

Building Community

***Social Connections and Civic Involvement
in Silicon Valley***

**Preliminary Findings Report
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**Welcome to Building Community
Social Connections and Civic Involvement in Silicon Valley.**

Over the past decade as Silicon Valley has experienced a high-tech gold rush, much has been written about our loss of community connection in the land of plenty.

During California's first gold rush, people converged on the state from around the world in search of opportunity. Similarly today, nearly four in ten of us hail from somewhere else.

Many of us arrive not planning to stay, but rather to earn enough to return to the place we consider 'home.' But like our nineteenth century predecessors, many of us do settle here permanently. We put down roots, start businesses, launch new traditions, and add to this incredibly rich stew known around the globe as Silicon Valley.

Our challenge is to create community in the midst of the greatest wealth creation in history. As community foundations, our mission is to foster and build stronger communities. We invest in grassroots neighborhood groups, local arts organizations, programs to help children and families learn to read or to help frail seniors connect to each other via the Internet.

Community Foundation Silicon Valley and Peninsula Community Foundation were offered an once-in-a-lifetime opportunity – to partner with 39 other communities in 29 states and the Saguaro Seminar at the John F. Kennedy School of Government at Harvard University – to collectively measure our community connections on a local and national level.

We asked local residents a series of questions to discover, “How connected are we to each other?”

This report is a first glimpse of the survey results. Some are promising. Others leave much room for improvement.

We hope that this survey will not simply become another poll taken, another anecdote about our lives here in the Peninsula/Silicon Valley region at the turn of the 21st century, but instead will catalyze action and inspire local residents to connect with each other for their own good, and the good of our community.

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About this Report/Preface

This survey report is part of a national collaboration that seeks to strengthen levels of social connectedness in American communities. It builds on work by Robert D. Putnam (Bowling Alone: Collapse and Revival of the American Community, Simon and Schuster, 2000) that provides insight to the significant erosion of social ties and civic engagement over recent generations. The work of Putnam and others measures civic engagement over time. This effort – the Social Capital Community Benchmark Survey – focuses not on past trajectories but the present. It examines differences in civic engagement across places. As such, this summary of Peninsula-Silicon Valley findings maps the relative strengths and areas for improvement in our community. It represents a baseline for our “sense of community” against which future progress can be assessed.

How This Study Was Conducted

The findings from this study are based on 1,505 respondents to a phone interview survey conducted in conjunction with the "Social Capital Community Benchmark Survey" directed by the John F. Kennedy School of Government at Harvard University. Community Foundation Silicon Valley and the Peninsula Community Foundation sponsored this local portion of a larger national study that included 40 communities, with a total of approximately 26,200 respondents. Each local sponsor of the community samples determined the sampling geography, and each of these samples consisted of at least 500 interviews. In addition, a national sample of 3000 respondents, included a two-times oversample of Hispanic- and African-Americans. As with our local sample, reported findings were weighted to reflect actual population distributions.

The Peninsula-Silicon Valley sample was drawn from a region that extends the normal reaches of what is commonly referred to as "the Valley" to encompass all of San Mateo County. This is consistent with the actual growth patterns of the industry clusters that define this economic region. Taylor Nelson Sofres Intersearch Corporation conducted phone surveys averaging 26 minutes between July 2000 and November 2000. The Survey has been developed by the Saguro Seminar at the Kennedy School with the involvement of a Scientific Advisor Group consisting of leading experts around the country on social capital measurement.

The interview protocol covered a wide range of standard social capital dimensions as well as demographic factors including immigrant status, ethnicity, education, income, and time in community. The survey was also designed to support multiple-item constructs. Constructs defined during preliminary analysis include various indices of social capital such as: social trust, inter-racial trust, conventional politics participation, protest politics participation, civic leadership, associational involvement, informal socializing, diversity of friendships, giving and volunteering, faith-based engagement, and equality of civic engagement across the community.

Mean scores for the aggregate sample were weighted to reflect each region's actual ethnic composition. For instance, the ethnic composition of the Valley is reported as: White (48.7 percent), African-American (5.0 percent), Asian-American (21.4 percent), and Hispanic-American (24.9 percent). These mean scores were in turn standardized for comparison with other communities, with a score of 100 as the mean for each survey item and index. This community quotient (CQ) score shows a community's performance on this dimension relative to what was predicted given its urbanicity, ethnicity, level of education and age distribution. A score above 100 indicates that a community shows more of this community connectedness than its demographics would predict; conversely, a score below 100 indicates that a community shows less of this type of social capital than its demographics would suggest. Roughly 68 percent of all communities would fall in the 85-115 range, and almost 95 percent of all communities would fall in the 70-130 range.

Random sampling results yielded a total (unweighted) survey population with 831 Whites, 53 Blacks, 238 Asians, and 248 Hispanics. Sixteen percent of respondents were noncitizens, compared with only five percent of the national sample. Generally speaking, the small number of Black respondents limited our ability to make meaningful statistical comparisons for this group. This was not the case for Asian and Hispanic subgroups, each of which was comprised of about thirty percent noncitizens. It should be underscored that both of these groups are diverse within the broader designation. Asian-Americans represent the languages, customs, and religions of nations as diverse as India, Japan and Taiwan. Hispanic-Americans include residents originally from Mexico, Central America, South America, Cuba, and other regions. Hispanic-Americans also include those whose families were among the original *fundadores*, settling here when this region was part of Mexico.

A Long-Term Campaign to Build Community

The sponsors of this study are committed to a long-term campaign to rebuild social connectedness and civic engagement. The quality of community life, resident happiness and experience of well being all benefit from a strong sense of community. Similarly innovation, as we've learned in this dynamic region, benefits from dialogue, collaboration, and learning through active experimentation. Hopefully, these findings will spark all of these.

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Highlights

In a place where business and technology networks are strong, the personal ties that bind us to each other and to our community are weak.

- In comparable communities individuals socialize with co-workers outside of work about 10 percent more than we do; in the nation as a whole they do this 22 percent more than us.
- In comparable communities individuals “visit relatives or have them visit” about 15 percent more than we do; in the nation as a whole they do this 27 percent more than us.
- We are less likely to serve as an officer or on the committee of a local organization, or to attend a club meeting or any public meeting.
- Only 26 percent are involved in a social welfare organization here, compared with 32 percent in comparable communities.

We are remarkably diverse in the religious communities with which we identify, but overall our involvement in faith communities is much weaker here than it is elsewhere.

- Seventy three percent of the national sample was Protestant or Catholic; here it was only 55 percent.
- Nationally, 84 percent of respondents say religion is important in their lives, only 69 percent say this here.
- Only 27 percent attend weekly religious services here compared with 41 percent of those in the national sample, and 33 percent of these in comparable communities.

We give less of our time and resources to our community.

- Giving as a percent of household income is 31 percent less here.
- We are much less likely to volunteer our time in a place of worship, for a health or disease cause, to help the poor or elderly, or to assist in a neighborhood or civic group.

We have a higher percentage of immigrants than in the national sample (16 percent versus 5 percent), and this is reflected in different rates of participation in the political process.

- Compared with White registration rates of 90 percent, Hispanic-American citizens had registration rates of 83 percent and only 69 percent of Asian-American citizens were registered. (Note: These differences reflect differences in the time of local community residency – 16.7 years for White, 12.2 years for Hispanic, and 9.3 years for Asian respondents, respectively.)
- Even though Hispanic-Americans were as likely as Whites to have lived in their communities for five or more years, the former were less likely to have voted in the 1996 election (65 percent of Hispanics had voted compared with 90 percent of Whites).

While our social ties and community engagement are weak, we tend to trust each other—including people from other ethnic or life-style backgrounds.

- Overall social trust and inter-racial trust are higher here than in comparable communities.
- We are more likely to be friends with individuals of a different race, or to have a homosexual friend.

Economics is the great divider in our community.

- Our friendships—though ethnically diverse—are less likely to cut across class lines.
- Those with lower household income and less education are more likely to be cut off from networks that could lead to a better life.
- With lower levels of college education and lower household incomes, many Hispanic-Americans in Silicon Valley face additional barriers to increasing informal, civic, and other community ties.

Trust, civic engagement, and other social ties are positively associated with quality of life.

- Seven social capital indices were significant predictors of self-reported happiness.
- Similarly, five social capital indices were significant predictors of self-reported health, and four of these were associated with intent to stay here.

Overall our region is characterized by weak ties but positive social and interracial trust, and a unique set of challenges for building community.

- Work demands are a greater barrier to civic engagement here, but our workplaces are also a rich stew of diversity and innovation that might be “recycled” to the community.
- Civic and social connections are sorting us by economic class, and we must address the social capital equivalent of a “digital divide”.
- Faith communities can play a greater role as incubators for social capital, especially if they also attend to the need to foster coherence across diverse religions.
- New “social architectures” will be required to build community in a place that defines itself more by the norms and networks for innovation and commercialization of technology and less by civic engagement and local ties.

