

Minnesota Active Citizenship Initiative (MACI) Case Study

Civic Governance

Updated November 2014

Civic Governance is a new approach to policymaking that produces the civic infrastructure needed to govern for the common good and sustain democracy as a just system of governance.

Co-authors

The following individuals, responsible for providing lead organizer capacity for Civic Governance, produced this draft update of the Civic Governance Case Study based upon outcomes from members in the Civic Governance Organizing Agencies

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Next Steps

1. November 2014, get feedback on the document at the Minnesota Active Citizenship Institute Meeting.
2. January 2015, produce a final update case study co-authored by all members of the 3 Civic Governance Organizing Agencies.
3. Members will advance the case through their 2015 work plans.

Civic Governance Pilot
A Minnesota Active Citizenship Initiative (MACI) Case Study
Updated November 2014

Read the full (current) case study posted at:
<http://activecitizen.org>

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

THE PUBLIC POLICY ISSUE

Minnesota's greatest water quality challenge - "non-point source" pollution - is not getting solved at the watershed scale, which is needed to impact the problem for the long-term. To date, roughly 40 percent of Minnesota's assessed waters have been found to be impaired (not meeting state water quality standards). The majority of those impairments come from "non point sources" of pollution – diffuse pollution created by the diverse land uses taking place across Minnesota's landscapes.

THE NEED FOR A NEW APPROACH TO WATER GOVERNANCE

In Minnesota we have a significant amount of infrastructure in place that impacts the issue of water quality - households, farmsteads, businesses, congregations, non-profits, academia, and government. All of these institutions have a role to play in managing the health of our state's waters. Yet these institutions do not see themselves as accountable for clean water goals, nor do they have the governance capacity or cross-sector, cross-regional infrastructure needed to work across and between watersheds on clean water goals. Instead, government agencies bear the lion's share of responsibility for governing our state's water resources. As a result, we are not making sufficient progress in meeting our state's clean water goals. There are an increasing number of leaders within government and within these diverse institutions who agree **we need a new approach to water governance and policymaking**, one that can be integrated into our existing systems.

PROPOSED SOLUTION STRATEGY

The Civic Governance policy pilot, which includes citizen leaders from government agencies, community-based organizations, and academia, is a response to this need. We are developing and testing a new approach to water governance in Minnesota - a "Civic Governance" model that demonstrates how to develop and practice the governance capacity needed in all institutions to achieve our state's water quality goals. And we are expanding this solution strategy to a larger, statewide scale.

WHAT'S WORKING

- We have developed a model for Civic Governance that, if sustained, can be expanded to produce water quality impact. Our "network" map illustrates working relationships we are building across sectors, regions, and watershed scales.
- We have developed specific guidelines for members of Civic Governance Organizing Agencies (OAs) to adapt and integrate a civic organizing approach into strategic planning, education and outreach, and existing boards to ensure a focus on governing for the common good and the organizing capacity needed to increase ownership, accountability, and scale of impact in the process of advancing best water quality practices.

- We have developed an integrated educational track that links practice to civic policymaking and advances a Civic Policy Agenda.
- We have developed and are now advancing a Civic Governance Policy Agenda from our practice, which includes the following recommendations for any water quality program or project:
 1. Water quality restoration and protection work must be linked to active citizenship and a higher purpose (i.e., all citizens in communities and institutions have a central role in and obligation in a democracy to solve the challenge of water pollution and to work toward the common goal of clean water).
 2. In order to ensure there are effective and sustainable local efforts to control water pollution within watersheds across Minnesota, we must develop the civic capacity of local leaders willing to engage in all aspects of the policy making process (including strategic planning, civic engagement, and transparent, accountable decision-making)
 3. In order for active citizens and civic leaders to emerge and thrive within watersheds, all institutions collaborating toward the goal of clean water must establish internal policies that develop the identity of active citizenship, civic capacity and the civic infrastructure needed to have a meaningful governing role in the process. This requires a dedication of resources to civic development across time, sectors, and generations.
 4. Advance recommendations 1-3 as a Civic Policy

WHAT IS THE GAP (CHALLENGE)

- The power dynamic that sustains current practices in water resource management is difficult to impact.
- Lead organizers work to build a bridge between the higher principles that define Civic Governance and the principles of their sector, but in doing so they must go against the current culture within their systems.
- Current understanding of policy is still interpreted as being developed by the “boss” and “the government” with citizenship being a response separate from more immediate roles of value.
- Closing the gap takes focus by individuals in a civic organizing agency to restructure their time, to learn from practice, sustain governing membership in a civic organizing agency until there is some evidence of the value of change.

