

The Campbell Neighborhood Principles

Cleveland's neighborhoods need a partner in City Hall. Our neighborhoods have not recovered from two economic tidal waves: the loss of manufacturing jobs and the large numbers of middle-income people of all races moving to the suburbs. Even while downtown Cleveland has recovered, these economic forces continue to undermine our neighborhoods. They have weakened neighborhood organizations, disrupted of personal and family networks, and eliminated role models so critical to developing positive attitudes for our children.

Our traditional social and health services have stumbled in addressing these devastating consequences. The challenges rest less with the people in the neighborhoods and more in the agencies themselves. We have been unwilling to give up “business as usual”. Across city and county agencies, we see bureaucratic weaknesses—fragmented services delivered by outside professionals, interventions only in response to crises, precious little thinking about prevention. My administration will choose another path.

My administration will focus city programs on making partnerships with the people I like to call “Neighborhood Builders”.

Building our neighborhoods can make a significant difference for Cleveland. Clevelanders can dramatically change their quality of life by organizing to take responsibility for their own neighborhoods.

Active neighborhood organizations lead to personal networks that are critical to healthy families and children. Through these networks, neighbors come to know and trust each other. They watch over each other's children, reinforce healthy habits, and provide mutual support when things go wrong.

Effective neighborhood builders focus on concrete tasks. Why? Because they know that these activities can obliterate feelings of dependency and replace them with self-reliance, self-confidence, and responsibility. This is where a lot of outsiders have it all wrong. The majority of residents in our inner city neighborhoods have the same aspirations of suburbanites: an opportunity to work for a living and to raise their children to be stable and productive members of society.

My administration will build strong connections between neighborhood builders and our public agencies-city community development, public works, and police departments, as well as county welfare and social service agencies.

These agencies have a significant impact on neighborhoods whatever they do. City agencies can undermine neighborhoods if they either ignore neighborhood initiatives, or try to take them over. The only positive alternative is partnership-arrangements in which City agencies invite neighborhood builders to come to the table as independent, not dependent, collaborators. We can then agree on clear action steps and hold each other accountable for results.

Some city agencies are already moving in this direction. In other cases, however, we will need to expend a considerable effort to transform agency attitudes and practices to support this new style of operation.

In partnering with neighborhood builders, my administration will be guided by a clear, concise set of principles.

1. **Focus on specific initiatives that build our connections to one another.** Building neighborhoods means working with our neighbors on productive activities, whether it is cleaning up a vacant lot, planning a housing project, trying to improve school quality, or mounting a citizen's patrol to prevent crime. By doing this, we can build the friendships, mutual trust, and organizations that we need to strengthen the lives of our families and children. Cleaning up a vacant lot or building a new housing project may not sound like a lot to someone from outside the neighborhood. But good neighborhood builders understand that "God is in the details." These projects are important because they build connections. They create an environment in which our children can grow up strong and make choices beyond a life of violence and drugs.
2. **Focus on neighborhoods with broad resident involvement.** Building connections can replace attitudes of dependency with self-reliance. But here is the catch: neighborhood residents must largely do it for themselves. "Community participation" is not enough. Each neighborhood must play the central role in devising and implementing strategies for its own improvement. This does not mean that outside facilitators cannot help them find the way, or that they cannot accept outside help or accomplish goals by partnering with outside agencies. But neighborhood residents must "own" the improvement process. Success also depends on a substantial share of the residents being directly involved in that process. Neighborhood leaders must continuously reach out for broad resident involvement and avoid becoming a remote elite themselves.

3. **Participate in neighborhood initiatives that are practical, strategic and entrepreneurial.** Our neighborhoods face multiple, interrelated challenges. Ultimately, all of these challenges-crime prevention, better education, jobs, housing, commercial development-need to be addressed. Continuing to specialize in only one or two areas over time will not bring fundamental change. Building our neighborhoods must be comprehensive.

However, thinking comprehensively does not mean we should try to do everything at once. Successful neighborhood building today starts with identifying community strengths and a brief action planning phase. Successful neighborhood builders do not wait too long to translate ideas into action. Like good entrepreneurs, they continuously set priorities. They tackle one or two critical projects and produce some results quickly to spread confidence and trust.

As neighborhood projects move forward, successful neighborhood builders rethink their vision and strategy and reassess their priorities and opportunities. In this way, they lay the groundwork for other linked initiatives that create a comprehensive agenda over time.

4. **Focus on leveraging assets, not filling gaps.** Neighborhood initiatives that are designed to “solve problems” or “meet needs” cast our efforts in the wrong light. In thinking this way, we miss exciting opportunity to strengthen ourselves.

