

## Civic Lab

Sacramento Area Council of Governments, CA

*#Robust External Partnerships*

Population: 2.4 million

## Innovation

### Criteria:

- Initiative fundamentally changed a process, product or service (fundamental)

OR

- Initiative builds upon existing knowledge to improve a product, process or service (incremental)
- The initiative substantially stretched the boundaries of ordinary governmental operations.

## Describe Your Innovation

*(When and how did this innovation get started? Do also detail how the program or policy innovative, how it has changed previous processes, products, or services, and how it has substantially stretched or improved the boundaries of ordinary governmental operations.)*

In its inaugural year, Civic Lab has proven that innovation, collaboration and culture change is possible for government, and at a regional scale. Civic Lab brings together cross disciplinary teams to tackle challenging issues related to transportation and land use, and to pilot innovate solutions that can have local and regional impacts. Civic Lab is a project of the Sacramento Area Council of Governments (SACOG), and is designed for public agencies to test and innovate on planning, programs, and policy.

Through Civic Lab, SACOG assists teams in finding creative solutions to some of the bigger issues facing the region today, and in the future, by designing pilot projects over the duration of the program. This is done through half- and full-day intensive workshops and training with local experts, national leaders, decision makers, and innovators. Civic Lab is conducted as a cohort style process that takes teams through 8 months of learning, sharing, and planning for pilots.

Year one of Civic Lab focused on smart mobility and how these 'disruptive technologies' make the region's transportation system function more effectively, efficiently, and equitably. SACOG has committed \$1 million of its own funds to help launch the pilots, and some teams, with SACOG's assistance, have found additional resources. This includes:

Paratransit, Inc and the BIA Foundation team received funding from Sacramento Transportation Authority to provide mobility options for bringing youth to internship and work opportunities.

The Franklin Boulevard Team has launched a microtransit service using Regional Transit's SmaRT Ride.

Two other pilots have received a subsidy and are in the process of finalizing a contract to start services in late 2018 or early 2019.

The Apple Hill team applied for a SACOG grant to test lane closures during this fall's heavy tourism travel period.

## Collaboration

### Criteria:

- Initiative demonstrated engaging stakeholders both internal and external.
- Initiative demonstrated high performance teaming, breaking down internal silos.
- Strategic partnerships and or community networks were developed as a result of the initiative

**In less than 200 words, what individuals or groups are considered the primary initiators of your program? How does the innovation engage stakeholders or demonstrate high performance teaming? What strategic partnerships and/or community networks, if any, were developed?**

Year one brought together 26 public, private, and nonprofit partners to work together on eight teams focused on mobility challenges from around the region. While the teams were led by a local government agency, most teams consisted of different stakeholders that helped collaborate and problem solve. The Civic Lab process brought these seemingly disparate groups together to dive deep into the issues, learn new and innovative approaches, and identify possible solutions to address their needs. This resulted in new relationships and partnerships being formed. An example of this was the Franklin Boulevard team. Through Civic Lab, a local utility, air district, business association, and a transit agency worked together to identify a real mobility challenge, and come up with an innovative solution to fill a much needed transportation gap. This group is now working together to expand beyond the pilot, and explore other areas.

**If a private consultant was used please describe in detail their involvement, identify the consultant and/or firm and provide contact information. Maintain a 100 word maximum.**

Civic Lab included three touch points from the private consultant community. National expert panelists were brought in throughout the workshop process to discuss with team concepts such as risk, innovation, and goal setting in delivering pilot projects. Private mobility vendors were brought in during the procurement process to interact with teams to better understand and frame each team's particular issue. Nine private sector vendors were pre-qualified to work with teams to execute pilot projects. Foreseeing the management of eight pilots and selection of vendors could cause coordination issues, Civic Lab partnered with UrbanLeap, a project management platform, to organize and track each team's pilot projects. UrbanLeap is new on the GovTech scene bringing a pilot-management software that helps municipalities with testing new technologies by streamlining the pilot process through a structured workflow containing automated reports.

UrbanLeap –Arik Bronshtein CEO

## Significance

### Criteria:

- Initiative addresses an area of concern for the majority of local government organizations.
- Initiative can serve as a model and replicated in other jurisdictions.

Please describe the extent to which you believe your program or policy initiative is potentially replicable within other jurisdictions and why? To your knowledge, have any other jurisdictions or organizations established programs or implemented policies modeled specifically on this project? Please also provide verification of the replication.

While Civic Lab acts with multiple stakeholders, these concepts can be altered and replicated by municipal departments, special district working groups, state level branches, or local nonprofits. While the goal of a replicated program may be the same, to find local solutions to regional issues, the framework and topic could change based on need. This flexible framework allows for entities to identify an issue within their community and encourage stakeholders (teams, individuals, departments, or other) to explore the issue and identify solutions through a series of intensive workshops.