I. What Is Social Capital and Why Should We Care About It?

Social capital refers to important features of social life in our community. It's the norms, networks and trust that enable us to work together in the pursuit of shared objectives. Some have likened it to the "glue" that holds us together. Others refer to it as the "social fabric" that enables us to find coherence and wholeness in the context of our rich diversity of backgrounds and interests.

Social capital provides individuals, groups and organizations with the capacity to address problems that cannot be solved when we act in isolation. These are often referred to as "collective action" problems. For the individual, social capital can provide access to a better job. For someone who faces a reversal of fortune, it can be the lifeline to a better future. For the entrepreneur, it can mean access to investment capital. In neighborhoods, the ability to reduce crime or revitalize deteriorating conditions is greater if neighbors feel connected to one another by a common purpose. It also helps if they are part of a larger network of trusting relationships that can bridge to wider community resources.

In organizations good social networks and trust foster the free exchange of ideas and the sharing of skills that are critical to breakthrough innovations and speeding these innovations to market. The networks that exist between organizations and across the educational, business and government sectors in Silicon Valley are renowned for the impact that they have had on commercializing new technologies. But, what's it like at the grass roots level of Silicon Valley, in the neighborhoods and everyday lives of our citizens?

By the end of the twentieth century Silicon Valley was regarded among the most protean economic environments in the world. But at the same time, there were also concerns here about our ability to solve such urgent common problems as the quality of K-12 education, affordable housing, transportation gridlock, energy shortages, neighborhood revitalization, and the impacts of a disturbing growth in income disparities. The mantra of Joint Venture Silicon Valley, "a community collaborating to compete globally," underscores the importance of building community in the context of our global economy. If we are to be a vibrant place to live for the twenty-first century we will need to foster the kinds of social networks and trust that will enable us to address common problems with collective resolve. We will need to cultivate a level of civic engagement that is equal to the challenges we face. We will also need to foster a sense of mutual obligation and shared responsibility for the common good. We will need to find new ways to develop and support civic entrepreneurs much as we recognize and reward individual achievement in commercial efforts.

The results of this study provide a benchmark against which we can see how our present stock of social capital measures up to these and other challenges. It's a "benchmark" in three regards. First, it's a yardstick that will enable us to see how we compare with 39 other American communities. Second, it's a starting point or marker against which we can measure our future progress. Finally, it's an independent, empirical database that members of our community can use to assess strengths and concerns, and to develop the

goals, strategies, and programs to maintain and strengthen our sense of community in the future.

From a growing body of research evidence there are several reasons why social capital matters to our everyday lives:

- It means greater civic engagement—from voting to serving on committees.
- It contributes to school performance by providing our children vital resources outside of school for learning and performing well in school .
- It's a foundation for citizen involvement in neighborhood revitalization.
- It strengthens neighborhood crime watches. If you had to choose between ten percent more cops on the beat and ten percent more citizens knowing their neighbors' first names, the latter is a better crime prevention strategy.
- It can help individuals get better jobs or leverage their skills by combining what they know with the skills of others.
- It enables organizations to reduce the cost of transactions, or to pool information and other resources in ways that speed technological innovation and commercialization.
- It improves human health and happiness through the power of social support. Joining one group cuts your odds of dying over the next year in half. Joining two groups cuts it in quarter. (Better Together – the Report of the Saguaro Seminar, Civic Engagement in America at the John F. Kennedy School of Government of Harvard University, 2001.)
- It's associated with charitable giving and volunteering.

You see, social capital really is like a currency—it's a resource we can draw upon to create a better quality of life for all. It's the sense of mutual obligation that enables networks of individuals to accomplish common and even uncommon ends, to take their collective fate to a "higher level."

II. Context: Silicon Valley Has Distinctive Challenges and Assets

Our region has some distinctive characteristics that make it an interesting and important place to explore where and how people connect to each other and to their community.

As a region we are an innovation powerhouse, home to many newcomers, diverse in our diversity, driven by skills and networks, and divided by income.

An Innovation Powerhouse

Silicon Valley is the world's leading innovation economy. The region's breadth of technology expertise sets Silicon Valley apart from other technology centers in the U.S., which tend to excel in one or two main areas. The region is two and one-half times more concentrated in technology employment than other high tech regions in the U.S.¹

Forty percent of employment is within the region's seven driving economic clusters—computers/communications, software, semiconductors/equipment, space/defense, bioscience, innovation services, and business services².

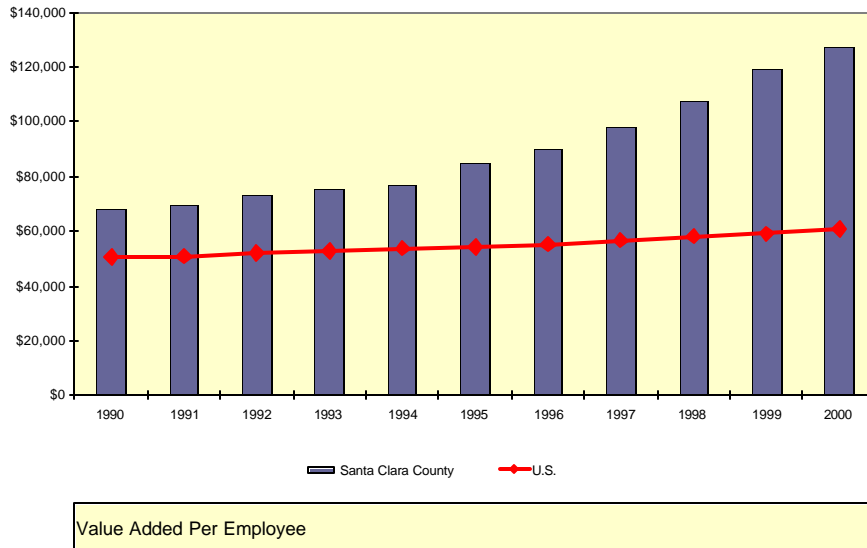
The region has pioneered new work models and requirements for speed, flexibility, and innovation. As a result, the region is exceptionally productive compared to the nation. Value added per employee is double the national average.³

¹ Cortright, Joe and Heike Maier (2001). "High Tech Specialization: A Comparison of High Technology Centers", The Brookings Institution, Washington, D.C. The location quotient measures of economic concentration in a region compared to that in the nation. It is calculated by dividing the percentage of regional employment in an industry cluster by the percentage of national employment in that same industry cluster.

² Joint Venture Silicon Valley, (2001) "Joint Venture's 2001 Index of Silicon Valley" Joint Venture, Silicon Valley Network, San Jose, CA. p. 4 and 8.

³ Joint Venture Silicon Valley, (2001), p. 15.

Production is Higher, Rising Faster, Than Nation



Source: Economy.com, Collaborative Economics

Silicon Valley’s edge during the past decade stems from an entire environment or habitat honed for innovation and entrepreneurship.

Growing Rapidly

The region has been growing quickly. The strong economy has lured talented and industrious people from all over the nation and world, and driven exceptional growth rates. From 1990 to 1999, employment grew 20% in the Silicon Valley/Peninsula region and population grew 14.5%--adding 218,200 new jobs and 311,600 new people.

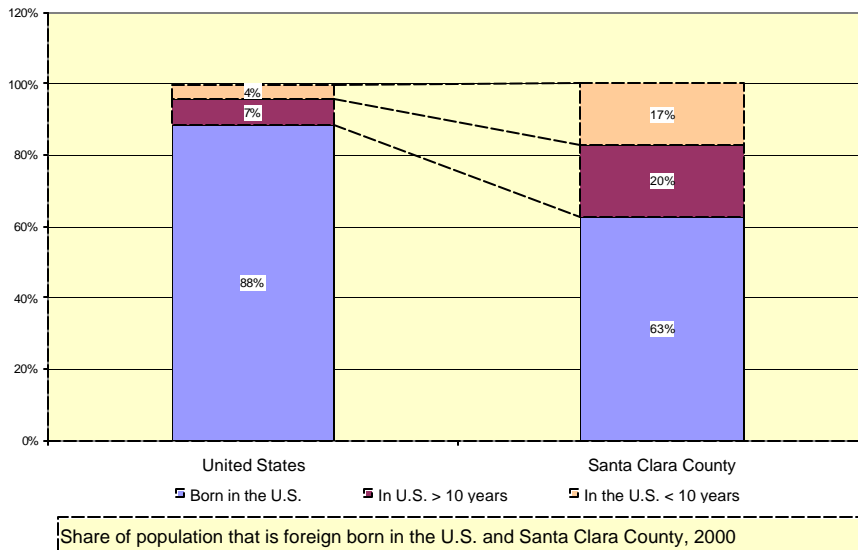
Many newcomers to Silicon Valley/Peninsula are from foreign countries or have ties to ethnic populations. In Santa Clara County, for example, 37% of residents are foreign-born, with 17% arriving within the last ten years. In absolute numbers, there are two times more immigrants in Santa Clara County than any other Bay Area county.⁴

Many new residents of the region are not U.S. citizens and therefore unable to participate in elections. An estimated 20% of residents in Santa Clara County are not U.S. citizens, compared to 6% nationwide.⁵

⁴ Bridging Borders in Silicon Valley (2000) The Santa Clara County Office of Human Relations Citizenship and Immigrant Services program. 12/6, 2000. San Jose, CA.

