



## Compiled Featured Viewpoints

### GP RED Think Tank 2012

Denver, CO

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**1. For contemporary leaders working to build whole communities, what are the cross-disciplinary research findings, tools and best practices currently in use? (2 Responses)**

One of the best tools currently being used to contribute to whole communities is health impact assessment (HIA). HIA is an interdisciplinary practice that brings together researchers, practitioners, and decision-makers from multiple disciplines to examine the potential effects of a proposed policy, plan, or project on the health of our communities. HIA is particularly useful for informing decisions involving the built environment, such as in land use and transportation planning. It is also becoming more widely applied to other settings, such as housing, natural resource extraction, education, and labor policies to name a few. Successful implementation of HIA methods leads to better informed decisions in respect to the often unintentional impacts on the health of populations that arise from said decisions. HIA informs these decisions by translating an analysis of potential impacts into actionable recommendations to enhance positive and mitigate negative health effects of a proposal where these effects would otherwise not be considered. HIA's orientation toward action (rather than simply contributing to a research base) and emphasis on bringing together diverse stakeholders makes it particularly relevant for building whole communities. Health, as defined holistically in tools such as HIA, is an important component of a whole community, and conversely, a whole community is an important determinant of health status. HIA operationalizes this relationship in a way that allows health to become a consideration along with the other drivers of decisions that shape our communities.

“Jimmy” James E. Dills, MUP MPH  
Research Associate II  
Georgia Health Policy Center  
Andrew Young School of Policy Studies  
Georgia State University

**1. For contemporary leaders working to build whole communities, what are the cross-disciplinary research findings, tools and best practices currently in use?**

Exposure and access to parks, open space and natural resources improves quality of life and enhances health and wellness.

Focus on urban design of safe multi-modal street environments utilizing walkability studies produces communities where people desire to walk and be outside encourages a social and recreational outdoor lifestyle.

Patsy McEntee  
Landscape Architect/Community Planner  
National Park Service  
Rivers, Trails and Conservation Assistance Program  
Denver, CO

**2. What are the gaps in research, tools and education still needing to be addressed to move the work of building whole communities forward? (2 Responses)**

I regularly utilize research findings provided through the California Healthy Kids Survey, California Department of Education Physical Fitness Testing and a variety of reporting sources accessed through "Kidsdata.org". I also use Active Living Research to review evidence based practices and cite research findings to justify the establishment of new programs and services. In recognizing best practices, the San Diego County Childhood Obesity Initiative is one of the best models I have discovered for integrating cross-disciplinary partners for the alignment of the systems to create impact, efficiency and desired outcomes. As for the subset with in this question on gaps in research, tools and education, the following is offered.

The data reporting systems I utilize often address populations by school district, county and state. In working at the City level, the data may be very difficult to interpret if the school district and city boundaries differ. Sadly, data sources are under-utilized as an assessment tool by park and recreation professionals. Research findings provide an insight to the conditions impacting a community and an ideal opportunity to respond to resident needs and build agency strengths.

Darin Loughrey  
Community Services Superintendent  
City of Irvine  
Irvine, CA

## **2. What are the gaps in research, tools and education still needing to be addressed to move the work of building whole communities forward?**

There appears to be gaps in how the funding of such communities is derived. The funding of projects often focuses the values that are implemented through the development and design of projects.

Patsy McEntee  
Landscape Architect/Community Planner  
National Park Service  
Rivers, Trails and Conservation Assistance Program  
Denver, CO

## **3. What are the top three industry challenges and opportunities for your profession in the next 10 years? Why? (3 Responses)**

The three challenges that will have significant impact on our organization over the next 10-year period include: succession planning; providing services that are being cut due to financial constraints by other public entities; and working with the healthcare industry in promoting health and wellness through our programs and activities to our constituents and staff.

With an organization with a very low employee turnover rate, the longevity of these employees' tenure is high. This leads to great continuity from year to year and a stable work force. However, it also leads to these dedicated employees staying with the organization until they reach retirement age. The key to preparing for the onslaught of retirements is succession planning, preparing our current employees to step in and continue on with the Tualatin Hills Park & Recreation District's (THPRD) mission and services to the community. In developing these future leaders, there is a delicate balance between preserving the institutional knowledge and history with the increasing complexity of the day to day operations management. Therefore, developing a model for educating our future leaders is critical.

