



Granite Falls Assessing Social Capital: Results and Insights for Action



**Center for Community Vitality
University of Minnesota Extension**

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Background and Overview on Social Capital

What is social capital?

"It's not *what* you know, it's *who* you know." This common saying describes some of what is known about *social capital*. The saying implies what we commonly observe – that getting membership to exclusive clubs requires inside contacts; that close competitions for jobs and contracts are often won by those with friends in high places.

But “who you know” makes a difference in other ways, too. When you fall on hard times, it is friends and family who create a safety net. Your happiest and most rewarding hours may be spent talking with neighbors, sharing meals with friends, being at religious gatherings, or volunteering for community projects. (Woolcock & Narayan 2000) That’s what social capital is all about.

There are three conditions that matter when thinking about social capital:

- ▶ **Trust:** Assured reliance on the character, ability, strength or truth of someone or something.
- ▶ **Engagement:** To take part...doing something for another without any immediate expectation of return (reciprocity).
- ▶ **Connections/Networks:** A collection of people you know who you can count on.

The ability to create and use networks is important for personal success – on-the-job; in professional organizations; in volunteer work. Communities also can create and use networks to improve the quality of life in their town. Networks help us get information, ideas, influence, and resources so that we can accomplish goals.

When you and your community improve your social capital, you can make change happen. You can leverage your strong networks for better results, and you can address your weak networks to make a difference in the future.

What are the benefits of social capital?

The basic idea of social capital is that your family, friends, associates – even acquaintances – are an important asset. You can tap that asset to survive a crisis, improve your financial footing, or just enjoy life more. This is true for individuals and for groups. Communities that have a rich and diverse stock of social networks and civic associations are less vulnerable, and can more easily tackle problems.

When social capital is lacking, it shows. We all know what it is like to fear being left out of the loop on important decisions, or to not be able to get a job in a field or organization where we don’t know anybody. One reason that people stay in poverty is that they don’t have the social networks and institutions that could be used to get a good job or decent housing (Woolcock & Narayan).

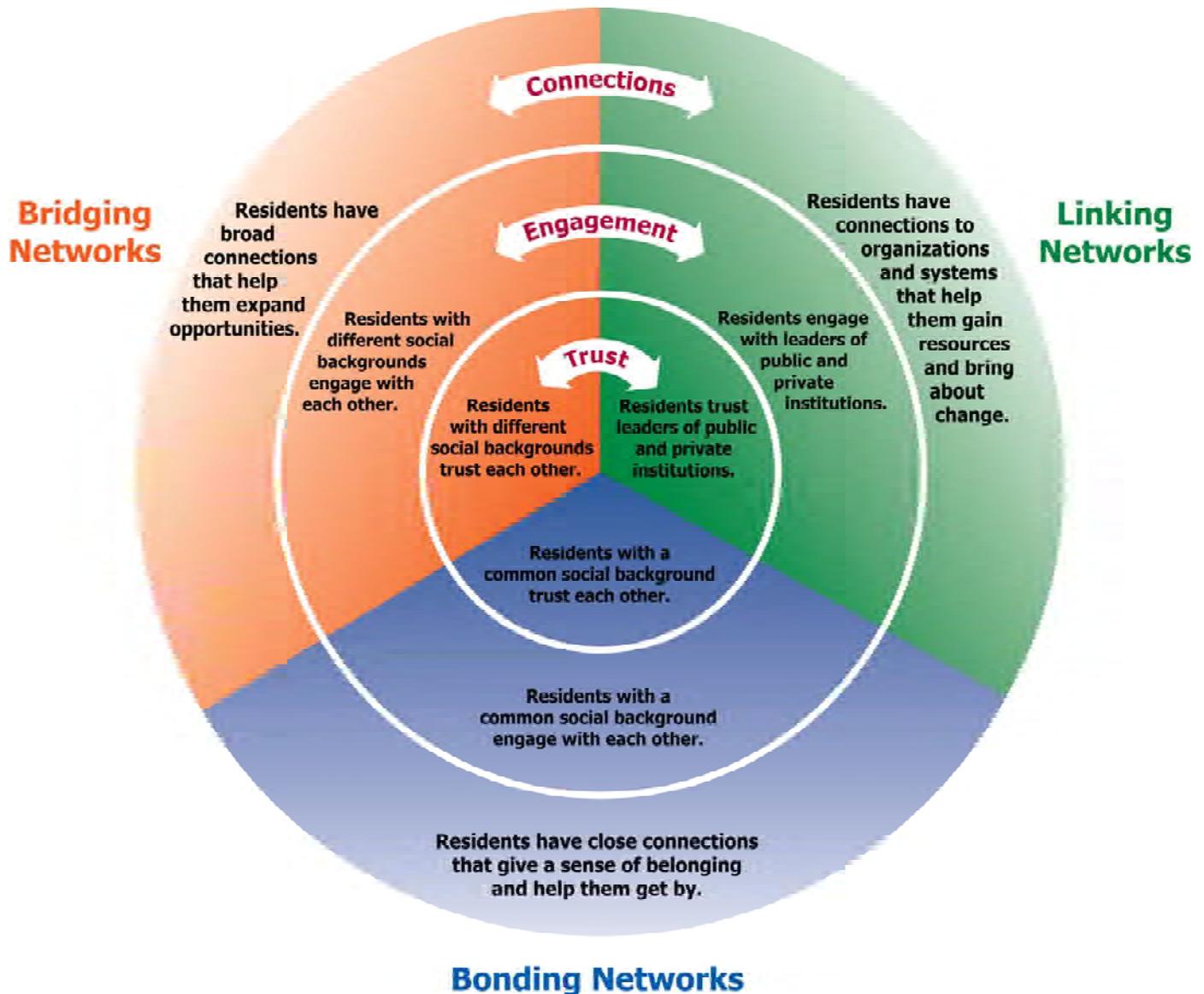
Social capital is so valuable that it affects almost every aspect of personal and community life. One report from Harvard University (Saguaro Seminar) summarized the benefits – stronger communities, better education, economic prosperity for peoples and communities, individual well-being and public health.

How can communities strengthen social capital?

Broad, diverse participation in social networks has side benefits. When people are in social and economic relationships with an assumption of trust they are better able to resolve personal or community problems. Engaged people are more likely to hear about a job or get good information about health issues. Connections within communities help people link to resources so that personal and public problems can be solved more easily.

Communities can improve their social capital by strengthening their residents trust and engagement within three distinct types of networks: bonding, bridging and linking.

Figure 1. Community Social Capital Model



Community Social Capital Model

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The Social Capital Assessment

A bit of history

The University of Minnesota Extension's work on social capital started in August 2002 with a search for a community survey that would help rural communities look at the social aspects of their community life. When no model for rural communities could be found, Extension decided to develop one..

The first pilot of the survey was started in January 2004. Since then, the assessment process has been used with ten rural communities (four towns, two school districts and four counties). Between 2002 and 2008 we have gathered data from over 3,200 individuals. We have responses from 2,659 adults and 555 youth have completed a youth version of the survey. An online version of the survey has also been piloted.