⁵ Source: U.S. Census Bureau (2000) March Supplement of the Current Population Survey. Collaborative Economics, Palo Alto, CA.

37% of Population Is Foreign Born

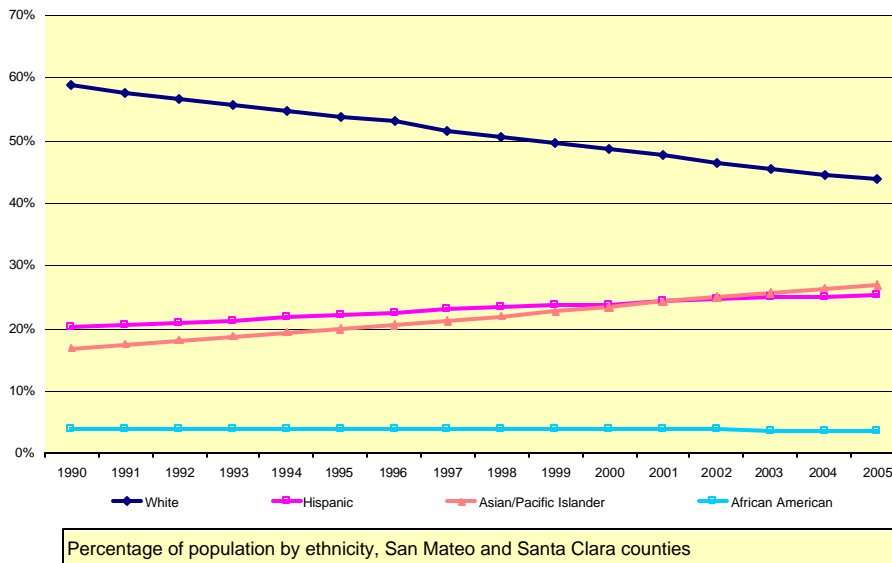


Source: U.S. Census Bureau, Current Population Survey

Diverse in our Diversity

In 1999, the region reached a demographic milestone, where no racial/ethnic group is a statistical majority. According to the California Department of Finance, the region's population will continue to diversify as it grows.

No Ethnic Group Is a "Majority"



Source: California Department of Finance

Within each broad ethnic group, diversity is wide-ranging in terms of country of origin. For example, there are 52 distinct languages spoken among regional K-12 public school

students in Santa Clara and San Mateo counties. For 42% of the K-12 students in the region, English is not their primary language⁶.

In the Santa Clara County Calworks program 50% of participants are native English speakers; however, 26% of participants speak Vietnamese, and 16% are Spanish speakers. The other 8% of participants are divided among 21 or more different languages.⁷

Driven by Skills and Networks

In the Silicon Valley region, what you know and who you know matter a great deal. The region is among the most educated metropolitan areas in the country. A greater share of Santa Clara County residents have attained a Bachelor's degree or higher (42.4%) than those of any other metropolitan region in the country.⁸ A 1997 survey of the region's fastest growing companies found that 84% of positions required education or training beyond high school.⁹

Silicon Valley is the world's most advanced "network" economy. Along with education, networks matter to job advancement in Silicon Valley. The value of being in a network that can lead to opportunity is higher here; the costs of exclusion greater. Individuals with better social network connections tend to secure higher-paying jobs.¹⁰ As Manuel Castells notes, the greater the importance of networks, the greater the costs of exclusion.

The constantly changing economic landscape and the premium placed on having the right skills and networks creates performance-oriented culture and anxieties about future employability.

Divided by Income

During the economic boom of the 1990s, top earners saw their incomes increase dramatically, but households at the lowest 20th percentile saw their incomes stagnate and even decline since 1993. This is very different from the national pattern, where household incomes increased at every level during the same time period.

⁶ Home Language Survey (2001) Dataquest, Education Demographics Unit for Santa Clara and San Mateo counties. California Department of Education, Sacramento, CA.

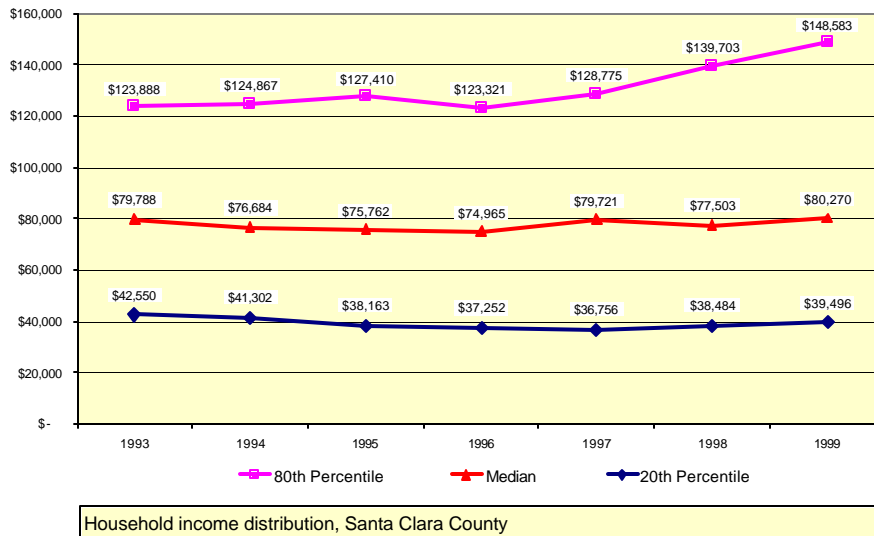
⁷ Catholic Charities (2000) Calworks Demographics, October 1, 2000, for Santa Clara County. San Jose, CA.

⁸ U.S. Census Bureau (2000) Educational Attainment of the Population 25 Years and Over, by Metropolitan Area, Including Confidence Intervals of Estimates: March 2000. December 19, 2000, Washington D.C. Table 15.

⁹ Joint Venture Silicon Valley (2000) Joint Venture's Index of Silicon Valley. San Jose, CA. p. 25.

¹⁰ Manuel Castells (2001), "Dimensions of the Networked Society," STS Nexus, Vol. 1, No. 1, Center for Science, Technology, and Society, Santa Clara University. Also see M. Castells, *The Rise of the Network Society*, Blackwell, Oxford, UK, 1996 and Manuel Pastor, et.al. *Regions That Work: How Cities and Suburbs Can Grow Together*, University of Minnesota Press, 2000.

Household Income Distribution



Source: U.S. Census Bureau, Current Population Survey

The region's fastest job growth has been at the very high and very low end of the wage distribution. For example, the two fastest-growing occupations are Systems Analysts/Electronic Data Processors and Home Health Care workers. These occupations require divergent levels of training (i.e., bachelors degree, short-term on the job training) and pay divergent wages (i.e. \$22.00 vs. \$9.00 per hour). Yet the number of jobs in these occupations is projected to grow 94.8% and 86%, respectively between 1997 and 2004.¹¹

We have grown very quickly. We come from many places and cultures. Work demands a lot of us. The distinctive features of Silicon Valley, create special challenges to creating and sustaining social capital, but also increase the importance of doing so.

There is a danger that our size and diversity will separate us. That some will "win" and some will "lose." That some will feel "in" and others will feel "out." We can see what happens in other communities when people pull apart and fail to build a shared sense of destiny.

But there is also potential for a truly new kind of society if we can pull together across differences. While "bonding" social capital means we can leverage relationships with people like ourselves, "bridging" social capital (developing meaningful connections to people who differ from us) can make us a truly new and powerful kind of regional community.

¹¹ California Employment Development Department (2001). Occupations with the Fastest Growth, Santa Clara County 1997-2004 and 2000 Local Directory of California Local Area Wages, Santa Clara county.Sacramento, CA. Table 5.

Gauging social capital in Silicon Valley may require asking penetrating questions that are focused on the context of life in the Valley. We hope that the following initial findings about social capital in the world's leading new economy will enhance our understanding and stimulate debate about why and how social capital matters for Silicon Valley's economic, social, and civic future.

III. Findings

A unique profile of our social capital emerges from this study. While the protean business and professional networks in this region are truly world renowned for fostering technological innovation and commercialization, a much different conclusion exists when it comes to civic engagement. In a positive vein, for a region as diverse and urban as ours we have relatively high levels of general social trust and interracial trust. But, our social cohesion and community involvement are low. It's a good news, bad news story--high trust, but weak ties to our fellow citizens and low levels of engagement in virtually all forms of civic and community life.

