Dialogue and Deliberation for Civic Engagement in Chicago: Building a Community of Practice

Principal Investigator:
Janice Thomson
(Public Engagement Specialist)

With assistance from:
Joe Hoereth (IPCE)
Katie James (IPCE)
Norma Ramos (IPCE)

November 2012

Dialogue and Deliberation for Civic Engagement in Chicago: Building a Community of Practice

University of Illinois at Chicago
College of Urban Planning & Public Affairs
Institute for Policy and Civic Engagement (IPCE)

Janice Thomson - Public Engagement Specialist
Independent Consultant - Chicago, Illinois

UIC UNIVERSITY OF ILLINOIS AT CHICAGO Institute for Policy and Civic Engagement
COLLEGE OF URBAN PLANNING & PUBLIC AFFAIRS

I. INTRODUCTION

The Institute for Policy and Civic Engagement (IPCE) at the University of Illinois at Chicago (UIC) is exploring how it might best help broaden and deepen the engagement of Chicago-area residents in public policy and community issues — particularly at the neighborhood, city, and county levels. The Institute is interested in understanding how processes involving *dialogue and deliberation*[1] might support this goal and the opportunities that might exist to further develop them. IPCE commissioned this report specifically to better understand the kinds of organizations that engage in dialogue and/or deliberation, the methods they use, the rationale behind those methods, and the results of their work. In addition, the report sought to identify local support services for this work (e.g., training, funding, public spaces), as well as laws and regulations governing its use.

This report is motivated by three purposes 1) to provide a survey or a 'lay of the land' of the dialogue and deliberation field: the who, what and how of dialogue and deliberation in Chicago; 2) to create a resource for dialogue and deliberation organizations and practitioners as a first step of building a dialogue and deliberation community of practice in Chicago; and 3) to inform IPCE about the role it can play in supporting and promoting dialogue and deliberation in Chicago. The hope is that this report will inform, stimulate further discussion, and potentially encourage cooperation among local dialogue and deliberation practitioners, sponsors, conveners, and other interested parties.

The scope of this report centers on dialogue and deliberation engagement with residents as citizens, neighbors, or parents for example, rather than professional roles as representatives of interest groups (i.e., public rather than stakeholder engagement). This is an important distinction; however, roles can overlap, so the report considers some stakeholder processes as well. Geographically, the focus is mostly on Chicago and Cook County, although it also considers interesting projects in nearby counties, as well as national projects with local components. In terms of topic, initiatives touching on public policy and/or local community issues are the main focus — such as education, urban planning, or diversity. Specifically excluded are efforts where dialogue and deliberation are not central, such as voter education and citizen lobbying. The report does not comprehensively identify every effort using these

[1] There is no common language used in Chicago to describe what is referred to here as dialogue and deliberation. This report uses definitions developed by the National Coalition for Dialogue and Deliberation (NCDD). "Dialogue is a process that allows people, usually in small groups, to share their perspectives and experiences with one another... (it) can and often does lead to personal and collaborative action. Deliberation is a closely related process that emphasizes the importance of examining options and trade-offs to make better decisions." Some examples in practice include conversation cafés, study circles, citizen advisory councils, charettes, participatory town hall meetings, appreciative inquiry, community visioning workshops, and restorative circles.

approaches, but rather develops a sense of scope and scale of use, as well as identifies key players and initiatives in Chicago.

II. APPROACH

Research began with a review of secondary sources using the MARC online database, Participedia, NCDD archives, archives of the Journal of Public Deliberation and the International Journal of Public Participation, internet and twitter searches (e.g., #demopart, #edem), Empowered Participation by Archon Fung, Talking About Race by Katherine Cramer Walsh, and Imagine Chicago: Ten Years of Imagination in Action by Bliss Browne and Shilpa Jain. This yielded preliminary ideas and an initial list of organizations and projects to explore.

On June 21, 2012, IPCE hosted an exploratory group discussion among 10 local dialogue and deliberation practitioners and academics to provide guidance for the scan — e.g., how to define the topic, how the local political and cultural context might impact these processes, potential opportunity areas, and additional organizations and people to contact.

This was followed by 38 individual interviews conducted in person, by phone, via Skype, and occasionally via e-mail with a range of people involved in dialogue and deliberation in Chicago on diverse topics and using varied approaches. Interviewees were asked about specific projects, methodologies, training, laws, challenges, engaging marginalized communities, local issues ripe for dialogue and deliberation, and especially how IPCE could support this work. Including the 10 participants in the initial discussion, the 48 individuals who contributed information to this report are facilitators, consultants, funders, planners, community organizers, educators, researchers, journalists, librarians, software designers, government watchdogs, lawyers, and civil servants (*See Acknowledgements and Appendix A: questionnaire).* The report is a synthesis of learning from all of these sources. To protect anonymity, no individuals have been quoted. The work of some organizations is described, although those descriptions may include information from multiple sources.

III. THE CURRENT STATE OF DIALOGUE AND DELIBERATION IN CHICAGO

Chicago's history is marked by a contrast between an entrenched political structure and a culture of community organizing and protest. Chicagoans are known more for organizing and demanding action, rather than for engaging in dialogue and deliberation. Given this history, it is easy to think that little meaningful dialogue and deliberation happens in Chicago with residents on community or public policy issues.

However, this in-depth investigation unearthed many dialogue and deliberation initiatives throughout the city and surrounding region that use a wide range of methods, focus on a variety of topics, and are sponsored by a great

diversity of organizations. Most of the practitioners involved in these initiatives are unaware of each other. Few know that a large and growing national (and international) dialogue and deliberation community of practice exists. This growing community of practice shares learning and support resources, spreads the use of dialogue and deliberation techniques, and ultimately seeks to develop wiser, more inclusive, and more sustainable solutions to community needs.

Most local initiatives have been modeled on specific projects borrowing from best practices in other cities. Other initiatives have been invented from scratch to meet a specific organizational need, to fulfill an organization's mission, or to solve a specific problem. There is little sense of these initiatives being part of a broader movement to revitalize local community by empowering citizens.

The existence of many efforts involving dialogue and/or deliberation in the city is encouraging, but the fact that they are isolated from one another makes them vulnerable. Clusters of similar initiatives have developed in the city, such as the numerous dialogue projects in cultural institutions and service organizations. However, when they are isolated, as was the case in the 1970s and 1980s with deliberative ward-level citizen assemblies, they can easily be eliminated when political or organizational leadership changes. The more initiatives active in the city, and the more they are identified as using similar approaches, then the more embedded such methods will become — until they simply become part of how communities function.

Currently, there is no entity in the city that is supporting the widespread adoption of dialogue and deliberation among residents and especially making the case for its use to government, funders, and non-profit organizations. Such an entity could play a critical role in embedding a cultural of dialogue and deliberation in Chicago. Before exploring what a real culture of dialogue and deliberation may look like in Chicago, it's helpful to first take a closer look at what exists now.

A. Four Streams of Engagement in Chicago

As processes for assisting groups of people to share perspectives and experiences as well as examine options and trade-offs, dialogue and deliberation methods can be used for a range of purposes. The National Coalition for Dialogue and Deliberation (NCDD) has synthesized the endless variety of methodologies, based on their primary purpose, into four engagement streams*:* 1) exploration, 2) decision-making, 3) collaborative action, and 4) conflict transformation *(see Appendix B)*. While this framework was designed to organize *methodologies*, not organizations, and the same organization can and often does use methods from different streams, it does serve as a simple way to understand the large and highly diverse field in Chicago.

1. Exploration — Humanities, Arts and Culture, Media

Exploratory approaches encourage residents to learn more about themselves, their community, and/or an issue, and possibly discover innovative solutions. These approaches help residents unpack complex issues often obscured by popular media. Residents share stories and listen to those who may be very different from themselves. Some use the arts and humanities (e.g., literature, film, visual arts) as a springboard to dialogue. Others start with provocative questions. While dialogue processes may be prompted by urgent community or public policy needs and sometimes do result in concrete actions, their goal is not to reach a consensus on an issue or craft policy recommendations. Rather, through these processes, participants develop skills in respectfully listening to others and considering diverse viewpoints. In a sense, they help build the foundations upon which vibrant communities can take shape and democracies function to support the well-being of all.

These approaches are perhaps the most developed and widespread use of dialogue and deliberation in the city. Driven by a need among local residents for meaningful conversation and connection with others, such initiatives have grown steadily in the city for the past decade. Local service organizations and professional groups have adopted exploratory approaches to clarify the purpose of their work. Local artists have used them to transform art from entertainment to be consumed into a vehicle for exploring community issues. Local media have used them to uncover fresh voices and new perspectives, challenging journalists to source stories and set agendas by open-mindedly listening to ordinary residents. Local cultural museums, humanities councils, libraries, and popular educators have used them to fulfill their core missions. The following is a closer look at some specific organizations and kinds of groups doing this work in the city.

The Illinois Humanities Council, a non-governmental, not-for-profit organization, hosts dialogue events, provides guidance to other organizations, and funds small dialogue projects in Illinois. Providing opportunities for quality public dialogue and encouraging the development of a culture that values conversation is part of its core mission. Its Public Square program provides a forum for marginalized voices in Chicago, from Civic Cinema film screenings followed by discussion to targeted neighborhood art and conversation events to weekly Café Society small group discussions on cultural, social, and political issues. Café Society also offers "do-it-yourself" discussion guides and facilitation training to local students, librarians, service clubs, and residents. Its Odyssey program of humanities courses for low-income adults uses dialogue as its core teaching method. It gains inspiration primarily from other state humanities councils and cooperation with the local cultural community.

