

Planning in Advance of Civil Unrest

Submitted by the Divided Community Project
The Ohio State University Moritz College of Law



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THE OHIO STATE UNIVERSITY MORITZ COLLEGE OF LAW PROGRAM ON DISPUTE RESOLUTION

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This document distills lessons from recent experience with civil unrest that can be useful to those who want to have a plan in place before turbulence occurs. Each community can adapt these general lessons as its leaders prepare a plan tailored to their community and the reasons for division within that community. The planning suggestions offered in this document can be used to assess and improve the resilience of a community, to identify issues and create ways to address them before they cause an eruption, and to be prepared to deal constructively with unrest if it occurs.

The recommended strategies do not stifle the public expression of concerns and emotions in large group settings. Rather, the message offered in this document reflects the conclusions of experienced intervenors, public officials, and advocacy group leaders that communities with division need not become polarized communities with groups that have stopped listening to opposing viewpoints, have demonized those who subscribe to them, and are prone to destructive civil unrest. Instead, communities can develop sensible ways to solve problems even in the midst of differences and avid advocacy for change. They can also gain by being ready in the event that civil unrest occurs, either as the result of local concerns or outside groups seeking to use a local event to express concerns about a national issue.

The planning steps include:

1. First, a respected entity within the community should **take the initiative** to promote a planning process by creating a checklist of planning activities and identifying experts and resources.
2. Next, the convening entity should begin by engaging other key individuals in conducting an **assessment** of the community's ability to handle division; the potential cost, broadly construed, of civil unrest; and the potential gains for the community when residents can handle their divisions constructively.
3. Then the preliminary planning group should use the assessment as a basis to **assemble a planning group** that includes key public officials and also reflects the broader community to gain the input, commitment, and legitimacy needed to plan well and gain implementation. The group can be augmented as needed during the course of planning.
4. This planning group should develop an **early warning system** that there are concerns among a segment of the community or that an event is occurring that might bring outside groups to the community to bring attention to national issues.
5. Given likely areas of concern, the planning group should develop **processes** and opportunities for residents to **raise problems and work with public officials**.
6. The planning group should help **establish a pattern of using constructive practices** to solve problems within the community, including holding regular meetings with spokespersons and key public officials to discuss hot button issues, enhancing relationships among diverse groups, training public officials to encourage these patterns, and more.
7. The planning group should encourage public officials and others to develop **concrete plans for their actions during the first hours and weeks of civil unrest**, should it occur. This would include ways to work with outside groups that want to take advantage of a local event to bring attention to national issues.

8. The planning group should develop an overall **implementation plan**, including ways to maintain the training and protocols as public officials and other leaders change.

This document details strategies for each plan step, explains why that step matters, and offers examples. The appendix includes an example of a planning checklist and planning resources. The Divided Community Project has written another document that offers more detail on Planning Step 7, reactive strategies in the midst of civil unrest: [Key Considerations for Community Leaders Facing Civil Unrest](#) (2016).

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PREFACE & ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

This report identifies for local leaders – both public officials and other community leaders -- some considerations for planning in advance of civil unrest. We encourage those serving individual audiences – mayors, law enforcement, advocacy groups, bar leaders, for example – to tailor this report to their constituencies. With that goal in mind, we have authorized adaptation under The Creative Commons Attribution-Share Alike International License (see page 2), seeking only attribution as other groups publish this or an adapted text for nonprofit and nonexclusive purposes.

This document grows out of an April 9, 2015 meeting of leaders and mediators from throughout the United States who had experience dealing with civil unrest in communities. The meeting was so productive in terms of coming up with “lessons learned” that participants urged the organizers to compile, organize, and transmit those lessons to leaders in government, business and the legal profession, the faith community, and others with an opportunity to contribute.

The Divided Community Project, the sponsor of the April 9 meeting, has published a companion document for local leaders in the midst of civil unrest, [Key Considerations for Community Leaders Facing Civil Unrest](#) (2016). The Project’s goal is to continue to develop and distill materials for public officials and other community leaders in communities facing volatile conflict that reflect advice from those who have worked with or studied divided communities. It is an iterative project; as the Project learns of new information, it will add to and modify this document and other project materials to reflect new insights

The Divided Community Project is housed at The Ohio State University Moritz College of Law. The steering committee for the Project includes: Nancy Rogers, Professor Emeritus, The Ohio State University Moritz College of Law, and former Ohio Attorney General; Josh Stulberg, Moritz Chair in Alternative Dispute Resolution, The Ohio State University Moritz College of Law, and mediator in

community conflicts; Susan Carpenter, public policy and community mediator, trainer and co-author of *Mediating Public Disputes*; Andrew Thomas, mediator in community conflicts and Community Relations and Neighborhood Engagement Director, City of Sanford, Florida; Chris Carlson, public policy mediator and Chief Advisor, Policy Consensus Initiative; Sarah Rubin, Program Manager, Public Engagement, California Institute for Local Government; and Craig McEwen, Professor Emeritus, Bowdoin College, and social scientist evaluating mediation and dispute resolution. Grande Lum, Director, Community Relations Service in the U.S. Department of Justice, generously shared his counsel as the project was shaped and joined the meeting on April 9, 2015 at The Ohio State University Moritz College of Law. William Froehlich, Langdon Fellow in the Program on Dispute Resolution at the Moritz College of Law, later joined the project and has helped to shape the report.

We are grateful as well to the others who, in addition to steering group members, attended the April 9, 2015 meeting, many of whom also contributed to editing this document.