NEXT STEPS

1. Stay focused on developing the identity of lead organizers and their capacity to sustain and strengthen current Civic Governance civic infrastructure.
2. Goal is “good enough” lead organizing capacity by December 2015 to meet criteria for Stage 1 and move forward as a Demonstration in Civic Governance.
3. Advance policy recommendations (See attached Civic Governance Policy Agenda

CIVIC GOVERNANCE: A MACI CASE STUDY

SECTION 1: THE PUBLIC POLICY ISSUE

Minnesota's greatest water quality challenge, nonpoint source pollution, is not getting solved at the watershed scale, which is needed to impact the problem for the long-term. To date, roughly 40 percent of Minnesota's assessed waters have been found to be impaired (not meeting state water quality standards). The majority of those impairments come from "nonpoint" sources of pollution – diffuse pollution created by the diverse land uses taking place across Minnesota's landscapes.

SECTION 2: THE NEED FOR A NEW APPROACH TO WATER GOVERNANCE

In Minnesota we have a significant amount of existing institutional infrastructure, including households, farmsteads, businesses, congregations, non-profits, academia, and government, all of which have a role to play in managing the health of our state's waters. Citizens within these systems (those who recognize this role) are making an enormous investment of time and knowledge, engagement of their constituencies, and are supported by millions of public and private dollars. **In spite of this, we are not making sufficient progress in meeting our state's water quality goals.**

All of this investment is grounded in existing approaches to water governance. Our government agencies – federal, state, and local – and our educational institutions seek to achieve these goals by developing scientific and technical expertise, packaged in services. Similarly, non-profit organizations advocate for water quality through legislative mandates, educational campaigns, volunteerism, community-based projects, and in some cases law suits.

Some might argue that the answer to the problem is more of the same. In a civic organizing approach, when there is evidence that the practices used in existing systems are not achieving their public purpose and water quality goals, we focus our attention on the policymaking process that underlies and produces that outcome.

There are an increasing number of leaders who agree **we need a new approach to water governance and policymaking** that can be integrated into our existing systems. To date, however, there is little imagination or investment in developing a new approach.

SECTION 3: PROPOSED SOLUTION STRATEGY

The Civic Governance policy pilot, which includes citizen leaders from government agencies, community-based organizations, and academia, is a response to the need. We are developing and testing this needed new approach to water governance in Minnesota. Our approach is to develop a

Civic Governance model that demonstrates the governance capacity needed to achieve our state's water quality goals and that can be expanded to a larger, statewide scale.

3 Pilot Goals:

1. Test our capacity to organize a Civic Governance infrastructure. This meets Civic Organizing Stage 1 Criteria. In the process we produce evidence that the approach provides greater success in achieving specific water quality goals as defined by each Civic Governance pilot jurisdiction (we have 3 CG pilots).
2. Produce a Civic Governance educational track. This track integrates with existing water governance approaches. We ensure our investment in this educational strategy produces and expands a permanent Civic Organizing Agency (OA) whose members can link their water governance practice to civic policymaking.
3. Advance a Civic Governance Policy Agenda. We ensure the Civic Governance Policy Agenda is in alignment with the Minnesota Active Citizenship Initiative Civic Policy Agenda and advance the recommendations in our respective jurisdictions.

Key Stakeholders Organized from 2011 to 2014:

2011

Janna Caywood, Lynne Kolze, and Peg Michels launched the Civic Governance pilot in partnership with the Minnesota Active Citizenship Initiative (MACI). Purpose is to test a Civic Organizing approach within the jurisdiction of each member. At this time they are the designated lead organizers for the whole pilot. We developed and advanced an educational track based on criteria that supported members to launch a Civic Organizing agency in their jurisdiction.