The Project on Civic Reflection (PCR) is a rarity in the city. It is the only nationally recognized organization headquartered in Chicago that provides training, process design, consulting, mentoring, and facilitation of civic dialogue. Although it works nationwide, many of its projects are local. Its method of "civic reflection" uses an object

(e.g., literature, video, facts) to stimulate discussion to clarify residents' thinking, build community, and encourage commitment around an issue. To encourage the spread of dialogue in the city, PCR offers 3-5 two-day long public training sessions in Chicago each year that focus on its own method, but participants also learn general facilitation skills applicable to other contexts. Many groups sponsoring citizen dialogue of the "exploratory" type in the city seem to have worked with PCR in some capacity — from WBEZ to the Chicago Public Library to the Chicago Cultural Alliance. Its success points to the importance of *local* "civic entrepreneurs" in facilitating the spread of and creating a culture that supports dialogue and deliberation.

Cultural and historical museums and societies in Chicago are increasingly incorporating dialogue into their public programming as part of becoming "centers of civic engagement." The Chicago Cultural Alliance, a consortium of the city's ethnic museums and cultural centers, has built on dialogue programs originally developed by Field Museum anthropologists in their Cultural Connections program. In 2010, for instance, they launched a "Talking About..." series of panel discussions and group dialogue using the PCR model where member organizations convene public conversations both within and between ethnic communities on topics such as health, immigration, identity, youth, and the environment. By focusing on ethnic communities, they also importantly teach civic dialogue skills to immigrants from cultures where publicly sharing opinions is discouraged. On the UIC campus, The Jane Adams Hull House Museum and Centers for Cultural Understanding and Social Change (e.g., the Latino Cultural Center) use public dialogue to fulfill their core missions — such as the former's "Re-Thinking Soup" luncheon conversations on the social, cultural, economic, and environmental implications of food.

Libraries nationwide are promoting civic engagement by convening deliberative dialogue with residents on community and public policy issues. To encourage this, the American Library Association (ALA), which is headquartered in Chicago, has created a Center for Civic Life with the Kettering Foundation and the National Issues Forum (NIF) to provide training and support to librarians in this work. However, although the Chicago Public Library (CPL) branch library system is considered a model of neighborhood engagement, the CPL itself does not sponsor community deliberative dialogue, with the exceptions of its "One City, One Book" program and a 2010 Engage! initiative to promote youth civic engagement via art-based dialogue. Such activity seems to be limited to suburban libraries. For example, the Skokie Public Library sponsors regular Café Society conversations. In the mid-2000s, the Des Plaines Public Library, after receiving training from the local National Issues Forum (NIF)-affiliate, used NIF approaches to convene multiple deliberative community dialogues on local issues.

The large and vibrant local arts community provides a tremendous number of opportunities to Chicagoans for public dialogue related to community and public policy issues. Over the past decade, dialogue has become increasingly a part of arts events in the city — from film screenings followed by discussion to visual arts exhibits featuring dialogue

events to community storytelling gatherings. To provide spaces for this, a number of "art and dialogue" venues have popped up throughout the city — such as Center Portion and Art in These Times in Logan Square and 6018 North in Edgewater. Community theater groups, such as the Albany Park Theater Project, both source stories from within their communities and follow performances with community conversations on their themes — like undocumented immigrants and public schools. Chicagoans also share their stories in live venues like Grown Folks Stories at the Silver Room in Wicker Park and through verse journalism in readings citywide facilitated by the Neighborhood Writing Alliance. Local filmmakers, like the Chicago-based production company the Kindling Group, specifically create films to engage communities in dialogue.

Perhaps the most surprising and potentially powerful use of public "exploratory" dialogue in the city comes from Chicago public radio station WBEZ, which has become a national community engagement innovator. WBEZ began by simply recording community events for its Chicago Amplified program, primarily distributed online via podcast. It has since evolved into a convener of public dialogue, both to fulfill its core mission to "connect people to each other and the world around them" and to improve its journalism. It has facilitated small group discussions in its neighborhood bureaus on topics such as racism and education, convened CPS staff, students, and parents for a dialogue on power in classrooms, rented cinemas for film-based discussion, and partnered with many community-based organizations to create events and programs that feature voices of ordinary residents. It is increasingly challenging its journalists to move beyond the "expert-driven news model" and listen to community conversations to bring in fresh, authentic voices and perspectives, identify untold stories, reframe issues, and perhaps ultimately to set news agendas from the bottom up. Such approaches have propelled Canadian Broadcasting Corporation (CBC) radio and television in Toronto to #1 in its market and are supported in public media by the National Center for Media Engagement headquartered in Madison, WI. Part of what makes this particularly powerful is the reach of WBEZ, with 600,000 listeners and 40,000 e-newsletter subscribers.

Chicago has also seen local entrepreneurial dialogue initiatives like Across the Table (currently on hiatus) which organized facilitated small-group dinner conversation throughout the city on current issues — all designed to bring together residents of diverse cultural backgrounds to explore an important community issue. Hillel at Northwestern University in Evanston initiated a monthly dialogue series called Ask Big Questions, since adopted nationwide, which likewise brings together diverse groups of students for meaningful conversation. Numerous informal small group discussions, sometimes touching on community and/or political issues, regularly take place in book groups, meet-ups, social clubs, and religious institutions throughout the city. In addition, many issue-oriented groups incorporate dialogue into their programming, such as the Chicago Council on Global Affairs use of discussions with local cultural communities to explore the local impact of global issues (e.g., Mexicans living in Chicago) or Archeworks community design school's cinema and dialogue series on waste disposal.

2. Decision-Making — Government, Planners and Technical Experts, Civic Education

The purpose of decision-making processes is to influence public decisions and public policy and to improve public knowledge. At the city and county levels, decision-making processes can be related to the provision of public services such as public education, policing, and community health care. Resident input is also sought for the management of common natural resources like watersheds, design of basic infrastructure like transportation, and fiscal/regulatory policy related to issues such as economic development and government budgets. These approaches may include "exploratory" dialogue elements, but tend to be more deliberative and strive to reach consensus on a specific recommendation. Many decision-making processes are required by law, particularly those tied to funds from the federal government. Others have been adopted voluntarily to better serve communities or improve the democratic quality of decision-making.

When exploring processes related to decision-making, it is helpful to keep in mind the Spectrum of Public Engagement *(See Appendix C)* developed by the International Association of Public Participation (IAP2). This classifies processes by how much decision-making power is given to residents — from none ("inform") to providing input ("consult") to integrating input into options for deliberation ("involve") to active partnership ("collaborate") to direct decision-making ("empower"). Regardless of what a process is called (i.e., consultation, dialogue, public hearing, workshop), the vast majority of public engagement by local city and county government entities is, in fact, at the lowest level of "inform" and contains no meaningful dialogue or deliberation. In fact, in Chicago, "consultations" by city government often only take place after a decision has already been made. Much of the remaining public engagement in the city collects public input to feed into plans to guide decision-making and is typically filtered through technical experts. Community policing (CAPS) and especially Local School Councils (LSCs) in theory allow residents and decision-makers to "collaborate," although this is rarely true in practice. Only participatory budgeting, as well as local initiatives and local referendums meet the spectrum's definition of "empower".

Both the governmental structures and the political culture in Illinois make meaningful deliberative public engagement in decision-making challenging. As compared to other states, Illinois has an extraordinarily large number of distinct units of government — e.g., municipalities, townships, special tax districts, park districts, school districts, water reclamation districts, mosquito abatement districts, etc. Each has its own governing structure and decision-making timelines. While this has allowed some innovation involving dialogue and deliberation with residents at a very small scale, it can limit the pooling of resources and expertise necessary to support meaningful and sustained deliberative public engagement throughout government. State laws impacting public engagement have been largely limited to requirements for transparency and public comment. In addition, the state has long trailed behind other parts of the country in even basic forms of public consultation, for example, only recently holding its first open public hearings on

redistricting.

Furthermore, Illinois politics has long been seen as a business, resulting in political corruption throughout all levels of government. In the city of Chicago, decision-making has been traditionally characterized by an entrenched political structure with a strong mayor and strong party politics. In such a political system, there has been a history of limited public consultation on local government issues. Nevertheless, there has been some innovation in deliberative public engagement in the city and surrounding areas — particularly at the neighborhood (ward) level, in small townships and villages, and within some planning and technical expert organizations.

The City of Chicago and Cook County

The recent elections of a new Chicago mayor and Cook County board president have ushered in hope in the possibility of new types of relationships between local government and residents. To date, the City of Chicago's public engagement efforts have largely focused on information sharing and gathering resident input, but a new model of two-way dialogue or deliberation with residents is yet to be revealed. The City has used technology to improve transparency (e.g., city's data sharing website), engage residents in practical ways to improve public services (e.g., Chicago Shovels), and to gather resident input. The city has used online crowdsourcing software on several occasions, such as to gather budget-cutting ideas and questions for Facebook town halls. Although certainly innovative, the impact of these processes on decision-making is not yet clear. In July 2012, the City also announced a new Office of Public Engagement, but has yet to publically define its goals and activities.

Previous Chicago mayors have experimented with using dialogue and deliberation in their public engagement. For instance, in the 1980s, Mayor Harold Washington sought to expand citizen participation using methods such as participatory community development planning workshops and even trained city officials to facilitate participatory meetings. Early in his administration, Mayor Richard M. Daley also supported citizen participation and sponsored open public meetings with city officials. Unfortunately, these were ineffective processes and were ultimately abandoned.

Cook County Board President Toni Preckwinkle and Mayor Rahm Emanuel have expressed desire to innovate government by placing a value on engaging the public. Both Emanuel and Preckwinkle have reached out to businesses, non-profits, and philanthropies in deliberative stakeholder forums for new ideas of how to deliver public services and meet resident needs but resident engagement has been limited to traditional town hall meetings.

Multiple city departments occasionally seek public input to develop policy plans for their areas of responsibility, especially those tied to federal funding where public involvement is legally required. Recent examples include the

Chicago Department of Transportation's public consultations to develop a Chicago Bike Plan, Chicago Pedestrian Plan, and CTA modifications, the Chicago Department of Public Health's efforts to develop a Chicago Food Plan, the Chicago Department of Cultural Affairs consultations to create a Chicago Cultural Plan, and the Chicago Climate Action Plan. The impact of some of these public input processes on the plans is unclear. There is debate about the degree of deliberation, the extent of engagement, and the actual amount of resident input involved. In some cases these challenges may have hindered resident acceptance and agency implementation of the plans.