- Community Relations Service conciliators: Derryck Dean and Thomas Battles;
- Sanford, Florida leaders: City Manager Norton Bonaparte, Jr., former Sanford Police Chief Richard Myers (now Chief of Police, Newport News, Virginia); Valarie Houston, Chair of the Sanford inter-faith coalition; and city mediator Andrew Thomas, mentioned above;
- Public officials from other state or local communities: Kimberly Jacobs, Chief of Police, Columbus, Ohio; Derrick Diggs, former Chief of Police, Toledo, Ohio; Jennifer Thornton, Outreach Coordinator for the U.S. Attorney’s Office (S.D. Ohio); and Lou Gieszl, Assistant Administrator for Programs, Administrative Office of the Courts, Maryland;

- Advocacy group leaders: Mickie Luna, Immediate Past National Vice President, League of United Latin American Citizens, and Hilary O. Shelton, Senior Vice President for Advocacy, NAACP;
- Representative of an institute devoted to educating local officials: Terry Amsler (emeritus), California's Institute for Local Government;
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- Researchers in the field: Maxine Thomas, Vice President and General Counsel, Kettering Foundation, and April Young, New Equity Partners.

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INTRODUCTION

Over the past few years, the nation has watched repeatedly as peaceful demonstrations followed an incident that highlighted an unresolved division within a community. Sometimes the demonstrations escalated to confrontations, arrests, property damage, and violence, and left in their wake a more bitterly polarized community.

One antidote to destructive civil unrest is a solid plan for constructively handling unrest, created in more tranquil times. That plan can help a community deal effectively with community division, so that those concerned about public policies and practices feel less need to escalate their actions. The plan can also help community leaders to act wisely in the early hours and days of civil unrest, should it occur. In this respect, this document focuses on how leaders throughout the community can listen for the broader concerns underlying unrest, encourage broad participation in a process for solving problems, act in ways to maintain and enhance public trust in its leaders, and establish consultation and decision-making protocols among law enforcement and other leaders.

The focus of this planning process is on developing communitywide relationships, but it does not cover all aspects of what might cause community unrest or be involved in solving it. For example, sometimes unrest occurs because a segment of the community views public officials as having made unjust decisions or does not trust local officials who do not reflect the racial or other diversity of the community. This document does not focus on making policy recommendations or suggesting new governance structures, except to note here their importance as a source of civil unrest or a barrier to resolving differences constructively and to discuss how to create warning mechanisms that alert governments about mounting concerns. This document focuses on how leaders across the board should plan to interact and coordinate but does not provide counsel on police procedures to restore order.

The planning envisioned by this document does not seek to dilute the voices of those who express concerns but rather to support their being heard and considered before some of those expressing concerns escalate their actions in ways that might be destructive to the community, endanger lives, and leave enduring bitterness.

1. Take the Initiative to Promote a Planning Process

POSSIBLE STRATEGIES

- Create a beginning checklist for the planning. This document can list people to talk with, research to conduct, and more. The checklist should fit the community and its issues (see Appendix B for an example).
- Consider what resources might be drawn upon to support the effort. A civic group, bar association or other entity might offer to provide leadership, logistical, or technological support. A local university might offer expertise or facilitation services. The U.S. Justice Department's Community Relations Service ("CRS"), which has intervened in volatile community conflicts for over 50 years, can offer expertise (see other ideas in Appendix A). The idea is to create an entity that will enable the planning and sustain its implementation, even when public resources are tight.

WHY TAKE THIS STEP?

Compared with all the other disasters for which communities must create emergency management plans—natural disasters such as hurricanes, wildfires, flooding, etc., as well as man-made ones—civil unrest often receives a lower priority. If communities undertake any such planning, they often delegate responsibility to the police department to create a plan to restore order. But civil unrest often takes its greatest toll on the social fabric of the community. If that unrest stems from residents' concerns of racial or ethnic injustice,

for example, destructive tensions or unresolved conflicts may deepen civic division. Therefore, the planning process should be broader than determining police practices to restore order; it might examine, for example, how community members communicate and interact across different sectors of the community – be it dialogue among faith-based groups or neighbors confronting homeless citizens situated on their streets –and how those persons can work together to meet the needs of all members of the community.

MORE DETAIL ON THE STRATEGIES

Ideally, such planning will be undertaken jointly by public officials working side-by-side with other community leaders. However, in practice it may be difficult for public officials to sustain the kind of long-term commitment to the process and relationship-building that is required. There are other challenges as well. Public officials may fear that they are acknowledging community division when they announce they are planning for potential civil unrest. Deciding what to call the effort is important. Framing the process in a positive tone is helpful. Community leaders may also fear that planning will only lead to deeper community

division or that they might make a misstep in discussing volatile issues such as racial division. But the consequences of the failure to plan may be more devastating.

Therefore engaging a group of community leaders to provide their visible leadership to initiate and sustain the process can be a long-term benefit to the community. Community leaders – drawn from civic organizations like business and bar associations, universities, inter-faith groups, and advocacy groups – can provide the impetus to convene a planning effort and facilitate a planning

initiative that engages both public officials and a broad cross-section of community leaders.

The planning will be productive only if key public officials participate, but the other community leaders can initiate the planning process and assume risks associated with initiating the planning

effort. When convening leadership comes from the broader community, it may enable broader participation from those who might be concerned with the small “p” politics of the endeavor. Also, some leaders will participate and help only in response to an invitation and only if persuaded that the planning will be conducted responsibly.