2012

Janna Caywood and Peg Michels launched the Como Civic Governance Organizing Agency in the urban setting of St. Paul. Janna leads the Como Active Citizen Network (CACN), a community-based network of residents living within the Como Lake watershed, which is located within the larger Capitol Region watershed. The CACN includes Como neighborhood households. The Como OA is testing Civic Governance as an approach for CACN households to work with each other and in partnership with local government and local organizations on Como Lake's water quality impairment. Current members of the Como Civic Governance OA: Janna Caywood and **Angie Sechler**, CACN leaders, and Peg Michels of Civic Org. Inc.

Also in 2012, Lynne Kolze focused on organizing in the St. Croix Basin of Minnesota and Wisconsin.

2013

Lynne Kolze and Peg Michels established the baseline MN St. Croix Civic Governance Organizing Agency, a mostly rural jurisdiction that includes the Snake River and Rum River watersheds. Current MN St. Croix CG OA members: Lynne Kolze of MN Pollution Control Agency, **Kelly Osterdyk** of Kanabec Soil and Water Conservation District, **Susan Shaw** of Mille Lacs Soil and Water Conservation

District, **Shannon Carpenter** of Natural Resources Conservation Service, and Peg Michels of Civic Org. Inc. The MN St. Croix OA is testing Civic Governance as an approach to better collaborate across jurisdictions – federal, state and county – and with local landowners.

Lynne and Peg also launched a 6-session “Introduction to Civic Governance” with St. Croix Basin citizens from Wisconsin, including representatives from state and local government, the Univ. of WI, local lake associations, and a local community consultant. Goal was to establish a 3rd Civic Governance organizing agency.

2014

3 Civic Governance OAs established: Como, St. Croix, and Interstate MN/WI.

Current members of Interstate MN/WI Organizing Agency: **John Haack** of Univ. of WI Extension, **Amanda Hansen** of Dunn County Conservation/Farmer Led Council, **Chris Gaetzke** of Dunn County Conservation, **Kyle Kulow** of St. Croix County/Farmer Led Council, **Danette Olsen** of Heritage Initiative, **Dan Prestebak** of Dunn County Conservation, **Buzz Sorge** of WI Department of Natural Resources, **Ron Verdon** of WI Lake Association, **Dan Zerr** of Univ. of WI Extension.

Also, the Minnesota St. Croix Civic Governance Organizing Agency is in the process of expanding, to include: **Rich Anderson** of Ann Lake Watershed Alliance in Kanabec County, **Jeff Hamme** of Ann Lake Watershed Alliance in Kanabec County, **Dottie Smith-Jacobs** of Minnesota Corn Growers Association, and **Teresa Wickeham** of Kanabec County Environmental Services and Snake River Watershed Management Board Coordinator.

Total number in 3 civic organizing agencies:

18 OA members organizing a larger network (potential base) of 100 leaders.

SECTION 4: EVIDENCE

What is Working:

- Ownership of identity and obligation of “lead organizer” role by the current Civic Governance pilot lead organizers, Janna Caywood and Lynne Kolze. This has been developed through 4 years of practice within their current roles. With that ownership comes greater capacity to argue the need for Civic Governance, relate the argument to existing approaches to policymaking within their jurisdiction, greater capacity to translate, co-create, and expand the analysis within the total base of leaders (18) who make up membership in the 3 Civic Governance organizing agencies.
- Evidence of widespread resonance and compatibility between the Civic Governance Policy Document and the public principles of particular individuals, institutions, and sectors of each jurisdiction. Examples of existing approaches within each Civic Governance pilot jurisdiction:
 - Community based problem-solving—public principle: well being of the whole community.

- Service—public principle: service to the common good (e.g., protection of the environment in each generation, sustainable infrastructure).
- Advocacy – public principle: equity (e.g. gives voice to stakeholders)
- Electoral—public principle: justice through governance for the common good.

