income households, seniors, and Spanish speakers. The city set up mobile budget booths at a variety of locations throughout the community, including libraries, public transit centers, and schools. Citizens learned about the budgeting process and provided informed input about how they would like their money to be spent.

IMPACT

Fort Collins lowered the price of local government for its citizens from 6.5 cents to 5.6 cents of every dollar earned, while increasing the community's overall satisfaction with the quality of local government services, according to the city's 2017 Community Survey. The process also led to changes in city services, such as an increase in building code enforcement officers, additional courts around the city for sports, and a program that ensures every student has a safe route to walk or bike to school. The city is more transparent and accountable to residents, and BFO team community members serve as unofficial ambassadors between the city and the community. Citizens now expect to have a say in their city policies, and they have a better understanding of their city budget. The collaboration has led to a greatly improved relationship between the city and its people.

HAMM, GERMANY



The shutdown of the mining industry left the western district of Hamm suffering from economic hardship, abandoned land, and loss of identity. The city collaborated with residents to develop more than 540 acres of land into a public park that physically and emotionally reconnected residents.

For years after the coal mine near the center of Hamm closed, it stood abandoned and surrounded by a wall. More than just an eyesore, the mine was a reminder of the lost mining industry that had left many residents unemployed, and a symbol of the social and economic divide between communities in the town.

When city leaders decided the site needed to be transformed into a park, they knew from previous experience that the process must involve the public. Many community members, however, felt uncertain about the future and skeptical of the project.

In an attempt to build trust from the beginning, the city invited citizens to participate in the tearing down of the wall to break ground for the park. As the wall came down during a ceremony on a rainy day, a marching band played “Der Steiger kommt,” a traditional German mining song. Many in attendance had tears in their eyes.

One of the first actions the city took in the development of the park was to build a path through the former mine site, which allowed families to walk their children directly to school instead of around the site. This was a turning

point for the project. Residents began to believe that the city was acting in good faith and that things could change. Citizens and their city then began the process of designing a park together.

Over the course of the project, citizens, community groups, and the city collaborated to bring multiple elements of the park to life, including an interreligious sculpture that was conceived by a well-known local sculptor with input from multiple neighborhood religious communities. It now serves as a place of rest and reflection. Responding to feedback from immigrant communities, the city also included outdoor grilling and picnic areas in the park, something that is not typical in Germany.

When the park was completed, the city held another ceremony. More than 3,000 people attended the event. Again, a band played the mining song, but this time it was a joyous occasion. The former mine site is now a park open to everyone, where kids skateboard and families barbecue in a park they helped design.

“This part of the city is seen in a completely different way,” said one citizen. “Not as a poor area, but as a place of the future.”

PROBLEM

The last coal mine in Hamm closed in 2010, leaving the city’s western district, which relied on the industry for employment and economic security, divided and disadvantaged. Previously united by reliable work, the diverse community faced pressures exacerbated by cultural differences and economic hardship. The large abandoned industrial area — with a wall around it — also became a barrier between their district and the rest of the city, contributing to the low morale and a sense of isolation within the community.

STRATEGY

City leadership collaborated with residents to transform more than 540 acres of abandoned industrial area into a public park. A citizens’ council was formed to oversee planning of the park, made up of stakeholders from neighborhood associations, clubs, religious groups, and representatives from city districts

bordering the park. The city also offered easily accessible opportunities for all residents to participate, including forums held within the community and information booths in the neighborhoods around the mine site. Finally, targeted efforts were made to include children and adolescents in the process, and they helped conceive of and design elements of the park, including the playgrounds.

IMPACT

Twenty-thousand citizens were involved in the creation of Lippepark. The completed 2 ½-mile green corridor connects western district neighbors to each other and opens the district to other neighborhoods in Hamm. Not only has the park lifted the physical and psychological barrier between communities, it has increased property values of homes near the park by approximately 20 percent and improved the neighborhood’s reputation. The playgrounds are frequently in use by children from the area and community investment in the park is high, evidenced by low levels of vandalism.