The research (validity and reliability testing) included three pilot versions of the survey tool which resulted in an instrument that is a solid measure of social capital. The full survey has a total of twelve questions that focus on six measures: bonding-trust, bonding-engagement, bridging-trust, bridging engagement, linking-trust, and linking-engagement.

Focus on networks and our six measures

The assessment focuses on trust and engagement within the three types (bonding, bridging, linking) of networks.

Bonding networks are close ties that help people get by. These connections are usually with family, friends, and neighbors.

Bridging networks are weaker ties that can help people get ahead and gain opportunities. These networks are usually with people different from themselves who are engaged in different types of networks like occupations, organizations, etc.

Linking networks are links to organizations and systems that can help people gain resources and bring about change. These connections are usually with organizations that have resources, both within and outside of the community.

Some key assumptions:

- All three types of networks matter. They benefit individuals and communities differently.
- Size and strengths of networks can vary.

The survey measures three types of networks and two key variables resulting in these six measures: Bonding Trust, Bonding Engagement, Bridging Trust, Bridging Engagement, Linking Trust, and Linking Engagement

The community process

As its title suggests, the community assessment process requires communities to provide leadership for training volunteers and gathering input. It is designed to identify areas where the community already has a strong foundation (strengths to build on) as well as areas to strengthen (priorities for action).

In Granite Falls, members of the **Design Your Community team** were: *Peggy Heglund, Dave Smiglewski, Dick Wambeke, Mark Henderson, Dan McGonigle, Tim Knapper, Cindy Velde, Steve Virnig, Mark Jensen, and Ryan Krosch.*

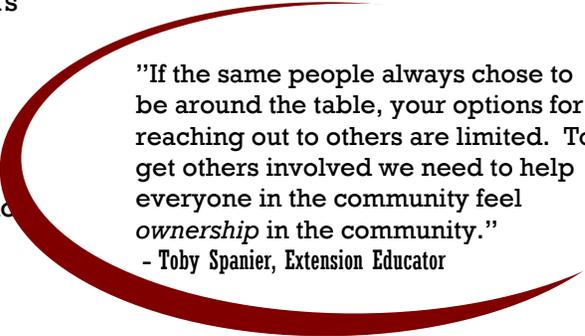
These individuals provided leadership for the process. In the “community planning phase” of the project, meetings were held to: 1) determine the boundaries of the community to be assessed, 2) develop a plan to reach a cross-section of the community to complete the survey, 3) select survey methods, 4) identify additional volunteers needed to assist with data collection, and 5) develop promotional strategies.

Those meetings were:

- **Informational meeting** attended by 10 people, September 28th, 2007
- **Planning meeting** attended by 8 people, October 25th, 2007
- **Training session** attended by 12 people, November 12th, 2007

In Granite Falls, the process for data collection for the adult survey was to have volunteers deliver surveys to local groups and individuals in the community. The planning team and volunteers mapped out places where people gather in Granite Falls (civic and community organizations, private businesses, schools, food shelves, churches, community service agencies, coffee shops, etc.) in an attempt to reach a cross-section of the community consistent with the demographics of the community. Then, ten to twelve volunteers selected areas in the community where they would be responsible for distributing and collecting the surveys from adults.

The planning team found there were some barriers to gathering data that is representative of the demographics of the community. Although they tried to be intentional about having a diverse group of volunteers to reach out and gather input from all sectors of the community, those who ultimately got involved were those individuals who are currently engaged in the community; who are usually found at the table around many different issues, and they were not as diverse a group as they might have been.



“If the same people always chose to be around the table, your options for reaching out to others are limited. To get others involved we need to help everyone in the community feel *ownership* in the community.”
- Toby Spanier, Extension Educator

The youth data was collected at Granite Falls High School (grades 10 and 11) as part of the social studies (civics) classes.

The outreach efforts resulted in data gathered from 285 individuals (168 adults and 117 youth).

The demographics

How representative of the larger Granite Falls community was the survey sample? In an ideal survey situation, survey participants would be truly representative of all the major population sub-groups of the community. This type of representativeness is best achieved when survey respondents are selected at random. However, random selection is often not practical in community-driven survey projects.

Using volunteers for data collection, Granite Falls was able to complete surveys with 168 adults and 117 youth. Volunteers made an effort to be as inclusive as possible of all demographic groups in the community, but the sample was not representative of the larger community in some important ways.

The table below compares some of the demographics of the survey sample with census data from the larger Granite Falls population. The table shows that the study sample over-represented women, households with higher incomes, and homeowners, while it under-represented minorities and people with lower levels of formal education. Because of this bias in the sample, extra care should be taken to make generalizations from the findings about the entire Granite Falls population, because the findings tend to reflect the perspective of a more affluent, more educated segment of the community.

Table 1. Characteristics of the adult sample

Demographic Characteristic	Population (U.S. Census)	Sample
Percent female	52%	70%
Percent minority	10%	3%
Percent age 19-59	70%	70%
Percent of households with more than \$75,000 income	11%	33%
Percent homeowners	70%	88%
Percent with high school education or less	50%	14%

The youth sample was more even in terms of gender and had a stronger representation of minorities. Most of the youth who completed the Granite Falls survey were in their junior year of high school.

Table 2. Characteristics of the youth sample

Demographic Characteristic	Population (U.S. Census)	Sample
Percent female	52%	45%
Percent minority	17%	8%
Year in school	N/A	10th grade 16.4%
		11th grade 56.0%
		12th grade 27.6%

Survey Findings

About the scores

It is important to keep in mind a few notes about the scores from the data analysis.

- ▶ Responses to questions concerning each of the types of networks were quantified, combined, and averaged.
- ▶ The scores are intended as starting points for talking about social capital in the community.
- ▶ They are not scientifically based, the whole story, or “proof”.
- ▶ Scores are from 0 to 100

0 = everybody in the community had the lowest possible responses

100 = everybody in community had the highest possible responses

50 = a good benchmark to use. The further above or below 50 the score is, the more it is an indicator of areas of strength or challenge for the community

The more representative the sample, the more confident we can be about the results. In the case of Granite Falls, we know the sample was over-representative of wealthier and more educated people, so some of the community scores might have been different if more low income or less educated community residents had been part of the survey sample.

Comparison to other communities

In this report we share a comparison of Granite Falls with other communities who have completed the Social Capital survey. For comparison purposes, it can be helpful to know the demographics of those communities which we've included here in Table 3. Among the four communities, Granite Falls was the smallest in population size, with slightly higher minority and elderly populations, and a smaller percentage of upper income households.