One example that stands out as a quality public consultation process is the design of the Chicago Cultural Plan (CCP). It was unusually effective at generating meaningful public involvement. The CCP public meetings combined entertainment and consultation, framed questions to spark innovative thinking, and included extensive outreach to diverse communities. This model could be replicated in other dialogue processes. Importantly, this is an example of how one "stream" can influence others -- in this case "exploratory dialogue" in the arts and humanities influencing "decision-making". Since few public officials receive training or support in designing and facilitating public engagement, they tend to copy what they see around them. This cross fertilization is to be encouraged.

Of all public services, education and policing are perhaps of greatest concern to Chicago residents. Significant reforms that empowered residents using dialogue and deliberation (i.e., Local School Councils [LSCs] and Chicago Alternative Policing Strategy [CAPS]) were adopted in the late 1980s and early 1990s under conditions strikingly similar to today: high CPS student failure rates and teacher strikes, crime waves and rampant homicides. Neither effort ever worked quite as its original community promoters intended, although both were improvements over previous top-down approaches. However, over time, most of the decision-making power given to LSCs and facilitation/training support given to residents in both programs were removed.

CAPS was originally intended by community advocates including groups such as Chicago Alliance for Neighborhood Safety (CANS), as a way to empower residents to get the city resources needed to strengthen their communities and address underlying systemic causes of crime. Instead, CAPS divided Chicago's 77 communities into tiny segments (279 beats) and limited subject matter to what police officers could do within each beat. Although there are a few early examples of residents who, assisted by CANS-trained facilitators, did work together to identify recurring crime problems and proactively used city resources to address their causes (e.g., cleaning up problem parks), CAPS has primarily been a method for police to collect complaints which they address with traditional police tactics. Not only are there no mechanisms to address underlying community issues contributing to crime, but CAPS prevents residents from seeking solutions to city or community-wide policing and crime issues. While designed to empower residents, CAPS may have ironically disempowered them by limiting their scope of action. However, the Chicago Superintendent of Police Garry McCarthy talks about the importance of public engagement. The CPD appears to now

be exploring alternative forms of public engagement, including partnering with the violence intervention group CeaseFire (which is now called Cure Violence).

The Chicago Public Schools (CPS) created a special Family and Community Engagement (FACE) office to proactively listen and respond to community concerns and enlist the participation of families and community stakeholders in dialogue pertaining to the quality of schools and improvement of educational choices. An important FACE innovation, the only one of its kind nationwide, was the creation of eight Community Action Councils (CACs), which encompass multiple communities on the South and West sides where many schools are on probation. Composed of 20-30 stakeholders whose monthly meetings draw upwards of 50 additional community members, CACs study the performance of schools and needs of residents in their communities, including via public dialogues facilitated in the America Speaks' 21st Century Town Hall Meeting style with both community and youth. CACs created broad strategic plans to improve public schooling in their communities (e.g., by introducing International Baccalaureate and specialty programs), as well as promoted small-scale community engagement efforts (e.g., parent universities, safety initiatives). Unfortunately, frequent changes in CPS leadership have limited the implementation of the CACs' strategic recommendations. However, this well-intentioned initiative still offers potential to improve resident trust in CPS if it improves open discussion of policy decisions, in particular those related to school closures.

Chicago ward-level initiatives

Historically, some of the most deliberative public engagement initiatives in the city have been initiated by city aldermen at the neighborhood or ward level. Many Chicago neighborhoods function like close-knit villages with the alderman as the politician closest to residents. For example, between 1967 and 1981, now UIC professor Dick Simpson experimented with participatory election campaigns and as 44th Ward Alderman used participatory forms of neighborhood governance. Some of these methods then spread nationally via the National Association of Neighborhoods and the now-defunct National Council of Neighborhoods -- such as a Hispanic Ward Assembly, Community Zoning Board, and Traffic Council. These methods were eventually phased out however, some processes, such as zoning boards, continue today.

More recently, aldermen such as Tunney (44), Cappleman (46), and Osterman (48) have deliberated with citizens to develop ward "master plans" to guide their work. Although they have mostly involved organizational stakeholders, Osterman involved residents via methods such as a community world café. Other aldermen, such as Harris (8) and Harriston (5), have created atypically participatory town hall meetings. Inspired by the earlier work of Dick Simpson, Alderman Pawar (47) recently created a ward council. A ward council is composed of representatives of block clubs who regularly meet to provide guidance to the alderman on city policy and community issues.

A new ward-level initiative that has drawn international attention is Alderman Moore's (Ward 49) 2009 adoption of

participatory budgeting to allocate the ward's infrastructure "menu money" for roads, parks, lights, etc. Participatory budgeting is a form of participatory and direct democracy, developed in Brazil but used worldwide, where citizens vote directly on how to spend a government budget. It incorporates elements of dialogue and deliberation at two key phases: when residents meet to identify prospective projects and when committee members deliberate to select and refine options to be put to a vote. It has been used three times in Ward 49 and is expanding in 2012 to include four city wards (5, 45, 46, and 49). Although demanding of volunteer time, in Ward 49 it has improved general civic engagement, voter participation, and support for the alderman.

Suburban Chicago, state and federal levels

In suburban Cook County, the Evanston 150 initiative engaged residents in visioning a future for their community, although primarily via crowdsourcing and voting rather than public deliberation. In suburban DuPage County, the Village of Woodridge and City of Warrenville have both sought greater citizen engagement via deliberative town hall meetings facilitated by trained staff members, with Woodridge's lessons recounted in the book Blueprint for Building Community. Woodridge also previously sponsored study circles on diversity, which led to topical citizen task forces. In Kane County, the city of Elgin recently used resident deliberations on the city budget, primarily via stakeholder forums, to identify new ways to deliver public services at a time of declining revenue.

All Illinois communities organized as townships are legally required to hold an annual township meeting each April. Some townships have sought to make these meetings more participatory and/or empower residents, for example by using citizen task forces. Voters at such meetings can also help set the local policy agenda and therefore start an informal public dialogue on an issue by submitting a petition to put a question to popular referendum. At the state level of decision-making, serious efforts to hold consultative public deliberations on how to resolve the continuing Illinois state budget crisis failed to achieve necessary political support.

At the federal level, meaningful deliberative dialogue with residents nationwide is practically non-existent. In Chicago, it seems to have been limited to "public listening sessions" or interest-group forums to collect input for federal plans (e.g., 2010 "America's Great Outdoors" plan for parks and recreation, 2009 school meals plan for the FDA).

Legal requirements for public participation

Many public engagement efforts initiated by local government are done to fulfill requirements tied to federal funding, especially in areas such as transportation and the environment. Each funding stream has its own minimum requirements for public engagement (see example for federal highway funds), which are then integrated into the particular planning or implementing agency's "public participation plan." These typically focus on communications and transparency, as well as providing opportunities for resident input. They do not specify which processes must be

used or require dialogue or deliberation. Some public entities have found it useful to exceed these minimum requirements, although many merely honor the letter but not the spirit of these laws.

For public policy not tied to federal funds, the main law governing public engagement throughout the state is the Illinois Open Meetings Act (OMA). This applies to all government entities in the state, from park districts to local school councils. Importantly, it does not apply to privatized public services or non-profits overseeing public/private partnerships (e.g., charter schools, Chicago Infrastructure Trust). The OMA's primary goal is to ensure transparency: that public bodies meet, take action, and deliberate in open meetings and that meeting times and agendas are posted in advance. In terms of public engagement, it merely requires "time for public comment," but does not specify guidelines. Reform efforts have sought to define specifics such as who can speak, for how long, and on what topic. In 2010, for example, public bodies in five collar counties were required to publish their rules and regulations on public comment. However, complaints of non-compliance with the OMA to the Illinois Attorney General typically result at most in an official critique as described on the Better Government Association (BGA) website.

The use of online space for public engagement is legally a grey area in Illinois. As per the OMA, public comments can only be obtained in person. Only Forest Park in suburban Cook County has proposed an ordinance on online public comments. However, with the exception of the Chicago Mayor's Office, online space is currently rarely used in Illinois to obtain resident input.

Most local good government groups are focused on enhancing government transparency and preserving existing democratic decision-making rules in light of continuing political corruption and the privatization of public services and infrastructure funding. No group has yet adopted improving how governmental entities engage citizens, either to enhance democracy, save public money or promote better outcomes, as a primary goal.

Planners and technical experts

Even more than most cities, Chicago has a strong history as a planning city dating back to Daniel Burnham's 1909 Plan of Chicago. Much of the local expertise as well as interest in deliberative public engagement for decision-making is therefore concentrated in governmental and private planning organizations, consultants, and think-tanks. This is the only field where most practitioners seem to have had some formal training in dialogue and deliberation (e.g., IAP2, mediation), although most also create new methods to meet specific needs. Planners and technical experts may engage the public to improve the relevance and effectiveness of their work, but the topics on which they work are also often linked to federal funding which requires public participation — e.g., transportation, environment, housing, economic development.

Non government planners and technical experts largely advise rather than make decisions and exist primarily to provide technical expertise; their methods often seek consensus and resident involvement in or feedback ("consult"). They use many expert-centered processes like design charettes, surveys, and individual interviews. Chicago boasts a number of technical expert groups, especially in the sustainability sector such as the Chicago Community Action Toolkit, that use deliberative public engagement methods to create new ways to meet goals and then empower the public to implement them.

The Chicago Metropolitan Agency for Planning (CMAP) is the largest and most comprehensive governmental planning organization in the USA, serving seven Northeastern Illinois counties and responsible for transportation, environment, natural resources, watershed planning, housing, economic development, and health and human services. Its biggest project with the most extensive public engagement is the comprehensive regional plan Go To 2040, revised every four years. CMAP uses a wide-range of public engagement methods, from classic communications to quantitative surveys and market analyses to deliberative dialogue methods such as visioning and scenario workshops, community conversations, and online software to visualize options. It cooperates extensively with community-based organizations and private planning groups, consultants, and think-tanks. While it does work in the city, increasingly its focus is the region. Interestingly, the predecessor organizations to CMAP, Northeastern Illinois Planning Commission (NIPC) and Chicago Area Transportation Study (CATS), were local innovators in the use of deliberative dialogue for public engagement, bringing to Chicago practices pioneered elsewhere and developing new ones, as well as training several people who continue to influence the field of dialogue and deliberation nationwide.

