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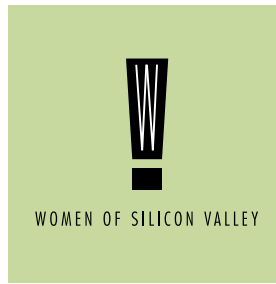
Women's Civic Leadership in Silicon Valley

FEBRUARY 2002

“ The women's movement gave one generation of women a chance to ask questions about what was fair and what was not fair. That enabled a whole group of women, not just in Silicon Valley but in the United States, to really throw themselves wholeheartedly into the enterprise of being successful. • Women and men today are leading lives that are more like one another's than at any time in the past. • I don't think that being recognized means that you are a leader. And not being recognized doesn't mean that you are not a leader. Quiet leadership is pretty powerful. • Women leaders are defining new roles of civic leadership, and we don't yet recognize them. • We need to cross-pollinate business, government, and education in a systemic way so that we can mentor people across institutions each other. That's how you When you want to solve the of guts. In the macro issues no easy answers and you make tough decisions, so it takes a special commitment and view of things to say, 'I really need to make a difference here.' ”



WOMEN OF SILICON VALLEY



Women of Silicon Valley

is a regional collaboration about the changing role of women in the Silicon Valley economy and community. The project promotes social innovation to achieve the promise of the new economy.

www.womenofsv.org

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About This Report

This research is sponsored by Women of Silicon Valley and Community Foundation Silicon Valley. The report is the second in a series exploring the changing role of women in Silicon Valley's economy and community, with implications for regional action. The first report, *Unfinished Business: Women in the Silicon Valley Economy*, presented a new regional fact base about how women fare in the Silicon Valley economy and their aspirations for work life. The report included results of a first baseline survey of Silicon Valley women and identified six areas of social innovation that are imperative for the long-term success of the region. (To download a copy of the report, go to www.womenofsv.org.)

This research is also a follow-on to the 1997 study by Community Foundation, *Giving Back: The Silicon Valley Way*, which looked at philanthropy and civic involvement by Silicon Valley residents, including the aspirations for and barriers to giving back by different subgroups of Valley residents. *Untapped Potential: Women's Civic Leadership in Silicon Valley* examines how women's participation in the economy is changing their involvement in the community and civic leadership.

Research Approach

This report is based on interviews with 30 diverse women civic leaders, consultations with additional observers of women's leadership, and a focus group of next-generation women philanthropists. (For a list of interviewees and focus group participants, see the Appendix.)

The interviewees shared their personal pathways to civic leadership, as well as developments that they see and anticipate. We selected the interviewees because they:

- Are emerging or recognized leaders in the civic arena
- Have demonstrated collaborative, "boundary-crossing" leadership spanning multiple geographies, issues, organizations, or networks
- Have demonstrated a commitment to Silicon Valley as a place
- Reflect a variety of backgrounds and pathways to civic leadership

For this research, we define *civic leadership* as the use of one's time, skills, resources, and networks to affect change in a community in ways that benefit the common good. The interviewees serve their community from a variety of platforms: as volunteer leaders in their communities, as business leaders operating in the civic arena, as philanthropic change agents, as elected public officials, as professional stewards of civic institutions (that is, public-benefit organizations, schools, labor unions, foundations, associations).



1 INTRODUCTION: Silicon Valley requires innovative civic leadership to meet the challenges of our changing economy and community.

Silicon Valley has been undergoing fundamental economic and social transformations, including the shift to an innovation-based economy and the large-scale participation of women in the workforce. These forces are reshaping our work life, private life, and community life.

The events of September 11 renewed our search for community, but we have not yet channeled this energy to address our common regional concerns. Silicon Valley faces clear challenges to create a vital economy and community: our leadership is transitioning to a new generation, our civic challenges are more complex, and we have a mobile and diversifying population.

Women have played critical roles historically as builders and sustainers of community. As women's role in the economy and in households changes, new pathways and possibilities emerge for women's civic leadership in Silicon Valley.

2 HISTORY: Women's civic leadership, increasingly diverse and multifaceted, is critical to Silicon Valley's community.

Women's opportunities for civic leadership have changed dramatically with the macro social and economic trends of each decade and with each generation. Women have been volunteer community leaders in neighborhoods and schools. They have agitated for change as social activists and political leaders. They have served as directors or board members of important civic institutions.

Today, women's near-universal participation in the Silicon Valley workforce has implications for civic life. They have new perspectives, resources, and skills to contribute but less time. Fully 86% of women ages 21–61 are in the workforce or plan to enter in the next two years. Almost half (49%) of women in Silicon Valley provide the majority of their household income, including 33% of women in marriages or partnerships. As the realities of our society change, women's civic roles will continue to evolve.

3 PATHWAYS: Civic leadership follows developmental pathways.

Civic leadership appears to grow along a developmental pathway. The generalized stages along a pathway—episodic participant, individual contributor, emerging leader, civic catalyst, regional steward—represent expanding spheres of influence. Pathways are unique to the individual; they reflect one's opportunities, interests, and life priorities.

Along the pathway, key influences and experiences can significantly accelerate the development of civic leadership. Early in the developmental pathway, it is important for individuals to have inspirational role models, identify entry points into the community, and receive a leadership “ask.” As they progress, emerging leaders find mentors, increase their efficacy, and clarify their values and passions. Some eventually become regional stewards who can connect issues and bridge networks across the region.

4 OPPORTUNITY: Significant leadership potential in Silicon Valley remains untapped.

To broaden and deepen the base of civic leaders in Silicon Valley, we need to tap emerging pools of women leaders. Significant leadership talent is underused because we have not yet realized how to strategically engage women's resources, talents, and networks in civic life. This report profiles seven new pools of leaders, and discusses the opportunity to engage them in civic leadership roles:

- “Life after Success” Leaders
- Senior Executives
- Flexible Knowledge Workers
- Temporary Time-Outs
- New Philanthropists
- Ethnic Leaders
- Young and Mobile Newcomers

5 MOBILIZATION: New approaches are needed to mobilize civic leadership in Silicon Valley.

Silicon Valley has a tradition of economic and technological innovation. Now is the time to apply that same spirit of innovation to the civic arena. Can we—as individuals, as institutions, as a community—develop boundary-crossing civic leaders who can strengthen our social fabric and work together to find creative solutions to our most difficult regional challenges?

We must rethink how we connect individuals to civic pathways and how we accelerate their development along the pathway. Four innovations are necessary:

- INNOVATION #1: Create a Regional Capacity to Help People Navigate the Civic Arena
- INNOVATION #2: Turn Professional Networks into Portals for Civic Leaders
- INNOVATION #3: Customize Civic Opportunities
- INNOVATION #4: Strengthen Women's Networks to Build Bridges between Generations, Ethnicities, Classes, and Sectors



Civic Leadership in Silicon Valley

“In the aftermath of September’s tragedy, a window of opportunity has opened for a sort of civic renewal that occurs only once or twice a century. And yet, though the crisis revealed and replenished the wells of solidarity in American communities, those wells so far remain untapped.”

—Robert Putnam, “Bowling Together,” *American Prospect*

Is Silicon Valley ready for a civic renewal? We are coming off of the rush of an economic boom that has created more material wealth than any other period in history. We now face the aftermath of September 11 and a national economic slowdown, prompting a widespread reevaluation of priorities among Silicon Valley residents.

The region has been undergoing fundamental economic shifts (accelerated competition, increasing innovation) and social shifts (the large-scale participation of professional women in the workforce, diverse population growth). Combined, these economic and social transformations have been reshaping work life, private life, and community life. They demand a new way of thinking and a renewed commitment to civic life.

Silicon Valley faces clear challenges to create a vital community and economy for the future—challenges that will require exceptional leadership:

- ***A Sustained Sense of Community.*** In the wake of national tragedy, opinion polls indicate an emerging sense of community and trust and a greater desire to connect to people. However, little evidence suggests that action has followed sentiment. Can we harness the public mood and point it in the right direction? Can we build on this new spirit of community to create a more cohesive and resilient region?
- ***Generational Transition of Leadership in Progress.*** The need to broaden and deepen the bench of leaders who can help Silicon Valley navigate the next set of transitions is great. The generation that steered Silicon Valley in the 1970s, 1980s, and 1990s is starting to move on from active leadership roles. How do we identify emerging leaders and prepare them to be stewards of the Silicon Valley region?
- ***Civic and Public-Benefit Sectors under Stress.*** Today, the civic and public-benefit sectors face greater demands and a difficult economic environment; the economic shifts create new pressures on organizations and the people they serve. The need for creative approaches to social challenges—some of them exacerbated by economic recession—is great. How do we value and aid the work of civic and public-benefit organizations?
- ***Leadership for a Diversifying Population.*** Silicon Valley has grown rapidly. The region absorbed over 300,000 new people from 1990 to 1999. Many newcomers are disconnected from extended family and the history of this community. In Santa Clara County, 37% of residents are foreign born, with 17% arriving

within the past ten years. For these new immigrants, economic and language barriers present challenges to connecting to the community. How do we build commitment to Silicon Valley as a place? How do we develop a diverse set of leaders who reflect our changing population?

