

CIVICCON

*Empowering Pensacola
Through Civic Conversations*

**BUILDING A CIVIC
EDUCATION PROGRAM
IN YOUR COMMUNITY**

BY QUINT STUDER

Civic Education Is a Game Changer.

Civic education helps people be more effective citizens, voters, and community members. When we provide it, we take the first and most powerful step to creating civic engagement. And an army of well-informed, highly engaged, and activated citizens becomes the engine that powers that journey to vibrancy. They are the contributors and refiners of great ideas, the voices that advocate for change, the “boots on the ground” that make things happen.

Communities are starting to make it a priority to educate and engage citizens. There is no one way to approach this. It depends on your city, its needs, and its resources.

In Pensacola, our centerpiece for civic education is the CivicCon lecture series. [“CivicCon” stands for “Civic Conversation.”] It began in the fall of 2017, when the Studer Community Institute and the *Pensacola News Journal* joined forces to bring the top urban planners in the country to Pensacola to speak to our community.

We didn’t know what to expect, but the response has been phenomenal. The lecture series has been extremely well attended, with more than 300 citizens at each event, and averaging more than 5,000 live video views for each session.

We got great feedback from the community, and the main message was that people didn’t want to stop with the monthly lectures—they wanted more involvement. They wanted to know how to take it to the next level and get even more involved.

When you aim a laser focus on providing great civic education, you’ll raise civic IQ—and that will be your most valuable resource of all. What is civic IQ? Essentially, it’s a level of knowledge relating to things that affect your community. That might include topics like local politics and government, laws, transportation, infrastructure, development and coding issues, growth and planning, the benefits of walkability and bikeability, etc. It may also mean being well informed about social issues such as homelessness, drug addiction, educational shortfalls, and other things that impact our lives. The key is, however, not to make your community members the experts, but to give them a general level of understanding so that more of your citizens can be active participants in the change process. Too many times civic conversations are conducted by a few vocal people, leaving the average citizen on the sidelines. The silent majority needs to be engaged, and each time you raise your civic IQ, you empower your community.

Remember, community revitalization is the job of citizens. While local governments are valuable partners and should definitely be a key part of the process, they are often not in a position to drive revitalization. Engaged and educated private citizens are more likely to have the budget for big projects. Plus, since they’re not constrained by an election cycle, they’re more likely to be able to provide needed continuity.

Here Are Some Great Reasons to Invest in Civic Education:

It builds critical mass (which helps you execute). Typically, there's no shortage of good ideas—but ideas matter only if they get implemented. If you want to execute on ideas, you have to bring people with you. Civic education helps you get people on board so you can move quickly.

It helps citizens see the *why* behind proposed improvement initiatives. When they understand what's going on and how they will benefit, they're far more inclined to get on board with revitalization efforts and even become advocates.

It brings lots of people together to hear the same ideas at the same time. There is great power in educating a group all at one time under one roof. It creates a common language that allows us to communicate and make connections. (Language matters: It's how all action starts.) During these events, conversations start, gather momentum, and trickle out into the community where other people are drawn in.

It shifts the conversation and gets the community “unstuck.” (This is the first step toward vibrancy.) Civic education gets us talking about what a great community we already are, why we deserve to get better, and how we're going to do it.

It's a great way to collect best practices and learn from others. Speakers often share stories of what they see in other communities. Learning from the mistakes and successes of other communities is far more efficient than trying to reinvent the wheel.

Civic education sparks creative solutions. The more conversations you have with citizens, more ideas rise to the surface. Someone volunteers a resource or skill. Others jump in and contribute. People know people (and know people who know people). This is how action starts. Plus, the people closest to the problems often have the best solutions.

It gets the average person involved. So many of us are stuck in our work-to-home routine that we can't see a way to be involved in the community. Civic education events give people a concrete place to start.

It helps neighbors get to know neighbors. Providing opportunities to bring people together strengthens social ties. In creating vibrant communities, that sense of connection matters.

It makes people feel heard and listened to. A vital part of civic education is the “give and take” piece. We don’t talk *at* people; we talk *with* them. We solicit their feedback. We listen. When citizens have plenty of opportunities to share their ideas, they’ll feel that they’re a part of what’s happening [as opposed to feeling that it’s done “to” them].