Another challenge we face especially during this period of a slower economy is the current situation where tax revenue-dependent organizations are struggling to maintain their service levels to the community and are forced to make difficult choices due to funding shortages. This is especially evident with our local school district, faced with significant budget cuts, many of the extra-curricular activities once offered through the schools have been cut. In these circumstances, the community turns to THPRD to take on the activities that align with our services, primarily sports and environmental education programs. THPRD is responsive to these

needs but is obligated to ensure that any new program areas that we take on can be accomplished within our current cost recovery model and can be sustained.

Finally, healthcare providers are focusing efforts on prevention and promoting healthy lifestyles. Many of the programs offered through THPRD help to promote healthy lifestyles that are so critical in creating and maintaining a high quality of life. More opportunities to develop partnerships with healthcare organizations/providers will help to support this effort in creating and promoting programs that support health lifestyles to our constituents. It is also important to carry this level of commitment to our employees, in promoting healthy lifestyles. This not only adds to their quality of life, but the benefits would hopefully lead to reduction in sick leave hours taken and potentially fewer on-the-job injuries.

Although, we face many challenges within our industry, those that directly impact our constituents and employees are where we can have the most significant, positive impact.

Doug Menke  
General Manager  
Tualatin Hills Park & Recreation District  
Beaverton, OR

### **3. What are the top three industry challenges and opportunities for your profession in the next 10 years? Why?**

1. Engagement- What I mean by this is park users clearly appreciate and are inspired to actively support the public spaces in their community. The connection between public space to quality of life, health and well-being, access to nature and social capital are inherent among members of the community and they are inspired to vocalize its virtues to any audience.

2. Disconnected Leadership- When government officials fail to create a sense of ownership in public spaces and lack response to resident needs, services and resources, they become irrelevant. Opportunities for re-invention or much worse, reduction and elimination occur.

3. Systems Thinking- Over the past four years, the park and recreation profession has evolved from being “everything to everyone” to that of a “partnership broker”. Community serving agencies and partners who can see themselves as part of an interdependent bigger picture will thrive in the new economy.

Darin Loughrey  
Community Services Superintendent  
City of Irvine  
Irvine, CA

**3. What are the top three industry challenges and opportunities for your profession in the next 10 years? Why?**

The top three challenges include:

- The ability to connect ecological function with the creation of communities.
- The ability to recognize and support aesthetics in community development.
- The reconciling of community-building in underserved neighborhoods with the redevelopment of post-industrial sites.

Patsy McEntee  
Landscape Architect/Community Planner  
National Park Service  
Rivers, Trails and Conservation Assistance Program  
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**4. What is needed to help educate health, planning, and parks and recreation professionals and students about contemporary issues and associated best practices for building whole communities? (2 Responses)**

Understanding how to access, interpret and utilize research findings is an essential skill for programmers and resource managers. Professionals must know how to prove their effectiveness through measured impacts and outcomes. Professionals need to be effective story tellers in resonating with and educating public on value of public spaces.

Darin Loughrey  
Community Services Superintendent  
City of Irvine  
Irvine, CA

**4. What is needed to help educate health, planning, and parks and recreation professionals and students about contemporary issues and associated best practices for building whole communities?**

More comprehensive large systems planning combined with small scale individual project planning. Better mapping and coordination between municipalities and special interest groups, as well as small communities. Spending more time talking with people in communities will enhance the developing of funding systems related to the values of the projects.

Patsy McEntee  
Landscape Architect/Community Planner  
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Denver, CO

**6. What communities or agencies are you aware of that are succeeding in building whole communities? Describe their successful initiatives, practices and tools.**

Redwood City, California is a lovely San Francisco Peninsula community with great weather and a strong middle class. It is also a community that has, within its own borders and in the unincorporated area that it surrounds a substantial population of recent immigrants, poverty, language barriers and other challenges.

In response, in 1991 several community partners joined forces to take a “whole community” approach and launched Redwood City 2000. The initiative continues in its latest version of Redwood City 2020. Core partners include the City, both school districts, the County Health and Human Services Departments, two major health care providers and Stanford University.