Table 3. Demographics of comparison communities

	Granite Falls ¹	Southern Community #1 ²	Southern Community #2 ¹	Northeastern Community ¹
Scope of community	Zip code area	School district	Zip code area	County
Population size	4,331	19,526	8,771	5,168
Percent minority	10%	7%	2%	9%
Percent of adults with high school education or less	50%	54%	50%	40%
Percent of households with \$75,000 or higher income	11%	15%	22%	14%
Percent of population age 60 or older	25%	18%	16%	23%
¹ SOURCE: American Fact Finder, index of data provided by the US Census Bureau, http://factfinder.census.gov/ ² SOURCE: School District Census Data, http://nces.ed.gov/surveys/sdds/				

Granite Fall's scores for the six measures

Bonding Trust

Bonding trust (for adults) was one of the stronger scores for Granite Falls. As seen in Figure 2, adults in the community had an average bonding trust score of 64.5, well above the benchmark of 50. Youth in the community had a somewhat lower average score of 55.5, suggesting that youth as a whole are not as well bonded as adults.

Do residents with a common social background trust each other?

Figure 2. Bonding trust averages for adults and youth

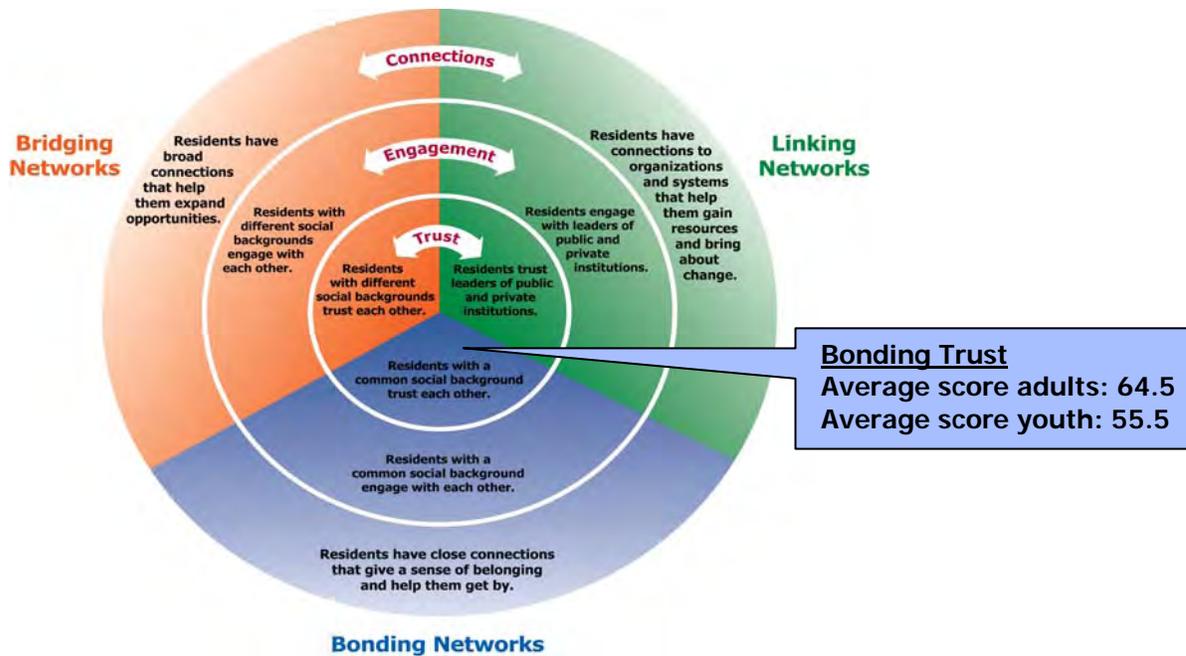
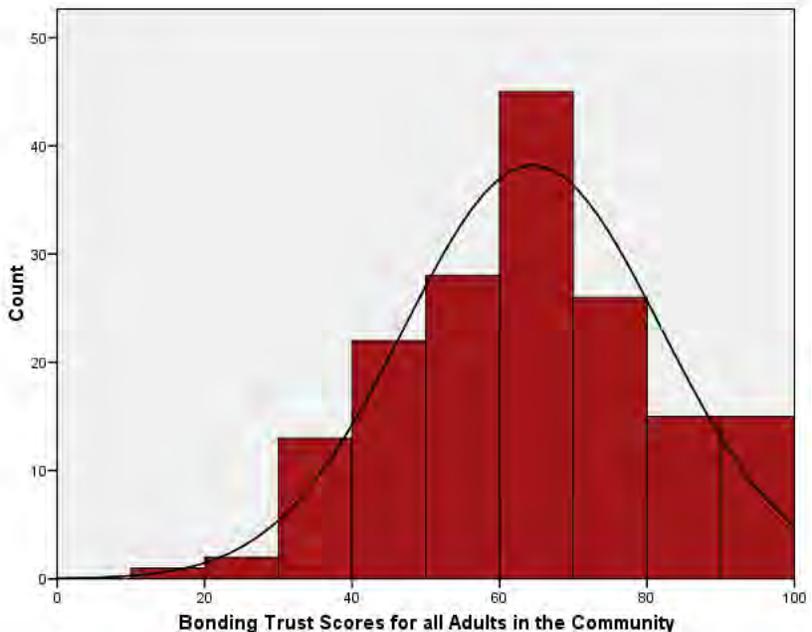


Figure 3. Bonding trust distribution

Average scores are informative, but they don't tell us much about the range of bonding trust levels in the community. Figure 3 shows a normal distribution of scores among those surveyed, with the greatest number of Granite Falls residents scoring in the 60s or higher on bonding trust, but a substantial number of community residents scoring below 60. The range in bonding trust scores was from 16.5 to 100.



When we compare the averages in bonding trust among demographic subgroups of adults, we do not find any statistically significant differences.¹ In Granite Falls, bonding trust is not different based on income, age, gender, length of residence, or educational level. Any differences in bonding

¹ DEFINITION FOR STATISTICAL SIGNIFICANCE: A difference between two averages is called statistically significant if it is unlikely to have occurred by chance. So when we state that a difference between averages for adults and youth, high or low income groups, or education groups, is statistically significant, we mean that the difference is likely due to real differences in survey responses, not chance. When a difference between groups is not statistically significant, it is less meaningful because it very well could be due to chance.

trust among community residents have to do with characteristics we were unable to measure.

We did identify differences in levels of bonding trust among adults and youth, however. Because the adult and youth surveys were slightly different, we are not able to run a test to determine if the difference in scores was statistically significant, but the difference was large enough to warrant a closer look at bonding trust among youth in the community.