Although the development of the park has been completed, the citizens’ council has become a permanent fixture of Hamm and continues to be involved in policy and event planning for the park. The city succeeded in its mission of creating a park for the people and from the people. They continue their efforts in a neighborhood across town where they are working with residents and the mine owner to redevelop another former mine into a community hub for retail, residential, and shared working space.



HELSINKI, FINLAND



To ensure that the fast-growing immigrant youth population was well integrated, Helsinki used a human-centered design approach to rapidly prototype, pilot, and implement citywide programs and services.

Ismail Abdullahi was 18 and looking for a job without success. If your name doesn't sound Finnish, it can be difficult to get an interview in Helsinki. Especially if you don't have much experience to show on your resume.

Then, in May of 2016, Ismail secured his first shift with Job'd. The program helps young immigrants get work experience, pairing them with nonprofit organizations, individuals, and businesses to complete short work shifts, which are posted on an app called Treamer. Employers can post reviews on the app and users can gain access to training. The program helps participants like Ismail develop their resumes and the skills

needed to succeed in the workplace, as well as a network of contacts who can serve as references.

Some Job'd participants work with Helsinki veterans and senior citizens who need assistance getting around or completing household tasks. Others work at nonprofit organizations or, in Ismail's case, at the local mall.

Job'd partnered with Itis shopping mall to recruit Somali and Arabic speakers to staff the information desk and provide customer support. After his first shift, it was apparent to his manager that Ismail was responsible and hard working. He received high reviews, which helped

him get shifts at other organizations, including driving cars for the biggest bank in Finland.

With so much experience on his resume, Ismail was able to land a permanent job at Vantaa Airport in April 2017.

"The work experience I have received from Job'd and the mobile app has changed my life," he said. "I have learned a lot and would never have got this job without that experience."

PROBLEM

More than 14 percent of Helsinki's residents are immigrants, and this percentage is rising. At the same time, 25 percent of young immigrants are not enrolled in school or employed, which is a rate six times higher than those with Finnish backgrounds. Immigrant youth also have a higher risk of mental health problems and loneliness. As the immigrant population continues to grow, addressing these issues is vital to the city's future success and its goal to become the most functional city in the world.

STRATEGY

Helsinki used a human-centered design approach to develop citywide programs and services focused on immigrant youth, using their personal



experiences as the basis for new programs. The city assembled a 30-person design team that included youth workers, policy experts, citizen activists, and others, and formed an expert group of 10 young immigrants. The city worked with these teams to obtain information and feedback from immigrant communities and various stakeholders to help develop new initiatives, which were then tested over the course of a year.

IMPACT

The city prototyped and tested 13 pilots, resulting in the creation of five new programs: Buddyschool, an immigrant youth mentoring program; Job'd, a program that has helped 400 young immigrants gain over 15,000 hours of work, providing them with experience and recommendations that will help them gain future employment; a peer-based youth court that has served 300 young people; an outreach program that supports immigrant parents; and Make Some Noise, a leadership and public-speaking training program through which 16 immigrant youth have been trained to date. The programs are designed to be easily replicated across the city and the city continues to test and refine them with citizen input. Through this human-centered design process, the city is closer to becoming a city that works for everybody.

HUNTINGTON, WEST VIRGINIA



In response to a growing health crisis, the mayor of Huntington decided to engage citizens to create a healthier city. The city worked with residents to develop initiatives that fostered healthy choices and reduced the obesity rate.

Mayor Steve Williams likes to meet with his constituents often. During one of his visits to the student center at Marshall University, the students invited him to get his blood sugar checked. It was very high. With a little encouragement from the students, the mayor started taking steps to get healthier.

It was also students from Marshall University who came up with the idea for The Wild Ramp, the local food market run primarily by volunteers. The students first identified the lack of access to local, healthy food in parts of Huntington. They then worked with Create Huntington, a citizen group that also includes the mayor, to turn

the idea into a reality. In 2014, The Wild Ramp opened up in a building the city leases to them for a dollar a year.

The operation is still primarily run by volunteers with only a few paid positions. Since opening, The Wild Ramp has helped 145 local farmers sell their produce and expanded access to healthy food.