2. Persuade Public Officials and Other Community Leaders to Conduct an Assessment of the Community’s Ability to Handle Division (see Planning Step 3 about identifying these persons)

POSSIBLE STRATEGIES

- Assess what might occur if no planning takes place
 - *Temperature taking:* Examine the level of division within the community by discussing:
 - The history of past civil unrest in that community.
 - Civil unrest in comparable communities around the nation.
 - Any clashing interests within the community (talk with key spokespersons about hot button issues).
 - Recent changes, including in assaults on police officers, complaints of racial, ethnic, religious or other inequity in law enforcement actions, complaints about racial or other inequity in schools, levels of unemployment, and media focus on racial or other tensions.
 - *Community resiliency:* Evaluate the community’s ability to deal with division:
 - Research the community’s history with respect to dealing with division/civil unrest.
 - Compare the community’s record with how comparable communities around the nation dealt with division/civil unrest.
 - Assess the diversity of decision-makers when taking into account the likely divisions within the community.
 - Assess the collaborative involvement of various segments of the community with the police.
 - Listen to perceptions of key spokespersons for a variety of interests within the community regarding the overall health of the community.
 - Examine the public agencies’ processes and informal practices already in place to deal with long-term, sustained divisions within the community that have the potential to lead to civil unrest.
 - Determine whether community leaders have sufficient channels of communication with public officials and with each other.
 - Compare the community’s resilience, according to these measures, with the resilience of other communities.

- List areas for improvement.
- *Emergency readiness*: Assess the community's readiness to deal effectively in the first hours and weeks of civil unrest, whether locally generated or generated because local events implicate national concerns.
- *Conflict resolution assessment*: Determine the community's readiness to deal with sustained conflict and civil unrest.
 - Gauge the resources for collaborative problem-solving within the community and the public's use of these mechanisms.
- Determine the community's unique identity and shared values:
 - Define what all segments of the community care about (for example, its ability to talk openly about its differences, its strong schools, thriving tourist industry).
 - Identify what the community has a reason to preserve by dealing effectively and peacefully with its divisions and avoiding extensive civil unrest.
 - Explain how shared values extend to each segment of the community.
- Conduct a cost assessment: Ascertain the potential range of the costs of civil unrest, including violence and deepened bitterness and the damage to the community-wide identity. The experience in Baltimore, Ferguson, and Sanford might provide a basis for estimating these costs for the planning community.

WHY TAKE THIS STEP?

To incentivize and inform planning, it may be necessary to identify the likelihood of civil unrest and the likely costs that could arise due to the failure to plan for civil unrest. Bringing in the expenses of another's city's unrest may help to overcome the human tendency to focus only on the cost of the planning. Baltimore officials, for example, estimated that the direct city expenses for the spring 2015 unrest amounted to \$20 million, an overall cost figure that could be augmented by taking into account the about 380 businesses damaged, conventions canceled, and federal costs. In addition, an assessment of what might occur allows the planning group to delve into the issues that will need to be addressed through the planning process for that community, and to examine how resilient the community's processes are for dealing

with division and the types of issues likely to produce division. An assessment might produce consensus on that community's unique identity and values – the valued public goods that people across the community do not want to jeopardize as the community wrestles with division. Naming what people from across the community value about their city can be key to getting people from different groups to understand that they have a shared interest in protecting their community. Even communities with little division may face unrest when a local incident provides a way to publicize national issues. Getting ready for civil unrest will improve the likelihood that underlying issues will be addressed constructively rather than resulting in destructive actions or remaining unresolved.

MORE DETAIL ON THESE STRATEGIES

In identifying potentially divisive issues, the planners might reflect on the fact that civil unrest seemingly triggered by a single incident is likely grounded in a broader sense of past unfair treatment and a lack of public trust in the community leaders to address that unfairness. Thus, a plan for civil unrest should take into account these broader public concerns. A planning group broadly representative of the community can often surface these potential sources of division. Past history is one of the key indicators of the potential for future unrest. An examination of the community's history of civil unrest as well as sources of current unrest in other communities helps to uncover divisive issues as well as the residents' concerns about how public officials handled them.

Seattle conducted such an assessment. The Seattle Office of Emergency Management provided research for the Seattle plan for "social unrest." The office investigated the history of civil disorders, from 1886 when a mob "attempted to evict Chinese residents from the city" to the present, and analyzed the effectiveness of interventions by city leaders. Next, it analyzed the vulnerability



"Immigration Reform, DC, 3/21/2010" by Susan Melkisehan is licensed under CC BY-NC-ND 2.0.

of Seattle to future events and the likely consequences for the city. It discussed the range of issues that might spark unrest currently and the range of developments that might ensue. Then it also assessed the most likely scenario, the city's readiness, and its costs. The office then issued a "Seattle Hazard Identification and Vulnerability Analysis" – with a cover page containing photos of a burning building and obstructed traffic – that could be a basis for future planning. <http://www.seattle.gov/emergency-management/what-if/hazards>.

3. Determine Who Should Participate in Planning and Persuade Them to Become Involved

POSSIBLE STRATEGIES

- Seek to involve in the planning:
 - Local public officials such as the mayor/city manager and the staff to whom the mayor/city manager will delegate this work, including staff from the civil rights/community relations agency.
 - Law enforcement officials.
 - Emergency management staff.
 - Key advocates for interest and advocacy groups within the community, especially civil rights groups.
 - Influential community leaders, including faith leaders, bar leaders, business leaders, educational leaders, local "celebrities" (radio/local TV hosts, athletes, etc.), leaders of youth organizations, who can be credible communicators and also can interact across interest and advocacy groups.