The Metropolitan Planning Council (MPC) is a non-profit organization that provides technical assistance in three states (IL, WI, IN) on topics such as transportation, housing, water management, and economic development. It is also the local partner of the Project for Public Spaces, which helps residents use public spaces in their neighborhoods to build a vibrant community. MPC engages in both extensive communications and public consultations, especially individual interviews and community workshops as part of their core work. It recently experimented with design charettes for a local corridor development project that integrated budget and land-use options, thus allowing residents to directly impact the final developer RFP.

The Center for Neighborhood Technology (CNT) is an innovative "think-and-do-tank" working on topics such as transportation, energy, and sustainable development. It is headquartered in Chicago, but it does work nationwide. CNT designs public engagement processes to meet specific needs, drawing more from community organizing than traditional planning and often incorporating elements of games. For example, it developed the in-person and online "Transopoly" game to help residents understand the relationship between transportation and land use and the

budgetary implications of different options. Similarly, the CNT "Bridging the Gap" process integrates technology into in-person meetings to help transportation planners and community members understand needs and work together.

Until recently, the Field Museum's Center for Cultural Understanding and Change (now part of Environment, Culture and Conservation) sought to help local communities develop their own strategies to meet the city's Climate Change Action Plan goals by drawing on tools from the fields of anthropology and popular education. The Center created the Chicago Community Climate Action Toolkit to explain technical issues in ways that are accessible and relevant to ordinary residents (e.g., comic books, storytelling, acting). The toolkit helps residents realize their personal stake in sustainability, empowering them to use their existing knowledge to create solutions that work for them.

Several other local groups working on sustainability have also experimented with innovative public engagement methods. For example, the advocacy group the Active Transportation Alliance was responsible for grassroots outreach to collect input for the city's bike plan and has used interactive games to help residents consider transportation options. Seven Generations Ahead developed the PlanIt Green project in Oak Park and River Forest, which engaged both the general public (e.g., reaching parents via schools) and stakeholders via participatory public forums to identify and develop important issues and then execute a local sustainability plan.

Civic Education

Dialogue and deliberation are often incorporated into quality high school civics programs to help students learn to respectfully discuss, think critically about, and sometimes come to consensus on public policy issues. Research has shown that these activities impact both young people and their parents as the youth bring what they have learned back home. Furthermore, schools are often more dynamic deliberative spaces than anything found in adult life, given their great ideological diversity,

Chicago area high schools that are part of the McCormick Foundation's Illinois Democracy Schools incorporate the "six proven practices" of high school civics education into their curriculums, including *"discussion of current events and controversial issues"* and *"simulations of democratic processes,"* such as legislative deliberations. The Constitutional Rights Foundation of Chicago is considered a national leader in developing and training teachers in school-based deliberation via programs such as "Deliberating in a Democracy." Similarly, the Chicago office of Facing History and Ourselves trains teachers to discuss controversial issues stemming from racism and other forms of prejudice.

Action civics programs that take place with youth outside of schools, such as Chicago-based Mikva Challenge, also incorporate dialogue and deliberation in their work. Much like the planners and technical experts noted above, youth

in these programs conduct interviews, surveys, and focus groups with residents to devise policy recommendations. In large congresses they use a variety of deliberative methods, including small-group discussions, to reach consensus on policy recommendations. Similarly, the Institute for Policy and Civic Engagement (IPCE) at UIC created Civic Engagement Days, a two-day educational workshop in which high school students model the policy-making process by developing a bill to propose to a mock congress.

In higher education, several Chicago-area colleges and universities are considering how to best teach skills for democratic engagement and civic learning (not just workforce preparation), as outlined in the Crucible Moment Report from the American Association of Colleges and Universities. The potential of higher education through deliberative dialogue to teach skills such as listening, deliberation, teamwork, negotiating different interests and views, and working across differences on public problems is also being explored in campuses nationwide via The Deliberative Dialogue Initiative. Several local universities already have civic engagement institutes, although most do not focus on deliberative dialogue.

3. Collaborative Action — community-based organizations and community organizing

The purpose of collaborative action efforts is to empower groups and individuals to solve complicated problems and take responsibility for the solution. Collaborative dialogue and deliberation methods such as community visioning processes, Appreciative Inquiry, and World Cafés, help residents identify shared needs and desires, generate ideas, and then develop and implement action plans. These plans might involve making demands of decision-makers, or they might lead to private initiatives. These types of processes are used in Chicago by a wide variety of groups working on a range of issues, including governments, businesses, faith communities, and social service providers. However, it is impossible to address the topic of collaborative action by residents on public policy and community issues in Chicago without considering the work of community organizers.

The legacy of community organizing in Chicago is pervasive. However, it is difficult to define exactly what community organizing does and does not include. A surprising variety of people working on community issues in Chicago self-identify as community organizers and stretch the term to include a range of public engagement approaches. Others define it quite narrowly as a specific public engagement tactic to amass power in residents in order to force entrenched interests to act. While traditional "direct action" approaches developed by the four main schools of Chicago community organizing [2] is the most pervasive in the city, new forms of community organizing are also

[2] The four "schools" of community organizing include the training and philosophies of: 1) Saul Alinsky, generally associated with the Industrial Areas Foundation (IAF); 2) Gail Cincotta and the National Training and Information Center, which is now National People's Action (NPA); 3) the Midwest Academy and; 4) the Gamaliel Foundation, a network of faith-based grassroots organizing groups.

emerging. Consequently, knowledge of, attitudes toward, and the use of dialogue and deliberation with residents vary widely within the diverse world of Chicago community organizing. Regardless of how community organizers themselves use these processes, the strong network of community-based organizations they've created has become absolutely central to how public engagement functions in the city.

Community-based organizations as gateways to residents

In Chicago, many residents have an affiliation with a community-based organization. Consequently, most governmental and non-governmental entities that use dialogue and deliberation on community and public policy issues with residents work with community-based organizations to publicize projects, recruit participants, and sometimes to hold consultations on their behalf. This is especially true when engaging traditionally marginalized populations. However, working through community-based organizations has both strengths and weaknesses.

Working with community-based organizations can simplify the logistics and reduce the cost of public engagement. It can also greatly enhance impact, as these groups can both publicize the outcomes of such work and potentially move from dialogue into action. Community-based organizations also reduce challenges inherent in working with culturally diverse communities, some of which are suspicious of outsiders. While there is, in theory, a danger of deliberative dialogues being co-opted to satisfy an organizational agenda, that does not seem to be a significant problem in practice, because partnerships are often based on long-term relationships built on trust and mutual benefit. Sometimes partner organizations are chosen because they represent a specific viewpoint. What seems to be much more important to dialogue and deliberation processes is the neutrality of the convener of such processes.

Working through existing organizations can, however, reduce the diversity of perspectives expressed. For example, some Chicago community-based organizations will only work on topics directly related to their core mission. This lack of diverse perspectives can lead to the perception that some organizations are defenders of the status quo and resist innovation in their communities or fields, perception that can lead to a lack of trust resulting in a refusal to cooperate on projects that also include organizations they consider rivals. Furthermore, a few Chicago communities are such frequent targets of planning consultations and/or community dialogues — sometimes regrettably used as substitutes for desperately needed action — that residents are simply burned out on such processes.

There appears to be a growing interest in experimenting with alternative methods of reaching the public. This could include "branding" public engagement programs and recruiting participants in public places or by going door-to-door, using online platforms to attract time-pressed and geographically dispersed participants, and using "serious games" to attract different kinds of residents, especially youth. Most direct resident contact outside of community-based organizations seems to be through distributing flyers and advertising.

Similarly, there is a growing interest in involving groups in issues outside their traditional interest areas, both to engage more people and devise new solutions — such as National Issues Forum (NIF) dialogues with nurses about public education or Field Museum conversations with minority seniors on community adaptation to climate change. The degree to which community-based organizations consider such approaches as a threat is unclear. From experiments to date, it only seems to be problematic when the topic addressed directly overlaps with their existing work or the approaches don't fit the culture of the community.

Community Organizers

Community organizing efforts engage residents in dialogue and deliberation as part of community "pulse taking" activities, issue identification, community visioning, recruiting, and motivating new community leaders. However, given their need to mobilize residents for sustained action over time, most community organizers still rely on traditional one-on-one interviews filtered through community leaders rather than collaborative group processes. These one-on-one interviews are used to both identify issues and build relationships, trust, and personal commitment. The simple act of being heard can help residents clarify and value their own personal needs. For this reason, community organizers will patiently spend weeks and months interviewing residents individually before any group deliberation ever takes place. This also incidentally ensures high attendance at meetings, as invitations are personal and attendees will see people they know — an approach from which other dialogue and deliberation practitioners could certainly learn.

Organizers use various group dialogue and deliberation techniques to help residents identify goals and community issues of importance to them — from biannual multilingual world cafés at the Albany Park Neighborhood Council to creative community visioning sessions for the LISC New Communities program to Appreciative Inquiry storytelling used to create Imagine Englewood If. In general, group dialogue and deliberation tends to take place infrequently, rarely lasts more than a couple hours, moves quickly from identifying community issues and goals to action planning, and then to community mobilization. In some cases, dialogue and deliberation only takes place among small groups of community leaders who use it primarily to devise action strategies.