Table 4. Differences in bonding trust among adults

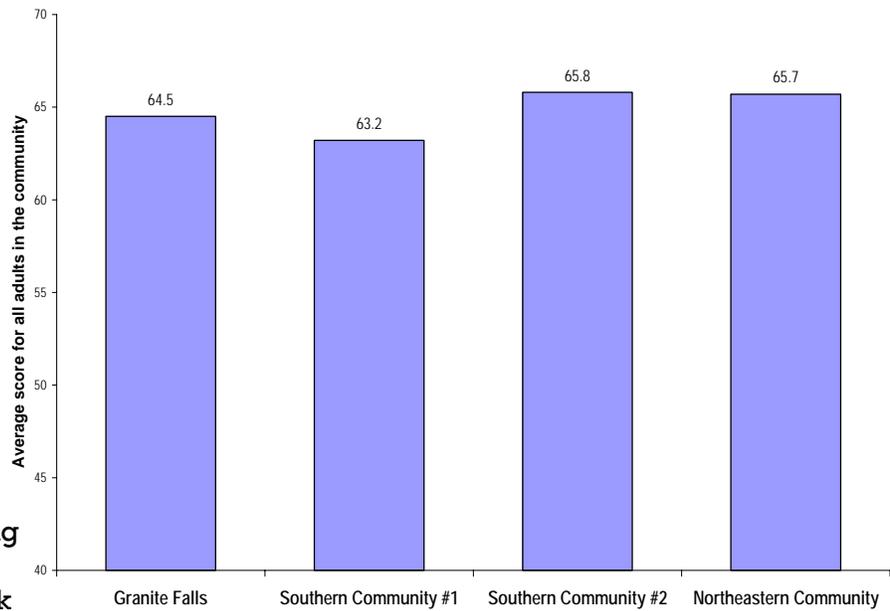
Gender	Bonding trust not significantly different among women and men.
Age	Bonding trust not significantly different among age groups.
Length of residence in community	Bonding trust not significantly different among people with different lengths of residence.
Education level	Bonding trust not significantly different among people with different levels of education.
Household income	Bonding trust not significantly different among people with different levels of household income.

Table 5 displays the average responses of adults and youth to five of the specific questions about bonding trust. Adults had the highest amount of trust in the people at their workplace, while youth had much lower trust in people at their school. For youth, the highest level of trust was in their group of friends (this question was not asked of adults).

Table 5. Bonding trust item averages for adults and youth

To what degree do you trust the following groups? (1=to a very small degree to 4=to a very great degree)	Adult average	Youth average
Your group of friends	N/A	3.3
People at church or place of worship	3.0	2.7
People in the same clubs or activities	2.8	2.6
Your immediate neighbors	2.9	2.6
People you work or go to school with	3.1	2.3

Figure 4. Bonding Trust in Granite Falls compared with other communities



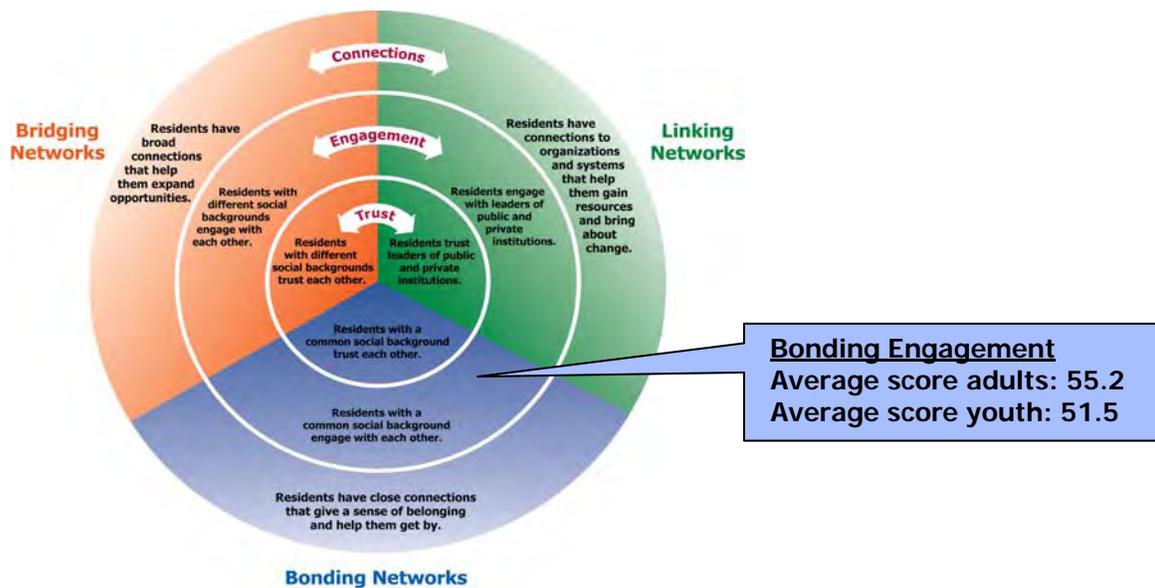
How did bonding trust in Granite Falls compare with other communities who completed the social capital survey? Figure 4 shows the average level of bonding trust in Granite Falls compared with two southern Minnesota communities and a northeastern community. All four communities have bonding trust averages in the 60s, well above the benchmark of 50. Granite Falls ranked third of the four communities in terms of bonding trust, but it is important to note that the differences among the communities were very small.

Bonding Engagement

Bonding engagement levels in Granite Falls were lower than those of bonding trust, but still above the 50 benchmark. Adults in the community averaged 55.2, while youth averaged 51.5.

Do residents with a common social background engage with each other?

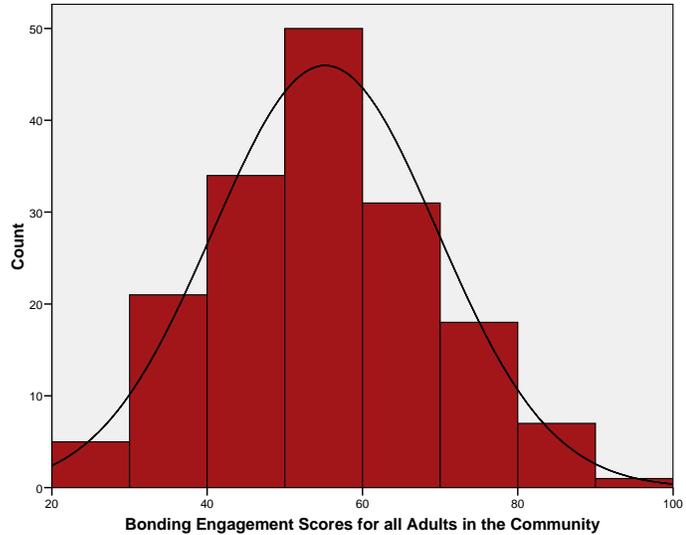
Figure 5. Bonding engagement averages for adults and youth



Bonding Engagement
Average score adults: 55.2
Average score youth: 51.5

Figure 6. Bonding engagement distribution

The distribution of bonding engagement was also normal. A large number of community residents scored in the 50s on this scale, suggesting a moderate level of engagement for most community members. In contrast to bonding trust, few residents scored above 80 on this scale, and more residents scored below 40, but no residents scored lower than 20.



Two demographic factors – education and household income – were associated with differences in bonding engagement in Granite Falls. People with higher levels of education and people from higher income households had significantly higher bonding engagement scores than people with lower levels of education and household income.

Table 6. Differences in bonding engagement among adults

Gender	Bonding engagement not significantly different among women and men.	
Age	Bonding engagement not significantly different among age groups.	
Length of residence in community	Bonding engagement not significantly different among people with different lengths of residence.	
Education level	High school diploma or less	49.3
	Associate's degree or some college	53.5
	Bachelor's degree or beyond	59.4
Household income	Low income (less than \$25,000)	47.0
	Moderate income (\$25,000 to \$44,999)	53.4
	Middle income (\$45,000 to \$74,999)	53.5
	High income (\$75,000 or more)	59.7

The survey questions that measure bonding engagement are shown in Table 7. Adults and youth in the community responded similarly to the first question about how often they could count on someone if they needed help, but adults were slightly more likely to do favors for each other .