The Civic Governance Policy Document provides a guide to integrate language reflecting these particular principles with the universal role and obligation of active citizenship, which produces the means (governing method and infrastructure) to achieve goals in each generation.

- Civic Governance is a model that, if sustained, can be expanded to produce water quality impact. (See jurisdictional network map).
 - We have 3 baseline CG OAs in jurisdictions that already have big impact. Also, leaders in the Mankato region are moving forward into a 6-session training track that could lead to a 4th Civic Governance OA in a key region.
 - We have initial evidence that members of CG OAs are growing in their knowledge of the need for change and developing their capacity to articulate why and how Civic Governance is a solution strategy that integrates with concrete projects in their jurisdictions. This argument is being tested within 15 existing water quality projects.
 - We have evidence that the approach is producing better results in these projects (e.g., the Como phosphorus source reduction project and the Red Cedar restoration project. There is potential for producing a model for restructuring existing boards and implementation teams.
 - All 3 CG OAs are governed by lead organizers – Peg Michels, Lynne Kolze, Janna Caywood - who take responsibility for sustaining and advancing the Civic Governance Policy Document within their jurisdictions. Members of the Civic Governance OAs are testing their interest in being lead organizers, which could sustain and expand the broader Civic Governance initiative.
 - Prime time is spent investing in learning the value and obligation of the role of lead organizer.
 - The 18 CG OA members are organizing a larger constituency base within their specific jurisdictions, in total about 100 leaders.
 - \$63K has been invested to date from the Pollution Control Agency and \$20K from Capitol Region Watershed District – each institution has invested in building the lead organizing capacity to produce the Civic Governance model.
- We have developed specific “integration” guidelines that members of Civic Governance Organizing Agencies (OAs) use to adapt a civic organizing approach in restructuring strategic planning, trainings, and existing boards. In doing this we can test capacity to increase ownership, accountability, and governance.
 - **Jurisdiction:** All individuals identify a place where they will test the value of a civic organizing approach.
 - **Purpose:** They link the particular purpose of their jurisdiction to the need to govern for the common good.

- **Goals:** They identify particular goals that relate to purpose, that are measurable, and identify the stakeholders needed to achieve goals.
- **Role:** Stakeholders are *active citizens, obligated to govern for the common good, no matter what other roles, expertise, or positions they hold*. They take on this role while achieving particular goals. *Civic leaders* are responsible for organizing the means (structure and method) for all stakeholders to carry out this governing citizen role. Practice is guided by civic standards that apply to all.
- **Governing Structure:** A member of a civic organizing agency leads the process. Governing active citizens are made up of leaders who agree to learn the role of civic leader while organizing the broader base of stakeholders needed to achieve goals.
- **Larger Network (base):** In order to impact the scale of the specific policy issue and make a case for the need for a new approach to policy making grounded in the role of *active citizenship*, civic leaders participate in a larger network (base).

Example: Janna Caywood and Angie Sechler of the Como Civic Governance OA are using an “adapted” strategic planning process to integrate Civic Governance practices into a community-based water quality project, called the Como Curb Cleanup. In the process they demonstrate Civic Governance practices to Como neighbors who make up the project leadership team and produce better project outcomes, including leadership development and base building, as a result of this integration. Leah DeGarmo, Como resident and Kowalski’s Department Head (Uptown Bakery) is a member of this leadership team. She was able to easily connect her role as a citizen with participation in this community project, a result of Kowalski’s as a company incentivizing her involvement in civic opportunities beyond her workplace and providing her with civic leadership development.

Example: Members of the Minnesota St. Croix Civic Governance OA are using the above integrated guidelines in the organizing projects they are using to test the value of a civic organizing approach. (5-6 applications) as well as using them within the educational track that introduces Civic Governance to key stakeholders.

Example: Shannon Carpenter of the MN St. Croix Civic Governance OA used an “adapted” approach to create a county-wide soil health plan. She met with participants prior to the meeting to set a Civic Governance tone, led the meeting according to Civic Governance standards, and achieved better participation and better collaboration as a result. She intentionally avoided labeling the process a Natural Resources Conservation Service (her agency) plan so that it was clear the plan “belonged” to all those who co-developed it.