Civic education benefits government leaders. Some may not have the knowledge and training they need to make the best possible decisions, especially during times of rapid growth or change. But even if they do, they’ll appreciate hearing outside perspectives. And most government leaders value the strong citizen-led initiatives that come from civic education.

Educated citizens hold government officials accountable. They’ll ask more informed questions. They’re more likely to involve themselves in key processes from the beginning.

It makes them savvier voters. When people know what the issues are, they’re more likely to choose smart elected officials who have a good understanding of the problems in the community and creative ideas for how to solve them. A big part of civic education is teaching people how government works, how to advocate, and how to ask the right questions.

Citizens already want to be engaged. Civic education gives them a path. The truth is, citizens are already deeply invested in our communities. They have skin in the game. They work there, live there, send their kids to school there. We just need to give them opportunities to get informed about and engaged in the projects that will improve the community.

How to Start Your Own Civic Education Speaker Series

Step 1: **Find a group in your community to “own” this project.** In many communities, it’s their young professionals group, which works out beautifully. After all, they will “inherit” the community and have an active interest in keeping it strong and healthy. Other partners can include your local paper, a university or two-year college, or a community foundation.

Step 2: **Identify the most pressing issues in your community.** What do your citizens most want and need to learn about? It could be a need to revitalize downtown, or improve education, or tackle high substance abuse rates.

Many communities have outside speakers who routinely focus on a single topic and are sponsored by a specific group. Also, there are certain projects that require citizen engagement. These are excellent starting points for determining which issues deserve attention.

You may also want to survey the community. What do citizens feel are the most important issues? Also, get key local groups and community experts involved in topic discussions. With enough focused attention, you’ll find that the most pressing issues naturally rise to the top.

The key for civic engagement is to strategically look at the most crucial issues facing the community and “connect the dots” on why this topic is of importance.

Step 3: **Find and engage experts to talk about these subjects.** You can do this one of two ways: You can bring in live speakers, or you can bring citizens together to view videotaped presentations from experts. Please feel free to pull from the attached list of speakers who participated in Pensacola’s CivicCon lecture series.

We have created a library of fantastic speakers who deal with things like place making, private/public partnerships, walkable cities, how to build a “strong town,” parking 101, etc. For each of our speakers, we have a podcast, a great article, and a streaming video. We offer all this at no charge to any community that wants to utilize the content.

If you have the budget to have them come to your town in person, that’s great. If not, however, it can also be impactful to simply bring citizens together to view a streaming video of the speaker.

Either way, please make sure your choices are not based on an “agenda” but only on collecting information and educating citizens in a fair and objective way.

If You Choose the Streaming Video Format...

- Peruse our list. See what you like. Presenters' names and descriptions of their speech are listed below, as well as links to the videos, articles, and podcasts associated with each one.
- Pick six presenters and get them on the calendar early so people can plan to attend. Aim to show one video a month (if you can).
- Choose a good venue that will hold a lot of people. Often, colleges and other institutions that are invested in the community will give space for free.
- Get the local newspaper involved. They are great partners.
- Figure out your format. A one-hour presentation followed by a 30-minute discussion period tends to work well. This half-hour is where the idea really comes to life in citizens' minds. You might ask a representative from the newspaper to moderate. Consider distributing a list of discussion questions in advance so people will know what to focus on.
- Pick six presenters and get them on the calendar early so people can plan to attend. You might think about building off a community event you have that needs a reboot. Aim to show one video a month (if you can). If you feel monthly is too frequent, try quarterly at first. Then, if the events prove to be successful (perhaps after you have two under your belt), you can ramp up to monthly.
- Provide a streaming option if possible. Some people who can't be there in person may want to follow along at home. Remember, it's quite powerful to have as many people as possible hearing the same message at the same time.
- Work out all technology bugs in advance. Make sure you have a good connection, download the video ahead of time, etc.
- Use Eventbrite or a similar event management service for scheduling. Often when people "sign up" for an event they are more likely to attend. It's free and it's a great way to know how many people to expect.

If You Choose the Live Speaker Format...

