# AN IN-DEPTH LOOK AT UNDERLYING CONDITIONS

| CONDITION & DESCRIPTION | WHAT TO THINK ABOUT |
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| **An Abundance of Social Gathering Places**—that enable people to learn about what is happening in the community and begin to develop a sense of mutual trust. These are usually seedbeds of trust, though they can also be ways in which people stay within their own circles. | • Where are people getting together with others in their daily lives (e.g., restaurants, kids' sporting events, backyard get-togethers, organized potlucks, local parks)?<br>• Do people get together in large gathering places (such as at sporting events, festivals, farmer's markets, etc.), and to what extent do people interact with each other in these spaces? |
| **Organized Spaces for Interaction**—where people can come together to learn about, discuss, and often act on community challenges. These spaces help a community begin to identify and tap existing resources to address common concerns. | • Are there spaces for different people to express themselves and work together on shared concerns?<br>• Will those who engage feel they can make a difference?<br>• Who is helping bring different people together (e.g., leaders, residents, nonprofit organizations, etc.)? |
| **Catalytic Organizations**—that help people in public life, spur discussion on community challenges and marshal a community's resources to move forward. These organizations help lay the foundation for community action but do not act as the driving force. | • Are there organizations or groups that serve as catalytic engines of change on particular challenges (vs. simply providing services or programs)?<br>• Is genuine learning about community challenges taking place and does it reflect what matters to the community?<br>• How are organizations or groups bringing people together across dividing lines or silos?<br>• Are new ideas being incubated and potentially spun off to others? |
| **Safe Havens for Decision-Makers**—here, a community's leaders can deliberate and work through community concerns in "unofficial," candid discussions. | • Are places being created where leaders can meet and feel "safe"?<br>• How are people getting to know and trust each other—and building new norms? |
| **Strong, Diverse Leadership**—that extends to all layers of a community, understands the concerns of the community as a whole, and serves as a connector among individuals and organizations throughout the community. | • To what extent do leaders at different levels of the community exist and are trusted (e.g., grassroots organizers, neighborhoods, faith leaders, nonprofit staff, elected leaders, etc.)?<br>• Are there emerging leaders and do they feel seen and heard?<br>• How are people's leadership capacities being developed? |
| **Informal Networks and Links**—that connect various individuals, groups, organizations, and institutions together to create a cross-fertilization effect of experiences, knowledge, and resources. People carry and spread ideas, messages, and community norms from place to place. | • How are networks being built for people to share ideas and learn from one another?<br>• How are relationships and links growing within and across networks?<br>• How inclusive are networks? |
| **Conscious Community Discussion**—where a community has ample opportunity to think about and sort through its public concerns before taking action. People play an active role in helping decide how the community should act | • Are people being engaged to express aspirations for the community (or on an issue or a project)?<br>• How are people infusing what they learn into their goals, program design, and relationships?<br>• To what extent does the community have an ethic (or habit) of engaging residents in discussions on what matters to people? |
| **Community Norms for Public Life**—that help guide how people act individually, interact, and work together. These norms set the standards and tone for civic engagement. | • How are efforts helping to build more productive norms in the community (e.g., trust, working together, hearing and listening to all voices, taking action, etc.)?<br>• What stories can people tell about how they are working together? |
| **Shared Purpose for the Community**—that sends an explicit message about the community's aspirations and helps reinforce that everyone is headed toward a common goal. | • To what extent does a shared sense of purpose in the community exist?<br>• Where can people talk about questions of shared purpose (e.g., in a staff or program meeting, board session, community engagement meeting, leadership discussion, etc.)?<br>• How can people spread a shared sense of purpose? |