“When citizens come up with initiatives, we analyze if we have policy that contradicts this and overcome it,” said former City Manager Margaret Mary Layne. “We provide them resources and technical assistance to become successful.”

PROBLEM

In 2008, Huntington was in the midst of a health crisis. The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention gave the City of Huntington the lowest health rating of any metro area in the nation. This was compounded by severe economic distress, with rates of poverty and depression in Huntington exceeding 30 percent. In 2009, the Associated Press labeled the city as the fattest, most depressed, and unhealthiest city in the United States. After Jamie Oliver depicted residents as unhealthy and unable to change in his television show, *Food Revolution*, the city reached a tipping point and decided it was time to change the culture and get serious about health.

STRATEGY

Huntington developed a “hub-and-spoke” citizen-engagement approach to foster healthy living. The city serves as the hub for community stakeholders, businesses, academic institutions, hospitals, faith-based organizations, and citizens to develop ideas and projects. Activities include targeted publicity about health programs, leadership development, encouraging resident-led outreach, and training residents in community organizing and advocacy. The city has also helped cultivate a variety of citizen-grown initiatives in addition to providing resources and adopting policies to encourage healthy living.



IMPACT

Huntington’s health initiatives have resulted in a variety of outcomes, including the creation of a 36-mile fitness trail, improved waterfront access for residents, a peer-based addiction recovery center, and The Wild Ramp, a citizen-led farmers market that has expanded access to fresh, affordable food. The citywide adult obesity rate dropped from 49 percent in 2008 to 35 percent today. Thanks to the collaborative efforts of city leadership and citizens, Huntington is a far cry from the unhealthy, depressed city it was less than 10 years ago. The mayor’s prioritization of citizen participation in building a healthier city and the partnerships created as a result have formed a foundation for them to face an array of challenges — together.



MEXICO CITY, MEXICO



Mexico City created a citywide campaign to elicit citizen opinions and proposals for the city's new constitution using a citizen working group and online petitions. Many of the proposals were incorporated into the final constitution.

When Francisco Fontano heard about the process for the new constitution, he thought it was silly. "Nothing will happen," he thought, but he went ahead and submitted a proposal anyway. Using the Change.org platform, Francisco submitted a petition calling for a minimum area of greenspace per person in the city, an issue he was passionate about. Not long afterward, representatives from Change.org contacted him to help him refine and promote the proposal. He thought his petition might receive a few thousand signatures, but came home one day to find 14,000 people had signed on to support it. Eventually, his petition exceeded 50,000 signatures.

The next step was to meet with then-General Counsel Manuel Granados Covarriubias to discuss the proposal. "I started studying to give a proper presentation about my topic," he said. "I was so nervous." Little did he know that Mr. Granados was also nervous, unsure about what to expect from the process.

The meeting went very well. Francisco came away feeling that he was taken seriously, and Mr. Granados couldn't wait for the next meeting. "I thought we had a government that didn't pay attention," Francisco said. "They listened to me." A version of Francisco's proposal is now part of Mexico City's Constitution.

PROBLEM

Mexican citizens' trust in government was at a historic low. Nationally, only 6 percent of Mexicans were satisfied with their democratic system and just 2 percent of the population trusted their government. Though the federal government granted Mexico City the ability to create a city constitution, the process allowed for very little input from the people. Only 60 percent of the city's constitutional assembly was democratically elected and it was presumed that the draft would be made exclusively by the mayor. The fact that citizens were not initially given a seat at the table to draft their city's constitution further deteriorated their trust in government.

STRATEGY

In order to build trust, Mexico City leaders created a citywide campaign to collect citizen opinions and proposals for the city's constitution. The campaign included a survey called Imagina Tu Ciudad (Imagine Your City) that asked citizens about their hopes, fears, and ideas for the future of the city and garnered 31,000 submissions. The mayor also created a working group to draft the constitution, consisting of academics, activists, former mayors, and other citizens representing a diverse cross-section of the population. The draft was submitted to a constitutional assembly for final approval. The city also used Change.org to capture citizen petitions for the constitution. Petitions that received 10,000 signatures were presented to three representatives of the working group. Petitions that exceeded 50,000 signatures were presented directly to the mayor, who committed to including them in a draft of the constitution for approval by the constitutional assembly.



