

# CitiZing!

**CitiZing! will be the first ever online civic networking platform that will provide citizens with *meaningful roles* in collective problem-solving.**

## ***The Issue***

Large, complex public policy issues, such as education, transportation, healthcare and land use are not being managed or solved. Traditional processes of civic engagement are predicated on feedback rather than real input, and citizens are not seen as part of the solution (although little will happen without their consent and genuine involvement). New, meaningful practices are needed to transcend special interests and gridlocked politics to drive towards real solutions.

## ***The Opportunity***

There are many easy-to-use tools to reach and communicate with people online, yet most of these tools go un- or under-utilized by citizens, government agencies, nonprofits, and public officials looking to solve public problems. Minnesotans are looking for meaningful opportunities to contribute to the public good – 63% believe that citizens should have a greater responsibility in solving public problems – and those at the top have expressed a desire to do civic engagement better, but don't know how.

## ***Civic Networking***

CitiZing! will fill this gap by assembling creating a cost-effective, user-friendly web platform that guides users through good public problem-solving practice. Following the lead of popular online trends in communication, CitiZing! combines the power of social networking with new and established tools to create new decision-making processes. CitiZing! is structured to provide key missing ingredients from today's civic problem-solving arena: action, and not just talk; transparency; and the opportunity to learn from one another through easy to use and fun tools. It will offer citizens, nonprofits, public agencies and other organizations easy-to-use tools to create new, clearer roles and expectations, greater transparency, and ultimately better outcomes in citizen participation processes.

## ***How does it work?***

The Citizens League seeks to put into practice “the wisdom of crowds” in the public arena – processes virtually nonexistent in the public sector. CitiZing! will provide a “public space” for citizens, agencies, organizations, and officials to meet up with one another, work together to solve common problems, and help information flow more freely in multiple directions. Users will be able to employ any number of tools from their toolbox – surveys, polls, forum discussions, simulation models and games, online study committees, and more – to consume, share and create information in processes structured so that they might learn, find common ground, and reach real solutions. Citizens will be provided with a direct way to get involved on the issues they care about and connect with others who have similar concerns.

## ***CitiZing! Goals***

CitiZing! will help decision-makers facilitate meaningful and transparent public processes and create accessible, productive and impactful opportunities for citizens to get involved. Ultimately, CitiZing! aims to be *the* online civic network for collective problem solving.

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**CITIZENS LEAGUE POLICY OPEN HOUSE – THURSDAY, FEBRUARY 28, 2008**