- Other individuals who reflect the general public's views and are respected by the community.
- Experts in areas crucial to the planning, such as media (including social media), educators, mediators and people versed in handling community conflicts.
- Make sure someone is responsible for adding new members to the planning group as the process moves forward, particularly as it becomes clearer:
 - What groups or individuals could help implement the plan.
 - What expertise would help the group.
 - What segments of the community are not represented in the planning group.
- Because of the challenges and barriers associated with creating a plan to deal with civil unrest, it may be necessary to persuade these key persons that it is worthwhile to participate in creating such a plan (see "more detail" below).

WHY TAKE THIS STEP?

Ultimately, the planning group should reflect the broader community, so that:

- The plan benefits from the views of all segments of the community,
- Those who must be part of carrying out the plan have already participated in the planning and are committed to its implementation, and
- Residents view the planning group as legitimate because they feel that their interests have been represented.



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MORE DETAIL ON THESE STRATEGIES

As a practical matter, it may be difficult to engage all of these persons at the beginning, as some will hold out to determine whether the planning process is likely to be productive. One way to enhance participation is to consider who should be issuing the invitation to participate. Engaging highly-respected, well-known figures may encourage others to participate. There can be successive stages at which more representatives of constituencies with different points of view, expertise, or ability to bring various segments

of the community are brought into the process. For example, youth group representation, always helpful, may become more important when there have been conflicts in the schools.

Possible points to persuade key persons to participate in the planning include:

- Although the community will need to adapt the planning to its own tensions and situation, it can benefit from the lessons learned by other communities that have experienced civil unrest.

- Divided communities need not become polarized communities with contending groups that have stopped listening to opposing viewpoints and have demonized those who subscribe to them.
- A preliminary assessment, done by the convening group using the strategies discussed in Planning Step 2, above, should review historical and current community divisions, whether the community might be susceptible to civil unrest, the likely costs (broadly defined to include property damage, police overtime expenses, violence, and continuing bitterness) of civil unrest, and the potential benefits of avoiding civil unrest.
- Advocacy groups may worry that planning might undermine their efforts to gain attention for issues. But planning to resolve issues at the earliest possible stage does not mean avoiding conflict. Nor does it mean that the conflict will not become contentious.
 - Instead, the goal of planning would be to promote discussion of potential issues and develop options for resolving conflicts before they are allowed to simmer or cause polarization within the community.
- A further goal would be to handle civil unrest more effectively, should it occur, by
 - Having protocols in place for communications: who does what among various parts of government and law enforcement,
 - Seeking engagement of leaders within communities of interest,
 - Developing a process for dealing with underlying problems, and
 - Outlining protocol for maintaining trust in public officials throughout such a crisis.
- Ultimately the planning would aim to give interest groups an outlet for expressing concerns before people believe that they must escalate their actions in order to gain attention for the issues.

4. Develop an Early Warning System—Establish Ways to Communicate about Developing Problems

POSSIBLE STRATEGIES

- Develop broadly inclusive advisory groups that meet regularly with key public officials to report problems that might escalate to division and then to polarization.
- Create and publicize a way for individual citizens to alert community leaders of issues affecting a segment of the community.
- Use instruments that help identify community division and how deeply various segments of the community regard the division.
 - CRS has developed a form to assess racial division. (Community Relations Service, Distant Early Warning Signs (DEWS) System (2012), <http://www.justice.gov/crs/resource-center>).
 - Data miners have developed ways to use publicly-available data to discover community “hot spots” with potential for civil unrest. (See, e.g., Naren Ramakrishnan et al., “Beating the News” with EMBERS: Forecasting Civil Unrest using Open Source Indicators (2014), <http://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC4276118/>).

WHY TAKE THIS STEP?

Ultimately, a strong approach to avoiding civil unrest is to make certain that public officials learn about problems that might escalate. “Community leaders need to understand what the hot button issues are and what interests there are,” according to Thomas Battles, Conciliator and Regional

Director, Community Relations Service, U.S. Department of Justice. (Of course, as the next point makes clear, surfacing the issues does not help unless public officials also begin to deal with the problems.)

MORE DETAIL ON THESE STRATEGIES

There are logical reasons why public officials might be unaware of existing community division. Public officials may not have regular contact with all segments of the community. To deal with that potential problem, the U.S. Attorney’s Office for the Northern District of Ohio and that region’s FBI office “convene quarterly meetings with community leaders, interested stakeholders and members of Northern Ohio’s minority communities.” <http://www.justice.gov/usao-ndoh/community-outreach>.

The U.S. Attorney’s Office in Detroit has a special group, formed after September 11, 2001 between law enforcement officials and leaders of the Arab American and Middle Eastern communities of the metropolitan area. It discusses such issues as border crossings, no-fly lists, charitable giving, cultural sensitivity, hate crimes, law enforcement policies, and immigration. <http://www.justice.gov/usao-edmi/community-engagement>.

5. Provide Forums Where Emerging Problems Can Be Worked Out

POSSIBLE STRATEGIES

- Provide forums in which people can raise concerns with public officials.
- Plan for facilitators who can help people talk about difficult issues such as race in constructive ways.
- Plan ways to evaluate residents’ perceptions of these forums.
- As discussed above, it is also helpful to:
 - Develop broadly inclusive ongoing advisory groups that meet regularly with key public officials and suggest solutions for real or perceived injustices.
 - Publicize how residents can participate in the planning effort, emphasizing the desire of the community that all voices will be heard.

WHY TAKE THIS STEP?