IMPACT

Citizens submitted 341 proposals, receiving over 400,000 votes. Four petitions surpassed the 50,000-signature threshold and 11 received 10,000 signatures. The new constitution, which goes into effect in September 2018, will include 14 articles based on citizen petitions. The rights outlined in the constitution now bolster a number of other efforts aimed at engaging citizens and transforming communities. These programs include Código para la Ciudad, working groups solving problems identified in the Imagina Tu Ciudad survey through technology and innovation; Peatoninos, a program that uses data to determine which neighborhoods have a high concentration of children but little greenspace, so the city can close off streets to create space for play and educational programs; and others. The democratization of the process led to a constitution that has been recognized by the United Nations as a "historical document that addresses the central challenges of development and peace" and as "a guide to fulfill the universal, indivisible and progressive nature of human rights." It has also increased trust and strengthened ties between citizens and local government.



SAN JOSÉ, CALIFORNIA



San José invited citizens to submit their solutions to some of the city's biggest challenges in a citywide competition. In the first year, the competition focused on graffiti removal and resulted in a drone prototype capable of removing graffiti in difficult-to-reach places.

When Chris Farmer learned about San José's Unleash Your Geek competition from an online mailing list, he didn't know how to build a drone or fly one. But he had an idea.

"As entrepreneurs, half the battle is finding someone who will use your idea," said Farmer. "The City of San José has stepped up and said, 'We will be the testing ground if you can bring the right idea.'"

One of 140 entrants into the competition, Farmer learned how to build a drone and got a license to fly it. He and his team prototyped the drone in his

living room, using Legos and bags of coins to test airflow and weight requirements.

The city wanted to make sure that their competition actually produced something useful and didn't just end with a good idea that never made it to production, so they partnered with the patent office, a startup incubator, and Caltrans, the California Department of Transportation.

"It's not just enabling innovation, but challenging us as a city to think differently about how we approach things," said Earl Sherman, Caltrans maintenance manager. Caltrans is now imagining

new uses for drones, such as surveying bridges. This highlights the potential for citizens to influence municipal operations beyond their initial engagement.

Farmer's drone won the competition and he is now working together with Caltrans to prototype a new version of the drone that will crawl up walls to safely and easily remove graffiti, saving the city money and time.

PROBLEM

More than 40 percent of the complaints to Caltrans are about graffiti, and it can cost as much as \$60,000 to shut down a highway and remove graffiti on a sign or overpass. Since 2011, the City of San José has spent upward of \$4 million on graffiti eradication. Despite these efforts, the city continues to receive an average of 2,400 graffiti removal requests from residents per month.

STRATEGY

San José launched Unleash Your Geek, a series of competitions that invited citizens to submit innovative solutions to some of the city's biggest challenges. The city partnered with several organizations on the initiative, including the California Department of Transportation, local nonprofits and universities, and the Silicon Valley U.S. Patent and Trademark Office, which provided participants with technical assistance in obtaining patents for their solutions. San José also engaged partners to help the winning team



develop and market its solution. In the first year, the competition focused on graffiti removal from areas that are difficult and expensive to reach, including overpasses, freeway signs, and tall buildings. The challenge resulted in 140 submissions from individuals, small businesses, corporations, and teams at local universities.

IMPACT

The winning graffiti removal submission was from a team, led by resident Chris Farmer, who built a prototype in their living room. They designed and equipped a drone to spray paint in hard-to-reach spots, where graffiti removal typically results in significant traffic disruptions. Early signs indicate the drone's ability to remove graffiti will make a big impact. When a local business owner allowed Farmer to practice using the drone on the back wall of her store, he reported that "she almost fell over with joy." The city is currently planning the second year of Unleash Your Geek, which will solicit tech innovations for flood detection.