Example: Members (9) of the Interstate Civic Governance OA were recruited using the integrated guidelines in a 6 session introduction to Civic Governance. They were used to establish expectations for membership in a civic organizing agency. Currently they are being used to track outcomes from individual check-in at the monthly OA meeting. Total number of

organizing projects being tracked are 9 or more (some individuals have several jurisdictions where they are testing civic organizing).

- We have developed an integrated educational track that links practice to civic policymaking and advances a Civic Policy Agenda. This track is based on the MACI Integrated Educational track and includes: Civic Organizing Agency—1-1 public meeting—Civic Policy Workshops—Introduction to Civic Governance expands organizing agency capacity

Example: See above examples under guidelines being integrated into an Introduction to Civic Governance.

Lynne Kolze is teaching Civic Governance in her statewide role developing civic engagement for MPCA. She is in the process of identifying 2-3 additional 6-session training tracks with the hope of expanding civic organizing agencies in other regions of Minnesota.

Example: Lynne Kolze (MPCA) and Janna Caywood are also testing this ed. track with Jeff Forester of Minnesota Lakes and River Advocates. This will introduce Civic Governance and inform the educational and organizing role they play statewide as a lakes association lobbyist organization. The hoped for outcome is that he will join an existing Civic Governance Organizing Agency to get day-to-day support for expanding Civic Governance within his role.

At all points of this integrated educational track, individuals can chose to contribute to advancing Civic Governance in whatever way works for them. Members of the civic organizing agency take the lead on keeping the larger network in the loop on findings; sustain the integrated educational track; produce and track evidence based upon criteria for civic organizing; convene members across regions to expand impact; and govern the initiative. The key to achieving this outcome is the use of a common approach to organizing within each region.

If Civic Governance meets criteria for Stage 1, members will have developed a base of civic organizing agencies that support a Civic Leadership Institute in 3 regions based on the structure of the MACI Institute.

- A Civic Governance Policy Agenda. This has been developed through the case study process, which included policy workshops with the broader stakeholder network, trainings, and the practice of Civic Governance OA members, and resulted in specific policy recommendations. The recommendations are currently being advanced by Lynne Kolze and Janna Caywood with their respective OAs. (See the Civic Governance Policy Agenda attached)

What is the Gap (Challenges):

- The power dynamic that sustains current practices in water resource management is difficult to impact. The role of lead organizer is key to producing evidence of how that can be done to the benefit of organizations. When we produce this evidence we are better able to generate the resources needed to produce further evidence and scale this work. (See Criteria for Stage 1)

- Lead organizers work to build a bridge between the higher principles that define Civic Governance and the principles of their sector, but in doing so they must go against the current culture within their systems. Investment in developing imagination and ownership in larger public principles that define sectors has eroded, with the result that these principles, if articulated, have been privatized. So what once was called service, defined as serving the interest of the common good, is now interpreted as providing service on demand. Advocacy now means *voice* without talking with anyone that might disagree. Community well-being has come to mean personal safety, a place to retreat from the larger society, and tension is avoided at all costs. The focus is on activities, tasks, ‘shovel ready projects,’ and a reliance on technical solutions that continue to advance the misnamed “service” culture. This is the case in all existing approaches to policy making, in which experts define, develop and deliver services to increasingly disengaged *customers*.
- Current understanding of policy is still interpreted as being developed by the “boss” and “the government” with citizenship being a response separate from more immediate roles of value. This is the source of “split realms” - the realm of *expertise* and the realm of *citizenship*: citizenship and volunteerism, citizenship and parenting, citizenship and learning, citizenship and governing. This can be a challenge when citizenship is seen as something that is practiced in “off hours” or when one has free time, which is increasingly limited. Lead Organizers watch for every chance or opportunity to build a bridge between the highest principles in each jurisdiction, the best practice, what is missing, and make the case for the Civic Governance Policy Document as a solution strategy. All this is done in concrete organizing projects so individuals can relate the governing function that produces more effective outcomes to the identity of active citizenship within their particular role as parent, worker, community member.
- Closing the gap takes time and it takes focus by individuals in a civic organizing agency to restructure their time, to learn from practice, sustain governing membership in a civic organizing agency until there is some evidence of the value of change. Once there is evidence of gain, it becomes easier to hold that line but in Stage 1 it is more difficult.