People may escalate their actions because nothing happens after they make demands. Sometimes public officials can simply make decisions in response to the problems brought to their attention, but that is not always easy and

does not often happen readily. The plan should create processes that encourage communication and interchange among those involved in order to begin addressing the problems underlying those demands.

MORE DETAIL ON THESE STRATEGIES

It takes courage to acknowledge that a problem – particularly a complex one – might exist. But recognizing a concrete challenge can sometimes form the basis for participants to engage in a sustained, detailed discussion that enables them both to address underlying issues effectively and develop a more comprehensive, pro-active plan to ameliorate recurrence. The story of the U.S. Justice Department’s Community Relations Service intervention in Fertile, Minnesota in 2011 illustrates such a situation. A series of slurs and petty vandalism against members of an Amish community culminated in individuals setting fire to a barn on an Amish farm and killing some of the calves housed within it. Amish leaders asked that the alleged arsonists not be prosecuted, as forgiveness was a central tenet of their religion, and the Amish community re-built the barn over the course of a week, using only manual labor and a chainsaw. While the Amish were unlikely to engage in civil unrest, there was a possibility that they would not report crimes in the future if their request was not met, thus perhaps encouraging those who wanted to perpetrate crimes against the Amish to repeat this or similar actions. Granting the Amish request posed a problem for police, however, as victims do not determine whether someone should be prosecuted. CRS convened a dialogue among the Amish, police, and members of the broader community. While the police did not accede to the request not to prosecute, the group suggested dealing with the underlying issues through increased police patrols near Amish farms

as well as arranging events that helped non-Amish members of the community understand the Amish religion and way of life as a way to reduce future hate crimes. <http://www.justice.gov/crs/what-we-do/hate-crimes>. The ability to convene a problem-solving dialogue to deal with underlying interests, even when a demand cannot be granted, can be crucial to being responsive.

Just as providing these problem-solving processes can be important, so can checking to be certain that the processes are working. As Gloria Reyes, Deputy Mayor in Madison, Wisconsin explained regarding such an effort in the police-community context, it is essential to evaluate whether residents need and trust police outreach and community forums. Without evaluation, municipal and police officials may assume that a new initiative to improve trust with the particular communities within the larger city is successful even though, for some reason, it has failed to achieve its goals. She noted, “Police conduct community outreach initiatives with good intentions, however [they] do not evaluate the success of building trust by receiving input on the impact it is having from the community it is serving. We thought we were doing a good job with our trust based initiatives within our diverse communities; however, it was not until we were faced with crisis that we realized that there was a breakdown in trust within our communities of color. Evaluating trust based initiatives is essential in developing outreach initiatives that build trust and respond to the needs of the community.”

6. Enhance Productive Patterns and, When Warranted, Establish New Patterns for How the Community Solves Problems

POSSIBLE STRATEGIES

- Develop ways to enhance relationships among diverse groups by fostering constructive contacts across groups that include:
 - Working toward building understanding and communication across divides (e.g., Muslim, Jewish, and Christian religious leaders talking about how they deal with day-to-day issues they all face),
 - Positive, even enjoyable, interactions (potlucks, cultural art and music festivals, community celebrations),
 - Extensive interaction, in which friendships develop, such as regular meetings,
 - Activities that help participants realize that their common values outnumber their differing values, and
 - Use of educational workshops on how to have difficult conversations to foster peaceful interaction.
- Plan regular meetings of spokespersons for various interests to share matters of concern to their interest groups with public officials and with each other.
- Educate leaders making public statements to refer to the community's shared goals and its customary practices of resolving differences through decision-making and dialogue rather than unrest.
- Consider a process in which stakeholders discuss what they would like their community to be, compare that with the existing community, and develop a plan to achieve their desired community.
- Work with media to develop a plan for using the media, including social media, to convey what is occurring to the broader community.

WHY TAKE THIS STEP?

Communities stand a better chance of stemming the most damaging civil unrest and lasting bitter divides if residents broadly:

- Enhance trust during tranquil times so that they are more likely to work together to resolve a crisis;
- Develop a shared sense of community identity that all interest groups can support and serve as a reason to preserve peace;
- Become aware of the costs, in the broadest definition of that term, of violent and rampaging civil unrest; and
- Become accustomed to resolving their differences without violence or damage to what they value in their communities.



City of Sanford, Florida, with permission

MORE DETAIL ON THESE STRATEGIES

Developing these approaches or enhancing existing approaches so that they become part of the entire community's customary practices can be challenging. But a careful plan that sets up mechanisms and establishes patterns for communication and joint problem solving can result in a community that reacts with resilience even when facing difficult problems.

Beyond these basics, communities will be more resilient if they have built relationships across segments of the community. Rabbi Victor Urecki of Charleston, South Carolina talks about strategies that at first did not work and later, after a course correction, have created cordial relationships among Jews, Christians, and Muslims in that community, relationships that seem unshaken by world events:

The religious leaders got together many years ago with the idea of talking and sharing the issues most important to each of them. Some groups

wanted to talk about abortion, some wanted to talk about social action, others wanted to talk about anti-Semitism, etc. Each person was talking about a separate issue that was important to him/her. The religious leaders were talking at each other and the relationships broke down. This was not effective. Now, the group gets together, but rather than talking about these "hot button" issues, they all began the relationship in a simpler way: talking about their days, what's going on in their congregations, what's going on in their lives. For example, one religious leader is able to say, "I have a congregant going through a difficult divorce, here's what I'm doing. Have any of you had this experience? What did you do?" These conversations have been a great experience for all involved because the different religious leaders are all able to support each other. Now, they're able to have the more difficult conversations about the "hot button" issues if they come up. They talk as friends first and as colleagues second.