Some organizers have experimented with more involved group dialogue and deliberation processes. For example, in 2008, Chicago-based Action Now was part of a national coalition that convened an in-depth deliberation with the help of America Speaks to develop a "national family platform." Community Organizing and Family Issues (COFI) has developed an innovative community organizing approach that incorporates dialogue and deliberation throughout all stages of its work, from forming community teams to developing and implementing solutions with government officials. In the 1990s, the consulting group Imagine Chicago used Appreciative Inquiry dialogue methods extensively with Chicago community-based organizations on topics such as intergenerational understanding, education, and

health. Access Living, an advocacy group for people with disabilities, has used literature-based dialogue to explore deep issues like inequality, and Growing Power, an urban farming organization, has convened dialogues on race. While stakeholder-focused, the Sweet Home Chicago coalition for affordable housing incorporated regular group trust and relationship building activities as well as shared leadership and consensus decision-making.

Local branches of national organizations have also convened community conversations to encourage collaborative action. For example, the YWCA Evanston/Northshore has been an active sponsor of small-group dialogue to fulfill its core mission of combating racism and promoting women's empowerment. The United Way of Metropolitan Chicago, convenes community conversations to help identify and resolve pressing local community issues. Similarly, the Chicago Urban League has convened community discussions on Chicago Public Schools and then linked them to citizen watchdog activities.

Relationship between dialogue, deliberation and action

Community organizers engage in concrete actions to bring about social change. Dialogue, the purpose which is often to clarify issues and enhance mutual understanding even more so than deliberation, which often results in specific recommendations, can therefore seem incompatible with organizing for action. Another challenge for aligning dialogue and deliberation with organizing is the challenge of sustaining dialogue efforts. For instance, in some low-income communities in Chicago, community dialogue processes run by outside experts have been introduced by decision-makers in lieu of taking action. As soon as funding ended, so did the dialogue, limiting the long-term impact on the community. Dialogue can also be associated with theoretical conversations sponsored by academics, foundations, and faith groups that don't lead to real change. Government entities at the state and local levels also engage in stakeholder "listening sessions" that, while helpful in clarifying issues, rarely lead to concrete action.

A common criticism of dialogue and deliberation initiatives is that they increase residents' knowledge of an issue and desire to see change, but then provide no tools or structures so they can act. However, at least one area community-based organization that has made real change in schools, Building Academic Achievement Within This Generation (BAAWG) in suburban Bolingbrook and Romeoville, organically grew out of a dialogue process to explore the achievement gap in education. Elsewhere, participants in dialogue groups have been supported to become action groups. This happened, for instance, with race dialogues in nearby Milwaukee and may emerge from current YWCA-sponsored race dialogues in Evanston. Given the strength of local community organizers, there are clearly more opportunities to link dialogue and deliberation to action in Chicago.

Challenges of government-community organization cooperation in deliberative dialogue

Often community-based organizations and local government need each other to best serve communities.

Deliberative dialogue processes that involve both can be very effective at ensuring that plans meet real community needs and are effectively carried out by both government and the community. However, the roles, missions, powers, and expectations of each party can conflict and derail joint processes. For instance, the now-defunct community organization CANS successfully advocated for community policing (CAPS) and then supported its early implementation through facilitation and training. Its core mission remained that of police watchdog, not dialogue facilitator and its critical analysis of crime statistics contributed to the non-renewal of its public contract to provide CAPS facilitation/training support, weakening CAPS overall.

Government-community cooperation in developing and implementing community plans has also proven tricky. Rather than take desperately needed action in some communities, local government has, on occasion, offered planning processes involving extensive community consultation and then failed to implement the resulting plans. When government has failed to properly manage expectations or reneged on promises, the result has not only been community anger, but also cynicism toward all such processes. For example, in the early 1990s, the city of Chicago empowered Bronzeville community members to develop a comprehensive plan. After expending much time participating in the effort, residents expected that the city would implement their plan and quickly became angry when it did not.

In contrast, government can later adopt as its own plans that have been initiated by community-based efforts. For example, in 2005, the LISC New Communities Program initiated a grassroots quality of life planning process in several Chicago communities, which was later adopted by city officials eager to help implement a plan with high-levels of existing community engagement and commitment. There is, however, at least one example of an Illinois government entity successfully playing the role of neutral facilitator of a deliberative community planning process. As part of its disaster preparedness efforts, the Illinois Department of Human Services experimented with using deliberative processes with community groups in exurban Kankakee to identify and meet broad community needs (e.g., jobs, education). It not only met goals, but more importantly built relationships of trust necessary for community resiliency in the event of disaster — where residents can typically only depend on each other for the first 72 hours.

COFI has successfully used dialogue and deliberation between residents and government officials to jointly develop and then implement new, innovative solutions to community problems, thus combining the wisdom, passion, and commitment of community members with the resources of government. For instance, its "ambassadors" program drew on local community knowledge of the needs of specific families to fill every Head Start slot in Chicago, something the experts at DCFS cannot manage alone. It is thus an inspiring example of how community organizers and government can in fact cooperate effectively to improve community well-being.

4. Conflict Transformation — Race Dialogue, Restorative Justice, Civil Discourse

The purpose of conflict transformation processes is to resolve conflicts, to foster personal healing and to improve relationships between groups. Such processes often include methods similar to those for "exploration," although with an even greater emphasis on respectful listening and creating safe spaces to have difficult conversations. Furthermore, they typically deal with divisive or sensitive topics and sometimes take place in potentially explosive situations. Conflict transformation processes can help unblock situations that are preventing meaningful action by government decision-makers and community-based organizations. They are also increasingly being used as alternatives to ineffective and expensive legal procedures and punitive disciplinary practices. Newer uses are efforts by a range of actors to encourage respectful dialogue on political issues across ideological divides.

Dialogue across difference — race and ethnicity, income, faith

In the city of Chicago and especially in suburban and exurban areas, community discussions of many public policy and community issues are tinged with undertones of racism, often linked to or used as a surrogate for the effects of income inequality. This can have a direct impact on policy decisions related to fundamental areas such as education, housing, and taxation. In order to meet pressing resident needs for affordable housing and effective schools while also assuring government solvency, decision-makers sometimes find that they must first address underlying community conflicts related to race, ethnicity, income, and faith.

In Evanston, for example, recent discussions to dissolve the township and voter rejection of a referendum to raise funds for a new school both had racial undertones, prompting the mayor to sponsor small group dialogues on race. Efforts such as My Evanston, My Neighbors build on existing small group race dialogue work by the YWCA Evanston/North Shore, as well as earlier racial dialogues in other parts of the state. In some areas, as outlined in the book Talking About Race by Katherine Cramer Walsh, these dialogues have allowed politicians and communities to move forward with decisions that were previously thought impossible.

Chicago is home to the Interfaith Youth Core, the Council for a Parliament of World Religions, and numerous other groups that engage in various forms of inter-faith dialogue, especially related to the Israeli-Palestinian conflict and the global impact of Islam. The primary goal of such processes is typically mutual understanding. With the exception of some localized conflicts, inter-faith conflict is much less prevalent and problematic in Chicago than conflicts related to race and income.

While these groups use a variety of processes, one unique approach pioneered locally by the Field Museum to enhance cross-cultural understanding is Marae Encounters. This uses the museum's Maori meeting house to enact a traditional Maori ritual involving a mix of speeches, music, and food designed to develop a sense of community and

understanding between two different groups.

Restorative Justice

Restorative justice or more generally "restorative practices" is the fastest growing use in Chicago and Cook County of dialogue to transform conflict. Restorative Justice is an approach to justice that uses peer dialogue processes, such as circle, to thoughtfully consider and develop customized responses that meet the needs of victims, offenders, and the community rather than applying abstract legal principles, which merely punish the offender. It has been law in Illinois since 1999 and applied extensively and effectively in youth and family law, such as child custody cases. Extending the concept more broadly into "restorative practices," some Chicago public schools use peer circles to find alternatives to suspension in discipline cases, and a few even use them to guide how the entire school community functions. They have also been used within CHA housing to solve conflicts between residents and within faith communities to resolve community conflicts.

The longest-standing circuit court judge in Cook County, Sophia Hall, is one of staunchest local champions of restorative justice (and restorative practices more generally) and provides regular opportunities for best practice sharing across the region. Local restorative justice practitioners are poised to expand the use of these practices with the aim of ultimately embedding them in community problem solving efforts, starting with the pressing problem of youth delinquency and incarceration. This could at once improve community well-being and reduce legal system costs. Examples include initiatives such as IBARJP's Stone Soup Project, which aims to embed restorative practices for juvenile justice in Southern Cook County, and community groups such as Project Nia in Roger's Park. The Alder School's Institute on Public Safety and Social Justice is developing methods to evaluate the effectiveness of these approaches, which could potentially also be applied to dialogue and deliberation processes used for other purposes. In addition, local groups such as Community Justice for Youth Institute provide regular training in facilitating restorative circles.

Civil Discourse

Alarmed by the nation-wide decline of civility in political discourse — most vividly demonstrated by acrimonious 2009 town hall meetings on health care reform — the Chicago-based American Bar Association adopted a Resolution to Promote Civil Discourse. The resolution seeks to promote respectful civic dialogue both through its own membership of lawyers and more generally through government, media, advocacy groups, etc. It has put this into practice through conferences, publications, and public events, some of which have taken place in Chicago and/or included local experts. Although there have certainly been instances of incivility in public discourse in Chicago and especially some suburban areas like DuPage County, Chicago has not witnessed the kinds of hijackings of public meetings by enraged Tea Party partisans or disruptions of regional planning meetings by Anti-Agenda 21 disinformation

campaigners that have happened elsewhere.

IV. SUPPORT FOR DIALOGUE AND DELIBERATION IN CHICAGO

High-quality dialogue and deliberation with residents on community and public policy issues that is both productive and respectful rarely just happens. It requires intentional planning, thoughtful design, thorough preparation, skillful facilitation, conscientious follow-up, appropriate evaluation methods, and of course practical resources. Users of such processes rely on services and resources such as training and consulting, technology, funding, research, and the networking and shared learning produced by healthy communities of practice.