Next Steps:

1. Stay focused on developing the identity of lead organizers and their capacity to sustain and strengthen current Civic Governance civic infrastructure.
2. Goal is “good enough” lead organizing capacity by December 2015 to meet criteria for Stage 1 and move forward as a Demonstration in Civic Governance.
3. Advance policy recommendations (See attached Civic Governance Policy Agenda)

Civic Governance Identity Statement- Civic Governance is a new approach to policy making that produces the civic infrastructure needed to govern for the common good and sustain democracy as a just system of governance.

The Purpose of the Civic Governance pilot is to develop the civic imagination, and organize the civic infrastructure needed to make a case for Civic Governance.

The Civic Governance Identity is grounded in the following Civic Principles:

Human Capacity (to govern for the common good)

- Every individual is a policy maker and has the capacity to know what is good, to grow in that knowledge, to govern for the common good, and to be a co-producer of justice in the world. Civic Leaders are obligated to organize the infrastructure to achieve this outcome.

Democracy (A system of governance that requires citizens to govern for the common good)

- Rule by “the people” is the best system of human governance. All stakeholders organize a civic infrastructure to govern for the common good and produce justice in the tension between individual and diverse interests.

Active Citizenship (Civic Leadership) (Role that obligates all stakeholders to govern for the common good)

- An active citizen is a governing member. In a democracy, citizens are obligated to govern for the good of the whole. In return for their contributions, citizens share in the rewards of a just society. Civic Leaders are obligated to organize the infrastructure needed for individuals to be active citizens in institutions of family, faith, community, work, learning and governance.

Political Competence (mindset and skill needed to carry out obligation of active citizenship)

- Politics is the “work of the citizen”. All citizens are responsible to develop the political competence to define problems, produce solutions, and establish policies in light of civic principles and standards while achieving their particular goals. This mindset and the civic skills needed to carry out the role of active citizenship is dependent upon civic leaders who organize the capacity for key stakeholders in their jurisdiction to carry out the obligation of active citizenship.

Institutional Efficacy (Societal structure needed to sustain democracy and develop active citizenship)

- In a democracy, institutions of family, faith, work, community, learning, and governance sustain the democratic values of our society and ensure the capacity to govern for the common good. Civic leaders and active citizens know they are obligated to produce the civic institutions and infrastructure necessary to sustain democracy as a just system of governance.

Civic Standards guide all decision-making

- All those impacted by the problem are stakeholders and help define the problem in light of civic principles and the realities of their situation.
- All stakeholders are accountable for contributing resources (leadership/time, knowledge, constituencies & dollars) to solve the problem.
- All stakeholders are engaged in decision-making and policy-making that contributes to the common good.
- All stakeholders implement policies grounded in civic principles in the places where they have the authority to act.

Civic Organizing Disciplines and Political Skills are used to meet Standards while achieving goals.

Civic Organizing Disciplines

- Civic Governance Policy Document-Primary policy document
- Civic Leadership Development-Basis for implementing Policy Document while achieving goals. (Civic Organizing Agency)
- Power Analysis-Guides Strategic Planning
- Work Plan-Implements agreements
- Used to advance work plan:
 - Principled Driven Calendar
 - Public Meeting
 - Public Evaluation
- Civic Policy Making-Outcome from use of disciplines and skills-organizes the civic infrastructure needed to solve complex problems and sustain a just democracy.

Political Skills

- Critical thinking: Distinguishing objective reality (facts) from subjective reality (interpretative) as both relate to achieving our principles and common goals.
- Open-ended questions to engage different perspectives.
- Strategic listening to determine and clarify self-interest as it relates to common goals.
- Suspending judgment to understand divergent points of view.
- Ability to negotiate and compromise while staying accountable to civic principles.
- Fostering constructive tension to work through values that are each good in their own right but often conflict (e.g. freedom and equality).
- Holding self and others accountable for following through on agreements.