Follow the tips provided for the streaming video. Here are a few other variables as well:

- Be flexible on dates when selecting speakers. To get someone you really want, you may need to compromise on dates or work around their schedule. They may be coming to a community near you and can piggyback the trip. Don't get hung up on the second Tuesday of every month. Keep the schedule flexible.
- Be prepared. For example, you will want to have key data about your community ready to share with presenters ahead of time. You might also take pictures of areas of your community that need help. You should also give them a tour before they speak. This will help them tailor their presentation.
- Make sure you are okay with the speaker telling the truth about what they see in your community. Remember, you are doing this because you want positive change!
- Encourage the presenter to use your community as an example when they speak elsewhere in the country. [This is a nice byproduct of choosing the live speaker route—you end up getting mentioned as a community that cares about growth and vibrancy.]

After the Event (Either Live Speaker or Video Stream)...

- Survey attendees to get their feedback on the presenter and their message.
- Build your tribe. Collect email addresses from attendees and others associated with these events and keep them in an active database. They are your most valuable resource. Programs like Constant Contact, Mailchimp, and Campaign Monitor may help you collect and manage your email addresses.
- Regularly push other good resources, ideas, or other interesting content to this group. You are creating “ripples” that will spread outward and positively impact your community in the future.
- Ask the local newspaper to follow up with an article about the event. Designate a point person to get all crucial information, press releases, and so forth to the paper in a timely fashion.

Above all, remember that civic education is a process. You are starting with a speaker series but there are many other ways to help citizens gain knowledge and to elicit their feedback and ideas. After this first component really takes and momentum starts to build, you will find other ways to get people engaged and involved in creating a more vibrant community.

Finally, we appreciate any feedback you may have. Please let us know which experts you bring into your community and what your experiences are. We want to create a library of recommended speakers. We are in this together!

Pensacola CivicCon Presenters



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Please feel free to use any of these videos in your own civic education speaker series!

Andrew Davis

Leveraging What's Special About Your Community

After studying what makes American towns boom or go bust, Davis has found that most thriving communities have “staked a claim” by making themselves synonymous with a particular industry or lifestyle [e.g., Napa Valley immediately calls wine to mind, and Nashville is the home of country music]. His CivicCon presentation identifies steps communities can take to focus their branding, create location envy, and attract more businesses. A best-selling author and renowned keynote speaker, Davis has built and sold a thriving digital marketing agency, produced for NBC’s *Today* show, and appeared in publications including the *New York Times*, *Forbes*, and the *Wall Street Journal*.

www.akadrewdavis.com

Event video: [watch here](#) **Article:** [read here](#) **Podcast:** [listen here](#)

Bob Graham

Engagement Is the Rx for a Healthier Democracy

Two-term Florida Governor and 18-year U.S. Senator Bob Graham has diagnosed the declining health of American democracy as the defining issue of this generation—and in his CivicCon presentation, he touts civic engagement as the cure. As the coauthor of two books that use case studies and practical instruction to teach people how to become more effective citizens, Graham identifies specific changes citizens can make to become more highly engaged and action-focused.

Event video: [watch here](#) **Article:** [read here](#) **Podcast:** [listen here](#)

Charles Montgomery

Create a Happy City by Connecting People

Having spent roughly a decade conducting research and urban experiments for his book *Happy City: Transforming Our Lives Through Urban Design*, award-winning author and urbanist Charles Montgomery knows that simple human connection is the key to making people—and thus, cities—happier. His CivicCon presentation details how government officials, developers, and urban planners can create environments that boost citizens' social connection, community engagement, health, and general well-being.

www.thehappycity.com

Event video: [watch here](#) **Article:** [read here](#) **Podcast:** [listen here](#)

Chuck Marohn

What Makes America's Strongest Towns Stand Out?