- ***Less Social Connectedness Than in Other Communities.*** A recent study found that people in Silicon Valley had weaker informal networks than did people in comparable urban areas, as well as lower rates of volunteering and less involvement in traditional civic associations. Can we find ways to build connections among us to strengthen the social fabric of our community?
- ***A Great Need for Social Innovation.*** Silicon Valley needs to apply its enormous capacity for innovation to its civic and social challenges. Complex, systemic challenges such as housing, quality child care, economic disparity, and regional transportation require a strongly engaged population and effective civic leadership. Can we find ways to connect diverse individuals and groups to solve common regional challenges?

To meet these challenges, we must think creatively and strategically about how to accelerate the development of leaders who can take responsibility for shaping the next Silicon Valley. These leaders must work from many different sectors and backgrounds to improve our common good.

In Silicon Valley and elsewhere, women played important roles historically as builders and sustainers of community. As women's role in the economy and in households changes, new pressures and new possibilities develop for civic life and leadership. Now is the time to think creatively about what women's increased participation in the economy means for life, work, and leadership in the Silicon Valley community. This report examines the following questions about women's contribution to civic leadership:

- *What are the diverse contributions of women to the civic arena?*
- *How can we support pathways to civic leadership?*
- *How can we engage untapped leadership potential in Silicon Valley?*

This project looks at civic life from women's perspectives, but hopes to spark dialogue around the fundamental question: How do we develop strong leadership to meet the challenges of Silicon Valley today and tomorrow?

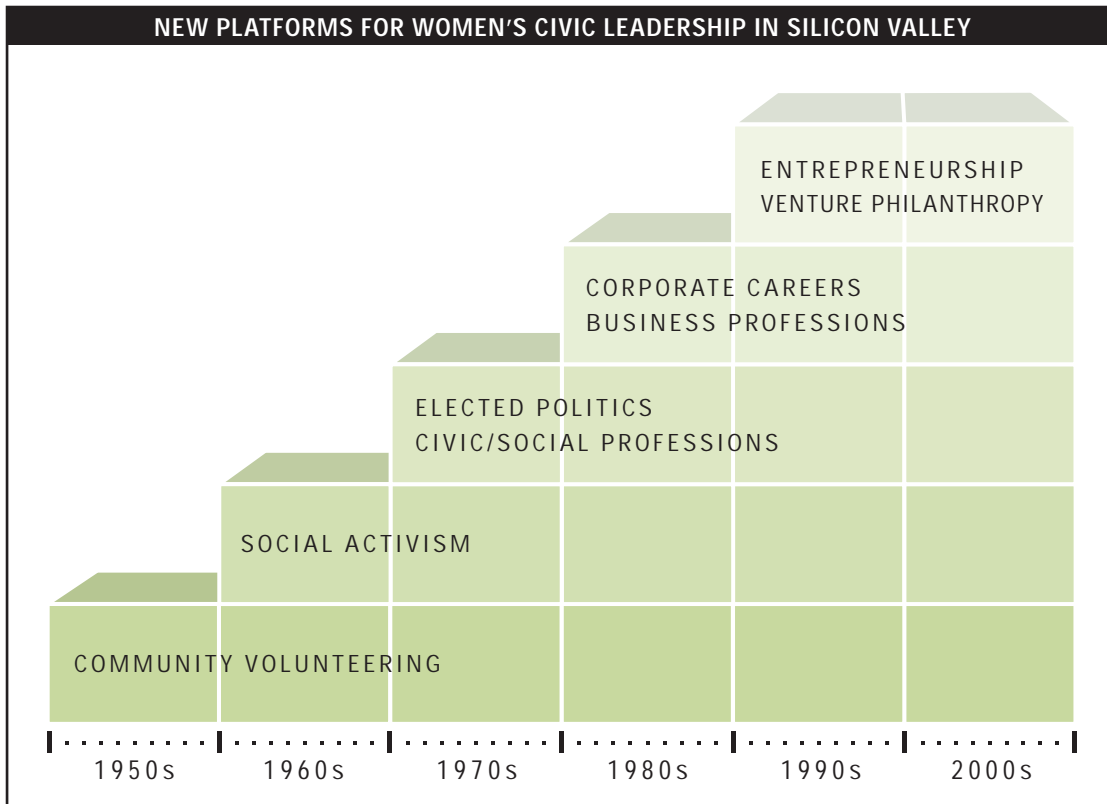
2 HISTORY

The Evolution of Women's Civic Leadership

“Defining leadership is a generational endeavor. While the traits and attributes can be timeless, each generation has to filter the meaning through its own experience and collective anchors.”

—Edward Headington, “Seeking a Newer World,” *The Future of Leadership*

Women's opportunities for civic leadership have shifted with the macro social and economic trends of each decade and with each generation. Together, the personal stories told by the women leaders of Silicon Valley reflect new layers of social and economic opportunities for women in the region. These stories reflect the increasingly diverse and multifaceted nature of women's involvement as change agents in the community over time.



In the 1950s, many married women in Santa Clara Valley centered their lives on raising children, supporting husbands, and volunteering in the community. Except for new immigrants and women from low-income families who have always worked, many women in the Valley were stay-at-home mothers. This army of volunteers included women who moved to the Valley with their husbands, many of whom were engaged in science and technology professions.

The women devoted themselves full-time to the important but unpaid work of raising children, supporting schools, improving neighborhoods, organizing youth activities, and caring for others. Volunteering, the women found, added an important social and civic dimension to their lives and tended to focus on children and neighborhoods.

“Mother belonged to a group called the sewing club. There was a group of probably 20 women. These ladies got together when their children were very small and actually started off getting together to sew, darning socks and stuff. And chatting. But after awhile that evolved in to more than just a social club. That’s how they got each other involved in whatever their volunteer opportunities were.”

—Susan Orr

The 1960s found women joining together to influence social change and build civic institutions. Sparked by renewed social consciousness, women banded together to educate themselves and work on the major social issues of that era: the Vietnam War, fair housing, civil rights, women’s rights. Women’s organizations—such as the League of Women Voters, the YWCA, the AAUW—formed in San Jose and on the Peninsula, and became hubs for education, advocacy, and community work, as churches and synagogues were. Women were active in labor unions and farm-worker unions, which helped prepare them for future community leadership.

During this time and into the 1970s, women channeled their entrepreneurial energies to create new civic institutions that are important to Silicon Valley to this day: the Career Action Center, Packard Children’s Hospital, the Mexican American Community Services Agency (MACSA), Hidden Villa, and the Stanford Institute for Research on Women and Gender.

As they saw new potential for their lives, middle-class white women started entering college in record numbers, preparing for professions as teachers, nurses, or social workers.

“We started figuring out how we could use our talents beyond being good wives and mothers.”

—Betsy Collard

“It was a whole different generation. The women were encouraged to take on social issues and social jobs.”

—Mary Griffin

PROFILE : JING LYMAN

Raised in an environment of civic responsibility in a family that included clergymen, Jing Lyman grew up with a strong commitment to social responsibility. Jing moved to Silicon Valley in 1958 with her husband, Dick Lyman, then a British history professor at Stanford University. He eventually became president of Stanford University and she became one of the community's leading social entrepreneurs.

Jing spent her adult life working on various aspects of community building. Her involvement began with the founding in 1965 of the MidPeninsula Citizens for Fair Housing, which worked to prevent discrimination in housing and to ensure a supply of low- and moderate-income housing. She also founded the Stanford MidPeninsula Urban Coalition, a grassroots effort with John Gardner to stimulate collaborative problem solving in the community.

In the past 20 years, she has been a champion of self-employment for people who have been locked out of the economic mainstream, including women and minorities. She observes that “women’s long-established entrepreneurialism was initially expressed in community service organizations and tiny family-sustaining enterprises.” Building on this work, she has been active in the Association of Enterprise Opportunity and other efforts to increase women’s agency.

Today, she is a trustee of the Enterprise foundation, the chair of the twenty-fifth anniversary of Women & Philanthropy, and active in the American Leadership Forum. She was recently named an Ella Walker Distinguished Fellow at the Rockefeller Foundation Conference Center in Bellagio, Italy.

In the 1970s, as an extension of social activism, women turned to elected office as a way of addressing larger, systemic problems. Leadership positions in PTAs, neighborhood associations, labor unions, and school boards served as training grounds for the first generation of women elected officials in the Santa Clara Valley. Women and men worked together to recruit and support the first generation of women candidates for elected office. The Valley proved fertile ground for women’s political leadership. By 1975, women in Santa Clara County held the majority of power offices, leading the nation in women’s representation. Janet Gray Hayes became the mayor of San Jose—the first woman mayor of a large metropolitan city in the United States. Women held the majority on the Santa Clara County board of supervisors as well as the San Jose City Council. Today, some of the Valley’s most visible women leaders are elected officials who entered politics through neighborhood, school, and women’s networks during this era.

