

2012 CAN Policy Palooza

Overview and Follow-up

Approximately 135 people attended the CAN Policy Palooza held on Wednesday, October 17, 2012 from 8:30 a.m. to 3:30 p.m. at the UT Alumni Center.

Welcome

CAN Board Chair and Workforce Solutions Capital Area Executive Director Alan Miller welcomed participants to the CAN Policy Palooza, noting that “palooza” means “excitement, and “policy” is a course of action based on intentional decisions. He said the goal of the day was to identify concrete steps for how we can work together to overcome challenges and break through to the future we want.

Our Community: The Hand We are Dealt

City of Austin Community Engagement Consultant, Larry Schooler, led attendees through a series of exercises and text voting questions to demonstrate some of the challenges we face as a community, such as a fast growing population and an even faster growing low-income population, high school graduates who are not “college ready,” and voter apathy among younger generations. He then introduced a video, “[Central Texas: Creating the Future We Want](#)” in which many community leaders share information about how our community can transform challenges into opportunities. The video is linked here: <http://www.caction.org/CAN-About/video.php>.

Panel Discussion: Our World Now and in the Future

CAN Board member and iACT Executive Director Tom Spencer moderated a panel discussion with State Representative Eddie Rodriguez, community engagement professional Beverly Watts-Davis, and economist Brian Kelsey. Panelists discussed the most important economic, political and community engagement trends facing our community and shared specific examples of ways in which people are overcoming challenges.

Beating the Odds through Creativity and Ingenuity

Larry Schooler introduced a “TED Talk” video that highlighted the “bottom up” concept of urban design championed by Better Block, an organization founded in Dallas’s Oak Cliff neighborhood by Jason Roberts and Andrew Howard. <http://www.youtube.com/embed/lciuh5pbnsI>

Strategic Framework for Action

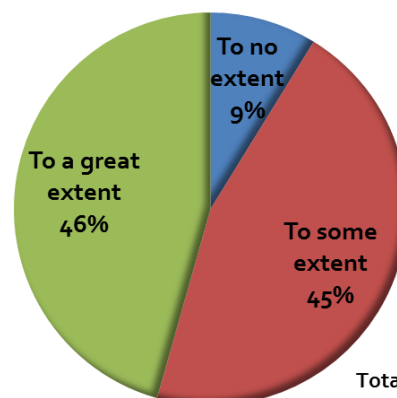
CAN Executive Director Vanessa Sarria shared a presentation about the [CAN Community Dashboard](#) indicators and targets and a [Strategic Framework for Action](#) that provides a common language for action we can take to achieve these community goals. The Strategic Framework for Action was created based on what CAN learned from many local collaborations and an inventory of over 70 community plans. CAN listened to what many non-profit organizations and the CAN partner agencies had to say about the strategies that can really make a difference and collapsed them into

four broad goal areas:

- we are safe, just and engaged;
- our basic needs are met;
- we are healthy; and
- we achieve our full potential.

For each Goal Area, there are three basic building blocks of strategies that, when taken together, can help our community make progress towards its goals and common vision.

To what extent has the CAN Policy Palooza enhanced your awareness of community issues?



Total votes: 57

What is Standing in Our Way?

Susan Schultz, with the University of Texas law School's Center for Public Policy Dispute Resolution, noted that the Strategic Framework for Action lays out what is needed to achieve our common goals, so why isn't it happening? She invited participants to identify up to three challenges that they believe are standing in our way of making substantial progress. Those responses were collected and used in afternoon Break Out Sessions.

Community Change Through Collective Action

UT professor and consultant Dan Duncan moderated a panel discussion with Timothy Bray, the Director of The Institute for Urban Policy Research at the University of Texas at Dallas; Susan Dawson, the President & Executive Director of the E3 Alliance; and Laura McKieran, Executive Director of Community Information Now in San Antonio. Panelists discussed the Five Conditions of Collective Impact that are described in a January 2012 Stanford Review article "[Channeling Change: Making Collective Impact Work](#)" and gave examples of how organizations are working toward collective action and impact.

Break Out Sessions: Identifying Concrete Steps to Overcome Our Biggest Challenges

Participants reported to afternoon breakout sessions where they reviewed the challenges identified before lunch and voted on which challenges are the most important to overcome. The participants then identified concrete steps that can be taken to overcome those challenges. Following is the result of that work.

Report Out: Breaking Through to the Future We Want Overarching Issues Related to Equity and Opportunity

Facilitator: Susan Schultz

- ▶ *Challenge: As individuals, communities, and organizations, we work and live in isolation (silos/ lack of communication)*
 1. Create networks, informal and formal, among like-service providers for efficiencies and complimentary resources
 2. Develop place-based strategies (neighborhoods)
 3. Enforce and implement existing commitments (for example: carrying out the Imagine Austin Plan)
- ▶ *Challenge: We have a structural funding mechanism that creates silos*
 1. Create a model or pilot of integration of service providers & funders
 2. Allow/create space for individuals to take control (for example: micro-financing)