Many of these supports have been provided to Chicago initiatives through national organizations, either within a specific field (e.g., media, transportation, education) or a specific methodology (e.g., America Speaks, The Participatory Budgeting Project). It appears that, if local efforts are to be sustained over time, as well as spread and inspire new initiatives, they also need local support services and resources. This is best illustrated by the impact of the Chicago-based Project on Civic Reflection and the now defunct NIF-affiliated College of DuPage Public Policy Institute. Each both inspired and then supported a flurry of dialogue and deliberation initiatives in their topical areas, using their respective methods. Rather than simply responding to a need, it appears that their very existence helped spark interest among local groups in these approaches and then provided the necessary training and support to put them into practice.

Training and consulting

Good process design and facilitation is vital in creating the conditions under which residents can come together and discuss or deliberate on community issues in respectful, productive ways. It is absolutely essential on contentious issues and when engaging residents from traditionally marginalized groups who may lack skills in articulating their needs or feel uncomfortable publicly discussing their views. Unfortunately, these skills appear to be rare, especially in local government. Local training opportunities to learn and develop such skills, as well as local expert consultants in these approaches, seem to be even rarer. Therefore, many Chicago-area groups either work with national experts or create their own approaches from scratch. Many are unaware that there is a vast field of knowledge from which they could draw.

Just a handful of Chicago-based groups provide training (as well as consulting, process design, and facilitation) designed to help community organizations and decision-makers use dialogue and/or deliberation. Most focus on only one methodology or approach. The Project on Civic Reflection offers a two-day public training session in Chicago on their method of civic reflection 3-5 times per year, as well as customized facilitation, process design, and other forms

of support. The Midwest Center for Civic Engagement, run by the former director of the now defunct NIF-affiliated College of DuPage institute, offers a yearly week-long training in the NIF method of issue framing, creating issue booklets, and deliberative dialogue, as well as customized training and consulting. The Illinois Art of Hosting community of practice sponsors a yearly three-day immersion and occasional courses in group dialogue methods such as circle and world cafe. The Institute of Cultural Affairs (ICA), headquartered in Chicago, holds training sessions in its Technology of Participation (ToP) method for collaborative action a couple times per year. Run by former ICA executives, the private firm Millennia Consulting designed a general facilitation certificate program for DePaul CPE. The Community Justice for Youth Institute provides regular training in facilitating restorative circles. In addition, trainers from outside the city occasionally hold International Association of Public Participation (IAP2) training courses in the city designed for government officials and others who must comply with federal public participation mandates. The Participatory Budgeting Project, in partnership with UIC's Great Cities Institute, provides local training and support to city ward staff and residents to implement participatory budgeting. Other Chicago-based organizations touch on the topic in courses on related topics such as mediation and community organizing.

Among national groups active in Chicago, America Speaks, which developed the 21st Century Town Hall Meeting method of small group deliberation within large media-worthy events, has had a tremendous impact on local funder and community groups' views of deliberative dialogue. Several of its multi-city national events, from public deliberations such as the 2010 Our Budget-Our Economy to stakeholder deliberations such as the 2009 Advancing Futures for Adults with Autism, have included a Chicago event. These typically use Chicago-based facilitators who thus gain experience in this approach. However, it is just one method among hundreds in use and has fed a misperception that "deliberative dialogue" must incorporate key-pad polling, take the form of big one-off events, and is extremely costly. Another well-known methodology that also uses large-scale events is Deliberative Polls by the Center for Deliberative Democracy at Stanford, but it has never been used in Illinois.

The impact of other national groups sponsoring or providing resources or training on dialogue and deliberation among residents has been subtler. For example, in the 1990s, Everyday Democracy (formerly known as National Study Circles) supported local small group dialogues on race in suburban Lake, McHenry, and DuPage Counties. One of the largest and longest lasting efforts based on their methods was the Aurora Community Study Circles, which over 11 years involved 4,000 community members. Several local groups, especially schools, still use their materials today. Similarly, the National Issues Forum (NIF) continues to be active in the area through affiliates such as the Midwest Center for Civic Engagement and partnership with the American Library Association. It is unclear the extent to which materials from other national dialogue initiatives -- like Living Room Conversations created with the help of the Public Conversations Project and designed to bring together neighbors on the political right and left for public policy discussion -- are being used in the city. Such initiatives provide "do it yourself" public dialogue kits, but

rarely track how they're used or provide local support.

Technology

Although most dialogue and deliberation takes place face-to-face, in recent years there has been much interest among decision-makers and practitioners nationwide in using technology to engage more and different kinds of residents, reduce costs, and improve outcomes. This includes technology such as online dialogue platforms, scenario visualization software, and serious games. Despite some interest, especially by planners and technical experts in the later two, there has been only minimal activity in this area in Chicago. There are no state or local laws governing the use of online spaces for public engagement. Chicago has no online civic dialogue entrepreneurs, like Minneapolis' Steven Clift of e-democracy.org. Moreover, the topic seems of little interest to local civic-minded software developers, unlike say is the case in the San Francisco Bay area.

Online public engagement efforts in Chicago have instead primarily sought to crowdsource ideas (e.g., ChicagoBudget.org, Give a Minute Chicago), enhance government transparency (e.g., data.cityofchicago.org, streaming public meetings), improve the usability of public data for citizen watchdogs (e.g., Open City apps), and especially help residents to use or improve public services (e.g., CTA trip planner, Open 311).

Some dialogue does take place among residents on citywide crowdsourcing sites like ChicagoBudget.org. However, as is typical of such platforms, comments do not seem to be monitored by the city, and it is unclear if they impact decisions. The private Give a Minute Chicago project similarly had no means to actually use the ideas it collected. Some practical applications used by Chicago residents, such as SeeClickFix (e.g., to report graffiti, broken street lights) and the city's data sharing website (data.cityofchicago.org) also include the possibility to post comments, but are not used.

Most online public dialogue related to community issues and public policy in Chicago instead happens organically on a neighborhood-level within community forums like Every Block (which originated in Chicago), the comment sections of blogs like Uptown Update, private list-serves like Ruth's List in Edgewater, and Facebook pages like Villa Chicago, twitter feeds, yahoo groups, etc. While most of the communication relates to practical issues of daily life, it can touch on public policy and community issues like local elections, crime, public schools, zoning decisions, etc. While it is hard to judge the impact of such dialogue on forming opinions or leading to action, conversations begun on Every Block have led to a few small community actions, such as a new farmer's market and block club. They've also helped start petition drives for things like parking permit zones. In addition, some aldermen follow discussions on these forums and sometimes respond to concerns raised there.

Perhaps the most promising use of technology, however, is alongside face-to-face discussions, to do things otherwise not possible — like visualize the possible impacts on a neighborhood of different scenarios and choices. CMAP, CNT, and the Metropolitan Planning Council have all experimented with and/or are interested in developing technology of this type. There are also local "serious game" developers, such as Game Changer at the University of Chicago, although these tend to be used for public education rather than dialogue and deliberation on community issues.

Funders

The role and potential impact of dialogue and deliberation among residents on community and public policy issues is poorly understood within the Chicago foundation community, as is also true to varying degrees nationwide. The national funders' learning collaborative PACE (Philanthropy for Active Civic Engagement) was formed to address this issue as well as questions related to other forms of civic engagement, such as service learning. PACE includes the Chicago-based McCormick Foundation and Spencer Foundation. PACE has sought to educate funders on deliberative dialogue for example it has partnered with the Deliberative Democracy Consortium to create the guide Funding and Fostering Local Democracy.

PACE member foundations McCormick and Spencer are the most knowledgeable and active foundations in Chicago on the topic of deliberative dialogue. Both, however, approach this topic primarily from the perspective of youth and education rather than broader democratic reform or community engagement. The McCormick Foundation has been particularly active in supporting the "civic mission of schools" and more generally the civic engagement of Chicago-area youth via programs such as Illinois Democracy Schools. In the context of funding academic research on education, the Spencer Foundation is exploring issues such as how research on school effectiveness can be incorporated into public deliberation on policy issues and so guide decision-making (e.g., on charter schools).

Other Chicago-area foundations that have been active in the broad area of community engagement, not necessarily related to dialogue and deliberation, include the Chicago Community Trust (e.g., participatory budgeting), MacArthur Foundation (e.g., America Speaks to impact fiscal policy), Grand Victoria Foundation (e.g., community sustainability planning), Steans Family Foundation (North Lawndale), Boeing Company, Crown Family Foundation, Crossroads Fund (micro-grants to community groups), Knight Foundation (community media), and Joyce Foundation (democracy and transparency). In addition, the Wiebolt Foundation and the Woods Fund of Chicago are the main funders of local community organizing.

Community engagement was the topic of the Donor's Forum first convening to bring together Chicago-area funders and non-profits to discuss topics of common interest (Engage to the nth Degree). However, attendees seemed more

interested in engagement to mobilize their constituents and communicate their messages than in how deliberative dialogue could be used to strengthen communities or public policy. Furthermore, while the event itself was extremely popular, only about 20 percent of attendees have chosen to continue to explore the broad topic of community engagement.

Research

Chicago is fortunate to be home to several academics whose research interest includes dialogue and deliberation explored from the context of a variety of disciplines, such as philosophy (e.g., Anthony Laden, UIC), civic engagement (e.g., Ellen Knutson, Northwestern University and Kettering Foundation), education (e.g., Diana Hess, Spencer Foundation and U-WI Madison), political science (e.g., Dick Simpson, UIC, Jamie Druckman and Jim Farr, Northwestern), science and society (e.g., Phil Nyden, Loyola), communications (e.g., Paul Arnston, Northwestern), and psychology (e.g., Elena Quintana, Adler School).

In addition to the impact they make in their specific fields, these scholars can be of tremendous practical benefit to local practitioners — such as the Adler School's development of evaluation methods for restorative justice practices and UIC's IPCE and Great Cities Institute's support of research associated with participatory budgeting. Where their impact could be perhaps even more valuable, however, is in helping to build a case for local decision-makers, funders, and community organizations as to why dialogue and deliberation with residents on community and public policy issues is important — i.e., what these practices can achieve, how they work, principles of good practice, and especially how they support changing communities, economies, and roles for government. This may not necessarily require new research as much as the application of learning from existing research to specific local issues.

