

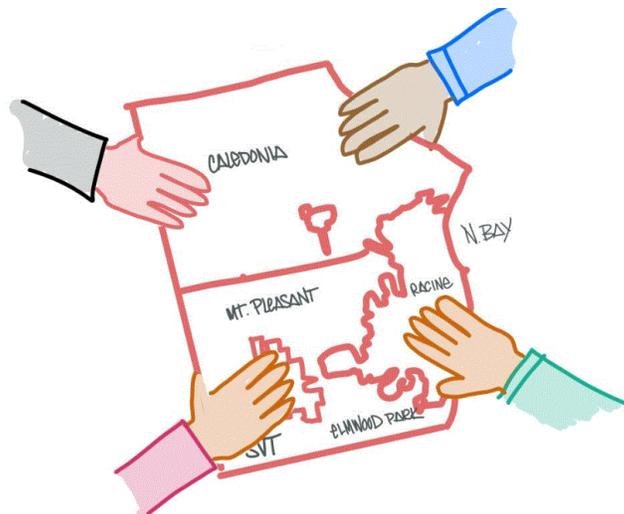


JUNE 2017 RESILIENT COMMUNITIES BRIEFING SERIES EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Collaboration is at the core of the mission of The Johnson Foundation. To that end, we bring individuals of diverse viewpoints together at our historic Wingspread Conference Center to explore new solutions to bring about change on issues that matter. For us, nothing matters more than the future health and well-being of our local neighboring communities.

In 20 years, will our Greater Racine area be the home of destination or drive thru communities for prospective businesses and families? Communities that are rich in opportunity with a great quality of life, or ones simply struggling to survive? Neighboring communities like ours across the country are joining forces in new ways to become regional centers of growth as resilient communities with a brighter future for one and all.

In June 2017, a special three-part series featuring leading experts engaged more than 3,000 residents in a new kind of dialogue on our collective future. They told us what resilient communities look like, how we compare based on the facts and what we can do to keep our communities moving forward versus lagging behind. The following are key themes and messages from each expert's presentation.



“RESILIENT COMMUNITIES: WHERE 1+1=3”

Dr. Kate Foster, Ph.D

President, University of Maine at Farmington

Former: Visiting Fellow, Brookings Institute, Washington, D.C.

Assoc. Dir., MacArthur Fdn. Research Network on Building Resilient Regions

Although typically regarded as a quality present in individuals, resilience is also a trait that can be found in communities of all sizes. Cities, townships and municipalities show their resilience when citizens band together to combat problems that arise from acute shock and chronic stress. The former refers to problems that strike a community without warning (i.e., natural disasters), while the latter refers to issues that have gotten worse over time (i.e., high crime rates, poor job numbers, high rate of poverty).

Communities are particularly adept at coming together and rebuilding in the wake of natural disasters like Hurricane Katrina and the earthquake that devastated San Francisco during the 1989 World Series. In instances like these, resilience is a byproduct of acute shock. Since these disasters occurred without warning, they facilitated the need for prompt responses and quick thinking from citizens and local officials. Conversely, when a community is faced with problems that result from chronic stress, bouncing back isn't quite as easy, as people are less likely to tackle issues that can't be solved with immediate action. Furthermore, finding solutions to these problems generally requires a substantial amount of thought, financial resources and cooperation from parties whose interests don't always align.

To truly understand community resilience, one needs to understand the facets of resilience – namely, performance and capacity. “Performance” refers to how well a community bounces back from strain, and “capacity” refers to a community's level of preparedness for bouncing back. To determine a community's resilience capacity, several factors need to be explored: regional economic capacity (income equality, economic diversification, regional affordability, business environment), socio-demographic capacity (educational attainment, percentage of people living with disabilities, percentage of people living outside the poverty line, percentage of people who are insured) and community connectivity capacity (civic infrastructure, metropolitan stability, home ownership, voter participation). Taking these factors into account, communities in the East and Midwest have a higher resilience capacity than those in the West and South. Additionally, Wisconsin boasts a fairly high capacity for resilience in its metro areas, with Racine scoring a “medium” grade – 43rd out of 103 small metro areas.

Not to be confused with government, *governance* – how well multiple groups within a region organize and act – plays a vital role in determining a community's resilience. While great things can be accomplished through centralized governance, decentralized governance is typically more effective from a structural standpoint. Regional decentralized governance carried out by businesses, civic groups, households and individuals can often bring about positive change in a timelier and more efficient manner than centralized governance. In addition, this type of governance promotes accountability, political participation and cost-braking competition. For regional governance to truly succeed, clear leadership, a well-defined agenda, sufficient financial resources, connections to relevant external groups and implementation experience are all needed.