As an alternative, we should support initiatives that build on a neighborhood's assets. All neighborhoods have them. No matter what their economic condition, each neighborhood can rely on the skills and entrepreneurial ideas of local residents, neighborhood businesses, churches, community organizations and volunteer groups. Even assets that a neighborhood does not control directly-hospitals, vacant buildings, schools, libraries-can become critical players with the right partnerships. By looking closely at neighborhood strengths, neighborhood builders find opportunities to change things. They understand that working from these strengths motivates collaboration and action.

5. Rely on objective indicators to measure our progress. You cannot improve what you do not measure. So my administration will work with local colleges and universities to build objective standards to measure our progress. Cleveland already has made important strides in this direction.

The Center on Urban Poverty and Social Change (CUPSC) at Case Western Reserve University participates in the National Neighborhood Indicators Partnership. With the assistance of the Urban Institute, the

Annie E. Casey Foundation and the Rockefeller Foundation, CUPSC has built self-sustaining information systems with updated information on neighborhood conditions. Likewise, the Center for Neighborhood Development at Cleveland State, provides valuable assistance to our local neighborhood efforts. The Center also maintains Neighborhood Link a web-based information link to each neighborhood. My administration will strengthen our commitment to these efforts.

6. **Encourage connections among our neighborhoods.** Focusing on neighborhoods is important for at least two reasons. First, the natural face-to-face interactions that support friendships and mutual trust among most residents do not work as well at much above that scale. Second, neighborhood conditions vary substantially-planning only for larger areas is likely to miss nuances that are often critical to effective strategies. For example, neighborhood A has a strong and supportive elementary school principal while neighborhood B, next door, does not, yet the drug trade is much more open and threatening in A than B.

At the same time, we need to encourage development and service organizations that cover larger areas and groups of neighborhoods. Urban challenges spill over neighborhood boundaries. Individual neighborhoods are often too small an area to effectively meet challenges, such as economic development or health care. These joint neighborhood efforts should keep the differences among their component neighborhoods in mind as they operate. Each neighborhood needs to develop a sense of strong identity if we are going to build the connections we need in Cleveland.

7. **Support neighborhood initiatives that link with city agencies and nonprofit organizations and promote outside opportunities for neighborhood residents.** In the past, community activists sometimes conveyed the impression that they wanted to make their neighborhoods self-contained and largely independent from the city around them. This thinking inevitably leads to neighborhood politics dominated by conflict. The idea of neighborhood independence is self-defeating.

Instead, we should end the devastating isolation of some of our city neighborhoods that has built up over the decades. We know, for example, from work completed by researchers at Case Western Reserve, that not enough jobs are located near where our lower income residents live. We need to encourage initiatives to prepare our residents for work and link them to jobs anywhere in our region.

At the same time, we should stimulate new business development within the boundaries of each neighborhood. Each neighborhood should look for opportunities to partner with outside organizations-

social service agencies, police departments, local business and philanthropic groups, universities -- in ways that will serve their own interests and strengthen their own neighborhood organizations.

This does not mean that there will never be conflict over neighborhood issues. But we should see conflict as an indicator that we need to set a broader, more positive agenda in Cleveland. Neighborhood conflicts that become ends in themselves lead us down a dead end street.

8. **Continuously challenge racial barriers.** Building neighborhoods is not simply a matter of strengthening connections. It's also about changing attitudes. Building neighborhoods through collaboration provides an opportunity to change people in each organization involved so that they become more sensitive to neighborhood interests in the future. As in all relationships, collaboration comes with conflict. But building neighborhoods can call forth our best skills of personal growth and conflict resolution.

Make no mistake. Race matters in building neighborhoods. A great deal of the feeling of isolation in our African American neighborhoods is the product of racial discrimination. We should neither ignore racial prejudice nor make them the centerpiece. Instead, we should all be willing to recognize the pervasive influence of race in our community and acknowledge its direct impact on particular issues. By looking for concrete outcomes, we can draw each of us beyond the barriers of our conventional attitudes.

We can then address these impacts directly as a step in moving toward progress on practical outcomes. Not infrequently, we will need to discuss the impact of race openly and take steps to change behaviors and attitudes that spring from racism. My administration will address the impact of racism as part of meeting the challenge of neighborhood development. By working on practical outcomes, we will look to engage Clevelanders of all ages and backgrounds in conversations about our racial differences and the strength that can come from our diversity.

To those who doubt that civic dialogues about race—confronting our cultural differences openly—can help us move forward, I say, “What is your alternative?” In my view, we must learn to live together, or we are destined to endure the misery of the consequences.

In the end, we will build our neighborhoods like we build a solid foundation for any building, brick by brick. There are no short-cuts. No magic projects. No special programs. It will take communication, consensus and commitment from all of us who care deeply about Cleveland, our home.