The focus of this collaborative is on the success of young people in their community. Included in its strategies are creating “community schools” at target locations, a Teen Resource Center, a Teen Wellness Center, alcohol and other drugs prevention, and a variety of other wellness and youth development initiatives. Key to the success of this effort has been the shared financial commitment of each of the core partners noted above.

Redwood City 2020: <http://www.rwc2020.org/>

## **Part II**

Two communities, one in the Silicon Valley of California, and the other in South Florida, have taken a regional and collaborative approach to providing services that promote health among the mature and aging population. Each has taken a similar path; the health foundation created from the sale of the non-profit community hospital has funded an ambitious effort to bring together medical, health, social services, housing and park and recreation agencies and non-profits to promote and provide evidence based health and wellness programs.

The federal Administration on Aging, with the National Council on Aging as its technical assistance arm, is strongly promoting the use of evidence based health and wellness programs through the Evidence Based Disease and Disability Prevention Program (EBDDP). The Healthy Aging Regional Collaborative of South Florida decided to focus its efforts specifically around the provision of evidence based programs. With the support of its academic partners, the Regional Collaborative has selected specific programs to promote and provide, established a logic model, and selected a specific evaluation tool. They have a 31 member leadership council drawn from academic, medical, health, non-profit, housing and public agencies to help steer the efforts of the collaborative across a 3-county area.

Two years ago the Silicon Valley Healthy Aging Partnership was initiated by the Health Trust, and is being facilitated/administered by the Kinesiology Department of San Jose State University. It has gathered 18 partners from across Santa Clara County that have participated in the selection of the specific evidence based programs to be supported and the initiation of those services. Each evidence based program requires the identification and training of a master trainer and the program instructors. It can be challenging to identify the right resource for master trainer, and the overall cost and commitment for training the master trainer and the program instructors can be substantial for some programs. A key value of this collaborative approach is the sharing of these resources, particularly the master trainer.

Healthy Aging Regional Collaborative of South Florida <http://www.healthyagingsf.org/>

Silicon Valley Healthy Aging Partnership <http://www.svhap.org/>

Paul Council  
Recreation Division Manager  
City of San Mateo Parks and Recreation

**6. What communities or agencies are you aware of that are succeeding in building whole communities? Describe their successful initiatives, practices and tools. (2 Responses)**

The City of Irvine's Healthy City, Healthy Planet initiative, is an affirmation of Irvine's long-held commitment to health, fitness, well-being and the sustainability of its community. Through the integration of multiple practices into all aspects of City planning and the delivery of municipal services, Irvine is actively supporting the health of the City, its citizens and the planet on a daily basis. Irvine's diverse population, abundance of parks and open space, wealth of educational and recreational opportunities, and engaged community partners qualify the City as an emerging Whole Community.

Darin Loughrey  
Community Services Superintendent  
City of Irvine  
Irvine, CA

**6. What communities or agencies are you aware of that are succeeding in building whole communities? Describe their successful initiatives, practices and tools.**

LIVEWELL, CO

Patsy McEntee  
Landscape Architect/Community Planner  
National Park Service  
Rivers, Trails and Conservation Assistance Program  
Denver, CO

**7. What are the most impactful innovations and/or methodologies that need to be emphasized in professional development (conferences and schools) curricula? (2 Responses)**

Professional development has to be intentional. Professional development experiences can be planned carefully to provide specific focus that allows those trained to be change agents. The learning approach should provide foundational information that assists with an understanding of the competency addressed. Next provide a variety of strategies that help apply the competency and then include the addition of repetitive opportunities to practice the competency. Additionally, professional development that includes work-based projects, in my opinion provides successful, sustainable, competency development.

When planning curriculum for your co-workers, students or peers, ask yourself these questions:

- Does it demonstrate a future need because it's reflective of a current issue?
- Does it facilitate an enthusiasm for learning?



- Does it teach a best practice, a method, a strategy, a process and show applicability for public sector use?
- Could it set an example for the profession due to trends on new ways to organize work (speed and innovation)?
- Is the case study used the “best of the best” – an example of the best things we are doing to serve our communities?