In the quest for lasting change, there are seven steps communities are encouraged to take. The first is organizing group breakfasts for civic groups and local leaders. In addition to building a culture of collaboration, this enables agents of change to get to know one another in a relaxed setting. Secondly, communities need to build on their strengths, be they natural resources, education, business or close proximity to major metropolitan areas. The third step is developing strong regional leaders. These individuals can be business owners, community organizers or seasoned educators.

Fourthly, communities need to leverage data collection. In the absence of comprehensive data collection, measuring success becomes impossible. However, as data collection is far from a one-size-fits-all affair, every community needs to come together to decide the best ways to go about it. The fifth step, sharing support for shared assets, entails collectively shouldering financial responsibility. An entire county agreeing to share a sales tax is a common example. Including everyone is the sixth step. Even with strong leaders in place, the support and participation of citizens is needed to bring about measurable change. In recent years, social media outlets have proven effective tools through which to spread important messages and drum up support. The seventh step is institutionalizing collaboration. This can be accomplished through the development of coalitions that become community mainstays over time.



Before setting out to accomplish change in your community, it's important to have answers to the following questions:

1. What is your community / region? What are you trying to do?
2. Who is your community?
3. What is your community's appetite and aptitude for working together?
4. What are your community's mechanisms for self-assessment?
5. How can we be different together? How can we recognize our needs and differences?

Speaker Bio:

Dr. Kate Foster's accomplished career in education spans over three decades. In addition to earning degrees from Johns Hopkins, University of California-Berkeley, and Princeton, Dr. Foster has taught at the State University of New York (SUNY) at Buffalo, worked as a Visiting Fellow at the Brookings Institute and as Associate Director of the MacArthur Foundation Research Network on Building Resilient Regions and currently serves as the 14th president of the University of Maine at Farmington (UMF). During her tenure at SUNY Buffalo, she chaired the Department of Urban and Regional Planning and later became director of the school's Regional Institute. As the president of UMF, Dr. Foster has turned around a five-year decline in enrollment, enhanced student success programs, and championed experimental education. An expert in local governance and regional decision making, she's authored numerous books, articles, and academic papers on the subjects – most notably *The Political Economy of Special Purpose Government* (1997) and *Regionalism on Purpose* (2001).

“RESILIENT COMMUNITIES: WHERE OUR DATA MEETS THE ROAD”

Mr. Robert Henken
President, Public Policy Forum

In order to fully understand the challenges facing Racine, it is helpful to draw comparisons with neighboring communities. We can do so through two different lens. First, by studying specific community indicators, we can get a better handle on what sets Racine County apart from such neighbors as Walworth, Kenosha and Milwaukee counties. Then, we can use similar indicators to determine how the City of Racine compares to its surrounding municipalities. Learning how Racine measures up to its neighbors in a variety of key areas will provide us with valuable perspective moving forward and help identify some of the most pressing issues affecting our community.

Despite being closer in size, population and proximity to Kenosha and Walworth counties, Racine County has more in common with the larger, more densely-populated Milwaukee County. However, in this instance, sharing similarities with a major metropolitan county isn't necessarily a good thing. This is evidenced by Racine County's sluggish property values, which impede the ability of local governments and school districts to generate resources for needed public services; and its limited population growth.

On the employment front, Racine and Milwaukee counties have experienced a similar loss of jobs in the past two decades, while Kenosha and Walworth counties have gained jobs. Like Walworth, Racine has a large manufacturing base, with manufacturing positions accounting for a substantial portion of its total job numbers. The fact that very few of these jobs require four-year degrees ties directly into the county's low college graduation rate.

Changing our view to the municipal level, we see that the City of Racine is facing socioeconomic and related challenges that are much more serious than those of its neighbors. For example, because of the city's higher crime rates, it spends much more per capita on public safety than such neighboring municipalities as Mount Pleasant, Caledonia and Sturtevant. Not surprisingly, the city's property tax rates are significantly higher as it strives to meet such challenges, and the problem is compounded by the fact that its property values are stagnant. At the same time, the City's population has shrunk while that of its neighbors has grown, its household incomes are lower, and its unemployment and poverty rate are considerably higher. These realities place a considerable burden on Racine's municipal government and taxpayers, thus contributing to an unhealthy cycle that affects not only the city, but ultimately the Greater Racine region as a whole.



*Images courtesy of Jen Adamski-Torres, visual interpreter of the Resilient Communities Briefing Series

In regions where municipal cooperation is strong, service delivery can be more efficient and service-level challenges facing individual communities can be better addressed. As such, when formulating solutions to the problems facing the Greater Racine area, leaders must strongly consider the benefits of collaboration. With the region encompassing seven different municipalities, bringing local leaders, government agencies and change-makers together represents a sizable undertaking – but one the communities are fully capable of tackling with the right leadership.