Also during this time, women started entering the paid workforce in larger numbers; they emerged quickly as paid professional leaders in the nonprofit sector. A first generation of women started serving on the male-dominated boards of universities, nonprofits, and civic institutions. Some women recall experiencing “active resentment” from others over these new roles.

“Women were looking for outlets. They were chomping at the bit, restless to participate. There was a cadre of women hungry to be involved in power.”

—Suzie Wilson

“In the 1970s, we really started discovering the power of women in this community.”

—Sharon Bray

PROFILE : JANET GRAY HAYES

When San Jose Mayor Janet Gray Hayes took a seat at her first big-city mayors' conference, a male colleague asked: "Whose secretary are you, dearie?" The year was 1975.

The frosty reception aside, Hayes' rise to power in San Jose gained her national attention as the first woman mayor of a city of more than 500,000. Still a civic activist, Hayes, now 74, paved the way for many women politicians in Santa Clara County. In 1974, Hayes pulled off a victory in the face of opposition from a powerful "old-boys' network," including the city's developers and its newspaper, the *Mercury News*. Three years later, Hayes would boast that Santa Clara County was the "feminist capital of the world." She had promoted a woman to vice mayor, and another chaired the Santa Clara County Board of Supervisors.

Among the people Hayes helped were Susan Hammer, who in the 1990s served as the city's second woman mayor, and Susanne Wilson, a former supervisors chairwoman. By 1980, Hayes had helped defeat a male bloc on the council—the "Fearsome Foursome"—and women held council and supervisorial majorities. "This is a place of innovation and risk taking. I could have never won in my home state of Indiana," Hayes said. "And the timing was just right."

Excerpted from the *San Jose Mercury News* (June 14, 2001)

In the 1980s, women had greater economic opportunity; they entered corporate careers and the professions in large numbers. This group was the first generation of women who prepared for and entered established professions such as law, medicine, and accounting, and started businesses.

Large numbers of women exited unpaid roles in the community for paid work in companies and institutions. With their increased participation in business and the professions, women started developing new networks, skills, and resources.

"The women's movement gave one generation of women a chance to ask questions about what was fair and what was not fair. That enabled a whole group of women, not just in Silicon Valley but in the United States, to really throw themselves wholeheartedly into the enterprise of being successful, which men have been doing all along. They didn't have to fight any barriers or walk on the streets. . . they could go to the best colleges, they could become lawyers, they could become MBAs."

—Kavita Ramdas

PROFILE : DEBRA ENGEL

Juggling responsibilities is not new to Debra Engel. She is a veteran executive of the high-tech sector, serving as Corporate Staffing Manager at Hewlett-Packard (HP) and Senior Vice President, Corporate Services, at 3Com. While engaged in the corporate world, she also was active as a civic leader in Silicon Valley and as a mother of two: a son, now 14, and a daughter, now 12.

Debra was introduced to civic involvement by her first employer, Hewlett-Packard. At that time, HP set the expectation that participation in the greater community was important and compatible with corporate success. Debra adopted this belief system and carried it with her to 3Com. As she progressed in her career, she brought her significant business skills and networks to the boards of organizations such as the Career Action Center, the American Leadership Forum, and Community Foundation Silicon Valley.

In 1998, Debra retired from her position at 3Com. Although she continues to pursue her business interests through service on a variety of for-profit boards, her increased role as a community catalyst and civic leader keeps her busier than ever. She has helped launch the Million Dollar Women's Club to raise funds for Homesafe, a collaboration of seven organizations working to provide housing and transition services to battered women and children. Debra currently serves on the boards of the American Leadership Forum, the Skoll Community Fund, the SHRM Foundation, and the advisory boards for Facing History and the Center for Innovation at Foothill College. She is Vice Chair for the Center for Excellence in Nonprofits, Board Chair of Community Foundation Silicon Valley, and an Executive Fellow for the Center of Technology and Innovation at Santa Clara University.

As for her current goals, she says, "my primary focus is my children, and I try to complement being available for them with commitments that allow me to continue to grow, while giving back."

The 1990s saw women play new roles as leaders of growth companies, founders of new businesses, and self-employed professionals. These leaders included women who gained valuable corporate experience in the 1980s, as well as a larger second generation of women entrepreneurs. During this time, more women started gaining equity wealth of their own, through their company's stock or their own investment efforts. Some women found themselves with the financial means to retire early.

Along with finding unprecedented economic and social opportunities in the 1990s, women faced the pressures of managing the demands of work life, home life, and community life. In Silicon Valley, 67% of women report that balancing these roles sometimes or always caused them stress. Workplaces replaced neighborhoods and churches as an important source of community for many people. A recent survey found that individuals in Silicon Valley were three times as likely to belong to a work-related organization than other Americans (52% versus 16%).

"When I moved to California and launched my career, I became very, very busy in my travel and work. I didn't know where I was going to be or for how long. It left very little room for community engagement. For the first ten years of my career, beyond giving money and beyond company sponsored activities, it was very hard to get out there and get engaged."

—Tae Yoo

PROFILE : VANI KOLA

Vani Kola, 37, recently stepped down as President of Right Works, an e-procurement company based in San Jose. She was born and educated in India as an engineer and came to the United States in 1985 to study computers and electrical engineering at the University of Iowa. She soon found herself drawn to the entrepreneurial environment of Silicon Valley, where she came to pitch her business plans for RightWorks.

Early on, Vani connected with The IndUS Entrepreneurs (TIE), a Silicon Valley network of South Asian entrepreneurs who helped her raise \$3 million in seed funding. Under Vani's watch, the company grew rapidly, expanding to 350 employees and attracting more than \$60 million in venture funds. In 2000, Vani sold the company to ICG for \$667 million. Since then, she has served as a mentor for other entrepreneurs while pursuing new enterprises including NthOrbit.

For the community, Vani launched the India Literacy Project to raise money from Indians in Silicon Valley and nationally for basic education in India. "I do not believe any of us are self-made. People help us along. There a lot of different ways in which we are supported and molded to become successful. I now have a tremendous amount of knowledge that I've developed through growing my company and my civic work, and I have a need to give that back."

In the 2000s, women's civic roles will continue to evolve and expand. Today, men's and women's lives are more similar than in previous generations. Men and women have increasingly shared roles and values in work life, family life, and community life. The ethnic variety in the population of Silicon Valley's women is more diverse than ever, and occupational opportunities for women are likewise more diverse. Women are finding new ways to contribute to the community and creating new models of leadership.

<p>Profile of Women's Economic Participation in Silicon Valley</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Fully 86% of women ages 21 to 61 either are employed (73%) or intend to enter the workforce in the next two years (13%). Among employed women, 80% work full-time, and 20% work part-time. • 52% of women in Silicon Valley work in the tech sector. • Almost half (49%) of women in Silicon Valley provide the majority of their household income; this number includes 33% of women in marriages or partnerships. • Women account for 39% of managers in Silicon Valley's private sector. • 15% of Silicon Valley women are entrepreneurial, including 10% who are independent contractors/free agents and 5% who own or co-own a business.
<p>Profile of Women's Civic Involvement in Silicon Valley</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 62% of part-time workers spend time on charitable or volunteer service activities, as do 50% of full-time employees and 54% of women who were not employed. • 40% of local elected officials are women. • Almost half (45%) of Santa Clara county's school superintendents are women. • 55% of executive directors leading United Way's 100+ agencies are women. • 69% of women have primary or shared responsibility for making philanthropic decisions in their household.