7. Agree on a Concrete Plan for Communication and Outreach During the First Hours and Days of Civil Unrest

POSSIBLE STRATEGIES

- *Identify potential intervenors (depending on the conflict) with conflict resolution expertise and experience in volatile community conflicts to advise the management team and begin discussions with stakeholders on a process for solving underlying problems (not just the incident illuminating these problems).* Calling the U.S. Justice Department's Community Relations Service may be a first step when the crisis seems near but it also helps to compile a list of names of local intervenors to draw on for expanding CRS capacity and staying on after CRS conciliators must move on to the next community crisis.
- *Create a list of groups/segments of the community that might have a stake in a conflict or can be a resource for resolving it, identify the decision-makers for these groups, and set up a process so that these persons are engaged with public officials and each other.* This list should include not only likely protagonists in a future conflict but also bridge-builders such as inter-faith leaders, civic, business and bar leaders, and youth leaders.
- *Train key public officials to employ effective communication and action strategies in the midst of a potentially polarizing situation so as to maintain public trust.* The U.S. Department of Justice's Community Relations Service might be a source for this training. The training points might include how to:

- Demonstrate an understanding of the needs and concerns of all of those involved;
 - Characterize the problem in a way that gets to the heart of the problem, not just the most recent incident;
 - Show the involvement of a diverse group of people in the decision-making;
 - Explain decisions more clearly than usual and convey the information in ways that reach all parts of the community;
 - Expedite investigations and decisions to respond to the urgency that is felt by segments of the community; and
 - Avoid communications that further polarize, such as generalizing behaviors of some individuals to an entire group.
- *Encourage public officials to develop a protocol between law enforcement and other leaders for on-going consultation and decision-making during civil unrest.* Police officers must react quickly in the midst of civil unrest and must have discretion to deal with ongoing challenges, but planning beforehand can put all city officials on the same page in terms of approach. For example, if a demand concerns adequate provision for the homeless, and a number of homeless people are camping out on a city property, city officials dealing with social services for the homeless might meet with code enforcement and police counterparts and decide to delay code enforcement and ejection procedures for 60 days to create a window for the social services officials to relocate those living in make-shift structures. Or recreations officials might agree that police officers will offer recreational services, such as a youth basketball league, as a means of enhancing police-community relations during a tense period.
- Set up a media/communications strategy for civil unrest.
 - A working group should be identified that will include communications professionals (including those accustomed to dealing with the national media and social media), those who understand the sensitivities regarding the conflict, those who have experience in other such community-wide conflicts (drawing on the experience of the intervenor), and key public officials, including law enforcement
 - Build necessary relationships among the public agencies that will be involved – police fire, mayor, etc. – for sharing information and coordinating responses.
 - Build the necessary relationships between community leaders who have the potential to help defuse the conflict by speaking with their own constituencies.
 - Create a key stakeholders group that can set up avenues of continuing communications and agree on disseminating a single message regarding how the community will resolve its differences.
 - Consider how to reach each audience effectively in order to:
 - Maintain/enhance community trust in public officials.
 - Help the public understand the issues and the reasons for differing views on them.
 - Offer a message that all segments of the community can embrace and that reaffirms community values.
 - Identify spokespersons, considering whether the spokespersons reflect the diversity of the community.

- Identify public officials who can work to re-establish patterns of normalcy, such as regular traffic and bus operations and trash pickup, as much as possible for the residents of the community.
- Identify persons who can take the lead on developing plans and spaces for allowing residents to air grievances peacefully.
- Identify how public officials can locate and hire intervenors who can manage long-term discussions to develop plans for dealing with the concerns that led to the unrest.

WHY TAKE THIS STEP?

Public officials make crucial decisions during the first few hours of civil unrest. Each week that follows also involves decision-making that affects the long-range outcomes. Planning ahead with respect to each of the items above can result in maintaining public trust, beginning a process for dealing effectively with underlying concerns, engaging the right people from the start, establishing a consistent approach among law enforcement, community relations officials and others, and communicating accurately, clearly, and effectively through regular as well as social media rather than leaving communications to the rumor mill. Prepared and effective local leaders also reinforce the expectations of the public that their community can deal with community divisions without becoming



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destructive, violent, or polarized. This, in turn, feeds the positive community problem-solving practices discussed in Planning Step 6.

MORE DETAIL ON THESE STRATEGIES

Even in the first days following civil unrest, public officials need, in addition to dealing with the immediate concerns, to begin the efforts to deal with the underlying problems, often by bringing in an intervenor who can institute a collaborative

process. The Divided Community Project has written a separate document, [*Key Considerations for Community Leaders Facing Civil Unrest*](#) (2016), that counsels in more depth how leaders should deal with civil unrest after it occurs.

8. Implement the Plan Through a Planned Sequence of Steps

POSSIBLE STRATEGIES

- Secure agreement to the overall framework of the plan by all officials who will be charged with responsibilities for implementation.
- Set up the sequence of implementation steps, with key persons responsible and target dates for each step.
- Develop implementation instructions: rosters of who should be notified with contact information, checklists, organizational charts, etc.
- Set up periodic briefings and educational workshops (anticipating changes in leaders) for:
 - Key public officials
 - Other community leaders
 - Larger community (how to use system and conflict resolution skills)
- Conduct simulation exercises to test the plan and demonstrate its effectiveness to the larger community.
- Schedule regular meetings to update the plan.

WHY TAKE THIS STEP?