SANTIAGO DE CALI, COLOMBIA



To combat a high level of violence, Santiago de Cali created local mesas, or councils, comprised of residents in 15 districts. The mesas launched a variety of community initiatives to build trust between neighbors, such as the rehabilitation of public parks and staging arts events, that helped lower conflict within the community.

Santa Rosa is a school located in Comuna 13, a district that includes some of the most dangerous neighborhoods in Cali. The area around the school was overgrown with weeds and poorly lit. Drug dealers recruited students from the school to use and sell drugs, and gang activity made it difficult to get to school safely.

The local mesa organized community members to clean up the green areas around the school that were covered in garbage from illegal dumping. They planted trees and flowers and

cut the grass. The city provided dump trucks to haul off the debris and put up fencing around the basketball court and garden. The mesa recruited ex-gang members to paint murals on walls surrounding the court, which were covered in graffiti.

Now the area is clean and well-lit, with flowers blooming around the school, and the city is working with gang members in the area to mediate conflict. As a result, drug activity has been reduced dramatically and the school and

surrounding area has become a safe place to gather in the neighborhood.

The graduation rate of the school has doubled, as fewer students are being recruited outside the school by gangs. “We’re stealing the workforce of the drug dealers,” said the school principal.

PROBLEM

In postwar Colombia, victims and former combatants have migrated to urban centers like Santiago de Cali, straining existing community relations and driving an increase in violence and conflict. In Cali, the homicide rate rose to more than 60 per 100,000 people, one of the highest in the world. Much of this conflict was due to small-scale drug trafficking and disputes between community members. Moreover, 60 percent of citizens expressed distrust in other people and 70 percent expressed a disinterest in civic participation. Many did not consider government institutions valid mediators for their conflicts.

STRATEGY

When Mayor Maurice Armitage was elected, his first priority was to reduce violence. He created La Secretaría de Paz y Cultura Ciudadana (Office of Peace and Civic Culture) and charged its staff with designing and implementing policies and programs for violence prevention, conflict resolution, and assuring human rights. Because trust in government was low, the office decided to empower citizens to help solve the problem of violence. The office developed local Mesas de Cultura Ciudadana para la Paz (Tables of Civic Culture and Peace), councils made up of citizens



who designed and implemented programs to build trust and reduce violence in their communities. The city supports the mesas with tools and supplies, such as grass cutters or trash bags, helps members request funding or supplies from city departments, and assists with planning and problem solving.

IMPACT

The mesas have begun to reclaim their neighborhoods from violence and drug activity. In less than two years, mesas have launched more than 200 community initiatives in 15 districts, and the impact of these efforts includes both immediate outputs like cleaner public spaces, as well as a stronger sense of unity in the neighborhoods and community pride.

The mesas have rehabilitated a number of areas that were previously used for drug activity and created campaigns to reduce illegal dumping. Mesas have organized soccer tournaments involving local youth, including former gang members. All participants sign a declaration of peace. Other mesas have started dance classes for at-risk youth, photography exhibits, and environmental education programs. These projects have engaged more than 450 citizens and benefited over 15,000 residents to date.

There is evidence that this strategy is helping to create a safer, more cohesive society. Between 2016 and 2017, the homicide rate dropped by 4.9 percent, resulting in the lowest number of homicides in 25 years. The number of people involved in the mesas continues to grow, as does the sense of a shared vision for the city and its future among the residents of Cali.

TULSA, OKLAHOMA



Tulsa brought city staff and citizens together to analyze data that helped them create policies and programs to address local challenges, such as income disparity and crime.

Mayor G. T. Bynum believes that data can help cities make better decisions and unite people. “I ran for mayor on a platform of utilizing data evidence and evaluations not just to improve city services,” he explains, “but as a way of pulling together people who might normally not agree with one another.”

But he had another challenge: when he entered office, he was in the middle of a budget year and his staff did not have the expertise or capacity to fully utilize the data to inform decision-making. Fortunately, Tulsa has a growing tech industry and a number of citizens who were eager to contribute. The mayor’s Performance Strategy and Innovation team established Urban Data

Pioneers and put out a call for citizens, including city employees, to join the team.