Chuck Marohn is the founder and president of Strong Towns, host of the Strong Towns Podcast, and the author of several books, including his latest, *Strong Towns: A Bottom-Up Revolution to Rebuild American Prosperity*. In his CivicCon presentation, Marohn identifies best practices cities can adopt to become financially strong and resilient. He will change the way you think about growth and development and talk about the ways we can make the lowest-cost, highest-returning investments in our community.

www.strongtowns.org

2019 **Event video:** [watch here](#) **Article:** [read here](#)

2017 **Event video:** [watch here](#) **Article:** [read here](#) **Podcast:** [listen here](#)

Donald Shoup

Create Parking Without New Asphalt

Donald Shoup, a research professor in the Department of Urban Planning at the University of California, Los Angeles, has spent decades studying how parking affects cities, the economy, and the environment. He says parking lots take up valuable space that cities could use as housing, restaurants, offices, or stores. In his CivicCon presentation, Shoup shares the three reforms that can make parking more profitable, productive, and pleasant for drivers, motorists, and neighborhoods.

www.shoupdogg.com

Event video: [watch here](#) **Article:** [read here](#)

Dr. Marvin Seppala

Fight Addiction Like a Disease

Dr. Marvin Seppala, chief medical officer at the Hazelden Betty Ford Foundation, has studied addiction and evidence-based research practices for decades. In his CivicCon presentation, he explains that addiction is a health issue—not a moral or ethical issue—that requires a health-centric approach. Communities must react to the opioid crisis the way they would the spread of any infectious disease. Dr. Seppala outlines the steps communities can take to stop and prevent widespread addiction.

www.hazeldenbettyford.org/about-us/leadership/thought-leaders/marvin-seppala

Event video: [watch here](#) **Article:** [read here](#) **Podcast:** [listen here](#)

Ed McMahon

Harness the Power of a Great Place

Ed McMahon is a senior fellow with the Urban Land Institute and a nationally renowned authority on sustainable development, land conservation, and urban design. In his CivicCon presentation, McMahon teaches that in places that succeed, the development is shaped by the city’s character. In less successful places, the development shapes the character of the city. The places that thrive are building facilities that fit the unique personality of the city and say no to projects that don’t fit in.

<https://americas.uli.org/senior-resident-fellows/ed-mcmahon/>

Event video: [watch here](#) **Article:** [read here](#) **Podcast:** [listen here](#)

Emily Talen

Want a Walkable and Diverse Community? It’s All About Equitable Access.

Professor, author, and city planner Emily Talen, who has studied planning communities since the 1980s, says good urban design ensures everyone has access to the “good” part of urban life. That means regardless of income, age, or background, people have access to schools, parks, libraries, and hospitals. In her CivicCon presentation, Talen addresses ways cities move toward greater walkability and diversity.

<https://socialsciences.uchicago.edu/faculty/emily-talen>

<https://urbanism.uchicago.edu>

Event video: [watch here](#) **Article:** [read here](#) **CivicCon show:** [watch here](#)

Gena Wirth

Resilient Waterfronts Protect Structures, People, and Wildlife

The Center for Civic Engagement funded the creation of a Downtown Waterfront Plan and engaged SCAPE, a landscape architecture and urban design studio based in New York, to do the plan. Wirth, a design principal at SCAPE, provides the CivicCon audience with an initial vision and then invites the audience to visit design tables in the auditorium to discuss different aspects of the waterfront with her team members. This is the beginning of a process in which more than 400 community members, city officials, local environmental leaders, and private property owners have given input for a waterfront plan. The goal is to produce a waterfront framework plan for the community by June that will include at least two catalytic projects that are doable and affordable.

www.scapestudio.com

Article: [read here](#) **Podcast:** [listen here](#)

James Fallows

What Successful Communities Are Doing Right

James Fallows is President Jimmy Carter's former chief speech writer, an award-winning author, and a decades-long correspondent for *The Atlantic*. He says that even though many Americans are worried about the direction of the country, local communities are getting things done: finding money to innovate their schools, investing in businesses and policies to revitalize their downtowns, and building better places for people of all different experiences and backgrounds. In his CivicCon presentation, Fallows shares his unique insights [he has spent years traveling across America in a single-engine prop plane] into what makes a civic success.

www.ourtownsbook.com

Event video: [watch here](#) **Article:** [read here](#)

Jay Walljasper

Creating Connections Between People Builds Better Cities

Jay Walljasper says just “hanging out”—relaxing in coffee shops, at dog parks, and on sidewalks—is fundamentally what we do as human beings. Hanging out builds connectivity and relationships, which, in turn, helps us build better communities. In his CivicCon presentation, the award-winning speaker and consultant shares the importance of having communities where people feel safe, have things to do, places to play, areas to walk, a mix of people, and opportunities for face-to-face human interaction. Walljasper offers his A-B-C-D [asset-based community development] approach to improving communities and making a difference.