Source: Women of Silicon Valley survey

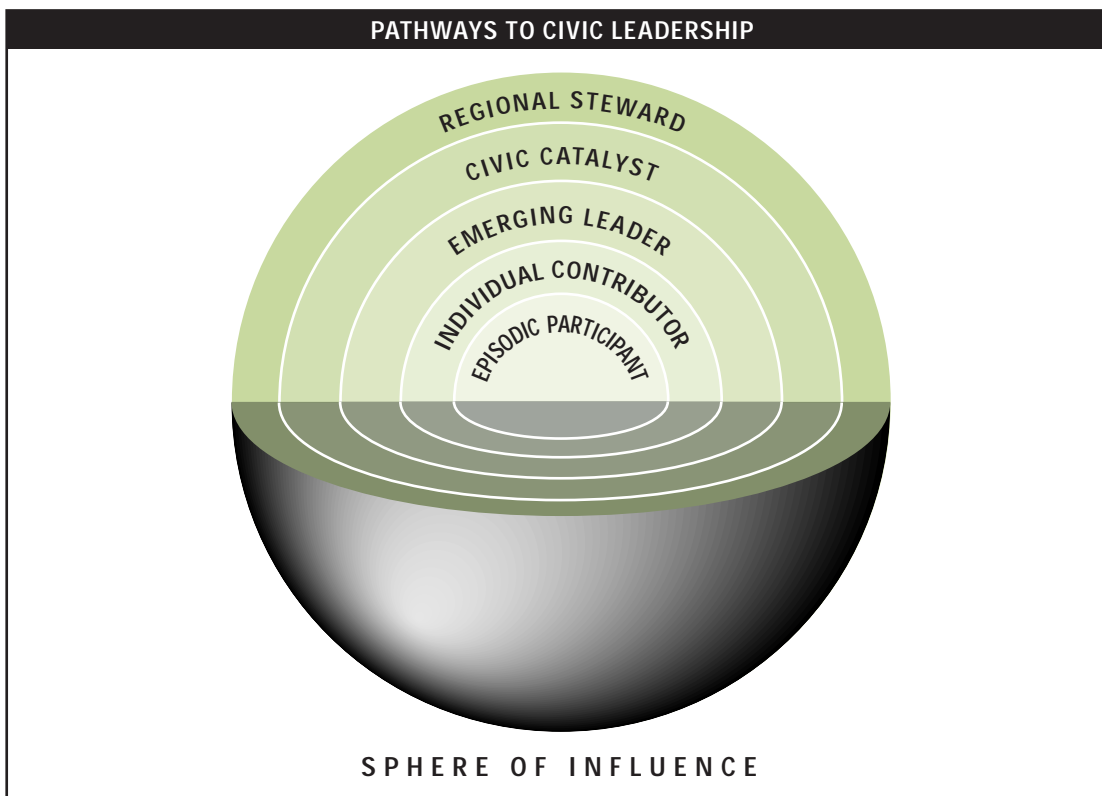
3 PATHWAYS

Developmental Pathways to Civic Leadership

“Leadership is an intentional choice born out of self-understanding, reflection, education, and experiences. Only those who make the choice become leaders.”

—Rev. B. Kathleen Fannin, Monmouth College

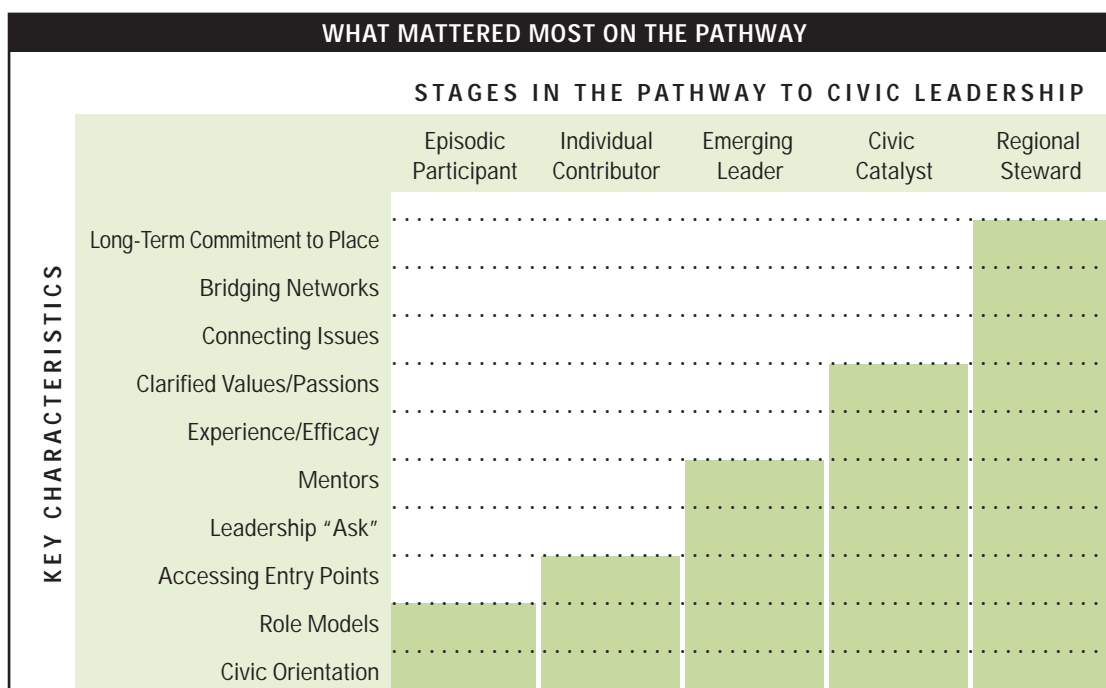
We chose the 30 leaders whom we interviewed for this project because they are emerging or recognized leaders in the civic arena who have demonstrated a commitment to Silicon Valley as a place. They come from different backgrounds, generations, and sectors but have each contributed significant time, money, or energy to the enterprise of making Silicon Valley a better place. Each person had a unique story to tell, but we found that they shared a common developmental pathway to civic leadership.



In the above diagram, the circles represent various levels of civic engagement and broadening spheres of influence. Individuals progress outward from the center, with each successive layer building on the experiences of the previous layers. Development along the pathway may involve any number of different platforms (such as business, philanthropy, politics, education).

An individual will move between spheres through her development, but the path is not necessarily linear. Rather, it is often a reflection of one's changing opportunities, interests, and life priorities. During times of significant external obligations, an individual might curtail her role in civic life by moving from being a leader to being an episodic participant. Similarly, some individuals may choose to be effective individual contributors for their entire lives, whereas others will choose to become regional stewards.

In our interviews, we also explored what most influenced the women leaders in moving along their pathways. As we examined the responses across interviewees, a pattern emerged. Women talked about people (role models, mentors), experiences (initial leadership opportunity), and changes in their personal development (clarified values and passions) that helped them increase their civic involvement. The diagram below summarizes the common experiences and influences that shaped these women's development at each stage on the pathway.



Episodic Participant

In the first stage, the episodic participant typically expresses her civic orientation in an ad hoc manner. She might vote, volunteer for a one-day project, or donate to a charity, but her involvement is usually episodic or irregular. In many cases, episodic participants are twenty-something individuals who are just starting out in their careers. They are civic-minded, but may not know how to get connected or where to contribute.

Why do these people get involved in the community? What motivates them? The women leaders we interviewed believed that their initial **civic orientation** was shaped at an early age. Most women mentioned parents or other adult **role models** whom they saw affecting change in their community. Faith/religion shaped how they viewed themselves in the world and their obligations to others. Some described how important it was either to experience need or to see need during their youth. Others talked about their travel experience as a way of reinforcing the desire to help those less fortunate.

“Personally, it was a function of the family that I came from and my cultural and religious background—it gave me perspective about the bigger world and my role in it. I observed my parents modeling behavior where they took responsibility for other people on their block. They took responsibility for people in the family. They were activists in the community.”

—Amy Dean

“I grew up in a community where I was supported almost more from outside the family than within the family. Teachers and neighbors and my minister really provided incredible opportunities for me. I was blessed with the kind of experiences that opened my eyes.”

—Becky Morgan

“I was the first generation in my family of Chinese immigrants. Even though we were very poor when I was growing up, we always found ways to help other people who were less fortunate. My grandmother was a good example of that.”

—Winnie Chu

From these early influences and experiences during their formative years, the women developed enduring values about community involvement that stayed with them through their careers, even as their civic involvement ebbed and flowed with personal and work priorities.

“I am a big believer that civic involvement is innate to the person—that interest demands to be expressed but it can ebb and flow in an individual’s life. The talent, the inclination, the commitment is either part of that person or not. If it was there at one point, it’s likely to be there at another point.”

—Kathy Yates

Implications for Silicon Valley: Can the region create broad opportunities for children to participate in their community at an early age? Can we create role models and icons of civic leadership that will inspire the next generation?

Individual Contributor

On the next level in the pathway, some women became more engaged in addressing a community need. They became an individual contributor—joining the PTA, organizing a political campaign, participating on a task force or commission—to causes and issues that they cared about. For the women we interviewed, this initial access to civic involvement typically came through one of two common **entry points**: children and employers. Many women, especially those of the Boomer generation and older, often became engaged in the community through their children’s schools. For instance, a recent survey found that women in Silicon Valley are twice as likely to volunteer for schools than are men (33% versus 15%).

For women who were new to the region, volunteering for an organization or cause was a good way to get to know the community. Many of the women leaders we interviewed did not grow up in Silicon Valley, but moved here for personal or professional reasons. Civic involvement provided the avenue by which they came to identify with and care about their community.

“When I moved here and learned that people were starting a children’s museum, I drew upon the experience I’d had at the Boston Children’s Museum and began volunteering for the museum. I was new to the community and I thought that would be a great opportunity to find out about the community and to contribute to something that could be meaningful and interesting.”

—Sally Osberg

“After moving to East Palo Alto from New York, I had not planned on serving on the city council. It never crossed my mind—until I started to get to know the families in the community and really liked the feel of the community. The city incorporated in 1983, and they sent out a request for people to come in and participate in forums to shape the city. I was fascinated by that—here was a minority community putting together a city government. I went to see what I could do to help.”