Table 7. Bonding engagement items for adults and youth

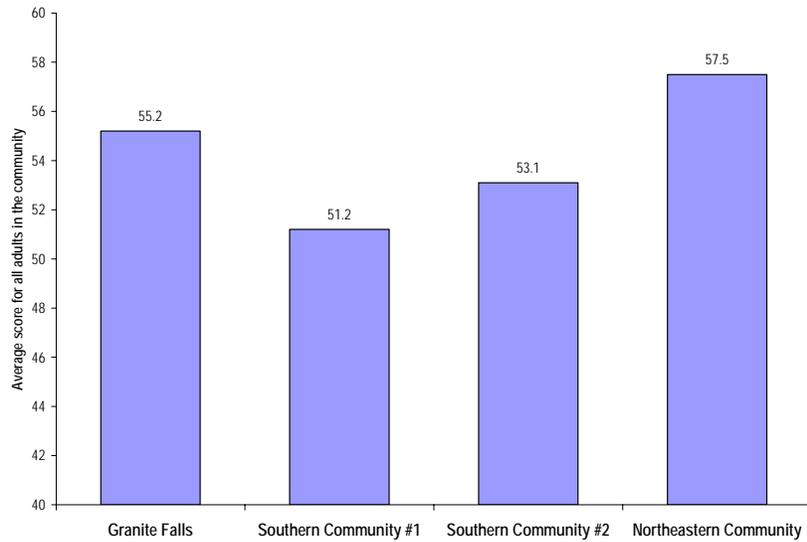
		Almost always	Often	Some- times	Rarely	Never
How often could you count on someone in the community if you needed extra help?	Adults	24.4%	29.9%	28.0%	9.1%	8.5%
	Youth	23.9%	27.4%	28.2%	12.8%	7.7%
How often do you and people in your community do favors for each other?	Adults	19.8%	35.3%	32.3%	10.8%	1.8%
	Youth	6.8%	37.6%	37.6%	13.7%	4.3%

What gives residents of Granite Falls a sense of belonging? Table 8 shows the responses for adults and youth. For both adults and youth, family and friends were the strongest sources of bonding, while places of worship were stronger sources bonding for adults than for youth. While neither adults nor youth felt very strongly about online networks as a way to belong, the average response for youth was quite a bit higher than the average for adults.

Table 8. What gives residents of Granite Falls a sense of belonging?

Group	Averages (1=not at all to 4=to a great extent)	
	Adults	Youth
My family	3.6	3.5
My friends	3.4	3.4
My place of worship	3.2	2.7
People I work/go to school with	3.2	2.9
People who share my interests	3.2	3.0
People who share my ethnic background	2.3	2.6
People who share my political views	2.1	N/A
People I have met online	1.2	1.9

Figure 7. Bonding engagement in Granite Falls compared with other communities



How did Granite Falls compare to other communities in terms of bonding engagement? As shown in Figure 8, bonding engagement in Granite Falls ranked second among the four communities, where all four communities had bonding engagement averages in the 50s.

Bridging Trust

Bridging trust, or trust among Granite Falls residents from different social backgrounds, was closer to the benchmark of 50. Adults averaged a score of 48.8, while the youth average was 39.9. The adult score was the lowest among the six social capital scales measured by the survey.

Do residents with different social backgrounds trust each other?

Figure 8. Bridging trust averages for adults and youth

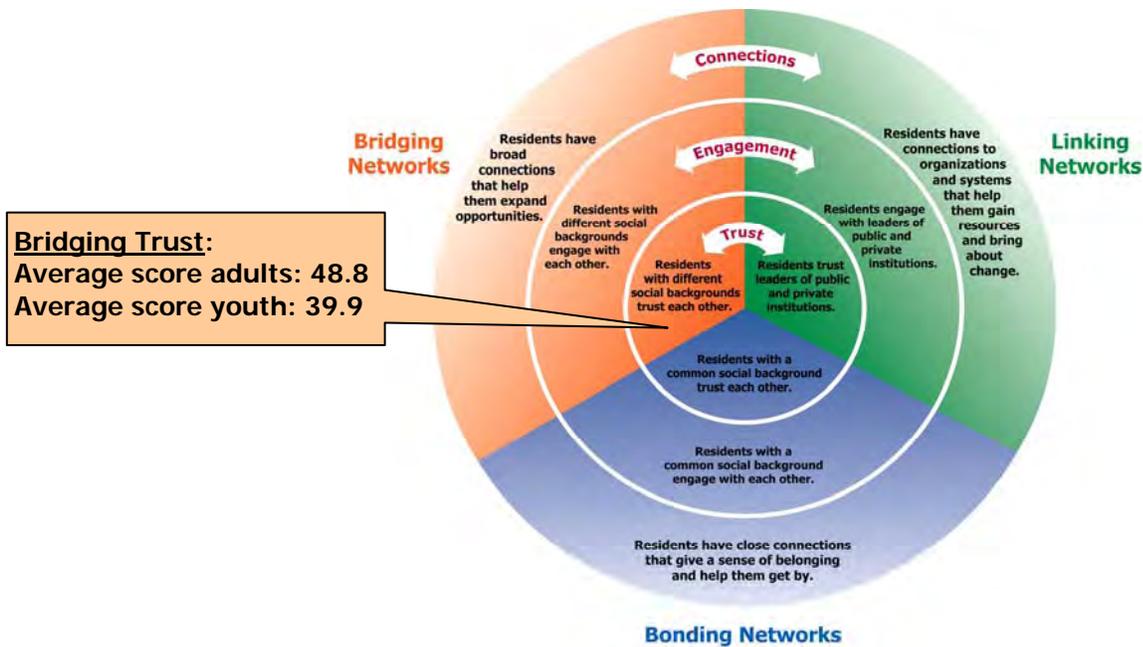
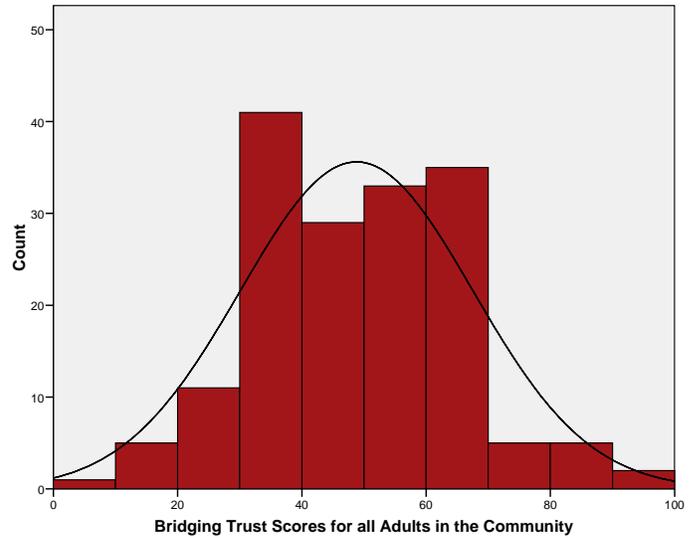


Figure 9. Bridging trust distribution

The distribution of bridging trust in Granite Falls had a “bi-modal” pattern. As seen in Figure 9, there were distinct groups of community residents who scored relatively low in the 30s and relatively high in the 50s and 60s rather than a single “modal” group. The implication is that there is a group of adults who have higher levels of bridging trust who could potentially be sought out as resources in the community – and who might be lifted up as leaders.