Planning is a crucial beginning and it must be followed by implementation. One of the biggest risks of creating any planning document is that the plan sits on a shelf. The initiators need to create an implementation plan that describes how the plan will be implemented along with establishing a system to ensure that regular updates occur. The implementation plan should detail actions

that will be taken, by whom, and by when as a means of creating accountability. Defined periodic discussions to assess and refine the plan are important, too. When an implementation effort is designed with immediate actionable steps and achievements are celebrated, it creates a sense of positive movement that influences people to stay engaged.

MORE DETAIL ON THESE STRATEGIES

If planners have engaged the right people in the planning process and developed a plan inclusive of the points in this document, there should be little resistance. Still, these kinds of processes have lots of moving parts and the people who need to be involved must be kept in the loop through regular communication. Planners should establish a system to ensure that there are regular opportunities to assess progress and make updates to the implementation activities as they are needed.

Problems encountered along the way will need to be addressed and new circumstances taken into account. Plans will need to be updated. As leaders turn over, new leaders will need to be engaged and trained. The convening team plays a critical role: providing the committed leadership that will be needed for the effort and building the relationships that will be central to achieving a successful on-going collaboration.

APPENDIX A: RESOURCES

PUBLISHED RESOURCES

Jim Arthur et al., *A Practical Guide to Consensus, Abbreviated Version* (1999).

Chris Carlson, *Solutions to Establishing Sound Government DR Practices, Executive Orders: How Governors Can Promote Collaborative Processes and Dispute Resolution for More Effective Governance* (2000).

Susan L. Carpenter & W.J.D. Kennedy, *Managing Public Disputes: A Practical Guide for Government, Business, and Citizens' Groups* (2001).

Peter T. Coleman, *The Five Percent: Finding Solutions to Seemingly Impossible Conflicts* (2011).

Divided Community Project, *Key Considerations for Community Leaders Facing Civil Unrest: Effective Problem-Solving Strategies That Have Been Used in Other Communities* (2016).

Maggie Herzig & Laura Chasin, *Fostering Dialogue Across Divides: A Nuts and Bolts Guide From the Public Conversations Project* (2006).

Bertram J. Levine, *Resolving Racial Conflict: The Community Relations Service and Civil Rights, 1964-1989* (2005).

Susan L. Podziba, *Civic Fusion: Mediating Polarized Public Disputes* (2012).

The Consensus Building Handbook: A Comprehensive Guide to Reaching Agreement (Lawrence Susskind et al. eds., 1999).

Robert D. Putnam & Lewis M. Feldstein, *Better Together: Restoring the American Community* (2003).

Nancy H. Rogers, *When Conflicts Polarize Communities: Designing Localized Offices that Intervene Collaboratively*, 30 *Ohio State Journal on Dispute Resolution* 173 (2016).

Wallace Warfield, *Building Consensus for Racial Harmony in American Cities: A Case Model Approach*, 1996 *Journal of Dispute Resolution* 1.

ORGANIZATIONS THAT OFFER EXPERTISE

U.S. Department of Justice Community Relations Service, <http://www.justice.gov/crs>.

“The Community Relations Service is the Department’s ‘Peacemaker’ for community conflicts and tensions arising from differences of race, color, national origin, gender, gender identity, sexual orientation, religion and disability. CRS is not an investigatory or prosecutorial agency, and it does not have any law enforcement authority. Rather, the Agency works with all parties, including State and local units of government, private and public organizations, civil rights groups, and local community leaders, to uncover the underlying interests of all of those involved in the conflict and facilitates the development of viable, mutual understandings and solutions to the community’s challenges. In addition, CRS assists communities in developing local mechanisms and community capacity to prevent tension and violent hate crimes from occurring in the future. All CRS services are provided free of charge to the communities and are confidential. CRS works in all 50 states and the U.S. territories, and

in communities large and small, rural, urban and suburban.”

Everyday Democracy, <http://everyday-democracy.org>.

“Our ultimate goal is to create positive community change that includes everyone, and we believe that our tools, advice, and resources will help foster that kind of change.”

Institute for Local Government, Public Engagement Program, <http://www.ca-ilg.org/inclusive-public-engagement>.

“The ILG mission is to promote good government at the local level with practical, impartial and easy-to-use resources for California communities. ILG is the nonprofit 501(c)(3) research and education affiliate of the League of California Cities, the California State Association of Counties and the California Special Districts Association. ILG provides training, coaching and technical assistance consulting in California.”

ADDITIONAL WEB RESOURCES

California Center for Civic Participation (Youth Engagement), <http://californiacenter.org/>

Civil Rights Mediation, <http://www.civilrightsmediation.org>

Civility, Bridging Divides to Strengthen Communities: <http://www.civility.org/>

Community Science, <http://www.communityscience.com>

Davenport Institute for Public Engagement and Civic Leadership, Pepperdine University: <http://publicpolicy.pepperdine.edu/davenport-institute/>

Everyday Democracy, <http://everyday-democracy.org>

Government Alliance on Race & Equity, joint project of Haas Institute for a Fair & Inclusive Society at UC Berkeley and the Center for Social Inclusion: <http://racialequityalliance.org/>

Kettering Foundation, <https://www.kettering.org/>

Living Cities: <https://www.livingcities.org/>

National Policy Consensus Center, <http://policyconsensus.org>

Practical Guide to Consensus, <http://policyconsensus.org/tools/practicalguide/docs/PracGuideAbbreviated.pdf>