—Sharifa Wilson

Implications for Silicon Valley: What will be the new entry points for people to connect to the community? How can we diversify and broaden the entry points—and make them more transparent—to tap new talent and new perspectives?

Emerging Leaders

In a significant juncture on their civic pathway, women described taking on an initial leadership role. This move typically meant chairing a committee, leading an initiative, serving on a board, or giving a significant amount to charity. They came to this position in one of two ways: either a **leadership “ask”** was made (typically from an organization or network with which they were already involved), or they sought out opportunities to expand their role.

During this stage, the recruitment of talent through personal and professional networks was critical. Our interviewees and the results from the 1997 *Giving Back The Silicon Valley Way* study indicate that the most frequently cited reason for volunteering is that someone asked them. In many cases, a trusted **mentor** or friend made the “ask” and pulled them into that role.

“As soon as my oldest daughter started kindergarten, I joined the PTA. They are always asking for someone to lead and there are never really that many volunteers. So then I said, ‘I will try if someone helps me.’”

—Delores Santa Cruz

“It was one of those things that you just got asked to join and so you joined. I was on a children’s theater board. Then I was on my daughter’s school board. Then I went on the board of a pro bono legal initiative. Once you are on a board, that gets you onto other boards.”

—Roberta Katz

For other women, their employer made an important “ask” for civic leadership. Several Valley companies were frequently mentioned for their encouragement of civic participation, both as a value and as a job expectation: *The Mercury News*/Knight Ridder Corporation, Hewlett-Packard Company, and Cisco Systems. But other interviewees perceived a neutral or negative response from employers.

“When I was the public relations director at the Mercury, part of the company values and culture was that you were expected to be on a community board, particularly if you were in senior management. They kept track and asked people to volunteer for one. They would give you an opportunity—‘here is what is available, we need somebody for this.’ They would do an inventory yearly to find out who was on which board. It was nothing punitive, but it was part of the package. It was an expectation.”

—Karen Storey

“At HP, the expectation was that you would do something in the community. The higher you went in the company, the greater was the expectation that you would contribute outside the company in addition to performing your work inside the company.”

—Debra Engel

Implications for Silicon Valley: As a new pool of potential leaders emerges, how can we help them identify civic opportunities and connect them with appropriate leadership roles? Who will make the leadership “ask”?

Civic Catalysts

Over time, the women usually developed expertise and networks that allowed them to effect significant change in a particular domain. The first leadership experience usually had a network effect that led to other leadership opportunities. Other leaders noticed their leadership ability and their dedication, and started thinking of the women for other civic opportunities. As the women developed competence in a particular field and experienced some success, their sense of **efficacy** and their personal credibility increased.

Continued civic involvement became rooted in **clarified values and passions**. As the women matured as people and leaders, they started focusing on civic activities that really reflected their values and passions. Busy women made time for things that mattered to them; as one mentioned, “civic life can actually sustain you.”

“I joined the Board at Mills at a time when the College recommitted itself to the education of women. I have had a core interest in woman’s education and this was a way to make a contribution to an institution with compatible goals. That Board position was a supportive and sustaining role for me throughout my years at Cisco. While I was the only woman officer in the Company, it was reassuring and sustaining to go to Board meetings at Mills College and be with strong, decision-making professional and academic women. Day to day at Cisco, I was the only woman in the room, or one of very few. At Mills, I was just one of many.”

—Cate Muther

Through their increased commitment and engagement, these women started seeing the bigger picture and diversifying their networks. They began to understand how the issue that was their initial passion relates to others. This recognition set the stage for acting as regional stewards to work on systemic and interconnected issues.

"I started out in the early 1970s very focused on helping battered women. But then I started to see the connections between battering situations and housing, child care, and land use policy. That led me to serve on the Planning Commission in Gilroy."

—Laura Gonzales-Escoto

Some women also started seeing how their "civic career" benefited their "professional career." They developed skills and networks that were valuable to their professional career. In some cases, volunteer civic involvement led to paid employment.

"When you take your skills to another arena, you see them differently and it causes you to rethink your assumptions. When I was on the board of Santa Clara University, it was the first time that I overtly thought about the role of values as a part of corporate policy. I brought it back to my job, and partly because of that, we developed Apple values. At the time, we were one of the first corporations to do that."

—Ann Bowers

"I interviewed for a prestigious job. After I was hired, I asked the woman that hired me why she had. I didn't have any skills that I could think of. She said, 'how can you say you have no skills?' In my resume I really didn't have any other jobs, but I did include all my volunteering and the awards that I had received. She said, 'That shows that you are organized, that you can communicate, and I was really impressed with that.'"

—Delores Santa Cruz

Implications for Silicon Valley: What experiences or leadership training can we provide to accelerate the development of effective leaders?

Regional Stewards

Some women leaders emerged as regional stewards, helping to integrate networks, resources, and issues across Silicon Valley, and acting on a long-term commitment to Silicon Valley as a place. They became connected to diverse networks and developed the ability to bring those networks together to create coalitions for change. They developed the values and vision that led to long-term care of the region.

During this stage, women really began to make the connection between local/micro issues and regional/macro issues. They saw the **interconnectedness of these issues** and began to work for systemic change.

"When you're younger, you do things that are more hands-on—you can tutor, you can be a counselor—and see some tangible differences that you can make at a personal level. As you move in years, you realize that at a macro level, there are other things that you need to do and learn on a broader public policy level in order to make sustainable changes."

—Winnie Chu

“The reality is that it’s easy to do the school thing. It’s easy to do the neighborhood thing. But when you want to solve the macro issues, it takes a lot of guts. It takes balls to stand up because you’re not going to be popular. It’s like running a company. You don’t run a company because you want people to love you. You almost assume that people will not love you, because you have to make some very tough decisions where there’s no clear right or wrong. In the macro issues in the community, there are no easy answers and you don’t get paid to make tough decisions, so it takes a special commitment and view of things to say, ‘I really need to make a difference here.’”

—Vani Kola

One other major developmental factor during this stage is the **bridging of networks**. Key experiences that bridged networks included the American Leadership Forum and other leadership development programs, serving on multiple boards, or getting involved in political campaigns.

“Before my ALF experience, I was very much connected with the local nonprofit scene because my volunteer work had been at the Children’s Hospital. Now I am much more aware of what’s going on in the Valley. And I never would have connected with the entrepreneurial sector—that whole side of Silicon Valley is not something I would have had anything to do with if it weren’t for ALF.”

—Susan Orr

Ultimately, these regional stewards developed a deep understanding of the issues facing the region and became connected to many of the networks in the region. They assumed responsibility as stewards of the region because they had a long-term commitment to place.

Implications for Silicon Valley: How do we grow the pool of stewards and connect them to regional issues?

“[Regional stewards] have first of all a deep sense of responsibility about their region. They want it to thrive economically, to be sustainable environmentally, and to have the web of mutual obligations, caring, trust, and shared values that make possible the accomplishment of group purpose.”

—John W. Gardner, *Regional Stewardship: A Commitment to Place*



New Pools of Untapped Leadership Potential

“There are great untapped reservoirs of human energy and capacity awaiting leaders who can tap them, and societies that deserve them.”

—John W. Gardner, On Leadership

Our interviewees are active, engaged civic leaders in Silicon Valley, but they represent a small part of our population. New pools of women leaders have emerged from the economic and social changes of the past two decades. These women have the potential to contribute greatly to the civic arena, but *they are currently an underused asset*. We do not yet do an effective job of engaging these new pools of women and strategically channeling their resources, talents, and networks on a civic pathway.

Our interviewees and observers identified seven new pools of potential leadership that are underused. This list is not exhaustive, but the descriptions below provide some insights about how we may begin to engage new groups of women in civic leadership roles.

“LIFE AFTER SUCCESS” LEADERS

PROFILE

Women who reached an apex of their paid professional career (many of them were the “firsts” and “onlys” in their field) and are now devoting themselves full- or part-time to a high-intensity civic career. These women still have their early social consciousness, but also a lifetime of credibility, networks, experience, and often resources.

They will not “retire” in a traditional sense, but will redirect their energies to a range of personal, professional, and civic activities. They have a unique ability to lead and often have exceptional financial resources. Typically, they are currently in their late 40s and 50s and 60s.

THE OPPORTUNITY TO ENGAGE THEM

Leverage their credibility, networks, experience, and resources. Connect them to the best of the public-benefit and philanthropic sectors. They can spur significant innovation by playing an important role in transforming existing institutions or launching new civic initiatives. They also have a critical role to play as mentors and civic advisors to the next generation of leadership.

“There is a whole cadre of successful women in Silicon Valley who are looking to give back using their experience and skills.”

—Roberta Katz

“One of the things we don’t leverage well enough is the number of elder statespersons in this Valley. I’m sure they’re involved quietly but we don’t know about it. There are tons of them.”