Leslie Fritz, CPRP  
Director of Education  
California Park & Recreation Society

**7. What are the most impactful innovations and/or methodologies that need to be emphasized in professional development (conferences and schools) curricula? (2 Responses)**

I have used Judd Allen’s “Creating a Healthy Culture Model” as a means to articulate how to impact the health of the Irvine community (beyond programming). Trainings have been effective for recognizing how staff influence behavior choices and how systems may adapt to create greater impact. Staff now see themselves as part of an environmental force in shaping the activity and nutrition choices of young people.

Darin Loughrey  
Community Services Superintendent  
City of Irvine  
Irvine, CA

**7. What are the most impactful innovations and/or methodologies that need to be emphasized in professional development (conferences and schools) curricula?**

Further emphasis on multi-system engagement and the analysis of ecological and human wellness benefits which are dis-associated from short-term financial returns.

Patsy McEntee  
Landscape Architect/Community Planner  
National Park Service  
Rivers, Trails and Conservation Assistance Program  
Denver, CO

**8. What can your professional membership organization do to help agencies and communities further the work of building whole communities? (2 responses)**

Most professional organizations are singular in their focus while trying to provide education and services to several levels of staff (management to operations). In this model, the programs and focus tend to be on the lowest common denominator and very specific to a topic or concept, not the overall picture or conceptual enough to provoke thoughtful discussions and actions.

In order to move the concept of whole communities forward, professional organizations will need to reinvent their mission and broaden their scope to include multi-disciplinary services that focus on the highest common denominator within the various fields, the visionaries and strategists. By including varied disciplines and focusing on high-level concepts, the organization can become a catalyst to change the way professionals at many levels approach their work. Moving from a singular focus to how a specific field affects others fields, and interacts with other fields, can create a more holistic view and in doing so effectively develop a cooperative environment.

One of the biggest challenges is the concept of cooperation and shared outcomes. Professional organizations provide education on partnerships related to funding. All too often the concept of shared missions and outcomes is cut short because of funding versus moved forward because of funding, the shift to cooperation based on outcomes and benefits, not financial gain, is the single most important topic to address.

Doug Menke  
General Manager  
Tualatin Hills Park & Recreation District  
Beaverton, OR

**8. What can your professional membership organization do to help agencies and communities further the work of building whole communities? (2 Responses)**

I am interested in reviewing how Whole Communities are cultivated. The concept is a great topic for Board discussion, particularly as it relates to the vision of the park and recreation profession for the future. As President of the California Park and Recreation Society, I am personally committed to connecting individuals (members and residents) to educational experiences which benefit the long term health of people and public spaces.

Darin Loughrey  
Community Services Superintendent  
City of Irvine  
Irvine, CA

**8. What can your professional membership organization do to help agencies and communities further the work of building whole communities?**

More research and marketing of research is needed to support the funding of urban forest infrastructure as well as at-grade storm water mitigation opportunities. In addition, the barriers to accessing natural and recreational resources need to be further identified and analyzed on a case by case basis.

Patsy McEntee  
Landscape Architect/Community Planner  
National Park Service  
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Denver, CO

**9. What are the contemporary leadership skills needed for success? (4 Responses)**

Leadership today is multifaceted but manageable--don't give up! Organizations consist of multicultural and multigenerational members. We have to keep our leadership skills fresh, and commit to continued modifications. Here lists my most desired leadership skill sets:

- Ability to commit people to action
- Creative thinking skills
- Understanding current business environments driving the need for creativity
- Providing open environments in the public sector that allow for creativity
- Resiliency
- Increasing efforts to form strategic alliances—we can't do it by ourselves
- mentoring—bring back mentoring practices

“The significant problems we face cannot be solved at the same level of thinking we were at when we created them.” Albert Einstein

Leslie Fritz, CPRP  
Director of Education  
California Park & Recreation Society

## 9. What are the contemporary leadership skills needed for success?

The following skills are key areas that define the skills of a good leader. A successful leader will need to apply these skills adeptly, be flexible and able to adapt to the growing list of personal styles, attitudes and varying generations of the work force. The use of technology and the ability to manage change will also be key components to successful leadership.