www.jaywalljasper.com

Article: [read here](#)

Jeff Speck

How to Create a Walkable City

Jeff Speck is a city planner, urban designer, creator of the Governors' Institute on Community Design, and former director of design at the National Endowment for the Arts. He advocates internationally for more walkable cities and argues that cities function best as a collection of small neighborhoods, each with their own places to live, work, shop, worship, and go to school. In his CivicCon presentation, Speck helps communities answer the question: "How do you get people to walk in America when driving is so easy and so cheap?" He emphasizes the importance of mixed-use spaces where citizens can meet their daily needs within walking distance, and opposes conventional zoning that separates residential, commercial, and office spaces and requires highways to connect them.

www.jeffspeck.com

Event video: [watch here](#) **Article:** [read here](#) **Podcast:** [listen here](#)

Joe Minicozzi

Do the Math: Run Your City Like a Corporation (and Invest in Your Downtown)

Joe Minicozzi is the principal of Urban3, LLC, a North Carolina consulting firm that helps citizens and city officials understand how their land usage affects their economy. Minicozzi says each piece of property in a city or county is an investment that either builds or drains wealth. In his CivicCon presentation, Minicozzi shares that, surprisingly, many downtown mom-and-pop businesses bring in hundreds of times the taxable value per-acre as big box stores. He emphasizes that dense, multi-story buildings create and retain more value than flat developments built on the outskirts of town.

www.urban-three.com

Event video: [watch here](#) **Article:** [read here](#) **Podcast:** [listen here](#)

Michaele Pride

Neighborhoods Matter Because Our Lives Depend on Them

Michaele Pride, professor at the University of New Mexico and architect whose work focuses on the intersection of urban design and health, believes design matters—and our lives depend on it. Every day people risk their safety and their health when they lack safe sidewalks and crosswalks, access to healthy food, and places to gather and relax. In her CivicCon presentation, Pride shares tactics people can use to make their neighborhoods more healthful and beautiful. Some ideas include slowing cars, inviting people to linger, planting trees and foods, creating housing that is affordable, and engaging the community in creative ways.

<http://saap.unm.edu/faculty-staff/faculty/michaele-pride/>

Event video: [watch here](#) **Article:** [read here](#) **Podcast:** [listen here](#)

Peter Bazeli

Is It Right for Your Community? Do Your Market Research to Be Sure.

“You can build something really expensive and fancy because that’s what people say they want, but unless it’s financially viable, it doesn’t make any sense,” says Bazeli, principal and managing director of Weitzman Associates, a real estate consulting firm. Bazeli has consulted on new developments in Manhattan, Miami, Chicago, Philadelphia, Seattle, San Francisco, and most recently in Pensacola. He describes for the audience the importance of doing a market study to be more assured of the viability of a project based on market needs, existing competition, and basic economics of the area.

www.weitzmanusa.com/p_bazeli.php

Event video: [watch here](#) **Article:** [read here](#) **Podcast:** [listen here](#)

Peter Kageyama

Does Your City Grab You by the Heart?

Peter Kageyama is the author of *For the Love of Cities: The Love Affair Between People and Their Places* and *Love Where You Live: Creating Emotionally Engaging Places*. The senior fellow with the Alliance for Innovation inspires the audience with his passionate stories of how grassroots community change has made life better and happier for people in cities across the country. His examples are simple and achievable, and in fact, inspired a local Chalk Art Festival in downtown Pensacola less than three months later. “When you love something, you go above and beyond for it. You forgive shortcomings. You will fight for it,” says Kageyama.

www.fortheloveofcities.com

Event video: [watch here](#) **Article:** [read here](#) **Podcast:** [listen here](#)

Ron Ferguson

Building an Educational Ecosystem Is *Everyone's* Job

Dr. Ferguson is the faculty director of Harvard's university-wide Achievement Gap Initiative. The MIT-trained economist declares that it isn't just parents and teachers who have a responsibility to improve education for our children. He includes a student's friends—being positive and supportive and not supporting the notion that there is no use trying to change the future for a lower-income child who may not have had early advantages. He includes the entire community and its commitment to supporting schools and holding the education system accountable. He shares how it is not so much the test scores of any one year, but it is more critical to look at trends from third grade to eighth grade, and then he shares those numbers for Escambia and Santa Rosa counties.