—Tae Yoo

SENIOR EXECUTIVES

PROFILE

The senior management of large Valley companies, as well as governments and nonprofits. These women bring organizational networks and credibility, access to resources, and wisdom from experience, but are often overlooked because they do not have the title of CEO in Silicon Valley. Women constitute 39% of managers in Silicon Valley and 6% of senior executives at Silicon Valley's largest 150 public companies.

THE OPPORTUNITY TO ENGAGE THEM

Treat mentorship of senior executives as part of civic succession planning. Open up "CEO-only" boards to the next tier of executives. Raise the visibility of these leaders.

"The President or CEO generally has a hard time fitting civic involvement in on top of all the other responsibilities, but the VP layer is where I think it can really take hold because there's more flexibility. There is certainly enough expertise and seniority to make it happen."

—Kathy Yates

"We don't have to reserve all the spots on all the boards for people who have already made it. The selection criteria should be broader than just money—it should include people who will bring vision and passion to the cause."

—Christie Vianson

FLEXIBLE KNOWLEDGE WORKERS

PROFILE

Self-employed/reduced-time/free-agent professionals who have flexible work arrangements. They have often deliberately chosen to change their work arrangements in order to accommodate other priorities in life, including civic involvement. This group is the most likely group to be involved in the community. A full 62% of reduced-time workers spend time on charitable or volunteer service activities, compared to 50% of full-time employees and 54% of women who are not employed.

THE OPPORTUNITY TO ENGAGE THEM

Recruit them through professional and personal networks. Connect to significant long-term projects that leverage their skills and allow flexibility.

"It was actually a very conscious decision on my part. I was working too many hours at my job and had no desire to burn out. Now I try to work 30–35 hours a week so that I have time to do other things. Part of it is a balance issue for me."

—Jennifer Overholt

"I made some personal choices—how I wanted to live my life—and I'm an independent consultant so that I can balance my time better. I could see that as my years went by, I had less and less time to dedicate to community activities. I know more people who are opting out in that same way... it is enormously stress reducing to be able to chunk your time up differently. That is where business really doesn't get it yet."

—Karen Storey

TEMPORARY TIME OUTS

PROFILE

Stay-at-home mothers with significant professional expertise and experience. Most women today who leave full-time work to raise children leave only temporarily and intend to return in some capacity. Of the 22% of women in Silicon Valley who identified themselves as homemakers, half intended to reenter the workforce within two years. Many say that they feel isolated once they leave their jobs and want to continue developing their skills and networks.

THE OPPORTUNITY TO ENGAGE THEM

Customize volunteer/leadership opportunities to use these women's professional skills on a short-term project basis; expose them to opportunities beyond schools/education. Find roles that keep them connected to professional networks and that continue to grow their skills.

"I go back and think about the PTA. We have all these women coming out for a reason. I think that is where your leaders are coming from. For a lot of them, if you were to give them more, they would learn more; and from learning more, they would become more involved. But if they are not aware of ways to get involved, then they won't engage."

—Delores Santa Cruz

NEW PHILANTHROPISTS

PROFILE

Many women today have the potential to contribute money to causes they care about. Some 49% of women in Silicon Valley earn at least half of their household income. They have more wealth and more control over charitable decisions in households than ever before. Some women have earned enough wealth to be able to leave the paid workforce. They are significant philanthropists who make strategic investments in causes that they care about.

THE OPPORTUNITY TO ENGAGE THEM

Pioneer new models for tapping women's philanthropic potential in Silicon Valley. Support women in identifying personal passions and values and connecting to causes they care about. Find ways for them to get involved that go beyond giving money. Encourage collaborative investment and involvement among women philanthropists.

"For our generation, money was something your husband gave you. Today, most women can figure out what they care about and make philanthropic decisions on their own."

—Rosemary Young

"As I started acquiring wealth, I realized I needed to start thinking strategically about what I am going to do with this wealth, how I am going to manage it, how I am going to invest it, how I am going to give it, and how I am going to use it in my life. So I started a process of educating myself about investments and philanthropy."

—Cate Muther

"Why wait until someone dies to start to make a difference?"

—Lisa Sonsini

ETHNIC LEADERS

PROFILE

Women who have credibility and connections in growing ethnic, cultural, and immigrant communities. As Silicon Valley becomes more ethnically and culturally diverse, these leaders can become the gateway to large and influential populations. They have important perspectives and networks to contribute to the civic arena.

THE OPPORTUNITY TO ENGAGE THEM

Leverage these women's connections to bring in other members of their community. Strengthen their role in the broader regional discussions. Include their perspectives and voices in key leadership roles in a way that goes beyond tokenism.

"The first generation hasn't had the time or opportunity to be civic-minded, but the next generation of Indian-Americans are in a position to really give back."

—Lata Krishnan

"In Silicon Valley it's going to be very important to think of ways to really get different ethnic groups more involved that's beyond just talking to them. A lot of nonprofit boards try very hard but it still comes out as tokenism."

—Winnie Chu

YOUNG AND MOBILE NEWCOMERS

PROFILE

Young professionals in their twenties who are just beginning their careers. They are often recent transplants from places other than Silicon Valley. They may not be familiar with the region and may have few roots in this place. This group represents the pipeline of next-generation leaders, but they report having a hard time identifying women role models in the civic arena and express confusion about how to navigate civic careers.

THE OPPORTUNITY TO ENGAGE THEM

Civic involvement can help develop a sense of community and commitment to place. Connect them to each other and to intergenerational mentoring opportunities. Provide them with opportunities that place them on a pathway to civic leadership.

What Women Want from Civic Life

What can we learn from these new pools of women leaders? The women shared their aspirations for the future, their frustrations, and their suggestions for how we can shape civic life to better accommodate current realities. Together, they describe a new vision of what civic leadership may look like in the future.

We see leadership as a way to influence change. We want to bridge issues, networks, and differences for the common good.

To the women whom we interviewed, leadership was not primarily about recognition or authority. They consistently identified leadership as a vehicle for influencing fundamental change. When asked about the roles they play and like to play, the women saw themselves as boundary crossers who were bringing new people and perspectives to the table. Women increasingly have the ability to bridge different networks. They want to contribute their experience and skills. They do not want to just write a check.

"I have money and power. I don't want to use this to glorify myself, but to affect change."

—Kathy Levinson

"I don't think that being recognized means that you are a leader. And not being recognized doesn't mean that you are not a leader. Quiet leadership is pretty powerful."

—SV2 (new philanthropists)

"I think I contribute two things: First, my rolodex—I can be a boundary crosser and bridge builder because of who I know. Second, I contribute a different way of looking at things because of my life experience, part of which is my experience as a female. So many people in high tech are so into their own world. Those of us in high-tech that do have and appreciate other backgrounds need to bring this."

—Roberta Katz

We want civic opportunities to include diverse, customized roles.

The old dichotomy of civic involvement, in which you contributed either your muscles or your mind in standardized ways (volunteer time or board service), is no longer adequate. In today's marketplace of diverse talents and skills, women from various backgrounds—executives, entrepreneurs, working women, women at home—want to contribute to the community in ways that fit with their lives. This includes defined projects, advisor roles, professional expertise, and other opportunities that leverage both talent and time.

"Women leaders are defining new roles of civic leadership, and we don't yet recognize them."

—Cate Muther

"One of the problems with nonprofits, especially with smaller ones, is that they don't have strategic plans. They don't know where to plug in people and they don't know really what their needs are. They need to design projects where people don't have to be necessarily be on the board or go to these board meetings. People could just say 'I have one month and I want to do some marketing, international analysis, or something. I've got those skills and I want to do it.'"

—SV2 (new philanthropists)

Although the demand for customization is high, many organizations and institutions are unable to receive available talent because they lack the infrastructure to create and manage personalized volunteer opportunities. As one nonprofit professional puts it, “Volunteers are ‘free’; organizing volunteers is not.”

We want thoughtful guidance for our “civic careers.”

Women, particularly those who work in the private sector, find it difficult to connect to civic leadership opportunities. If their professional networks do not overlap with civic networks, they find it challenging to get connected to the community. With myriad options and choices, women expressed uncertainty about where to go for advice or direction. They longed to have a resource that could help them navigate through the decisions.

“We need some structure or channel or process for people to participate. In Alaska, in Denali Park, they don’t have any trails. You just have to bushwhack, try to go wherever you want to go. It’s very hard to do mountaineering that way. You go to other national parks and there are trails. It’s the same thing with civic involvement. Sure, I can take on some social issue on my own. I can bushwhack it. I can clear the brush and maybe make it to the top of the mountain. But only a few can do that, or will take the time and energy to do that. So, the question is, if we want to draw in a larger number of people, can we create some trails and put some signposts on them? We need to set up a channel and a process to get new people involved in this region.”

—Vani Kola

“I have been out of work now for a year. Before I quit, I was very much connected to the business network. A lot of those people are also involved in nonprofits but they are not necessarily involved in the same kinds of things that I am interested in. So I have to find my way around and find a match with my interests. The network is not as visible as you presume it is.”