The teams of city hall staff and citizens have delved deeply into the data, largely in their own free time, to create tools and make recommendations that are being used to inform policy and shed light on entrenched problems.

And it’s already changing how the city does business. For years, the city had been using only pavement quality to evaluate and prioritize street improvements. An Urban Data Pioneers team created a new set of criteria that includes street safety and traffic to better prioritize improvements. The team also analyzed the

causes of car crashes at intersections around the city. The new criteria and research will be used to guide many of the improvements included in a half-billion-dollar capital campaign the city is launching next year.

“These are folks that may not want to ever run for office, but they want to help build a better community,” explains Mayor Bynum. “They might be voting for different candidates for president, but they agree that we want to have fewer car accidents in Tulsa, they agree that we want to have safer neighborhoods, they agree that it makes sense to consider more factors in our streets than just the current condition of a street that was built four years ago.”

PROBLEM

Tulsa wanted to be a data driven city. The city had hundreds of data sets that could help them grow per capita income, increase population, reduce violent crime, and address other challenges. But they did not have staff with the sufficient expertise to analyze the data for insights it might provide, or the capacity to harness the skills of those who did. They needed a way to source additional talent from outside city hall.

STRATEGY

The mayor’s Performance Strategy and Innovation team established Urban Data Pioneers, a group of citizens and city hall staff to analyze data and inform decision-making. The city brought teams of city employees from various departments together with community members for 10 weeks and provided training, access to data sets, and physical and online



meeting spaces to help them dig into data and gain a thorough understanding of a variety of challenges facing Tulsa. The teams then presented their findings and suggested next steps to department heads and other staff in city hall.

IMPACT

Urban Data Pioneers helped the city effectively use data to identify and solve problems ranging from traffic incidents to blight. Data analysis demonstrated a connection between blight and violent crime, so the city developed a tool that city employees and citizens can use to inventory blighted properties and take action. The city hopes to use this information to proactively deploy police. Another group has examined the connection between education and per capita income, which has led to initiatives aimed at increasing reading proficiency and helping students apply for financial aid.

The program has fostered collaboration between departments in city hall and created new opportunities for city staff to work smarter, using data and the new skills they gain in the process. Urban Data Pioneers now includes more than 120 data scientists, technical professionals, city staff, and representatives from nonprofit organizations. These teams have delved into the data to help the city address more than a dozen public problems. Urban Data Pioneers has broken down barriers between local government and residents, bringing citizens into government to help build a stronger city.

ABOUT CITIES OF SERVICE



Cities of Service builds stronger cities by changing the way local government and citizens work together.

We know that citizens are a source of insight, creativity, and talent that can help city leadership solve public problems. Cities of Service helps mayors and city leadership connect and collaborate with citizens to create better places to live, work, and play.

With a data-driven focus on creating measurable results, Cities of Service counsels city leaders and their staff; brings leadership together to share best practices, expand networks, and deepen relationships; and provides cities with expert technical assistance and proven resources. Founded in 2009, Cities of Service now supports a coalition of 240 cities, representing nearly 70 million people in 45 U.S. states, and more than 10 million people in the U.K.

LOVE YOUR BLOCK *How a Cities of Service Signature Program Creates Stronger Cities*

Since 2009, Cities of Service has helped dozens of cities implement Love Your Block, a signature program that teams city leaders with citizens to tackle blighted properties, clean up neglected areas, and create community gathering spaces — block by block.

With financial support and technical assistance from Cities of Service, cities provide small grants to community groups for neighborhood revitalization projects. More than 10,000 volunteers have been engaged to remove over 480,000 pounds of trash, clean up nearly 600 lots, and create more than 180 art displays, in addition to numerous other community projects.

The program also improves the quality of life for city residents in other long-term ways.

A recent Urban Institute study of Love Your Block found that the connections the program forges between city leaders and citizens can also be a catalyst for further action and engagement from residents. Neighborhood participants feel empowered to reach out to city officials, while city officials report that the projects give them a way to build relationships with vulnerable neighborhoods.