www.hks.harvard.edu/faculty/ronald-ferguson

Event video: [watch here](#) **Article:** [read here](#) **Podcast:** [listen here](#)

Ryan Gravel

How to Make Infrastructure Work for People

Urban planner, designer, and author Ryan Gravel makes the case that infrastructure should be designed for people; if it's not helping to create a place where people want to live, it's not living up to its full potential. In his CivicCon presentation, Gravel shares insights he learned during the creation of his Atlanta Beltline project—an in-development network of 33 miles of trails, 2,000 acres of parks, and 50 miles of streetcar lines connecting 45 neighborhoods in the center of Atlanta. Gravel emphasizes that the project was less about the “thing” that was being built, and all about the mobility, opportunity, and connections it would create for people.

www.ryangravel.com

Event video: [watch here](#) **Article:** [read here](#)

Tom Murphy

Public/Private Partnerships Can Change a City

Cooperation between governments and businesses is a good thing for cities. But assuring both sides of a public/private partnership take on a fair share of the risks and rewards can be a tricky proposition. In his CivicCon presentation, Tom Murphy, a three-term mayor of Pittsburgh whose policies generated more than \$4.5 billion in economic development, shares best practices for public/private partnerships and keys to creating a city that's competitive in today's market.

<https://americas.uli.org/senior-resident-fellows/tom-murphy/>

Event video: [watch here](#) **Article:** [read here](#) **Podcast:** [listen here](#)

Mikael Colville-Andersen

Building Bike-Friendly Cities

Mikael Colville-Andersen is an urban designer and urban mobility expert who has helped more than 100 cities become more bicycle-friendly, and thus more pedestrian-, commuter-, tourist-, health-, and environmentally friendly. In his CivicCon presentation, Colville-Andersen discusses the benefits of making cycling safe and practical. His ideas are based on bike infrastructure of his home in Copenhagen, Denmark. Widely recognized as the most bicycle-friendly city in the world, Copenhagen has invested approximately \$300 million into its bicycle infrastructure over the past 10 years. Colville-Andersen says this infrastructure could be copied and pasted into any city in the world. Seville, Calgary, Minneapolis, Mexico City, and Almetjevsk are a few cities that have modeled this approach.

www.colville-andersen.com

Event video: [watch here](#) **Article:** [read here](#)

Joe Riley

Ready to Transform Your City? Commit to Quality and Excellence.

Joe Riley, who served as mayor of Charleston, South Carolina, from 1975-2016 is the visionary credited with transforming Charleston into the vibrant and beautiful city it is today. An advocate for parks and public spaces, Riley believes that making waterfront spaces accessible to the public in a beautiful way is a civic duty and a huge opportunity for citizens; and with the waterfront as its centerpiece, Charleston has built a booming downtown. Riley's CivicCon presentation shares this and other critical initiatives that can transform any city, including preserving historic buildings, ensuring that street-facing buildings have exterior windows, and building parking garages that look visually interesting.

Event video: [watch here](#) **Article:** [read here](#)

***You can also see all of these at www.pnj.com.**

pensacola news journal
PART OF THE USA TODAY NETWORK

Sample flier:

Civic Engagement Series: A More Vibrant Community Starts Here

The civic IQ of a community is important. Informed citizens matter. They often lead the way on improvement initiatives. They are the “boots on the ground” that make things happen. When citizens understand what’s going on and how they will benefit, they’ll be more inclined to get on board with revitalization plans.

Civic education is the key. It not only helps them understand the *why* behind plans, it engages them and creates a common language that allows them to make meaningful connections. This allows progress to happen faster. In an effort to promote civic education, the Young Professionals Organization is pleased to announce a new video series called Civic Engagement Series.

Sparking Conversations for Citizen-Powered Change

YPO’s Civic Engagement Series will bring ideas from the nation’s leading thinkers and experts on community building to our city via a video series. We hope to not only better educate our citizens on ways to improve our community, but also improve community engagement and harvest best practices.

