



The search for the new America

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Published Dec 9, 2020

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Current politics in America are polarizing; local communities are not.

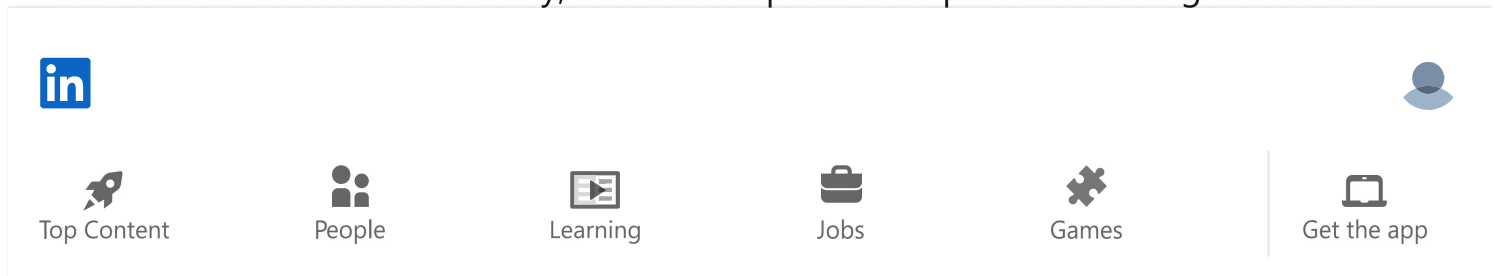
The recent national political election cycle in the United States has revealed the apparent depth of division across the country. There has been an amplification of different views, in terms of vision, societal values and acceptable behavioral norms.

However, the story at a local level seems very different.

Future iQ has worked in hundreds of communities and regions across the country, as they engage in community future visioning and planning initiatives. This work spans

across cities, towns, states, industries and regions. In our community visioning work with towns and cities, what has stood out in all these projects, are the thousands and thousands of people that come together in valiant efforts to forge shared visions for their own communities and neighborhoods.

An almost universal subtext is local people striving to create their own inclusive communities, which can fulfil on shared aspirations and needs. The overwhelming sense is of committed and caring people trying to figure out what their community needs to be like in the future. People know America is changing, and they know their community demographics are changing. They are coming together to try and understand how to evolve. In every case, the vast majority of people are searching for a new version of their community; one that respects their past but is designed for the



95% of people say that having a shared vision for their community is important, with most saying critically important.

From what we see, the search for a new America is alive and well in towns, cities and communities right across the country, as thoughtful leaders and residents come together and wrestle with evolving and reinventing their community fabric. This is not saying it's perfect, or there are no problems; but people are working on it. But they are throwing their time and effort into finding solutions. And they are tackling their big issues, like accommodating more active retirees, creating affordable housing, revitalizing business sectors, and creating welcoming and inclusive communities.

Why is the conversation so different at a local level? Is it because people have to live with each other? If the new America is being forged in a patchwork of communities, cities and towns across the country, is it possible that the sum of the parts could become greater than the whole? Coupled with the rapidly shifting generational influences, and accelerating changes in societal values, a potent new version of the American dream will emerge within the next decade. This will be shaped by different ideals and values and will reflect varied emerging voices.

America is a country and society that has reinvented itself over and over. It will be fascinating to see the next version.



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**Gabrielle Kay**

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Hi Dave, I'm encouraged by your article and to hear that local communities want to create inclusive communities. In Australia the media leaves us with an impression that it's a very divided society with self interest predominating given the recent presidential election or gun rights. Your article restores hope.



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**Eric Davis**

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Community/Business Development at Wessler Engineering

Your summary is accurate David. I see this nearly every day in the small towns that I work with here in Ohio. Thank you for the insight.

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