Communities of Practice

Communities of practice are formal or informal groups of people who share a profession or topic of interest. Members learn from each other, support one another's work, and help a field grow by collaborating on initiatives of mutual benefit. They are particularly important in supporting new fields of practice. In the US, there are regional communities of practice in dialogue and deliberation in New England, Texas, California, and Oregon. There are even small communities in nearby Minneapolis and Madison. In Chicago, while there are hundreds of people involved in some way with dialogue or deliberation, there are currently no entities that convene these practitioners on a regular basis. Most individuals connect only with others doing this work within their topical field (e.g., urban planning, humanities) or at a national level.

The International Association of Public Participation (IAP2) has just a few Illinois members, whereas it has enough active local members to hold events in nearby Minneapolis and Madison. When the National Coalition for Dialogue

and Deliberation (NCDD) members organized regional gatherings in 2010, there were events in Boston, Denver, Austin, Portland, and San Francisco. The few dozen NCDD members in Illinois have not even met as a Chicago group. Similarly, the Chicago chapter of the International Association of Facilitators (IAF), formerly the Midwest Facilitators Network, consists primarily of facilitators working in the business sector. The only active local community of practice that touches on community engagement is the nascent Illinois Art of Hosting, which is slowly expanding from an original focus on youth and families.

There is a clear opportunity for initiative to convene a community of practice around dialogue and deliberation work in Chicago. The potential value of simply bringing together the vast array of practitioners and organizations involved in this work in Chicago is great. The supportive value of such a network offers the potential to grow the field well beyond its current members.

V. MOVING FORWARD: BUILDING A COMMUNITY OF PRACTICE

As stated earlier, IPCE commissioned this report specifically to better understand the kinds of organizations that engage in dialogue and/or deliberation, the methods they use, the rationale behind those methods, and the results of their work. In addition, the report sought to identify local support services for this work (e.g., training, funding, public spaces), as well as laws and regulations governing its use. The hope is that this report will inform, stimulate further discussion, and potentially encourage cooperation among local dialogue and deliberation practitioners, sponsors, conveners and other interested parties.

This report noted some important observations about the current state of dialogue and deliberation in Chicago. First, Chicago's history of community organizing and protest has not precluded dialogue and deliberation efforts from budding and growing in Chicago. Second these efforts are wide ranging in terms of purpose, method, the types of organizations or institutions involved, and resident input. Currently, there is no common language or institutional center binding these efforts together so Chicago has not yet benefitted from the collective value of these very diverse initiatives. In essence, Chicago does not yet have an embedded culture of dialogue and deliberation among residents, civic institutions, and government.

There are many ways IPCE and its partners could potentially help a real culture of dialogue and deliberation among residents on community and public policy issues to take root and blossom in Chicago. The most urgent need is for an advocate and thought leader to develop and promote a local vision of and research-supported case for high-quality public engagement, including standards it should meet and values it should incorporate. IPCE could also support a community of practice by providing a regular meeting place and publicizing local projects and resources. It could convene deliberative dialogues, either among students or, if it can maintain neutrality, among residents. It could also

support local groups which otherwise could not receive assistance to convene such conversations. Once it has developed its own expertise, it could then provide skills training, process design consulting, and potentially logistical support to local government and non-profits, incorporating multiple methods and perhaps developing its own innovative approaches.

This report was prepared in anticipation of a convening of dialogue and deliberation practitioners planned for December 2012. In the tradition of dialogue and deliberation, that convening will provide an opportunity for practitioners to discuss, deliberate and share ideas on how to develop a real culture of dialogue and deliberation in the Chicago region. IPCE also expects to share the outcomes of that conversation and lead or assist action steps. The hope is that this report and the convening mark the beginning of a movement to help transform how Chicago area residents relate to their government, institutions and each other.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

The Institute for Policy and Civic Engagement (IPCE) would like to thank the following individuals who contributed to this report as advisors to the project or interviewees. For more information about IPCE, visit www.ipce.uic.edu.

Carolyn Abdullah, Everyday Democracy
Erin Aleman, Chicago Metropolitan Agency for Planning (CMAP)
Gaston Armour, Illinois Department of Human Services
Dan Bassill, Tutor-Mentor Connection
Raul Botello, Albany Park Neighborhood Council
Brian Brady, Mikva Challenge
Bliss Brown, Imagine Chicago
James Capraro, Capraro Consulting
Anne Carroll, IAP2 Midwest
Kim Casey, Midwest Center for Civic Engagement (NIF)
Godwin Chen, City of Evanston
Dan Clark, America Speaks
Lina Cramer, Wisdom Exchange and Illinois Art of Hosting
Thea Crum, UIC, Great Cities Institute*
Adam Davis, Project on Civic Reflection
Jim Field, Chicago Coalition for the Homeless
Walter Fisher, facilitator*
Jacky Grimshaw, Center for Neighborhood Technology
Lauren Grossman, Across the Table
Maria Hadden, Participatory Budgeting Project*
Eileen Hogan Heineman, YWCA Evanston/North Shore
Diana Hess, Spencer Foundation
Jenny Hirsch, Field Museum (former)
Maryam Judar, Citizen Advocacy Center
Alice Kim, Illinois Humanities Council
Ellen Knutson, Northwestern University, Center for Civic Engagement*
Nancy Kranich, American Library Association Center for Civic Life
Anthony Laden, UIC, department of philosophy*
Mark Ledogar, Seven Generations Ahead
Matt Leighninger, Deliberative Democracy Consortium
Ryan Lewis, Illinois Humanities Council (former)
Valerie Lies, Donor's Forum
Robert Luskin, University of Texas and The Center for Deliberative Democracy
Barb Macholz, Better Government Association
Hubert Morgan, Stanhope Consulting*
Quentin Mumphrey, Chicago Public Schools
Peter Newman, Circuit Court of Cook County
Daniel X O'Neil, Smart Chicago Collaborative
Breeze Richardson, WBEZ
Amanda Kathryn Roman, Living Room Conversations

Ellen Schumer, Community Organizing and Family Issues (COFI)
Dick Simpson, UIC, department of political science*
John Sirek, McCormick Foundation
Tracy Siska, Chicago Justice Project
Andrea Telli, Chicago Public Library
Thomas Tresser, Civic Lab
Joanna Trotter, Metropolitan Planning Council
Jim Troxel, Millennia Consulting

IPCE Deliberative and Democracy Exploratory Working Group*
*Part of 6-21-2012 small group discussion meeting with practitioners and academics

Thea Crum, UIC, Great Cities Institute
Walter Fisher, facilitator
Maria Hadden, Participatory Budgeting Project
Joseph Hoereth, UIC, IPCE
Ellen Knutson, Northwestern University, Center for Civic Engagement
Anthony Laden, UIC, department of philosophy
Hubert Morgan, Stanhope Consulting
Norma Ramos, UIC, IPCE
Dick Simpson, UIC, department of political science

Appendix A: Questionnaire

GENERAL TOPICS TO EXPLORE:

- What are your general impressions of *citizen dialogue and deliberation* in Chicago/Cook County? What specific projects, initiatives, and support resources are (or have been) here?

- How does or might the local political/civic engagement cultural context support or hinder dialogue & deliberation here?

- Explain the context, purpose, methodology, and outcomes of specific local dialogue & deliberation projects, initiatives, and support structures.

- What potential might exist for expanding and/or embedding citizen dialogue & deliberation in Chicago/Cook County?

DETAILED QUESTIONS (USE AS RELEVANT):

- General impressions of "dialogue and deliberation" and identification of specific initiatives and support resources in Chicago/Cook County.
    - When I say "*citizen dialogue and deliberation* in Chicago" what comes to mind?
    - What citizen-focused initiatives involving deliberation on public issues are you aware of or been involved with in Chicago/Cook County?
    - What groups or individuals (inside and outside government) are involved in citizen-focused D & D locally -- as sponsors, conveners, consultants, facilitators, trainers, evaluators, academics, funders, online designers/developers, etc.?
    - Do you know of any existing research exploring D & D in Chicago/Cook County?