This lack of social connectedness relative to communities like ours may seem unimportant on the surface. After all, this is a region of entrepreneurs and wealth creation in a state that champions individual freedom. But, like a leading indicator, the hints of a less vibrant and perhaps deteriorating future may one day be traced to the fact that our regional stock of social capital is considerably lower today than our stock of financial wealth. We are at serious risk of creating a tragedy of the commons. As we crowd into this small regional space and our atomistic worlds spin faster and faster, we ignore our growing interdependence at great peril. As with overgrazing, we may be depleting rather than replenishing the valuable web of grassroots networks that will sustain our future quality of life. But, this is getting ahead of our story. If we "stick to the data" you will be able to draw your own conclusions about what this first national study has to say about us.

Here is the "social capital profile" that emerges from 1,505 in-depth interviews with a representative cross section of our region.

- Our informal networks are considerably weaker than those in comparable urban areas.
- We are much less involved in traditional community organizations, and have especially low levels of involvement in faith-based organizations.
- Our levels of giving and volunteering are lower than elsewhere.
- Our political participation is comparable to elsewhere, but civic leadership is low.
- Our general social trust and interracial trust levels are higher here, and we are more likely to have diverse friendships.
- Social capital is not equally distributed across income, education, and ethnic subgroups, and health, happiness and the likelihood of staying here are all related to social capital.

We will turn now to the evidence that supports each of these findings. We will then conclude with some reflections that tie back to this report's introduction, our challenges and the unique resources that we might bring to bear on these.

Informal Socializing

One of the ways that we connect with others in our community is through informal relations and networks. Sometimes these social ties are referred to as "schmoozing." Nationally, Robert Putnam's extensively researched book, Bowling Alone, has shown

these informal networks to be in decline for nearly 30 years. It's no different here. For this dimension, our stock of social capital is lower than elsewhere.

To draw an appropriate comparison with communities elsewhere on this and other social capital dimensions we have controlled for education, the urban character of our region, ethnic diversity, and age. In this way we will be comparing ourselves with "communities like us" rather than less urban or diverse communities in places like the rural south or upper mid-west. This was important because the 40 communities included in this study varied significantly in their degree of "urban-ness," their educational levels, their diversity and their age distribution. Each of these factors has an independent effect on social capital. By statistically controlling for these factors, we are able to see how we compare on informal socializing with communities that have comparable demographics.

Our score for "informal socializing" social capital is 89 relative to a normalized mean or expected score of 100. When scores are normalized in this way its possible to say roughly what percent of other communities would score higher or lower. If we had a score of 100 we would be in the middle, with about half of the 39 other communities higher than us and half lower. As previously stated, a difference that is 15 points from the mean of 100 (a score of 85 or 115) is equal to one standard deviation. From the normal ("bell") curve we can tell what this score means in terms of the percentage of other communities that are likely to score above this point. In this instance, our difference score of 11 means that about 75 percent of other "communities like us" would score higher.

The items that comprise this scale and comparison data are summarized in Table 1 below. To illustrate the points that we've made about the need to control for urban-education-diversity-age factors we've shown how we would compare without making these controls (the "National" data column), as well as how we compare to "Communities like Us." As you can see, without controlling for the kind of community that we represent we would appear to be even lower on this dimension of social capital than we deserve to be. Since we want to focus on "Us" as a community, we believe it is important that we make the appropriate comparisons to "Communities Like Us." We will be doing this throughout the remainder of this report. No more "statistical talk," we promise!

Table 1
Informal Socializing
(Mean Scores)

In the past 12 months...	National Data	Communities Like Us	Us
-Number of times played cards or board games with friends	11.7	10.0	8.8
-Number of times visited relatives or had them visit you	25.0	22.7	19.7
-Number of times had friends to your home	22.1	20.6	20.8
-Number of times socialized with co-worker outside of work	9.3	8.3	7.6
-Number of times hung out with friends in a public space	15.5	15.3	15.7

Overall, informal ties in our area appear to be weaker than they are elsewhere. Interestingly, they are highest for the young: 43 percent of 18-34 year olds score high on this, but only 22 percent of those age 35-49 were high, and less than 17 percent of those 50-64 were high on this measure of informal networks. Similarly, only 18 percent of those with household incomes under \$30,000 were high on "informal socializing" compared to 31 percent of those with incomes above \$30,000. Here and elsewhere in this report you will see that those with less income also have weaker social ties.

Should "alarm bells" sound because we are less connected in this way than is the case in other "communities like us?" Perhaps there are important ways that we spend leisure time with each other that simply were not tested in this survey. For example, we may be more likely to go out to eat with friends rather than having them to our home, or connect socially while exercising or recreating together. The survey did ask about "the number of times you played a team sport," but there was no evidence to refute the conclusion that we appear to be somewhat more socially isolated here. We reported that we did this only 5.1 times vs. 5.9 times in the last 12 months in comparable communities. Similarly, the notion that we are a more work-centric culture is refuted by the fact that we are actually *less* likely here to socialize with co-workers off the job.

One way to refute the significance of this lack of informal social connectedness would be to explore whether, through some other means, we might experience a sense of community that is comparable to that which is experienced elsewhere. To examine this, the survey utilized a set of questions developed by the survey research firm of Yankelovich Partners to assess the various ways that individuals develop a sense of community in the places they live.

Table 2
Sense of Community
(Percent Agreeing)

I get a sense of community from...	National Data	Communities Like Us	Us
-Friends	88	85	82
-Neighbors	78	76	74
-The city where I live	78	79	74
-Place of worship	75	72	67
-Work colleagues	66	66	65
-Members of my ethnic group	69	66	60
-Individuals met online	12	12	11

As Table 2 indicates, respondents here scored lower than those in comparable communities, and the pattern is incrementally lower for all dimensions. This is particularly telling because urban communities with similar ethnic diversity, age, and educational distributions were relatively low to begin with. The fact that we are lower still on “sense of community” is consistent with the earlier data which indicate that we simply spend less informal time with one another. As an overall score for SOC we computed the 7-item total for SOC items in the above table and compared people here (mean score, 61.9%) with the national sample (mean score, 65.1). Clearly, our overall scores are consistently lower.

This region has experienced high levels of immigration. Our Asian-American and Hispanic-American respondents, for example, have lived in our communities for fewer years (9.3 years and 12.2 years, respectively, compared with 16.2 years for the average White respondent). Asian-Americans are an especially diverse group. They represent the languages, customs, and religions of nations as diverse as India, Japan and Taiwan. As Table 3 indicates, Hispanic-Americans are significantly less likely than Asian-Americans to experience a sense of community through friends and neighbors. For both of these groups however, ethnic identity is clearly more important than for Whites in building a sense of community. As a region we are not a monoculture, but a culture richly textured by diversity.

Table 3
Sources of Sense of Community
(Percent)

Sources of sense of community (SOC)	White	Asian American	Hispanic American
-Old & new friends	84	88	67*
-Neighbors	70	83*	68
-Ethnic group members	47*	77	67
-Place of worship	60	71	68

* Differences relative to other groups are significant at .05 level of probability.

In relative terms the higher SOC scores of Asian-Americans with respect to “old and new friends” and “neighbors” is likely to be an important source of both informal support and information sharing. For new comers and immigrants this may serve as a bridge into this dynamic economic region.

Associational Involvement and Civic Leadership

In chart after chart, Robert Putnam’s book, Bowling Alone, depicts the decline of America’s involvement in civic and formal organizations. He also finds a steady erosion since the early 1970’s in the percentage of American’s who report attending a public meeting on town or school affairs during the last 12 months, down from 23 percent to less than 13 percent from 1973 to 1994. The percentage of people who have worked on a community project or served as an officer of some club or organization declined by more than 40 percent between the mid-70’s and the mid-90’s. This section explores how we compare with other communities today on involvement in formal groups and civic leadership.

Compared with other “communities like us” this research suggests that our region ranks very low when it comes to developing social connections through traditional formal groups. Our standard score of 62 would rank in the bottom one percent of communities with comparable demographics. We also ranked the lowest of any of the communities in this study in “civic leadership,” a scale that included the formal group involvement items in Table 4 plus three items on officer/committee roles, and involvement in public or club meetings.

Controlling for ethnic diversity and urban-rural differences across the communities that we are comparing ourselves with was especially important on this dimension of social capital. When it comes to the importance of traditional organizations, we wouldn’t expect to see comparable social dynamics at work in our region and, say, rural South Dakota. But, why do we also need to take education into account through statistical controls in comparing ourselves with others. The reason is quite simple. Regions vary significantly in their percentage of college graduates and education is a strong predictor of social capital. For example, in a region like ours—with a high percentage of college graduates--

we would expect involvement in formal groups to be higher. As Table 4 indicates, this is clearly not the case.