“It’s a two-way relationship,” said a citizen involved in a park cleanup in Phoenix. “I don’t feel like we’re bugging the city; they’re coming to us, as well, to create solutions directly related to services.”

From the basic benefits of knowing whom to call in city hall with a problem to forming relationships in the community with neighbors, Love Your Block leads to better city government and stronger cities.

CITIZEN-SOURCED DATA *The Newest Cities of Service Resource Helps Cities Ensure that Everyone is Counted*

In many cities, due to the high cost of living, thousands of residents live in converted garages or with multiple families in single family homes.

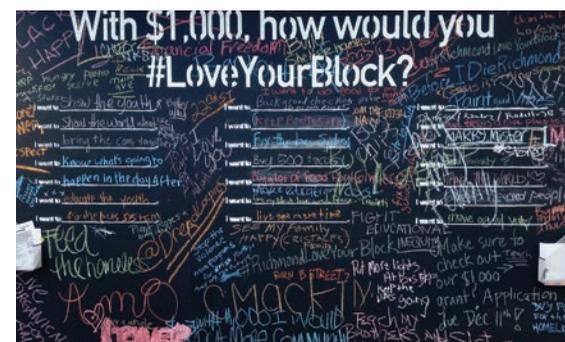
As the 2020 Census approaches, cities need to identify these hidden residences and ensure residents are counted, or they could lose millions

of dollars in federal funding. It’s a big job, and city staff can’t do it on their own. Cities of Service is helping cities solve this problem with citizen-sourced data.

Working with the city of San José, Cities of Service piloted an address-mapping initiative with the help of citizens. The initiative enabled citizen volunteers to quickly record the location of low-visibility dwellings via a text-messaging tool. Citizens looked for signs like multiple satellite dishes or curtains on garage windows, and then sent a text message to a designated phone number which responded with a series of questions to describe the dwelling. Those residences were then added to the address list used by census workers. This could make a big difference for the city, which estimates a loss of up to \$20 million in federal funding a year due to uncounted residents.

Cities of Service helped coordinate partners and created a guide called Citizen-Sourced Data in Your City, so the program can be replicated in other cities. Cities of Service also offered webinars to share best practices around using citizen-sourced data for a variety of needs with other city leaders.

The program has attracted the attention of media outlets, including *The New York Times*, and other cities. Detroit and Salt Lake City are already implementing similar census count programs with help from Cities of Service to ensure everyone is counted.



Love Your Block and Citizen-Sourced Data are just two examples of many programs and resources offered by Cities of Service to help cities engage their citizens to create better city government. Learn more at citiesofservice.org.

Cities of Service works with city leaders every day to help them build stronger cities by engaging more effectively with their citizenry. After nearly a decade of helping cities address issues ranging from neighborhood revitalization to disaster preparedness, we are intimately familiar with the day-to-day challenges that city leaders face.

We created the Engaged Cities Award because we wanted to expand and deepen our knowledge about the work happening in cities, to bring even more strategies for effective problem-solving with citizens to our coalition. We knew there were many good ideas out there, and we were not disappointed.

Together with their citizens, the 10 finalists for the inaugural Engaged Cities Award are creating better budgets, healthier communities, and safer drivers. They're remaking the physical and cultural landscape of their cities, integrating newcomers, reducing violence, and rewriting policy, often with small budgets or no budget at all.

This collaboration at the local level is essential. We know that when citizens and city leaders focus on concrete challenges, not only do they solve public problems, but they build trust — between government and residents, and between neighbors. This trust leads to real, lasting change in communities. And it can break down barriers that are detrimental to healthy democracy.

Over the next year, Cities of Service will share these Engaged Cities' ideas and strategies with our coalition cities to help them address the myriad challenges they face. Together, we are creating a roadmap to stronger cities and better government, built upon President Lincoln's belief that "government of the people, by the people, for the people, shall not perish from the earth."

We hope you'll continue on this journey with us.

Thank you,



Myung J. Lee
Executive Director
Cities of Service

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