**Vision:** This is key to the success of any leader. The vision will help set the direction, goals and objectives of the organization.

**Adaptability/Flexibility:** Developing ways to anticipate problems and prepare backup plans to effectively cope with problems that arise.

**People Skills/Communication:** A leader needs to have the ability to observe people in your organization. This gives you the insight needed to take the appropriate action required for the right result. The ability to communicate effectively. The ability to motivate gives you the leadership edge to get the best out of those who work for you or with you. Developing better people skills helps you attain your business objectives much faster by working more productively.

**Creativity:** A leader must have the ability to embrace change and how to manage change in an effective way, not just for change sake, but to have a direct purpose with an eye on the future. The ability to find new ideas and solutions that will ultimately push the organization toward the set vision.

**Decisiveness:** Decisiveness is an important aspect in leadership - the decisions you are willing to make will have a direct impact on how you're accepted as a leader. Decisiveness is an exercise in good judgment, affording well-informed, fast and sound decisions when needed. This is not to be confused with inflexibility or making quick uneducated guesses. A good leader needs to be able to process information quickly and make sound decisions in an efficient manner.

**Collaborative Skills/Communication:** It will be key to be able to communicate effectively and work together toward a common goal. Technology has provided new opportunities for communicating and working today. We can benefit greatly from a collaborative culture across all departments, both internally and externally. The Internet and other technologies make this extremely easy to do for a reasonable cost.

Collaboration is a technique that can quickly add to the success of your program if you are able to develop a system where everyone can play their part in contributing ideas or providing feedback.

Innovation/Execution: Collaboration can develop a constant exchange of innovative ideas within the organization. A good leader becomes the person that everyone approaches when they have a new idea or innovative approach to a problem. Effective leadership understands that you do not have to come up with ideas yourself – you can also nurture growth and innovation in others that will benefit everyone.

Doug Menke  
General Manager  
Tualatin Hills Park & Recreation District  
Beaverton, OR

### **9. What are the contemporary leadership skills needed for success?**

Ability to apply purpose. Start with *Why* Ability to inspire others to action Skill to articulate vision, Skill to educate via story telling, Ability to build trust, Tact and Diplomacy to develop and sustain relationships and of course the Ability to prove effectiveness along with the Ability to continually adapt.

Darin Loughrey  
Community Services Superintendent  
City of Irvine  
Irvine, CA

### **9. What are the contemporary leadership skills needed for success?**

The ability to network and collaborate at multiple scales and levels along with the ability to reach out to individual organizations in order to create private-public partnerships which meet community goals with long-term construction, environmental and financial sustainability in mind.

Patsy McEntee  
Landscape Architect/Community Planner  
National Park Service  
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## 10. Self designed Featured Viewpoint on any related topic (500 words).

“Nature is a mirror of and for culture. Ideas of nature reveal as much or more about human society as they do about non-human processes and features.”<sup>1</sup>

-Anne Whiston Spirn, from *The Authority of Nature*

When we talk about whole communities, we are talking about the health and wellness of human beings in their environments and the places that they inhabit. The “Whole Communities” approach to the nurturing of people with place and land is a critical one which engages in a more reflective and intimate conversation occurring at a smaller scale, at the scale where people self-invest and activate their own community change. This is important. But it is also important to recognize that the relationship that people have with their landscapes and the ground they cultivate occurs as a direct result of the cultural treatment of ecological systems that are at work in a given area. Such non-human cultural systems and the design language we use to either celebrate or suppress them is an equally important part of the conversation. Rural or urban, ecological processes may be integrated into human dwelling (a practice of native cultures) in a way that can tie people to their land and their treatment of it. Similarly, the conversation of municipal leaders with neighborhoods in the design and development of such communities also directs the values placed on shared lands. The language we use and the funding systems that are put in place to drive community development are powerful tools that should be further analyzed to be representative of the cultural values we collectively seek to represent.

Patsy McEntee  
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<sup>1</sup> Anne Whiston Spirn, “The Authority of Nature: Conflict, Confusion, and Renewal in Design, Planning and Ecology,” In: *Ecology and Design: Frameworks for Learning*, (Washington, D.C.: Island Press, 1991), 32.