Civic Engagement Strategy: Inclusivity for the Win

Mayor Karen Freeman-Wilson, Gary, Indiana
First Vice President, National League of Cities
Who We Are

• The oldest and largest national organization representing municipal governments throughout the United States.
• We are dedicated to helping city leaders build better communities.
• In partnership with State Municipal Leagues, we serve as a resource to and advocate for America’s 19,000 cities, towns and villages.
Where We Are
THE SQUEAKY WHEEL GETS THE OIL.....
BUT WHAT ABOUT THE WHEELS THAT DON’T SQUEAK?
5x5x5 Revitalization Program

- **Started in 2013**
- **Focus on:**
  - Abandoned building identification, demolition and board-ups
  - High grass, weeds and tree overgrowth
  - Dumpsite removal, trash and debris pick-up and drainage
  - Beautification efforts with the Parks Department
  - Information and resources for residents
Vacant-to-Vibrant Program

- Launched in partnership with Cleveland Botanical Garden
- Collaborative public-private effort
- Focus on:
  - Transforming vacant urban properties into vibrant, lush, eco-friendly community spaces
  - Preserving the quality of the Great Lakes by managing storm water
ArtHouse: A Social Kitchen

- Developed with grants from Bloomberg Philanthropies & John S. and James L. Knight Foundation
- Public art installation & culinary incubator
- Focus on:
  - Supporting new, locally-owned food businesses
  - Creating a nurturing space for artistic and creative endeavors
  - Increasing tax revenue
Communities For All Generations

- **Designated as AARP Age-Friendly Community**
- **Senior Summit to provide resources and services to senior population**
- **Focus on:**
  - Improving quality of life for seniors
  - Engaging community partners
  - Ensuring public spaces and events cater to all ages

Photo credit: Post-Tribune/Carole Carlson
Creating an inclusive civic engagement strategy

- Focus on the big picture, but realize the importance of small details
- Challenge citizens to assume responsibility for their neighborhoods
- Leverage every opportunity you have & involve as many stakeholders in your community as possible
- Don’t forget about the wheels that don’t squeak!
See you in LA

NOVEMBER 7-10, 2018

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