—SV2 (new philanthropists)

We value the growing integration of men and women in civic life, as well as in the professional and private spheres.

Our interviewees see men and women sharing responsibility for the community more equitably, with both men and women serving in strategic as well as tactical roles. This vision has changed from several decades ago, when men were the ones who set direction on boards, and women were more likely to volunteer for implementation or start new service-oriented initiatives. The integration of gender roles in the work and civic arenas is making men’s and women’s lives—and the challenges they face—increasingly similar.

“As women assume more responsibility in the workplace and the civic arena, men are of necessity assuming more responsibility at home. Thus, women and men today are leading lives that are more like one another’s than at any time in the past. . . . This integration of work and home also supports the desire of women to see themselves as whole persons, whose rounded identities do not depend entirely upon their status in the workplace or the fact of their motherhood.”

—Sally Hegelsen, author

Women value both civic and professional careers and see them as reinforcing. Many find that their civic involvement allows them to develop skills, experiences, and networks that benefit their professional careers. Others expressed the desire for multidimensional lives, and civic involvement allowed them to pursue their interests and passions.

“It matters a lot to me to be part of a company that will allow me to work on something that is important to me. And I know it comes back to the company—from my dedication and from the networks and skills I develop in the community.”

—Karen Hodgkins

“It is not just about making money. I need balance, and that balance will come from continuing to play a role in nonprofit boards and pursuing some of my other interests in the community.”

—Roberta Katz

We want strong women role models, networks, and a culture of mentoring among women.

Our interviewees cited the importance of women role models, but found it difficult to identify ones in our region. The few commonly cited role models were typically former politicians such as Susan Hammer and Becky Morgan.

“One of the things that I felt very strongly is that there aren’t as many role models as I would hope. At least my perception of the traditional civic leaders is that many of those were male.”

—Kathy Yates

Many of our interviewees expressed the desire to connect with other women, listen to their stories, and learn from the previous generation. Some suggested that the power of women’s networks in Silicon Valley was not being optimized, and they believed that if this energy and creativity were harnessed, they could bring about significant social and economic change.

In the Women of Silicon Valley survey, women expressed high interest in donating time or money to causes that affect women and girls: helping women in poverty (71%), girls’ education and development (67%), and women’s health and family planning (44%). Furthermore, 59% of women said that they would be interested in contributing to a charitable fund focused on helping women and girls in Silicon Valley.

“We need people who are inspirational and motivational icons of giving back. We do not need to be hammered and shamed into giving back, we need to be inspired and lifted by people who will show us by personal example and then say ‘here’s how you plug in.’ That is how a revolution or social change happens—you provide inspirational examples and then an environment for people to rally around and contribute.”

—Vani Kola



New Approaches to Civic Leadership

“In periods where there is no leadership, society stands still. Progress occurs when courageous, skillful leaders seize the opportunity to change things for the better.”

—Harry Truman

Silicon Valley has a choice. In the past, the region has been a pioneer of economic and technological innovation. Today, our leadership is transitioning to a new generation, our civic challenges are more complex, and we have a mobile and diversifying population. Big challenges face Silicon Valley, but we are not tapping our people to solve them.

Can we—as individuals, as institutions, as a community—develop boundary-crossing civic leaders who can strengthen our social fabric and work together to find creative solutions to our most difficult regional challenges? This study examined women’s pathways to civic leadership, but the action implications affect the whole population.

We will need to draw on more numerous and diverse sources of leadership for the region. To do so, we must create models of civic leadership that are appropriate for our current realities by making four innovative shifts.

	FROM...		TO...
INNOVATION # 1	Ad hoc civic involvement	➔	“Civic navigator” capacity
INNOVATION # 2	Business and civic separation	➔	Business and civic integration
INNOVATION # 3	Standardized civic opportunities	➔	Customized civic opportunities
INNOVATION # 4	Disconnected networks	➔	Bridging networks

INNOVATION # 1: Create a Regional Capacity of “Civic Navigators”

We need to develop a regional capacity to help people navigate the civic arena, similar to the career-counseling capacity that already exists. Many interviewees expressed the desire to have somebody help them figure out what they could contribute to and what was needed in the civic arena. In particular, young women from the private sector wanted to seek advice and guidance that went beyond searching an online database. They wanted a personal guidance counselor for the civic arena.

“The opportunity is to turn a passing interest into a connection and a commitment to make something happen.”

—Debra Engel

Informal civic counselors and mentors already exist. Many of the women we interviewed informally serve in that role. These “civic connectors” are the ones who are plugged into community initiatives and organizations. They are the ones whom friends talk to when they want to get involved. We need to systemize and scale up what is happening in an ad hoc manner today. This is especially important for young residents, those new to the region and people transitioning out of a period of intense employment.

Silicon Valley must extend its “ask” culture and draw on the strengths of its networks. A special role exists for “connectors”—individuals who are gateways into multiple social and professional networks. Silicon Valley could develop professional civic career counselors, specialized in matching high-skilled volunteers with key civic leadership opportunities. Such counselors can recruit and encourage others to step up to civic leadership.

“Other people would say I am a matchmaker. I am one of those people that people call because I can help connect them to other people or opportunities. I may not be able to help them but I can give you somebody who could.”

—Karen Storey

“We need some people who are willing to be civic navigators for women. Share how-to techniques, steer them in a direction.”

—Lata Krishnan

The regional “civic navigator” capacity can take many forms. It can operate as a decentralized network of organizations and individuals that leverage existing regional institutions such as American Leadership Forum, Career Action Center, Community Foundation Silicon Valley, and Working Partnerships with minimal organizational layers.

INNOVATION # 2: Turn Professional Networks into Portals for Civic Leaders

We need to encourage companies and business/professional associations to be wider gateways to civic leadership. The sense in Silicon Valley is that business networks are disconnected from civic/community networks. With near-universal participation of women in the workforce, businesses and professional networks can serve as an effective entry point for individuals looking to get connected with the community.

“There’s this whole notion of corporate and civic integration. We’re corporate citizens but we’re also community citizens. It’s not zero-sum. In fact, I think together you make both of them richer.”

—Tae Yoo

In addition, more companies can be more reinforcing of community involvement by creating a corporate culture and incentive system that encourages civic participation as part of job advancement and professional skill building.

“One of the best things the Mercury News did with me is that it approached my work in the community as absolutely part of my skill building. Human resources departments should think about civic engagement as a legitimate professional development tool—there are skills that you learn which are absolutely transferable to professional work.”

—Ann Skeet

Examples of what this reinforcement could mean:

- *Organizations* like the Entrepreneurs Fund, the Forum for Women Entrepreneurs, and Women's Technology Cluster help shape the civic orientations of CEOs/emerging companies. We have learned that the civic orientation of a company's founder/CEO is the single largest influencer of a company's corporate values and the level of involvement of its people.
- *Professional networks* such as the Bar Association, GraceNet, WebGrrls, and IndUS Entrepreneurs have access to large pools of talent. They can serve as an entry point to engage their members in the community or to provide guidance on how to get connected to civic opportunities.
- *On-site civic advisor in the workplace*, an innovative partnership of Community Foundation Silicon Valley and Cisco, helps educate employees about civic issues, philanthropic planning, and volunteer opportunities. A variation on this theme is to bring in an advisor/consultant who can counsel senior executives and place them into civic leadership roles.
- *Stanford Graduate School of Business's Board Fellows program* places business school students on boards of public benefit companies. The goal is to help prepare individuals to become engaged in their communities as they climb up the corporate ladder. We can find similar ways to expose young business leaders to the civic and public realms.
- *Exposure events* can bring together business and civic sectors. Individuals can play an important role by hosting informal gatherings that expose business leaders to civic leaders and community issues.
- *Release time, reduced time, and other flexible work options* provide employees with the ability to integrate work life and civic life. Programs like "release time" could pay for employees to be involved in a community initiative that fits with a company's mission.
- *Visible leaders of large companies* can model civic engagement for their employees and peers. They can create a culture that values civic involvement in tandem with career advancement. Organizations that engage established CEOs, such as the American Leadership Forum, Silicon Manufacturing Group, Joint Venture Silicon Valley, and the San Jose Chamber of Commerce can help influence these leaders.

INNOVATION # 3: Customize Civic Opportunities

We need to create customized, flexible ways for people to contribute their talents to nonprofits and civic initiatives. Women's and men's lives are more fluid and complex than ever. Many people want to contribute to causes, but cannot attend regular meetings or make a long-term commitment. They want to use their skills, but find few opportunities to do so. If public benefit and civic institutions can figure out how to find customized ways for people to get involved, they will be able to tap new talent.

"Things don't have to be done the traditional way. We don't have to have a group meeting in one location to decide what to do and then go and do it. We can use technology to do a lot more of that via e-mail. Or instead of having to do everything by committee, we can have specific paths and get more people that can connect the pieces. Everybody needs to be looking at a different model."