While there appear to be important differences in the community between people with high bridging trust and people with low bridging trust, none of the typical demographic factors explain these differences well. As shown in Table 9, average levels of bridging trust were not significantly different for subgroups based on gender, age, length of residence, education or income. This finding may be due in part to the lower overall level of bridging trust and non-normal distribution of bridging trust in the community. A larger sample size may also have yielded some statistically significant differences.

Table 9. Differences in bridging trust among adults

Gender	Bridging trust not significantly different among women and men.
Age	Bridging trust not significantly different among age groups.
Length of residence in community	Bridging trust not significantly different among people with different lengths of residence.
Education level	Bridging trust not significantly different among people with different educational levels.
Household income	Bridging trust not significantly different among people with different levels of household income.

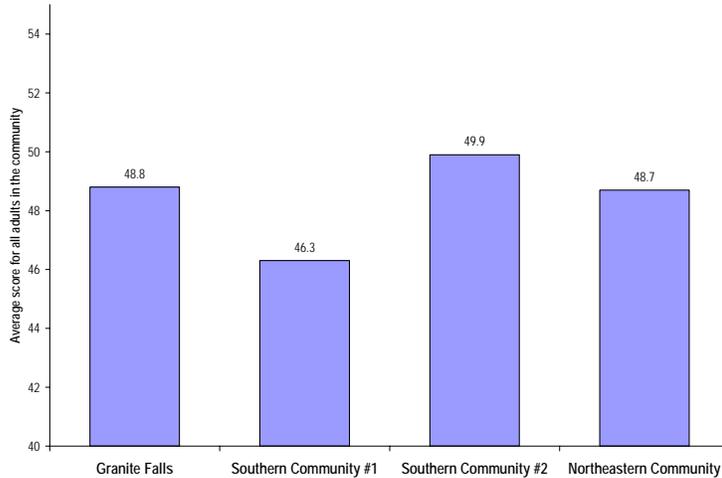
Table 10 displays the specific survey items used to measure bridging trust. On a scale of 1 to 4, averages below 3 suggest that trust is not strong for any of these types of people. Adults tended to have higher levels of trust in people of other religious beliefs, while both adults and youth had the least trust for people new to the community.

Table 10. To what degree do you trust the following?

Group	Averages (1=to a very small degree to 4=to a very great degree)	
	Adults	Youth
People of other religious beliefs	2.7	2.3
People from other cultural or ethnic groups	2.4	2.3
People new to the community	2.3	2.0

Figure 10. Bridging trust in Granite Falls compared with other communities

How did Granite Falls compare to other communities in terms of bridging trust? All pilot communities had bridging trust averages in the 40s. As seen in Figure 10, Granite Falls ranked second among the four communities that have completed the survey thus far.



Bridging Engagement

While bridging trust was the weakest of the six survey scales in Granite falls, bridging engagement was the strongest, with an average of 64.8 for adults and 58.4 for youth.

While it is not surprising for there to be a gap between trust of strangers and engagement with strangers, the size of this gap in Granite Falls is a concern.

Do residents with different social backgrounds engage with each other?

Figure 11. Bridging engagement averages for adults and youth

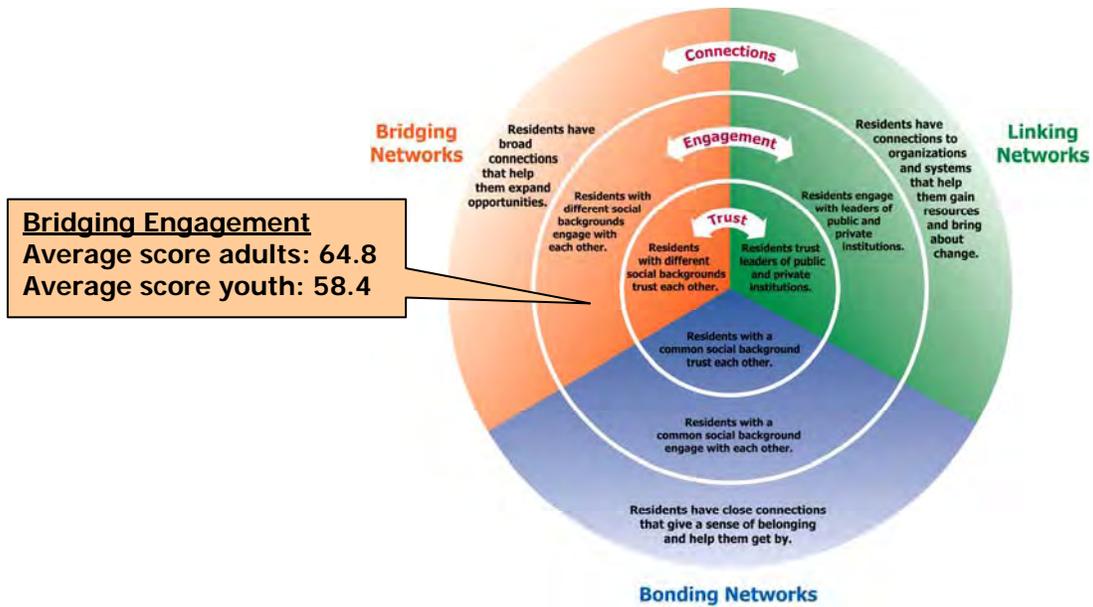
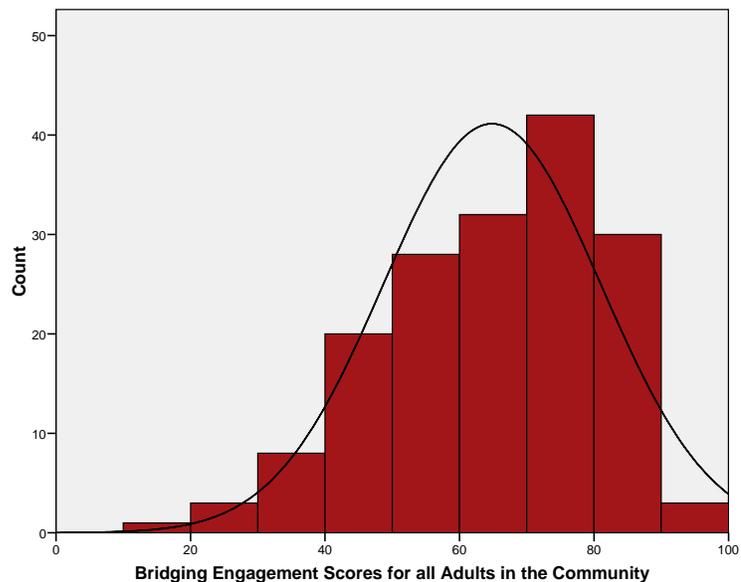


Figure 12. Bridging engagement distribution

The distribution of bridging engagement in Granite Falls was skewed toward higher levels of engagement. The largest group of residents scored in the 70s on this scale, and a substantial number of residents scored in the 80s, showing high levels of contact with people different from themselves.