Table 4
Associational Involvement and Civic Leadership
(Percent)

In the past 12 months, have you been involved with...	Communities Like Us	Us
-Nonservice church activities	37	27
-Nonchurch religious organization	15	12
-Sports/outdoor activity club	23	22
-Youth organization	21	18
-Parents association	22	20
-Veteran's group	8	5
-Neighborhood association	23	20
-Seniors group	14	13
-Social welfare organization	32	26
-Labor union	10	12
-Trade/business organization	24	23
-Service/fraternal organization	13	10
-Ethnic/civil rights group	7	7
-Public interest group	9	8
-Literary/art/music group	19	19
-Hobby/investment/garden group	25	21
-Self-help/support group	18	16
-On-line (internet only) group	3	4
-Other type of group	15	15

Three additional questions were asked to develop our overall ranking for “associational involvement and civic leadership.”

- In the past twelve months, have you served as an officer or served on a committee of any local club or organization?” Only 13 percent had done so here vs. 17 percent elsewhere.
- “How many times in the past 12 months have you attended a club (or association) meeting?” The answer was 4.6 times here vs. 5.4 times in similar communities.
- “How many times in the past 12 months have you attended any public meeting in which there was a discussion of town or school affairs?” For this the answer was 2.2 times here vs. 2.4 times in similar communities.

In communities like ours, individuals are: 31 percent more likely to serves as an officer or on the committee of a local organization; 17 percent more likely to have attended a club

meeting; and 9 percent more likely to attend any public meeting. These are small, but persistent findings. When all of the items that comprise the associational scale are considered only 27 percent of our local respondents scored high compared with 33 percent in communities like ours.

Within our local sample there are significant differences in levels of associational involvement across educational, age, ethnic and income groups. Consistent with previous research, those with a college degree were 2.3 times more likely than those with a high school education or less to have a medium or high “associational involvement index” (37 percent vs. 16 percent). Income had a similar effect, with those having a household income greater than \$75,000 nearly two and one half times more likely to have medium to high associational involvement. There were also significantly lower levels of “associational involvement” among Asian-Americans and Hispanic-Americans (21 and 20 percent, respectively, score medium or high) than for Whites (32 percent scored medium or high). A number of factors may account for these differences, but it is the findings for education and income that are clearly most striking. It would appear that social class, as reflected in education and income, is a powerful factor in this measure of social capital.

Finally, there also appears to be a “life cycle effect” that influences involvement in formal community organizations. While only 21 percent of those aged 18-34 were medium to high on this scale, among those in the 35-49 age group 27 percent were similarly active, and 37 percent of those 50-64 years of age scored medium or high. Involvement trailed off for those over 65, with only 28 percent medium or high.

In sum, while life cycle, income and education may moderate this “traditional” form of social capital here as elsewhere, overall we are significantly less likely to form our social interaction ties through traditional formal organizations. This pattern is also evident when it comes to involvement in faith-based communities, as we will discuss in the next section.

Faith-Based Engagement

Robert Putnam posits that “faith communities in which people worship together are arguably the single most important repository of social capital in America.” He estimates that they are about half of all our country’s stock of social capital. Faith communities are a natural laboratory for the development of civic skills, and church members are significantly more likely to give to charity or become volunteers in civic and social service organizations. Nationally, however, both church membership and church attendance have declined significantly since 1960.

Compared to communities like us, our standard score of 83 ranks us in the bottom 15 percent on faith-based social capital. Of the 40 communities included in the study, only four ranked lower than us, and none was more diverse in its religious beliefs. But what is “faith-based” social capital? The answer can be found in the component items that comprise this scale in Table 5 below.

Table 5
Faith-Based Engagement
(Percent)

Items	Communities Like Us	Us
-Member of a church, synagogue, or other religious or spiritual community	53	42
-Attends weekly services	33	27
-Involvement beyond attending	37	28
-Involved in religious affiliated activities	15	12

Utilizing these items Kennedy School researchers calculated a total “faith-based” social capital score, and then divided individuals into “high,” “medium,” and “low” groups. In communities like us individuals were nearly 50 percent more likely to score high on this measure (29 percent were high vs. only 20 percent here). Similarly, 46 percent of our respondents were low on faith-based social capital, compared with only 37 percent elsewhere. In short, we are much less likely to form social connections through church and faith related activities than elsewhere in America.

It’s difficult to know why faith-based capital is so low in our region. While respondents here were somewhat more likely than nationally to respond “no religion” when asked about their religious preference (17 percent vs. 12 percent nationally), the most striking finding is the diversity of our religious preferences. Nationally, 73 percent of respondents indicated that they were either Protestant or Catholic; locally it was only 55 percent. In fact, nationally 47 percent of respondents said they were Protestant, while only 22 percent described themselves as Protestant here. Catholicism plays a bigger role here, at least in religious preference, but so do other religious groups. We have a great deal to learn about the rich diversity of religious beliefs in our region that is well beyond the scope of this report. As a whole, however, we are less likely to form our social connections through faith communities.

Giving and Volunteering

National trend data indicate that charitable giving as a percentage of national income peaked in the early 1960’s, while volunteering has increased since 1975. But Putnam argues that we are not experiencing a Springtime of volunteering, but an Indian Summer propped up by our nation’s seniors who have been more civic throughout their lives. The most significant predictor of giving and volunteering is community involvement. Be it schmoozing, involvement in formal organizations, or church attendance, those that are more engaged in the life of their communities are also more generous with their time and money. Given this fact, we expected to find lower levels of giving and volunteering in our community sample. Our findings confirmed this expectation.

Charity is a behavioral example of social capital at work. It illustrates how our collective sense of mutual obligation is translated into financial support or gifts, and volunteering.

Time, like money, is real currency. A volunteer’s time in a Habitat for Humanity project, if equated to contract wages, may translate to hundreds or even thousands of dollars. Our national Social Capital Community Benchmark Study results enable us to draw comparisons between giving and volunteering here and patterns elsewhere. The results are quite interesting and consistent with what we’ve discussed thus far. Taken as whole, we are quite low when it comes to charity.

Utilizing standardized scores as we have in previous sections, our “score” on this dimension was 79. Our standard score is nearly one and a half standard deviations below the expected score of 100. More than 90 percent of comparable American communities would achieve higher overall scores on “charity.” In fact, only three of the 40 communities in this study ranked below us. To better understand what this means let’s look at responses to the two dimensions that comprise this scale—giving and volunteering.

Giving to “religious causes, including your local religious congregation” is lower here than elsewhere. Average household giving of \$750 to religious causes is 28 percent below the \$1,035 national average from this study. Forty percent of respondents here gave no money to a religious organization in the previous year, compared with only 34 percent in communities like us and 30 percent in the national sample. This is consistent with the earlier reported finding that faith-based social capital is significantly lower here. In short, we are less involved in and give less to faith communities.

Giving “to all non-religious charities, organizations, or causes” presents a contrasting picture. Our average household giving of \$605 to non-religious charities is 26 percent greater than the national average of \$481. When religious and non-religious giving are combined, our total giving of \$1,355 per average household is about 11 percent less than the national average. However, local respondents reported average household incomes of \$67,000, fully 28 percent higher than the average household incomes of \$53,000 in the national sample. When average household giving is stated as a percent of household income we appear to be significantly less generous (2.0 percent of income) than individuals in other communities (2.9 percent). By this measure we give 31 percent less.

Table 6
Giving and Household Income
(1999 Dollar Amounts)

Comparison Data	National	Us
-Religious Giving	1,035	750
-Other Giving	481	605
Total Giving	1,516	1,355
-Average Household Income	53,000	67,800

People “give back” to society in many ways besides money. Giving of one’s time is the consummate limited resource, and volunteering is essential to the common good in any community. The results for our area are similar to those for financial giving. In short, we do

less of it here. People elsewhere volunteer 20 percent more than we do here (6.9 times per year here vs. 8.3 times in communities like ours). As the table below indicates, with the exception of volunteering in school or youth programs and in arts or cultural programs, we are considerably less likely to volunteer than our counterparts in comparable communities.

**Table 7
Volunteering
(Percent)**

In the past 12 months, have you volunteered...	Communities Like Us	Us
-At a place of worship	25	16
-For a health or disease cause	19	12
-For a school or youth program	31	28
-To help the poor or elderly	29	22
-For an arts or cultural organization	13	12
-For a neighborhood/civic group	20	14

Political Participation

In the Presidential election of 1996 48.6 percent of voting age Americans cast their vote, a fact that marked the most recent data point in the steady erosion of voting in America. Since peaking in 1962 this percentage has declined by more than a third.

Participation in the political process, like giving and volunteering, represents an investment in the future vitality of any community. It strengthens the responsiveness of democratic institutions to the interests of an informed citizenry and, in doing so, contributes to the common good. Our national benchmark survey results enable us to assess how our stock of social capital measures up when it comes to a number of dimensions of civic engagement. We will look first at voting.