—Karen Storey

We can help public-benefit organizations articulate their needs and learn how to manage volunteers with professional and technical skills. In business, we have seen some innovation around customized work arrangements that meet both organizational and personal goals. The same type of customization will need consideration in the civic and public-benefit sectors.

Examples of what this customization could mean:

- *Project model of civic engagement* allows individuals to engage in a short-term opportunity, usually with a specific time frame or deliverable. This type of work can be customized to fit personal schedules and can provide an opportunity to develop expertise and skills.
- *“Virtual” advisory boards* can provide a way for public-benefit organizations to access expertise that they need and don’t have in-house. They would act as an “extended family” of advisors who are not on the board but who can contribute their expertise in small chunks of time. The current model of boards is primarily as fund-raising vehicles, but increasingly, people want to contribute their expertise and perspectives, not just their money.
- *Smaller governance boards* are a smaller group of people who can provide a regular level of engagement and have become familiar with the organization and the role of board member as fiduciary.
- *Flexible meeting times* create a greater opportunity for women to participate in board meetings or other civic activities. Most women are in the workforce, and many still have primary responsibility for child care within the home. Rather than hold meetings at 7 am (which makes it difficult to get children to school), organizations can be more conscious of the time conflicts faced by women.
- *Recognize the contributions of individuals beyond organizational titles.* Today, women’s lives—and the roles they play—are fluid. Women may change jobs or leave the workforce during their lives (i.e. early retirees, temporary time-outs), but their contributions are still assets for the community to leverage. Civic and public benefit institutions can benefit from significant volunteer and board talent if they do not overlook women who are not associated with an organization.
- *Shared HR infrastructure among public benefit organizations* would allow time- and resource-constrained organizations to create the capacity to manage volunteer resources and find creative opportunities for engagement. Organizations such as CompassPoint, which focus on improving the effectiveness of public benefit organizations, can be a natural home for such services.

INNOVATION # 4: Strengthen Women’s Networks to Build Bridges between Generations, Ethnicities, Classes, and Sectors

We need to develop mechanisms that connect people to regional networks and opportunities. Silicon Valley has great movement of people in and out of the community, which can undermine the social cohesion of the region. The fragmentation of geography, sectors, ethnic communities, and generations hinders the region’s ability to develop regional stewards. Emerging and established women leaders can support and learn from each other.

“A lot of people are isolated in their worlds, but some individuals have bridges between social groups. If people are able to do that, they have a responsibility to make sure that happens. People have to be able to make introductions and you have to develop human relationships.”

—Magda Escobar

“We need to cross-pollinate business, government and education in a systemic way so that we can mentor people across institutions, and so they can connect with each other. That’s how you open access to opportunity.”

—Martha Kanter

This bridging of networks is particularly important for connecting ethnic women to civic opportunities. In Silicon Valley, we have strong networks among immigrant groups, but we do not have strong networks that bridge these groups. We have not yet learned how to reach out to these nontraditional sources of leadership and build relationships. Connecting to these women’s networks is one way to bring them together.

Examples of what this connection could mean:

- *A Women’s Fund* can draw on the collective philanthropic power of individuals interested in women’s and girl’s causes regionally. Other communities, such as San Diego, have had a successful Women’s Fund for years. The launch of such a fund can also act as a connector of diverse groups.
- *Build an intergenerational mentoring component to current women’s networks.* Many interviewees report that they would greatly benefit from exposure to mentors and women role models. One example would be to evolve the SV2 Women’s Affinity Group as a learning and giving network, with intergenerational mentoring.
- *Million Dollar Women’s Club for HomeSafe* is an example of the power of leveraging women’s networks around a community need. The Million Dollar Women’s Club is composed of a group of professional women who are applying their business skills and networks toward raising \$1 million to help battered women and children. HomeSafe is a collaboration of seven nonprofit domestic violence and housing service agencies that formed to build and operate four long-term housing facilities in Santa Clara County.
- *Hold informal forums that showcase diverse civic leaders.* Current award programs such as Women of Vision raise the visibility of women’s achievements in the community, but more can be done to showcase women leaders who are not as visible. We should hold up diverse leaders from ethnic communities and grassroots and value their unique contributions.
- *Share the stories of women leaders.* Capture the stories of women civic leaders (using digital media or other communications) and broadly expose girls and young women to the possibilities. Help them connect with these leaders to inspire them for the future.
- *Connect networks of ethnic women* to other regional networks. Draw on ethnic networks that are typically overlooked, such as the Indian Business and Professional Women (IBPW), the Latino networks in San Jose, and African-American churches. Bring regional perspectives to these ethnic venues to increase interaction and participation.

“Women’s energy, encouraged and unconfined, can change the world.”

—Eleanor Roosevelt

Now is the time to recognize the many important contributions that women have made to the economic vitality and civic leadership of the Silicon Valley region. At the same time, we must pioneer new approaches to engaging and developing a broad and deep bench of leaders, including diverse women, who can take responsibility for this community's future.

There is a special potential to mobilize women and men to advance the six commitments to social innovation outlined in *Unfinished Business: Women in the Silicon Valley Economy*—commitments that, if met, will ensure that Silicon Valley's legacy as a place of exceptional innovation, of widespread opportunity, and of human compassion and community.

SIX COMMITMENTS TO SOCIAL INNOVATION

COMMITMENT # 1: We redefine "success" as the whole-life approach—work life, home life, and community life.

COMMITMENT # 2: We customize paid work to fit our lives, both on a daily basis and over our lifetimes.

COMMITMENT # 3: We redouble efforts to make women full partners in the region's technology revolution.

COMMITMENT # 4: We reinvent family supports, including child and elder care, aligned with the realities of our lives.

COMMITMENT # 5: We raise up women in low-wage positions, ensuring that their work pays and leads somewhere.

COMMITMENT # 6: We recreate civic life, for both women and men.



Interviewees and Focus Group Participants

(Titles and organizations are as of date of interviews)

Carolyn Bechtel, Silicon Valley Social Venture Fund	Kathy Levinson, former President and COO, E-Trade
Ann Bowers, Trustee, The Noyce Foundation	Jing Lyman, Social Entrepreneur
Sharon Bray, Chief Executive Officer, Career Action Center	Rebecca McCracken, Silicon Valley Social Venture Fund
Winnie Chu, Vice President for Community Programs, Community Foundation Silicon Valley	Dianne McKenna, Board Chair, United Way Silicon Valley
Betsy Collard, Stanford University	Milbrey McLaughlin, Professor, Stanford School of Education
Delores Santa Cruz, Chair, Mayfair Neighborhood Initiative	Becky Morgan, President, The Morgan Family Foundation
Amy Dean, Founder, Working Partnerships USA	Catherine Muther, President, Three Guineas Fund
Ann DeBusk, Founding President, American Leadership Forum Silicon Valley	HG Nguyen, Co-Founder, Vietnamese American Chamber of Commerce of Santa Clara County
Debra Engel, Investor	Susan Nycum, Partner, Baker McKenzie
Magda Escobar, Executive Director, Plugged In	Susan Orr, Chairman, David & Lucile Packard Foundation
Diane Ford, Silicon Valley Social Venture Fund	Sally Osberg, Executive Director, Children's Discovery Museum of San Jose
Laura Gonzales-Escoto, Director of Community Development & Planning, Mexican American Community Services Agency	Jennifer Overholt, Principal, Indigo Partners
MRC Greenwood, Chancellor, University of California, Santa Cruz	Kavita Ramdas, CEO, Global Fund for Women
Mary Griffin, Supervisor, San Mateo County	Amy Santullo, Silicon Valley Social Venture Fund
Susan Hammer, former Mayor, City of San Jose	Ann Skeet, President, American Leadership Forum Silicon Valley
Nancy Handel, VP of Global Corporate Finance & Treasurer, Applied Materials	Sheri Sobrato, Silicon Valley Social Venture Fund
Karen Hodskins, Managing Director, Cunningham Communications	Lisa Sonsini, President, Sobrato Family Foundation
Gina Jorasch, Silicon Valley Social Venture Fund	Olivia Soza-Mendiola, Associate Director, Mexican American Community Services Agency
Martha Kanter, President, DeAnza College	Karen Storey, Co-Founder, Silicon Valley Charity Ball
Roberta Katz, President, Flywheel Communications	Christi Vianson, Vice President Change Management, Silicon Graphics
Marianna Grossman Keller, Silicon Valley Social Venture Fund	Sharifa Wilson, Mayor, East Palo Alto
Virginia Chang Kiraly, Silicon Valley Social Venture Fund	Susanne Wilson, Principal, Solutions by Wilson
Vani Kola, Founder, RightWorks Corporation	Kathy Yates, Vice President/Product Development, Women.com
Lata Krishnan, Co-Founder, Smart Modular	Tae Yoo, Senior Director of Community Investment, Cisco Systems
	Rosemary Young, Philanthropist