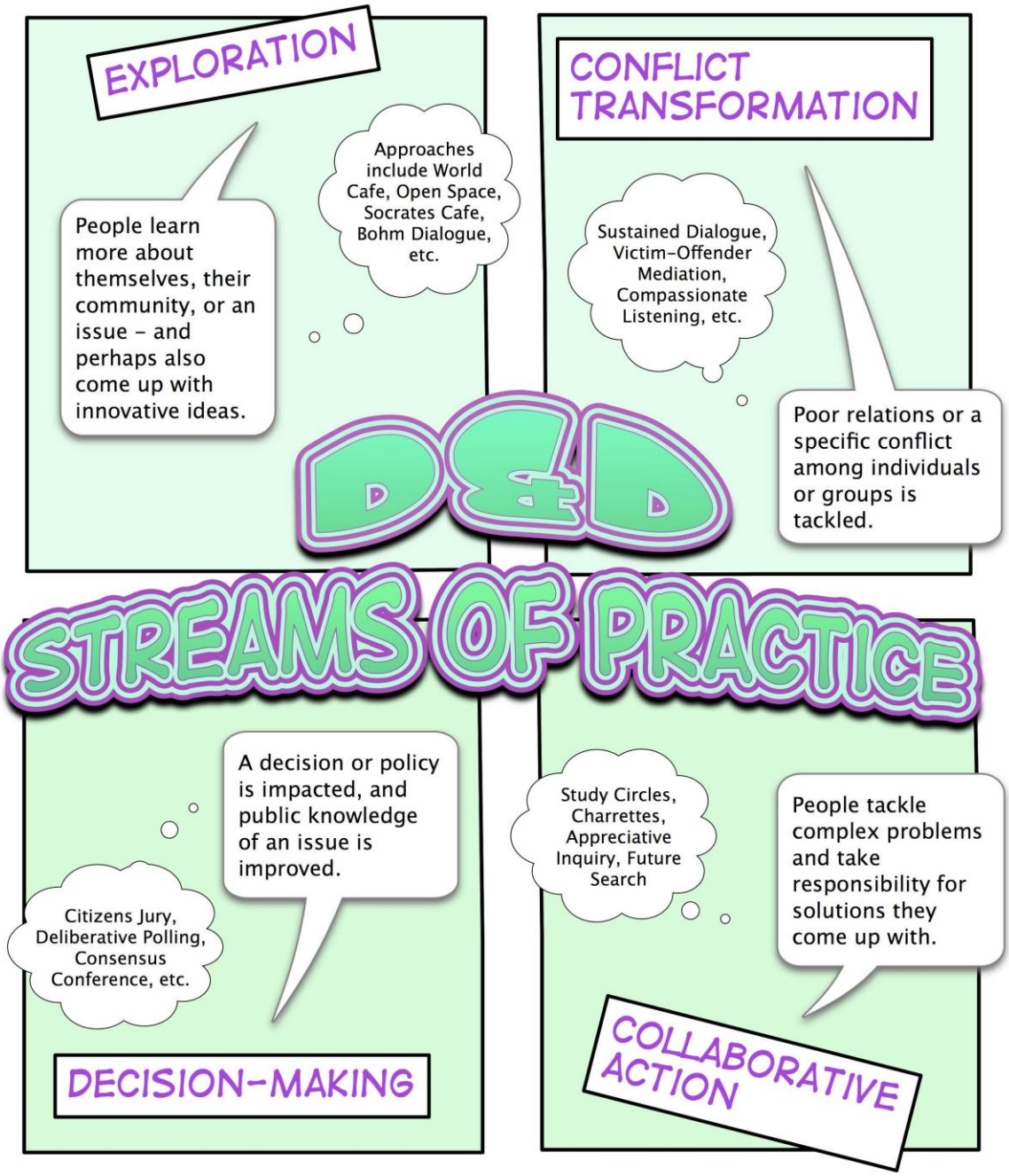
- Explore local political/civic engagement cultural context for dialogue and deliberation and identify past/current/potential future D &D champions.
    - How does or might the Chicago/Cook County political and civic engagement culture and history impact the use of D & D here?
    - What issues need to be considered when using D & D with historically poor and marginalized communities in Chicago/Cook County?
    - Which individuals/organizations (in government, civil society, academia, media, business) are, have been, or might become champions for local citizen D & D? Why and how?

- As relevant, explore details of specific local D & D initiatives and resources, such as:
    - What is the primary purpose/mission of your organization? How does D & D relate to that?
    - How and why did your organization get started in D & D? What support and resources did you use to develop your D & D work (e.g., consultants, materials, funders)?
    - Who was/were the project's sponsors, supporting organizations, and funders? What impact did that have on the project and its perception by outside groups?
    - What forces helped or hindered you?

- What kinds of people participated in your initiatives and how were they chosen? Strengths/weaknesses of that method?
- What, if anything, did you do to ensure the participation of historically marginalized groups (e.g., low income, minorities, immigrants)?
- What deliberative methodologies, locations/settings, and online/new technologies did you use, why were they chosen, what were their strengths/weaknesses?
- What have been the outcomes of this work, both tangible and intangible?
- How, if at all, did this relate to other forms of public engagement, including issue advocacy?
- What other sources of information on this initiative are available, such as reports and evaluations?

- Explore potential for embedding D & D in Chicago/Cook County and support infrastructure
  - Which issues or kinds of issues might be ripe for D & D in Chicago/Cook County?
  - Where, in person or online, do Chicago/Cook County citizens regularly meet that could potentially be used for D & D (e.g., neighborhood websites, libraries, schools)? Do you know of any existing efforts to use these spaces for deliberation on public issues?
  - What kinds of laws (at city/county/state/federal level) exist requiring public engagement? How are these interpreted and might there be opportunities to update these laws to support more and better D & D?
  - What methodologies or practices developed or used elsewhere would you like to see tried in Chicago/Cook County?
  - What public and private funding sources might be available for D & D in Chicago/Cook County?
  - In your opinion, ultimately what is needed for D & D to flourish in Chicago/Cook County?
  - What else might be helpful to consider when exploring the potential for D & D in Chicago/Cook County? Who else might we contact?
  - What sorts of supports or resources (tangible or intangible) would help you most with <u>your own</u> D & D work?

Appendix B: NCDD Dialogue and Deliberation Streams of Practice



This is a snapshot of the **Engagement Streams Framework** developed by Sandy Heierbacher and members of the National Coalition for Dialogue & Deliberation (**NCDD**). The framework helps people decide which dialogue and deliberation methods are the best fit for their circumstances. The four streams coincide with the four main purposes for engaging people in transformative conversations. For the full framework, go to **www.thataway.org/streams**.

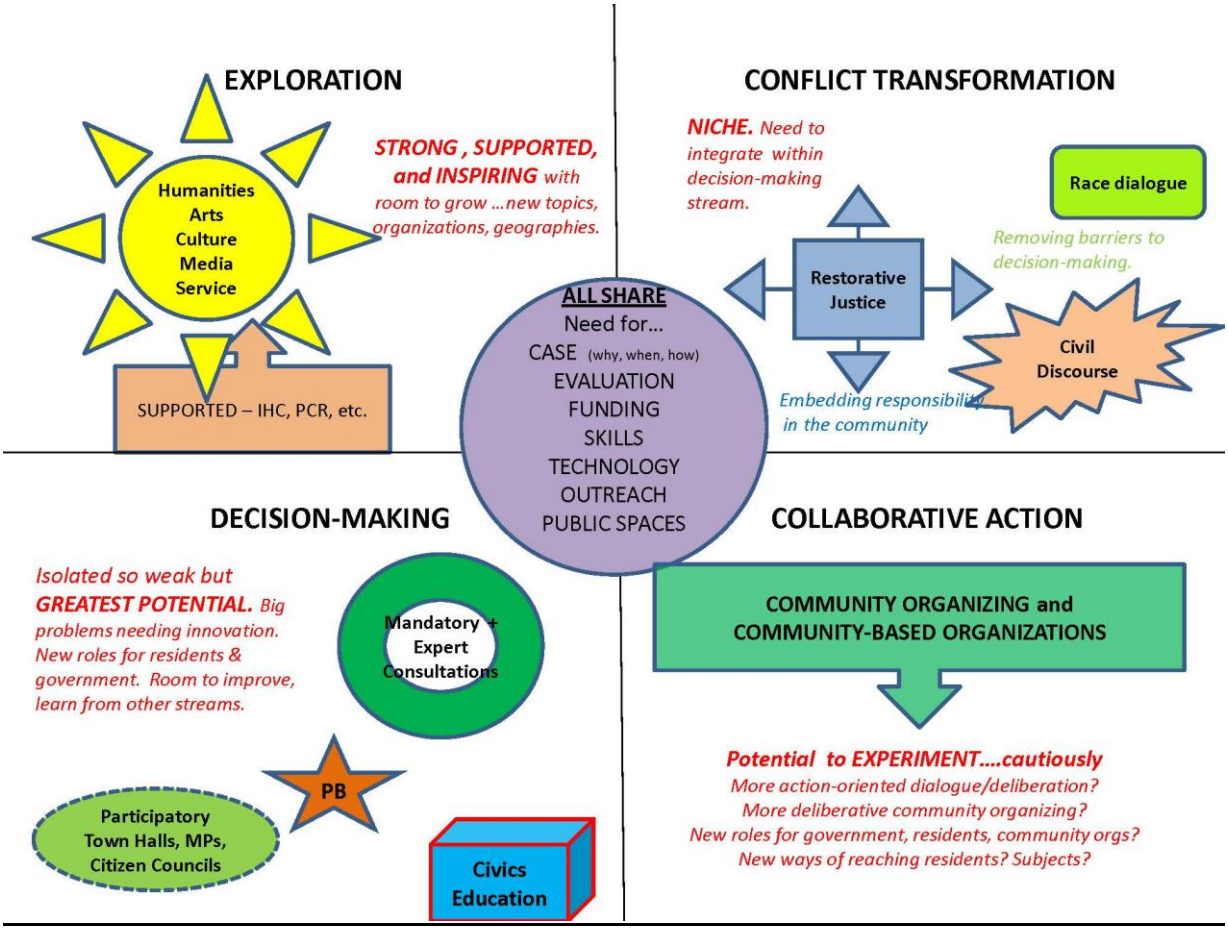
Appendix C: IAP2 Spectrum of Public Engagement

IAP2 Spectrum of Public Participation

International Association for Public Participation

Increasing Level of Public Impact

	Inform	Consult	Involve	Collaborate	Empower
Public participation goal	To provide the public with balanced and objective information to assist them in understanding the problem, alternatives, opportunities and/or solutions.	To obtain public feedback on analysis, alternatives and/or decisions.	To work directly with the public throughout the process to ensure that public concerns and aspirations are consistently understood and considered.	To partner with the public in each aspect of the decision including the development of alternatives and the identification of the preferred solution.	To place final decision-making in the hands of the public.
Promise to the public	We will keep you informed.	We will keep you informed, listen to and acknowledge concerns and aspirations, and provide feedback on how public input influenced the decision.	We will work with you to ensure that your concerns and aspirations are directly reflected in the alternatives developed and provide feedback on how public input influenced the decision.	We will look to you for advice and innovation in formulating solutions and incorporate your advice and recommendations into the decisions to the maximum extent possible.	We will implement what you decide.
Example techniques	▪ Fact sheets ▪ Web sites ▪ Open houses	▪ Public comment ▪ Focus groups ▪ Surveys ▪ Public meetings	▪ Workshops ▪ Deliberative polling	▪ Citizen advisory committees ▪ Consensus-building ▪ Participatory decision-making	▪ Citizen juries ▪ Ballots ▪ Delegated decision

© 2007 International Association for Public Participation

Appendix D: Summary of Engagement Streams in Chicago