Speaker Bio:

Public Policy Forum President Rob Henken has devoted his career to regional government. A Newton, Massachusetts native, Henken spent seven years working on Capitol Hill before moving to Milwaukee in 1994 – first as a senior aide to two congressmen and later as staff director for a House of Representatives foreign affairs subcommittee. Prior to beginning his tenure as PPF President, Henken spent nearly a decade working in Milwaukee County government, during which time he served as Director of Research for the County Board, Director of Health and Human Services, and Director of Administrative Services. Henken also directed two of the city’s most prominent non-profit organizations: the Alliance for Future Transit and the Milwaukee Jobs Initiative. From 2014-16, he served as President of the Government Research Association, which encompasses almost 30 different organizations across 19 states. Passionate about education, Henken is also an adjunct professor at the University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee’s School of Architecture and Urban Planning, where he teaches transportation policy.

“RESILIENT COMMUNITIES: MISSION POSSIBLE?”

Rebecca Ryan

Futurist & Founder, NEXT Generation Consulting

When working to enact lasting change, one must explore the future a community is organically headed toward versus the one you wish to bring about. If Racine stays on the same track and makes no changes to its current trajectory, what does its future look like? Alternatively, if local government, business leaders and concerned citizens successfully band together to implement change, how much will this alter its “business-as-usual” future?

Most people, regardless of where they live, are not particularly optimistic about the future. In addition to believing the future will be worse than the past, many people have a very narrow view of the future – i.e., it only happens to them. However, while Gen X-ers tend to be highly skeptical of change efforts, Millennials are generally more receptive. Furthermore, a community’s native sons and daughters, or “home-growns,” often have negative outlooks regarding the future, whereas transplants and boomerangs have a greater appreciation for their respective locales. As such, communities with high numbers of transplants and boomerangs are generally better at implementing change.

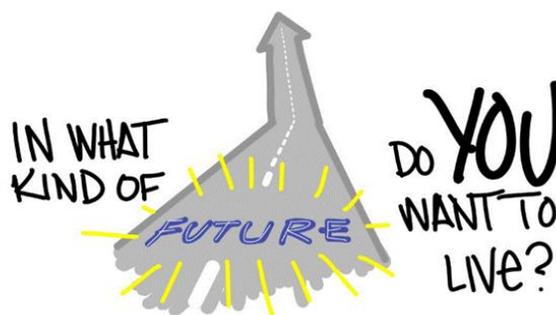
In their efforts to alter a community's future, local change-makers are well-served by three key elements: engagement, collaboration and accountability. Proper engagement requires seeking outside input and reaching beyond the usual suspects – e.g. hearing from people who aren't the same people. Collaboration involves bringing different groups and individuals together, setting aside differences and working collectively to achieve shared goals. In essence, collaboration is about energy, so figuring out which issues people have energy for is crucial. Accountability entails selling people on the changes you wish to bring about. For example, if you're proposing a new sales tax, people need to know what they're getting out of it. Since people have become individually isolated, it's important to communicate how certain changes impact them personally. If you want someone's time, energy and support, there need to be measurable outcomes and their efforts need to add up to something.

In determining whether a community is adequately equipped for enacting change, one should also consider the five tenets of resilient communities:

- Visionary cross-sections of leaders who aren't afraid of change.
- A clear vision that is stronger than any resistance.
- A recognition of the sum of the whole.
- A willingness to collaborate with neighboring communities.
- A sense of urgency to quell negative trends before they become emergencies.

If a community lacks any of these qualities, bringing about lasting change is liable to prove difficult, if not impossible.

Transformative change is not something that occurs overnight. Every effort needs to start somewhere, and there are numerous first steps local change-makers are encouraged to take. Organizing meetings, creating hometown pride, joining change-focused groups and demanding effective local leadership can pave the way for long-term success in any community in need of change – and the Greater Racine area communities are no exception.



Speaker Bio:

One of the country's most dynamic thought leaders, Rebecca Ryan specializes in helping companies and communities look ahead and take charge of their futures. A highly accomplished futurist and economist, Ryan is the founder of NEXT Generation Consulting, the Resident Futurist at the Alliance for Innovation, a Senior Fellow at CEOs for Cities, and a board member

of the World Academy for Entrepreneurship & Enterprise (WAE2). Through NEXT Generation Consulting, Rebecca has helped communities like Columbus, OH and Charleston, SC usher in positive change and set the stage for long-term prosperity. An accomplished author, Rebecca is also responsible for penning *Live First, Work Second: Getting Inside the Head of the Next Generation* (2007) and *ReGENERATION: A Manifesto for America's Future Leaders* (2013). With such impressive credentials, there's little wonder as to why Rebecca was named one of *Accounting Today's* Top 100 Most Influential People and *Women in Communication's* Communicator of the year – among many other honors.