Age and education were significant factors in bridging engagement in Granite Falls. People ages 40-59 had the highest levels of bridging engagement, while people age 60 or older had the lowest levels of bridging engagement. Interesting, young adults (ages 18 to 29) had higher levels of bridging engagement than adults in their 30s. This may be due to increased family and parenting responsibilities for those in that age group.

As seen in Table 11, bridging engagement was also greater for those with higher amounts of formal education.

Table 11. Differences in bridging engagement among adults

Gender	Women.	60.9
	Men	66.5
Age	Age 18-29.	66.8
	Age 30-39	62.4
	Age 40-49	70.4
	Age 50-59	70.4
	Age 60 or older	59.8
Length of residence in community	Bonding engagement not significantly different among people with different lengths of residence.	
Education level	High school diploma or less	53.6
	Associate's degree or some college	64.5
	Bachelor's degree or beyond	69.3
Household income	Bridging engagement not significantly different among people for different income levels.	

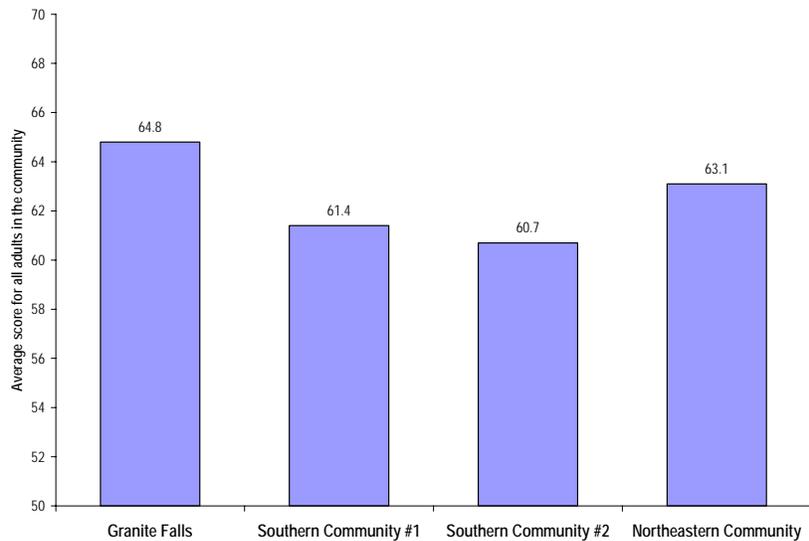
Table 12 shows responses of adults and youth to several of the survey items related to bridging engagement. Adults tended to have less contact than youth with people from a different racial or ethnic background. Youth reported having less contact with people much poorer than themselves than did adults.

Table 12. Bridging engagement survey items

In the past month, how often have you had contact with the following categories of people?		Not at all	Once or twice	Three or four times	Five or more times
People who have a different religion than me	Adults	3.8%	14.6%	23.4%	58.2%
	Youth	11.3%	22.7%	19.6%	46.4%
People of a different race or ethnicity than me	Adults	15.2%	27.2%	24.1%	33.5%
	Youth	7.3%	20.0%	19.1%	53.6%
People much wealthier than me	Adults	3.8%	17.3%	27.6%	51.3%
	Youth	12.6%	32.6%	20.0%	34.7%
People much poorer than me	Adults	3.3%	24.7%	23.3%	48.7%
	Youth	12.2%	34.4%	20.0%	33.3%
People with disabilities	Adults	9.1%	38.3%	20.8%	31.8%
	Youth	14.7%	37.3%	24.5%	23.5%

Figure 13. Bridging engagement in Granite Falls compared with other communities

How did Granite Falls compare to other communities in bridging engagement? Granite Falls had the highest level of bridging engagement among the four communities that have used the social capital survey thus far.



Linking Trust

Linking trust was relatively strong among adults in Granite Falls, with an average of 61.4. Trust in leaders of public and private institutions was somewhat lower among the community’s youth, with an average score of 51.4. This gap in linking trust between adults and youth suggests that some additional efforts to build youth connections and trust with community leaders would be an important investment, not only in youth, but in the community’s future.

Do residents trust leaders of public and private institutions?

Figure 14. Linking trust averages for adults and youth

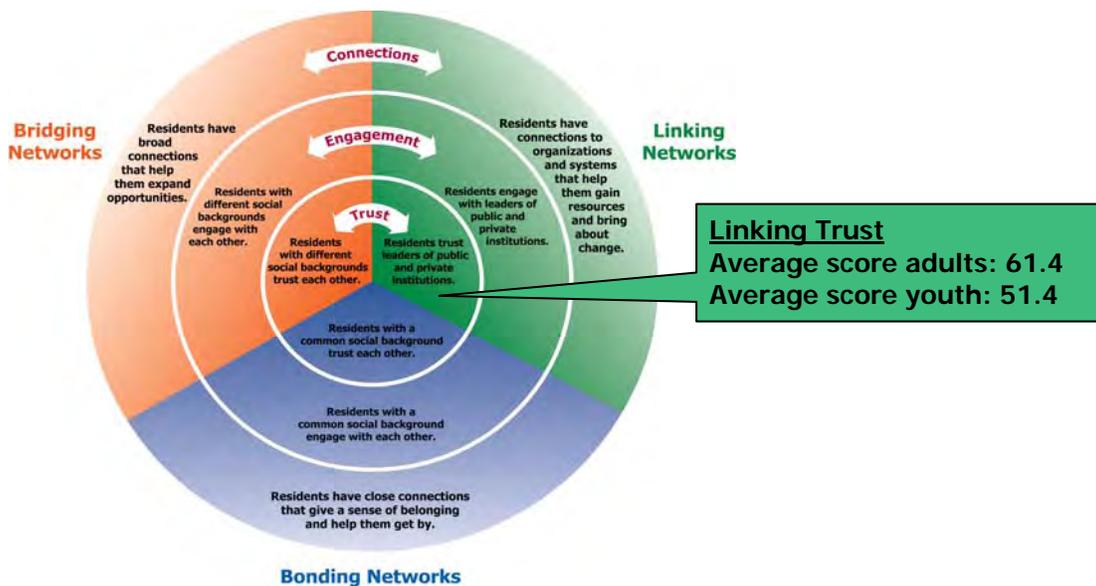
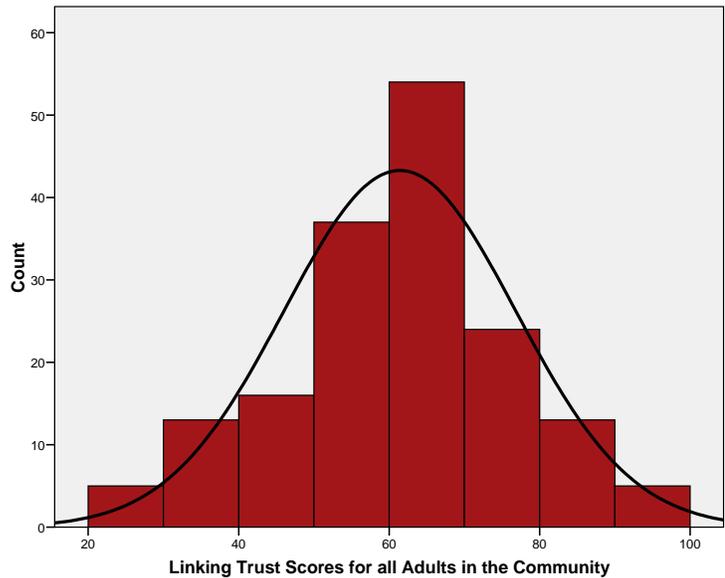


