

## The Community Challenge

Detroit, MI

November 10-11, 2010

## overview

*Imagine a city where every citizen enjoyed public amenities of choice, engaged actively in the decisions affecting their community, shaped their community with their citizenship and volunteer commitments, and shared public space joyfully with others. How can citizens' attachment to their community be solidified by their ability to engage in a robust public life? What would that vision look like for cities throughout the country and what can we do now to realize it?*

These are some of the questions we will tackle as part of the Community Challenge. It is one of five big challenges that are part of a national initiative spearheaded by CEOs for Cities and its network of partners in 45 of America's largest communities. We call it the US Initiative – an initiative to build and sustain the next generation of great American cities that are of, by and for *us*.

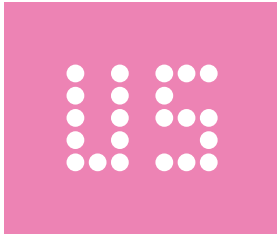
The Community Challenge will gather experts from the fields of citizen engagement, public policy activism, volunteerism, technology, government and citizen-led civic production to share knowledge and, informed by their diverse points of view, develop a new understanding of what a contemporary robust public life looks like, what attracts people to it, what it ought to deliver (its purpose and its value to individuals and to communities), how it should be evaluated and how we get more of it.

Using Microsoft TownHall, we intend to offer virtual engagement in the Community Challenge to our network of more than 215 of today's urban leaders as well as to our broader sphere of influence vis-à-vis our weekly e-newsletter, ReThink, which has a distribution of more than 2300 and through our Twitter followers, which number more than 1200. The five categories we intend to explore using TownHall are:

1. Robust Public Life
2. Social Offerings
3. Openness
4. Aesthetics
5. Demonstration Projects

These categories reflect the critical role of attachment and its drivers based on the findings of the Knight Foundation/Gallup Soul of the Community poll. These drivers will be central to this new understanding of what accounts for a robust public life since attachment to community underpins the rationale for participation in public life broadly defined and the drivers provide places to “push” to get more of it.

By the end of the challenge, participants will have developed a set of 12 big ideas to foster a robust public life that increase attachment by amplifying community attachment drivers; produced a quick start strategy detailing what needs to be done in the next 18-36 months to make meaningful progress toward fostering a robust public life; and identified some quick wins that can build momentum. Recommendations to urban leaders will amplify community attachment drivers, with a particular focus on concepts that can be produced through citizen-centered activities, such as crowdsourcing, DIY or pop-up. Our bias will be to acknowledge that we can work on building a robust public life simultaneously bottom up (concept generation and production) and top down (encouraging and enabling).



## Creating cities that are of, by and for *us*

CEOs for Cities is launching the US Initiative now for one reason: We continue to build too many of our communities – physically, economically, and socially – on an outdated set of beliefs. This is expensive, wasteful and puts us way over due for a new version of the American dream.

The purpose of the US Initiative is to bring into very clear focus how communities can deliver on five big (very big) ambitions that, together, can define a new American dream.

We hold these values to be self-sustaining:

- Livability** We will all have access to beauty, art and nature every day.
- Community** We can all participate in a robust public life.
- Connectivity** We can meet our daily needs without owning a car.
- Opportunity** We will develop all of our talent and put all of our talent to work.
- Optimism** We believe that the future can be better for each of us and all of us.

The US Initiative is:

- 200+ civic partners across
- 45 cities committed to a
- 5 year campaign to innovate the future of cities through
- 6 rallying “Brain Trust” events, celebrating the work of
- 52 innovators changing the urban condition at
- 5 Local Challenges to bring new thinking into action inviting
- 1000’s of people to create new images of the future collected in
- 1 book documenting the movement and digitized available to
- 1,000,000’s of people interested in the future through the web