In the 1996 election 57 percent of our respondents voted, a slightly lower turnout than the 60 percent reported in communities with comparable urban-diversity-education characteristics. Given the greater immigrant population here—many of whom may not be citizens—this is not surprising. Sixteen percent of our respondents were noncitizens, compared with only five percent in the national sample. Citizens here were no less likely to register to vote – 83 percent had done so compared with 84 percent in the national sample. However, voter registration rates varied among citizen respondents, with Whites at 90 percent, compared to 83 percent for Hispanic-Americans and 69 percent for Asian-Americans. Among registered voters there were marked differences in the percentage that voted in the 1996 population. For example, although 73 percent of both White and Hispanic populations had been in their current communities five or more years, only 65 percent of registered Hispanic-Americans had voted in 1996 compared with 90 percent of registered Whites. Similarly, only 61 percent of registered Asian-Americans voted in 1996. In this instance, though, only 48 percent of respondents said they had lived in their

current community more than five years – so lower voting rates likely reflect greater post-1996 immigration rates.

Beyond voting, Table 8 below reflects the additional questions used to compute our overall “score” for involvement in “Conventional Politics.”

Table 8
Conventional Politics

Survey Items	Communities Like Us	Us
-Days read a daily newspaper in the past week	3.4	3.3
-Very interested in politics/national affairs	31%	30%
-Could name neither senator	54%	48%
-Could name both senators	24%	33%

Except for our greater knowledge of our Senators, we are quite similar to benchmark communities. Overall, our involvement in “Conventional Politics” score of 99 placed us at about the mid-point relative to communities like us. We had a similar score (96) on the “Protest Politics” scale. The items that comprise this scale are summarized in Table 9, below.

Table 9
Protest Politics
(Percent)

In the past 12 months, have you...	Communities Like Us	Us
-Signed a petition	36	38
-Attended a political meeting/rally	17	13
-Involved with a union	10	12
-Ethnic/civil rights group	7	7
-Participated in a demonstration	8	7
-Public Interest group	9	8

Trust

In Bowling Alone, Robert Putnam begins a chapter entitled Reciprocity, Honesty, and Trust with the following statement: “The touchstone of social capital is the principle of generalized reciprocity—I’ll do this for you now, without expecting anything immediately in return and perhaps without even knowing you, confident that down the road you or someone else will return the favor.” Generalized social trust and norms of mutual reciprocity act as a social lubricant to enhance human productivity and our collective capacity to innovate and solve problems. Such norms are likely to evolve in “dense social networks” where reputations are embedded in close interactions and hence there is clearly a personal stake in being viewed as trustworthy. But, “thin trust,” or trust that is not tied to close or intimate interactions can be even more valuable to a community

because it extends to those that we may not know intimately. Given the low levels of community involvement and social connections that we reported earlier, we were eager to see whether trust levels were commensurately low or whether, despite this, we had maintained reasonable levels of generalized trust in our community. Given our extraordinary ethnic diversity, we were also eager to learn about levels of interracial trust. The results were encouraging.

The informal, formal, faith-based and “civic connectedness” findings that we’ve discussed thus far all reflect various social contexts within which we interact with one another. As we’ve seen, in many of the traditional areas where we might form social bonds, our ties are relatively weak. In addition to such ties or networks, trust is an important dimension of social capital. While such social interactions can contribute to trust, in fact trust tends to be a relatively independent factor.

This study developed two measures of trust—“Social Trust” and “Inter-racial Trust.” We develop our sense of social trust out of a variety of daily experiences—with neighbors, co-workers, fellow church attendees, local store employees, and police. Collectively, these experiences lead us to conclude, to paraphrase a survey question, “that people can be trusted or that you can’t be too careful in dealing with people.” People here were somewhat more likely, (51 percent), than respondents in comparable urban areas, (47 percent), to say “people can be trusted.” On the overall “Social Trust” scale, which included this item with five other questions, our score of 110 was greater than the expected score of 100.

The “Inter-racial Trust” scale assessed the levels of trust that individuals expressed toward each of the three general racial group categories other than their own. Our phone survey used only the general categories of White, Asian-American, African-American, and Hispanic-American. The findings were, here again, quite positive. In comparison with “communities like us” our score of 105 relative to a benchmark of 100 is a significant strength for an area with such substantial diversity.

Bridging

A great deal of research has indicated that what makes community strong and adaptable is its ability to find common ground and to come together across ethnic, class, gender, educational, and cultural boundaries. When our interactions cross boundaries and bring us into contact with others who are different than us we become part of larger networks and we expand our collective capacities. These “bridging” networks enable us to see the world in more complete, holistic ways. They can spark innovation and permit the solving of problems which require our collective action. For some, it can also be the link to a good job or a brighter future. In short, “bridging” social capital is essential to a sustainable social, political and economic future. So lets see what we learned about this factor in our community.

There are several ways that this study enables us to assess the degree of bridging that exists in our interactions. First, as we've seen, social and interracial trust are relatively high in our region. This is a real community asset. In addition to this, a "Diversity of Friendships Index" was developed to assess the degree to which our friendships encompass a wide range of people with varied backgrounds. On this scale, our standardized score of 106 means that we were higher on this dimension than our demographics would predict. Table 10 summarizes the items that comprised this index.

Table 10
Diverse Friendships
(Percent)

Do you have a personal friend who is...	Communities Like Us	Us
-A business owner	62	58
-A manual worker	65	56
-A welfare recipient	36	32
-A vacation home owner	46	45
-Of a different religion	77	77
-White	86	84
-Hispanic-American	57	70
-Asian-American	45	67
-African-American	60	57
-Homosexual	39	47
-Community Leader	45	37

What is interesting in the above table is that the diversity of our friendships relates primarily to cross-ethnic and life style factors. Our networks are less diverse than elsewhere when it comes to cutting across class lines. We are significantly less likely to count among our friends a cross section of people that spans business owners, manual workers, welfare recipients, or community leaders. We may be a "rich stew of diversity," but class-related bridging seems somewhat less evident. For example, when asked whether they had been involved with "a charity or social welfare organization that provides services in such fields as health or service to the needy" respondents elsewhere were 24 percent more likely to answer yes (32 percent, compared with only 26 percent here).

The incorporation of ethnic diversity into our friendship sets is reflected in responses to the following question: "How many times in the past 12 months have you been in the home of a friend of a different race or had them in your home?" The answer here was 14.3 times, 21 percent higher than the 11.8 times response in comparable communities. When asked to think of the group that they are involved in which is "the most important" to them respondents here were significantly more likely to characterize groups as being comprised of individuals from different ethnic backgrounds, and as more proportionately of mixed gender.

Social Capital Equality

While “bridging” occurs across ethnic lines in our region and interracial trust is higher here than elsewhere, our network society appears to be “sorting” people along class lines. Joint Venture’s “2001 Index of Silicon Valley” notes that households at the 80th percentile in income experienced a 20 percent inflation-adjusted increase in incomes between 1993 and 1999, while those in the 20th percentile saw their “real” incomes decline by seven percent over this same period. The data from this study cast light on how social capital exacerbates class divides in this region. In our networked economy those from lower socio-economic levels are much more likely to be cut off from this important resource and its potential role as a bridge to a better life.

One of the most startling findings of this national study concerns the degree to which social capital is unevenly distributed. As wealth and income disparities have grown, individuals appear to be “sorted” in their access to community based networks on the basis of social class. The poor, less educated, and people of color are all likely to have smaller stocks of community connectedness than their whiter, more educated, and richer brethren. In addition, ethnically diverse communities tend to develop weaker social networks than more homogeneous communities. Moreover, within communities, ethnic diversity, income, and education are all correlated with levels of social capital. The more diverse your community, the more challenging it is for its members to develop high levels of social capital.

To compare the 40 communities in this study on how strongly demographic factors influenced levels of social capital, measures of ethnic diversity, education and income were each, in turn, regressed on the dimensions of social capital. The average “explained variance” was used as a measure of “equality of civic engagement across the community.” Each community was then given a standard score, with a score of 100 as the mean. These scores ranged from a low of 64 to a high of 138. Our score of 95, which is below the mean, indicates that social capital inequality is a greater factor here than it is nationally. As the table below indicates, there are a number of areas where levels of education and income appear to sharply influence social capital.

Table 11
Education, Income and Social Capital
(Percent)

Forms of Social Capital	Level of Education	
	High School or Less	College or More
-Medium/high diversity of friends	34	53
-High “faith-based” social capital	19	27
-Medium/high “formal group ties”	16	37
-High “social trust”	14	44
-High “interracial trust”	23	34

Forms of Social Capital	Average Household Income	
	Less than \$30,000	Greater than \$75,000
-High informal/“schmoozing”	18	31
-Medium/high “diversity of friends”	24	64
-Medium/high “formal group ties”	15	36
-Low “organization ties”	53	25
-High “social trust”	18	40
-High “racial trust”	20	33

Mean “civic engagement” scores for those with a high school education or less were 1.85, compared with 2.61 for those with a college degree. Similarly, mean scores for those from households with less than \$30,000 were 1.88, significantly below the 2.70 mean “civic engagement” levels of those from households with \$75,000 or greater incomes.

