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Resolving conflicts, mapping solutions for sustainable development at Gary symposium

Rob Earnshaw, Times of Northwest Indiana Correspondent

GARY | Resolving conflicts and mapping solutions for sustainable development in communities was something all attendees took part in on the final day of the [Strong Cities, Strong Communities](#) Symposium at the Genesis Center.

A charrette involves stakeholders in a project collaborating on a vision for development and is usually a two to three day process. At the symposium Wednesday attendees had 90 minutes to act as a mayor's task force working on a makeover for a "fake" neighborhood and its housing, industrial corridor and transportation issues.

Jena Bellazza, of the Gary-based [Indiana Parenting Institute](#), said the charrette opened her eyes to a dialog she hadn't had before.

"I was able to look at it from a planner's perspective," she said. "I'm with a nonprofit and I think about the problems from people's perspective. Well, look at how place can affect the people's perspective."

John Antaramian, former mayor of Kenosha, Wisc., said the charrette shows people who are invested in the area how look at issues and make accomplishments for the future.

"It's an exercise for them to walk through and have an understanding of what it will take to actually start doing these types of developments," he said. "They are going through a conceptual type of thing as far as what type of design they might be doing. So in the future when a specific project comes forward you'll have people who have actually gone through it and know some of the questions they need to ask and what type of things to look for."

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