Following each one-hour video, we will have a 30-minute discussion on how we can best utilize what we heard in our own community. It is our hope that these conversations will bring the best ideas to the forefront so we can make them our own and set them in motion.

We’ll start our series with videos from Pensacola’s CivicCon program, as it features some of the top thinkers in the country. Our first video will feature Chuck Marohn, founder of Strong Towns:

What Makes America’s Strongest Towns Stand Out?

Chuck Marohn is the founder and president of Strong Towns, host of the Strong Towns Podcast, and the author of several books, including his latest, *Strong Towns: A Bottom-Up Revolution to Rebuild American Prosperity*. In his CivicCon presentation, Marohn identifies best practices cities can adopt to become financially strong and resilient. He will change the way you think about growth and development and talk about the ways we can make the lowest-cost, highest-returning investments in our community.

Date: Tuesday, October 29
Time: 5:30 p.m.-7:00 p.m.
Location: Chamber of Commerce

Our plan is to have one per month for the next five months [dates TBA]. Our next five speakers will include:

- Andrew Davis: *Leveraging What’s Special About Your Community*
- Bob Graham: *Engagement Is the Rx for a Healthier Democracy*
- Ed McMahon: *Harness the Power of a Great Place*
- Tom Murphy: *Public/Private Partnerships Can Change a City*
- Joe Riley: *Ready to Transform Your City? Commit to Quality and Excellence.*

Please join us for Civic Engagement Series. Remember, civic education is the path to strategic, positive growth that makes life better for all of us. The more we know, the smarter we grow.

Sponsored by Young Professionals Organization
Questions? Please contact Katie Johns at 123-456-8729 or katie@civiced.com.

Sample email:

August 16, 2019



CIVICCON

Come Be Part of History on Tuesday

The *Pensacola News Journal* plans to take a historic photo at Chuck Marohn's CivicCon speaker event at the Rex Theatre on Tuesday evening—and it includes everyone who is attending the event that night.

Marohn, president and founder of Strong Towns, will be assessing the progress of Pensacola as a vibrant and resilient city and making suggestions about what should be considered next. But he also will be presenting the Strongest Town Award, which the city won in a competition earlier this year. He will formally give the award to city and county elected officials on the stage Tuesday night, and the *PNJ* photographer will be asking the entire audience to pose in front of the stage during the ceremony.

Marohn was CivicCon's first speaker in September 2017. The enthusiastic response to that event fed a lot of the momentum that has carried CivicCon speaker events to be continued for two years. CivicCon originally was announced as a one-year project.

Come join the celebration of the city's earning the Strongest Town designation. And Marohn will talk about why Pensacola was one of the 16 towns across the country chosen to compete for the award and why he thinks voters selected Pensacola as the country's Strongest Town.

Doors open at the Rex Theatre at 5:30 p.m., and the event is from 6:00 to 7:30 p.m.

RSVP Aug. 20 Marohn
Event

Making Pensacola Bike-Friendly

Mikael Colville-Andersen, an urban designer who is famous for making cities more bike-friendly, appears at a CivicCon event on Sept. 12.

Colville-Andersen is the author of *Copenhagenize: the definitive guide to global bicycle urbanism*.

RSVP [here](#)



A Beautiful Downtown Waterfront

Joe Riley, the long-time Charleston, S.C., mayor, will be here for a CivicCon event on Sept. 17.

Riley will talk about the impact of a city's investing in its downtown waterfront and making it more accessible and beautiful for the community.

RSVP [here](#)



CivicCon Ripples

Sample survey:



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Empowering Pensacola Through Civic Conversations

What is the number-one thing you learned from today's session?

How likely is it that you will recommend a CivicCon presentation to a colleague or friend?

Please circle your score on the 1-10 scale here:

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

1-6 means you are unhappy and will spread negative comments.

7-8 means you are satisfied but unenthusiastic; you may or may not come to another CivicCon.

9-10 means you love the presentations; you will come again and refer others.

If you did not score either a 9 or 10, please let us know why.
We want to ensure CivicCon meets the needs of our community.

What future CivicCon topics would you like?