The adverse impacts of lower levels of education and income are especially troubling for Hispanic-Americans. Tables 12 and 13 indicate a number of the ways that these socio-economic factors may spill over and condition “connections” to the larger community. For example, in addition to significantly lower educational levels and household income, Hispanics have much lower levels of newspaper readership and home Internet access. They also spend significantly more time watching TV. Many Hispanic-Americans appear increasingly cut off from the kinds of networks, levels of trust, and civic engagement that would be beneficial to a more promising future.

Table 12
Comparisons Across General Ethnic Groups

Survey Questions	Asian- American	White	Hispanic- American
Socio-Economic Factors			
Average household income	\$72,100	\$76,200	\$48,000
Years in community	9.3	16.7	12.2
Home ownership	60%	71%	40%
College education or better	51%	36%	10%
Groups with mostly college peers	57%	48%	31%
Political Engagement (among citizens)			
Registered to vote	69%	90%	83%
Voted in '96	61%	90%	65%
Media Use			
Read daily newspaper	36%	38%	18%
In-home internet access	83%	71%	46%
T. V. watching (hrs./day)	2.5	2.5	3.7

As Table 13 indicates, Hispanic-Americans experience significantly lower levels of trust for neighbors, for people they work with, and for local police. They are also less inclined to express high interest in politics or national affairs, to name both of their senators, or to feel that people running the community care about them. At a more grassroots level, they are much less likely to be involved in a neighborhood association or crime watch, or to work on a community project. Not surprisingly, they also reported lower levels of happiness. We will discuss the relationship between social capital and happiness in a later section.

Table 13 also indicates that Hispanic-Americans were much less likely to have been involved with a charity or social organization, a professional or trade association, or a service or fraternal organization. Only nine percent had served as an officer or committee member for a community organization in the last 12 months compared with 21 percent of Whites, and on average they attended fewer community events during the year (4.8) compared to Whites (6.8). Interestingly, they were significantly more likely to describe “safety” as a barrier to community involvement. They were also more likely to say that “lack of information or knowing how to begin” was a barrier to their involvement. Overall, Hispanic-American respondents fare poorly not only when it comes to education and household income, but also in terms of social capital.

Table 13
Trust & Community Involvement
(Percent)

Survey Questions	Asian- Americans	White	Hispanic- Americans
Trust Levels			
People can be trusted	52	59	33
Trust neighbors	35	56	23
Trust co-workers	34	50	28
Trust stores	23	34	19
Trust local police	47	61	41
People running community don't care about them	39	30	44
Interest in politics/national affairs	18	37	23
Can name both senators	32	44	10
Community Involvement is likely to...:			
Serve on a community project	26	37	27
Neighborhood assoc. or crime watch	19	25	11
Charity/social welfare organization	21	32	19
Professional or trade association	21	28	9
Service or fraternal organization	7	14	4
Officer, committee member	11	21	8
Community events attended within one year (number)	4.0	6.8	4.8
Barriers to Involvement			
Safety	46	20	52
Information (knowing how to get involved)	28	16	52

We were interested in considering whether the above findings reflected educational and income factors or whether, in addition, cultural identity might influence social capital. To begin to explore this we controlled for income, education and time in community and examined the influence of ethnic groupings on general social trust, racial trust, and involvement in electoral politics. Hispanic-Americans had significantly lower values on all of these dimensions. A similar pattern exists for Asian-Americans. Ethnic diversity, even when controlling for education, income, and residential mobility, continues to help predict lower levels of social trust.

As we noted earlier, ethnic identity is more important to experiencing a sense of community for both Hispanic- and Asian-Americans. But, when we control for time in community, education and household income, Asian Americans are significantly more likely to engage in formal organization activities like attending public meetings, club meetings or community events. By contrast, Hispanic-Americans are significantly more likely to engage in such “protest politics” or reform-oriented activities as signing

petitions, attending political meetings/rallies, joining demonstrations or a labor union, or becoming a member of a civil rights or other reform group.

Health, Happiness, and Intent to Stay

According to the national survey results: Personal happiness is also much more closely tied to the level of community social connectedness and trust than to income or educational levels. This is true, even controlling for individual characteristics, such as income, education, and so on. That is, even comparing two persons of identical income, education, race, age, and so on, the one living in a high social capital community typically reports greater personal happiness than his/her “twin” living in a low social capital community. The same thing is not true of the overall level of community income or education. In other words, your personal happiness is not directly affected by the affluence of your community, but it is quite directly affected by the social connectedness of your community.

As we've already noted, individuals vary widely in their amounts of social capital. For example, with the exception of informal socializing which was higher for those under age thirty-five, social interaction ties and trust levels generally increased with age. Similarly, those with less education and less income scored lower on social capital dimensions. We were interested in exploring whether variations in social capital might be associated with levels of self-reported health and happiness, and whether intentions to stay in one's community might also be linked to social capital. To examine this question we predicted the three outcomes (Health, Happiness, and Intent to Stay) from responses to the social capital questions with statistical controls for age, income, and education (Table 13).

Table 13
Social Capital "Outcomes"

Predictors	Happiness	Health	Expect to Stay
Informal socializing	*Positive		
Civic leadership	*Positive		
Faith-based	*Positive	*Positive	*Positive
Conventional politics	*Positive	*Positive	
Giving and volunteering	*Positive	*Positive	*Positive
Social trust	*Positive	*Positive	*Positive
Racial trust	*Positive	*Positive	*Positive

*Indicates significant at $p < .05$ level using a two-tailed test

Across all seven dimensions of social capital this exploratory analysis indicated that social capital was positively and significantly correlated with happiness. Everything from informal socializing, to civic leadership, to voting, charity and trust was significantly linked to levels of self-reported happiness. By controlling for income, age,

and education we were able to determine that this finding was not attributable to these other demographic factors.

We found a similar, though somewhat weaker link between social capital and self-reported health. In this instance, all of the relationships were positive but only five out of seven were statistically significant. When it came to whether individuals expected to stay for five years or more in their local communities, only four out of seven social capital indices were significantly predicted. These indices were faith-based social capital, charity, and our two measures of trust. Involvement in faith communities, trust, and giving of one's time and money were significantly correlated with all of the "outcome" measures—happiness, health, and intention to stay. For two of these measures—health and happiness—it's plausible to argue that the direction of causality is reversed. That is, it could be that happiness and good health make people more likely to trust others, join a church or give back. A similar argument could be made for intention to stay with respect to faith involvement and charity. If you don't plan to stay you don't make such "investments" in the community. But it is somewhat more difficult to argue that intention to stay in a community for five or more years is what "causes" higher levels of trust.

While the methodology used in this study does not enable us to say what came first--social capital or health and happiness--the overall pattern of findings here is consistent with work which has more rigorously examined how social capital influences individual well-being. The trust, reciprocity, information sharing, and cooperation associated with social capital appear to be very positive for individuals. Simply put, being socially connected in networks of mutual obligation is good for you. Giving of one's time and money also appears to be positive for individuals. Perhaps Emerson got it right when he said, "It is one of the most beautiful compensations of this life that no man can sincerely try to help another without helping himself."

IV. Building Community in Silicon Valley: Summary and Conclusions

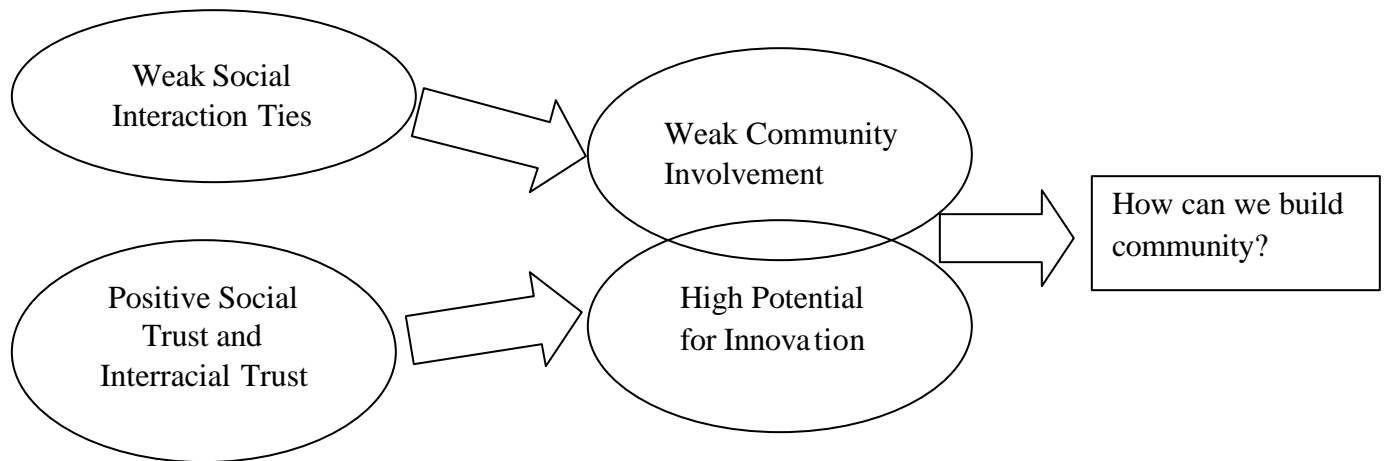
As a regional economy, we represent an innovation powerhouse. Our industry clusters in such areas as semiconductors, software and biotechnology are robustly networked to foster the innovation and commercialization of new technology. They have pioneered numerous new models of organizing for speed, flexibility and high performance. They've become a magnet for high value-creation jobs and attracted industrious people from all over the world. In so doing they've helped to make us one of the most richly diverse regions in the world, with wide-ranging countries of origin. There is no question that these characteristics of our social architecture have contributed mightily to our capacity to compete globally. But these unique advantages are not without their challenges.