Public Agenda: <http://www.publicagenda.org/>

Public Conversations Project, <http://www.publicconversations.org/>

Sanford, Florida videos, web address will be available from Andrew Thomas, Community Relations & Neighborhood Engagement Director, Sanford, Florida

The Village Square (Community Dialogue), Florida, Utah, California: <http://tallahassee.tothevillagesquare.org/>; <http://sacramento.tothevillagesquare.org/>; <http://utah.tothevillagesquare.org/>

APPENDIX B: CHECKLIST FOR CREATING A PLAN AHEAD OF CIVIL UNREST

STAGE 1: EXPLORE, PLAN, SECURE FUNDING

Step	Short Description	To Learn More	Potential Timeframe
1. Conduct Initial Assessment	Those interested in convening local leaders toward creating a Plan Ahead of Civil Unrest conduct an initial assessment of local level of interest and key issues. This can be either a <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Short, quick assessment, or a 2. More robust assessment if possible. Information gathered will inform next steps.	For more on what a quick or more robust assessment might include See pg. 9 “Take the Initiative to Promote a Planning Process”	2 weeks to 3 months
2. Draft Straw Proposal(s) for Civil Unrest Prevention Planning Effort	Create 1-3 straw proposal timelines and draft possible goals for the potential Civil Unrest Prevention Planning effort. These proposals will likely vary in cost.	See pg. 10 “Persuade Public Officials and Informal Leaders and Public Officials to Conduct an Assessment of the Community’s Ability to Handle Division”	1 day to 1 month
3. Check In and Vet Proposals; Gain Commitments from Local Govt & Community Leaders	Reach out to key leaders from initial assessment to vet potential timelines and approaches. Depending on the size and scale of your initial assessment, choose a subset of diverse leaders to check in with.	See pg. 12 “Determine Who Should Participate in Planning”	1 week to 2 months
4. Explore and Secure Financial Support	Estimate potential cost of executing project. Seek help to understand potential range of costs for Planning Effort. Begin to explore where funding might come from to support project. To degree necessary explore and document potential costs of civil unrest as way to compare reasonable cost of creating a prevention plan Secure financial support. Re-scope project plan as necessary to accommodate budget. If necessary, break project up into Phases. Phase 1 goals would include securing funding for Phase 2 and beyond.		ongoing

STAGE 2: INITIAL PROJECT IMPLEMENTATION

Step	Short Description	To Learn More	Potential Timeframe
5. Conduct Robust Assessment	A robust project assessment would take into account: broad community representation; broad public concerns; potential, current, past sources of division. Past history of civil unrest including concerns about how public officials handled them. (see white paper p8)	See pg. 10 “Persuade Public Officials and Informal Leaders and Public Officials to Conduct an Assessment of the Community’s Ability to Handle Division”	6 weeks to 6 months
6. Invite People to Participate	It is critical the group starts off right. Key components to document include: time commitment, facilitation, decision making, group goals, etc.	See pg. 12 “Determine Who Should Participate in Planning”	ideally at least 6 weeks before a meeting
7. Create a Planning Team to Help Execute Meetings	Key items for Planning Team to tackle will include: Meeting logistics, Review of agendas Assist in securing speakers as appropriate, Consideration of ongoing efforts to support relationship building among stakeholder members (field trips, icebreakers, events, etc.)	See pg. 12 “Determine Who Should Participate in Planning”	6 weeks before 1st meeting or earlier

STAGE 3: GROUP MEETS | EFFORTS LIKELY TO BE TACKLED EARLIER IN PROCESS

Step	Short Description	To Learn More	Potential Timeframe
8. Confirm Goals and Work Plan	Includes presenting robust assessment findings		1-3 months
9. What Is Likely to Happen with No Plan?	Start with self-education (reading, speakers from within stakeholder group, speakers from outside of stakeholder group; Through stakeholder members and other Community Based Org (CBO) partners conduct series of formal or informal focus groups or other dialogues with residents to explore ‘what might happen with no plan’	Components of the exploration may include: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Temperature taking • Community resiliency • Emergency Readiness See pg. 10 “Persuade Public Officials and Informal Leaders and Public Officials to Conduct an Assessment of the Community’s Ability to Handle Division”	3 months to 1 year
10. Determine Unique Community Values	See page 9. After group tackles the needs to be taken out to community for input.	See pg. 10 “Persuade Public Officials and Informal Leaders and Public Officials to Conduct an Assessment of the Community’s Ability to Handle Division”	3 months to 1 year

STAGE 4: LIKELY EFFORTS LATER IN PROCESS

Step	Short Description	To Learn More	Potential Timeframe
11. Create a Plan	<p>Create an early warning system (p 11)</p> <p>Design ad hoc or ongoing forums where problems can be worked out</p> <p>Establish New Patterns for How Community Solves Problems</p> <p>Create thoughtful implementation plan (Ensure future funding is one of plan goals)</p>	<p>See pg. 14 “Develop an Early Warning System”</p> <p>See pg. 15 “Provide Forums Where Emerging Problems Can Be Worked Out”</p> <p>See pg. 17 “Enhance Productive Patterns and, When Warranted, Establish New Patterns for How the Community Solves Problems”</p> <p>See pg. 18 “Agree on a Concrete Plan for Communication and Outreach During the First Hours and Days of Civil Unrest”</p>	<p>3 months to 1 year</p>
12. Implement Plan	<p>Test</p> <p>Train</p> <p>Update</p>	<p>See pg. 21 “Implement the Plan Through a Planned Sequence of Steps”</p> <p>Should include creating a successor group</p>	<p>TBD by stakeholder group</p>