We are safe, just & engaged

Facilitator: Diane Miller

- ▶ *Challenge: Disproportionality within systems*
 1. Provide culturally sensitive early interventions to social problems before criminalization
 2. Create a program bridging leaders across systems to work on diversity, inclusion, and cultural competence
 3. Convene courageous conversations with workforce around culture - educate those in & out of systems to recognize disproportionality
- ▶ *Challenge: Increase volunteerism, engagement, charitable giving and voter turnout*
 1. Increase simple/easily understood communications to voters through all government organizations
 2. Encourage businesses do more to encourage volunteerism
 3. Create City of Austin "meeting in a box" system with involvement from League of Women Voters and Travis County to promote volunteering, engagement, and voting—
 - work with educators to give students extra credit for participating in "meeting in a box"
 - move beyond silos for non-profit/ business collaboration



Our basic needs are met

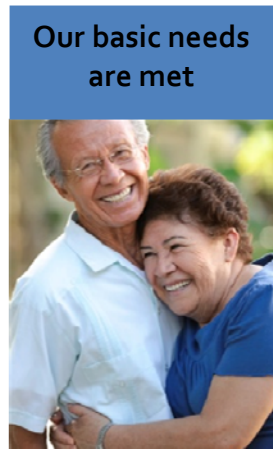
Facilitator: Mary Dodd

► *Challenge: Transportation grid-lock*

1. Support policies to create complete communities with access to affordable housing, transportation, healthy foods, services and quality educational opportunities (from cradle to career)
2. Find new funding sources for transportation

► *Challenge: Conflict between economic prosperity and sustainable growth*

1. Reorient business incentive process towards ideas of complete communities (i.e. local hiring, access to education continuum, connect where people live, learn, work, and play)
2. Support policies to direct economic development tax base revenue to basic needs
3. Evaluate and raise skillset of under- & unemployed



We are healthy

Facilitator: Larry Schooler

► *Challenge: Lack of shared vision for community's health*

1. Use education and demonstration projects that show public, elected officials, and community leaders how healthcare for everyone prevents social issues and lowers costs
2. Use existing framework (eg. CAN, CHA-CHIP) as baseline for the creation of and amendment to a shared vision of good health, including critical voices in the conversation, addressing perceived gaps in the vision.

► *Challenge: Lack of access to integrated, person-centered care regarding physical, mental illness, and substance abuse disorders*

1. Increase infrastructure and remove barriers for healthcare professionals to practice in an integrated fashion, including physical, mental, and substance abuse treatment and preventative measures
2. Create information sharing tools and agreements across all providers in Travis County



We achieve our full potential

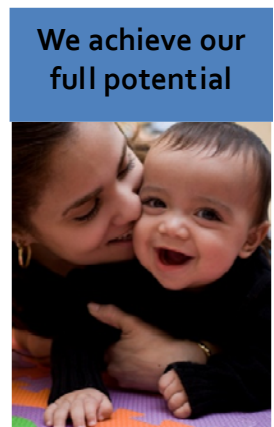
Facilitator: Chantel Bottoms

► *Challenge: We have growing marginalized populations, educational inequities, and a lack of inclusiveness*

1. Desegregate Austin!
2. Infuse vocational training into education
3. Build grassroots leadership
4. Integrate efforts with Imagine Austin to address inequities
5. Build community/ school alliances

► *Challenge: We do not have adequate funding for public education*

1. Pressure policymakers to fund education, especially early childhood & out-of-school time
2. Enhance public awareness and advocacy efforts by clarifying scope/scale of need

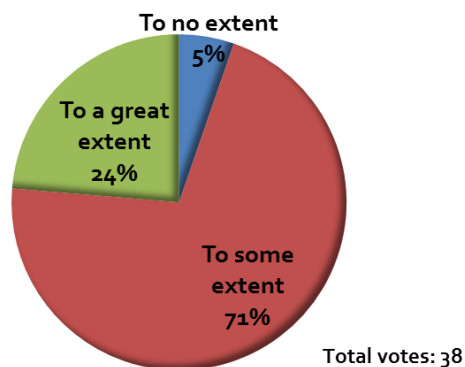


Evaluation and Closing Remarks

CAN leaders and other participants reflected on what was learned during the day. CAN Executive Director Vanessa Sarria committed that CAN would share the results of the Policy Palooza and carefully consider the recommendations that came out of it. She noted that some organizations and collaborations are already taking action in some areas of the recommendations, and that it would be important to identify those efforts and share that information with participants. Sarria committed that CAN would consider where additional focus and action is needed and identify where CAN, in its role as convener, connector and informer, could be most helpful while respecting efforts already underway.

Furthermore, she indicated that she would present outcomes from the Policy Palooza with the CAN Board and work with partners to identify what efforts would be appropriate to include in CAN’s 2013 Work Plan.

To what extent has the CAN Policy Palooza increased your awareness of collaborative strategies that will enhance the community's well-being and promote greater equity and opportunity?



What is the most critical challenge to address?		
	# Votes	Percent
Conflict between economic growth and sustainability	11	20.8%
We do not have adequate funding for public education	10	18.9%
We have a structural funding mechanism that creates silos	8	15.1%
As individuals, communities, and organizations, we work and live in isolation (silos/ lack of communication)	6	11.3%
Transportation	4	7.5%
We have growing marginalized populations,	4	7.5%
Increase volunteerism, engagement...	3	5.7%
Lack of access to integrated, person-centered care	3	5.7%
Disproportionality within systems	2	3.8%
Lack of shared vision for community's health	2	3.8%
Total Text Votes Cast	53	



Community Action Network is a partnership of government, non-profit, private and faith-based organizations who work together to enhance the social, health, educational and economic well-being of Central Texas. For more information about Community Action Network, visit www.caction.org.