In the shadow of our high tech clusters, the social ties that bind us as a community are weak. Our informal ties, our involvement in formal organizations, our connections to faith communities, and our volunteering are all lower than elsewhere. We were significantly less likely to have worked on a community project in the last 12 months than our counterparts elsewhere, only 32 percent had done so here compared with 36 percent in communities like us. Similarly, we were significantly less likely to have been involved in a social welfare organization that addressed a community need, only 26 percent had done so here compared with 32 percent elsewhere. We were also 23 percent less likely to be involved in a service or fraternal organization; ten percent had done so here in the last 12 months, 13 percent had done so in comparable communities. But, in case you conclude that it was just volunteering and community service that were low, respondents here were also 16 percent less likely to say that they were involved in a hobby, gardening, or investment group. Similarly, we were much less likely to be members of a church, attend church services regularly, be involved in church related activities other than attending services, or to say that religion is very important.

From informal to faith-based ties and from volunteering to participation in community service, our social ties appear by all measures to be weaker here than elsewhere. By contrast, with the "thinness" of our social interaction ties, we have some real advantages when it comes to the second major component of social capital – trust. General social trust and interracial trust are strengths here. We have more ethnically diverse friendships and participate in more diverse groups than elsewhere. We are also less likely to say that "immigrants push too hard for equal rights," only 34 percent of our respondents said this compared with 38 percent nationally. But our friendship ties are less likely to encompass manual workers, a welfare recipient, a community leader, or a business owner. Our interactions do not cut across socio-economic, occupational, and community stratifications as much here as they do elsewhere. Moreover, when it comes to social capital the rich do get richer. It's a much less open "market" for those from households with less than \$75,000 income and for those with less education.

The graphic below depicts the comparative social capital strengths and weaknesses of our community.

A High Level View of Social Capital



Overall, these findings suggest that we have tremendous untapped and underdeveloped potential for creatively addressing community issues. Our social interaction ties are relatively weak, but trust levels are a real asset. If we could recycle to our communities the same creative energies that exist in our globally competitive industries, we could tackle urgent problems in our neighborhoods, in under-performing schools, and in other conditions that would ensure more livable communities for the future. As it stands now, we are more financially satisfied here than elsewhere (30 percent were “very high” here compared with only 26 percent in comparable communities). But, we are no happier or healthier. Neither are we more likely to rate our communities as an excellent place to live. As was noted in the introduction, for the highly mobile professionals that our region depends on, this could become a growing concern. We are somewhat less likely to stay five or more years: nationally 80 percent of respondents agreed with this; in communities like ours it was 77 percent, while here it was only 73 percent. Social capital is not only an asset or currency when it comes to individual or community needs. It may also be the glue that holds us together.

Questions and Challenges in Building Community

We would like to invite the readers of this report to engage in thinking about the social relevance and importance of this study and the broader national effort of which it is a part. Civic engagement and our sense of community have been waning for 30 years in America. This was not a longitudinal study so we cannot comment on whether patterns of long-term erosion exist here. However, the cross-sectional data from this study do indicate that our stock of social capital is, today, significantly lower than for comparable communities on a number of dimensions.

What are the barriers to social capital formation in our community? What new social architectures will we need to create to serve our individual and collective needs in the

early twenty-first century? We say “new” because, despite nostalgia for a simpler time, history offers little hope for resurrecting the past. What are the new emergent roles for communities of place – neighborhoods, municipalities and regions in building community? How will family systems be bolstered as they continue to manage the strains of intense work demands, single parenthood, dual wage households, child and elder care strains, astronomical housing costs, lengthening commutes and, for some, unsafe neighborhoods? In this context, we must ask what are the roles of businesses in building community?

When asked to describe barriers to community involvement, balancing work, family and community needs (an inflexible or demanding work schedule or inadequate childcare) was by far the biggest concern. Fully 56 percent of the respondents who said barriers kept them from being more involved described these demands as very important obstacles. This compares with only 42 percent in the national sample. On average only 25 percent described various other factors as a major barrier to community involvement. The workplace is an important arena where we might begin, but there are other places that we must also look if we are to rekindle our sense of community.

Findings from the national study suggest four challenges to building community which are of particular relevance to our region:

- *The Social Capital Equivalent of "Digital Divide."* Here and nationally survey findings reveal that the poor, less educated, and people of color are likely to have smaller stocks of community connectedness compared with their whiter, more educated, and richer brethren. In our region, Asian-Americans as a group have risen economically. For others, especially Hispanic-Americans, to what extent does less access to social capital *cause* economic poverty and to what extent does it *impede* efforts to rise economically? How can we address these concerns?
- *Faith-Based Social Capital.* Faith-based efforts are about half of our country's stock of social capital. For our region this important aspect of community building presents several challenges. While this dimension of social capital is extremely low here it is also the case that our religious beliefs are extremely diverse. More religious connectedness may strengthen social capital, but it will not necessarily build greater cohesion. Religious Americans are more charitable and volunteer more, but in some instances they may also be less tolerant and politically engaged. How can we experiment with ways to bolster faith-based engagement, but at the same time promote more civic and tolerant behavior?
- *Diversity and Social Capital.* The national results from this study show that building community connections is harder in diverse places. Diversity is a strength in our region. We work in diverse work places, have more diverse friendships, and have higher levels of interracial trust. But, the level of

vitality and innovation that is found in the workplace does not appear to be spilling over into grassroots community and civic organizations. How can we recycle the innovative spirit that exists in our globally competitive industries to meet community needs?

- *Bridging Social Capital.* While our relationships with fellow citizens cut across racial and cultural lines, they are less likely to cut across social class or income levels. In our region real income for those in the top fifth has grown substantially over the last ten years, while it has declined for those in the bottom fifth. How can we develop networks that cross boundaries and build bridges to a better life for those who have less access to resources?

Community Foundation Silicon Valley and the Peninsula Community Foundation believe that levels of social capital are of critical importance to the overall health of our communities. They see themselves as social capital builders, committed to working with all groups in their communities to deploy experimental solutions to build their communities. In this spirit, they complement efforts like *Silicon Valley 2010* which set forth a vision of integrating an innovative economy with a livable environment and inclusive society. They realize that noble visions do not ensure results. It takes, in the words of John Gardner, "tenaciously caring citizens. They are the ones who attend significant community meetings, they chair important civic committees, and they help raise the funds to keep the important civic ventures going." It takes, in his words, "the web of mutual obligations, caring, trust and shared values that make possible the accomplishment of group purpose." How can we build this psychological sense of community where it is needed to solve common problems?

Research by Jim Koch, Bob Rossi and Mark Royal indicates that visions are important but insufficient to mobilize communities and foster collective action. Visions must be shared and encompass both common purpose and shared beliefs. In addition, trust--a factor that was identified as a relative strength in our region--is necessary but insufficient to building a true sense of community. The other dimensions of social support--caring, respect, and recognition--must also be nurtured. In addition, community building entails the essential elements of engagement--communications, participation, and teamwork. Together, these three general dimensions of sense of community--shared purpose, social support, and engagement--require greater intimacy or social interaction ties than we found in this study. What new social architectures will we need to create to foster the psychological sense of community that is essential to collaboration? How can such organizations as the California Center for Regional Leadership, Alliance for Regional Stewardship, and Silicon Valley Civic Action Network strengthen today's regional stewards and support the development of future community leaders?

Community Foundations play an especially vital role in fostering innovation, experimentation and bold initiatives to meet community needs. The results of this survey clarify where we stand today in our stock of social capital. They point to both weaknesses and strengths, to areas of concern and to opportunities. Hopefully, these results will also serve as a benchmark against which we can measure future progress.

Appendix A: Acknowledgements

A high level of social connectedness matters significantly for both the quality of life in the Silicon Valley region and our personal happiness. In 2000-01, Community Foundation Silicon Valley and the Peninsula Community Foundation joined with 36 Community Foundations in 40 U.S. communities (across 29 states) to undertake a Social Capital Benchmark Study to survey the current level of social connectedness that exists and to commit to build more local social capital.

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