Smart Communities, a recent publication by Suzanne Morse, Executive Director of The Pew Partnership for Civic Change, is an easy to read and comprehensive overview of effective community based approaches to building stronger communities. The Pew Partnership bases the book on more than 10 years of research for Civic Change.

According to Morse, Smart Communities are able to develop a capacity to deal with “the big picture and to effectively adopt strategic decision-making.”

Morse references the work of Peter Senge, who suggests the most effective approach to solving difficult problems “is to identify the places of high leverage that lead to lasting, significant improvement.” (Senge, The Fifth Discipline)

Morse’s research led to the identification of seven *high leverage* points that successful communities put into practice. These actions include:

1) Investing right the first time,
2) Working together,
3) Building on community strengths,
4) Practicing democracy,
5) Preserving the past,
6) Growing leaders, and
7) Inventing a brighter future.

Case studies and illustrations from communities across the United States are used as examples illustrating how the seven high leverage actions have been successfully implemented.

Smart Communities is an excellent resource for volunteers and community development practitioners interested in an innovative approach to rebuilding local communities. For additional information visit: [http://www.pew-partnership.org/smartcommunities.html](http://www.pew-partnership.org/smartcommunities.html).

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