The Startup in Residence (STiR) and Office of Extraordinary Innovation at Los Angeles Metropolitan Transportation Authority (LA Metro) have programs that also follow a cross disciplinary approach to creating or defining new ways to find innovative solutions.

## Effectiveness

### Criteria:

- Initiative addresses a community or organization need.
- Initiative has achieved tangible results.
- Initiative improved the organizational culture or the traditional approach to problem solving.
- Initiative has received recognition for its achievements, i.e. independent evaluation, national recognition, local press, etc.

Please describe the most significant obstacle(s) encountered thus far by your program. How have they been dealt with? Which ones remain?

Pilot projects often include concepts and involve private sector vendors outside of traditional government procurement processes. Creating a consolidated procurement and contracting process allowed centralized decision making where necessary. Each statement of work was characterized as a base problem statement falling under one single procurement where private-sector vendors were then pre-qualified. All vendors fall within a single master agreement where teams have the flexibility to discuss with vendors on meeting each pilot's budget, scope, and schedule.

Overall administration and coordination of the team's stakeholders represented a challenge, especially being the inaugural year. Constant flexibility and an agile project management mindset was key to mitigating setbacks or challenges in a timely manner. Leading into Civic Lab year 2 team a FAQ page has been established early on to help provide clarity on the cross jurisdictional project approach.

Civic Lab will need to continue to adopt a flexible program management approach as new barriers and risks are identified throughout workshops and based off of team need. Planning for these iterations is necessary to allow for better program execution.

**What outcomes did this program or policy have? Could you share one or two objective measures that demonstrate these outcomes? Ultimately, how did you measure the change based on the intervention, and why do you believe in the credibility of this assessment?**

As a result of participation in Civic Lab, the following funding actions have taken place:

SACOG Board of Directors approved \$1 million in funding to Civic Lab pilot tests; Sacramento Transportation Authority awarded \$400,000 to pilot test a program of Paratransit, Inc., Elk Grove Unified School District, and Building Industry Association Foundation; Additionally, Civic Lab projects are eligible for another \$750,000 in grant funding through SACOG's Transportation Demand Management Innovations Grant program, and Electrify America included the Franklin Blvd. electrification plan in its settlement with the City of Sacramento.

In order to address the performance and success of each pilot, one of the full day workshops with the teams explored ideas and emphasized the importance in establishing performance metrics to each pilot. The project team went a step further by providing teams the UrbanLeap platform to simplify, track, and measure metrics to assist in determining a successful pilot.

**Has the program received any press or other media coverage to date? If yes, please list the sources and briefly describe relevant coverage.**

<http://www.govtech.com/civic/Whats-New-in-Civic-Tech-Gov2Go-Expands-to-Colorado.html>

GovTech article giving detail from Civic Lab's first graduating class.

<https://transformgov.org/blog-posts/testing-innovative-solutions-transportation-sacog-civic-lab> A blog post from the Alliance for Innovation :)

## Presentation

Criteria:

- Presentation will be delivered by a team.
- Presentation will be highly interactive and engaging.

### Example Social Media Post

The future of transport? Meet Civic Lab, a Sacramento Area Council of Governments new project to test innovative solutions and the latest transportation technologies to address mobility challenges around the 6-county Sacramento Area region #CivicLab #localgovernment #innovation

**Please write an abstract or short description for your innovation that would make conference attendees say "Well, I need to attend this session!"**

Local and regional mobility is complex and in a sphere of rapid change. Across the globe, technology has been a proven disruptor in systems, and yet a solution for only some mobility challenges. Too often local and regional governments are not part of the innovation process, and even pose to be a barrier to innovation. In order to maximize the potential of mobility solutions integrated with technology from the private sector, the public sector must have a seat at the table, and be ready to iterate and work differently. The public sector must move past its

business as usual and risk adverse planning practices. Civic Lab is the place where the public sector comes together to explore, pilot test, iterate, and evaluate to bring rapid mobility solutions that can be scaled up.

**How will you make the session creative and unique?- How do you plan to be both entertaining and educational?- Include a description of how your session will facilitate group activities and/or interaction.- What will attendees be able to have as an actionable "takeaway" from the session?**

\*Rough draft – subject to change especially interested in AFI feedback\* The session would start by addressing the need for innovation in government leading into an overview of Civic Lab was approached and implemented. Detail would go into how the approach breaks down multiple barriers from external partnerships to internal operations.

As a possible interactive activity, we would walk take the participants through a workshop session of Civic Lab. The audience would be given an overarching problem statement and each table would be broken up into groups. Questions would be presented and discussed addressing areas such as risk, procurement, performance monitoring, or beyond. The group would come together to discuss their reactions and how it can be replicated in their individual community.

**Anything else you would like to add?**