On a scale of 1-10, with **1 being very poor** and **10 being excellent**, please rate:

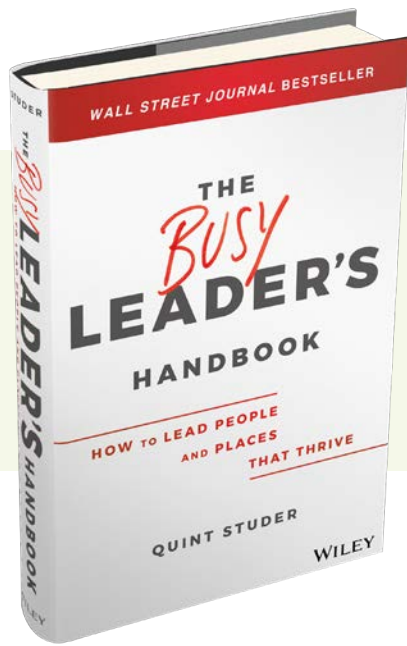
CivicCon Presenter:

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

The VALUE of Today's Session:

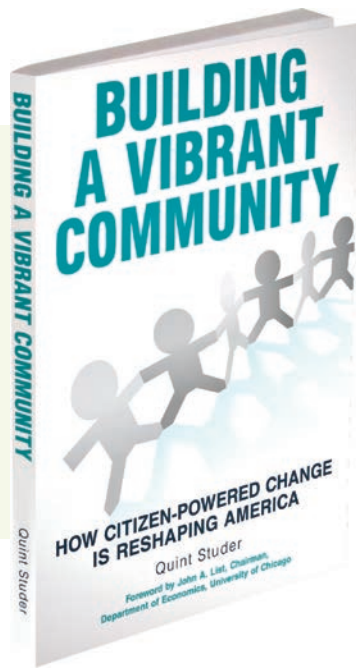
1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

Based on what you heard and learned, what are you going to do?



The Busy Leader's Handbook: How to Lead People and Places That Thrive

[Wiley, 2019, ISBN: 978-1-119-57664-8, \$28.00] is available at bookstores nationwide, and at Amazon.com and other online booksellers.



Building a Vibrant Community: How Citizen-Powered Change Is Reshaping America

[Be the Bulb Publishing, 2018, ISBN: 978-0-998-13111-5, \$24.95] is available at bookstores nationwide, and at Amazon.com and other online booksellers.

Quint Studer is author of *Wall Street Journal* bestseller *The Busy Leader's Handbook: How to Lead People and Places That Thrive* and *Building a Vibrant Community: How Citizen-Powered Change Is Reshaping America*. He is founder of Pensacola's Studer Community Institute, a nonprofit organization focused on improving the community's quality of life and moving Escambia and Santa Rosa counties forward, and Vibrant Community Partners, which coaches communities in building out a blueprint for achieving growth and excellence. He is a businessman, a visionary, an entrepreneur, and a mentor to many. He currently serves as the Entrepreneur-in-Residence at the University of West Florida.

Vibrant Community Partners: Who We Are and What We Do

Vibrant Community Partners [VCP] is a coach advisory firm that helps communities on the path to vibrancy and creates a plan to help them grow into the best version of themselves. In general, we help communities recognize and achieve their potential. We work with community members and local anchor institutions to get everyone on the same page, raise civic IQs, bring citizens together, galvanize their small business community, and make smart decisions about growth and development.

Quint Studer created VCP after playing a pivotal role in Pensacola, Florida's revitalization. A decade and a half ago, it was struggling economically. Today, it's thriving. In the past five years, there's been a 67 percent increase in downtown construction and a 34 percent growth in property values. The Quality of Life Survey went from 27 percent in 2008 to 63 percent in 2019 of people believing the city is moving in the right direction. And it's winning awards and accolades for its flourishing downtown. Now Quint and his team use best practices harvested from Pensacola's journey and their research of other communities to create a blueprint to follow.

VCP has a gift for zeroing in on what makes your community special. Then, we provide the tools and tactics you need to amplify these attributes and tell your story to the world. In short, we help you shape that distinctive "sense of place" that attracts investors, entrepreneurs, new talent, and visitors and keeps your young people from moving away.

To learn more about Vibrant Community Partners, please visit
www.vibrantcommunityblueprint.com.

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