Figure 15. Linking trust distribution

Linking trust varied widely among adults in the community. The majority of adults had linking trust scores in the 60s and 70s, but a surprising number of adults had low (between 20 and 40) or high (above 80) linking trust scores.



Education was the only demographic factor associated with differences in linking trust in Granite Falls. People with bachelor’s degrees or beyond had an average level of 65.9, while people with less education had averages closer to 59. It is possible that if a higher proportion of low income residents had responded to the survey that significant differences in linking trust based on income might have emerged.

Table 13. Differences in linking trust among adults

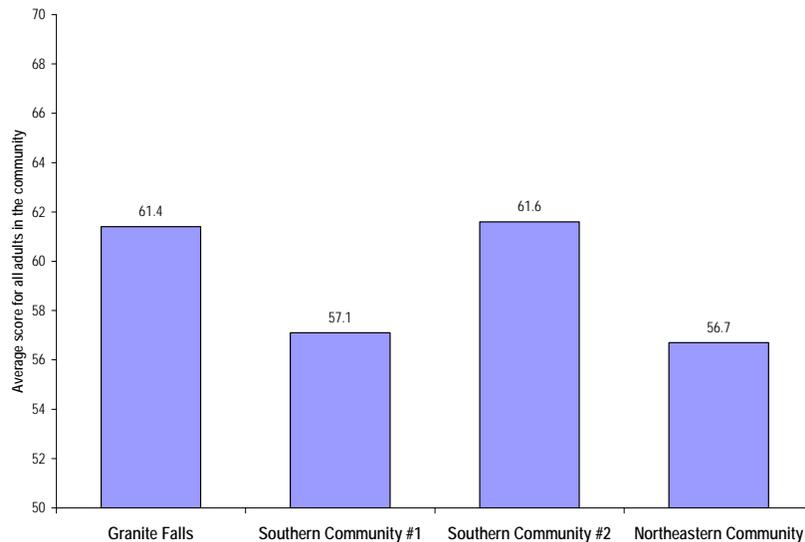
Gender	Linking trust not significantly different among women and men in Granite Falls.	
Age	Linking trust not significantly different among age groups in Granite Falls.	
Length of residence in community	Linking trust not significantly different among people with different lengths of residence.	
Education level	High school diploma or less	58.6
	Associate’s degree or some college	58.7
	Bachelor’s degree or beyond	65.9
Household income	Linking trust not significantly different among people for different income levels.	

Linking trust in Granite Falls (Table 14) was strongest for people in health care, law enforcement and education, although trust in teachers was stronger for adults than it was for youth. Trust in local government officials was relatively low for adults and youth, while youth tended to have more trust in the local news media.

Table 14. Linking trust survey items

To what degree do you trust the following?	Averages (1=to a very small degree to 4=to a very great degree)	
	Adults	Youth
Nurses / doctors	3.2	2.8
People in law enforcement	3.1	2.2
Teachers / educators	3.1	2.4
Business people	2.7	2.2
Local government officials	2.4	2.0
The local news media	2.4	2.9

Figure 16. Linking trust in Granite Falls compared with other communities



How did Granite Falls compare with other communities in terms of linking trust? As seen in Figure 16, Granite Falls ranked a very close second, confirming that linking trust was an area of strength for the community.

Linking Engagement

Linking engagement, a measure of actual contact with leaders of public and private institutions, was somewhat lower than linking trust for adults in Granite Falls, with an average score of 52.0. The average gap between linking engagement of adults and youth in Granite Falls was very large, with youth averaging a score of 31.7.

Do residents engage with leaders of public and private institutions?

Figure 17. Linking engagement averages for adults and youth

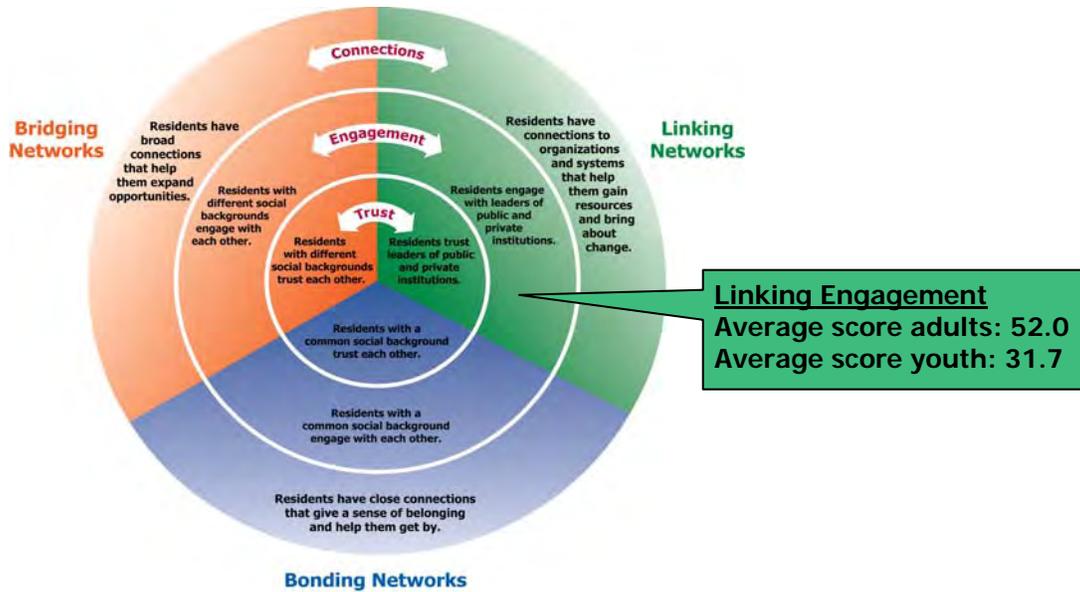
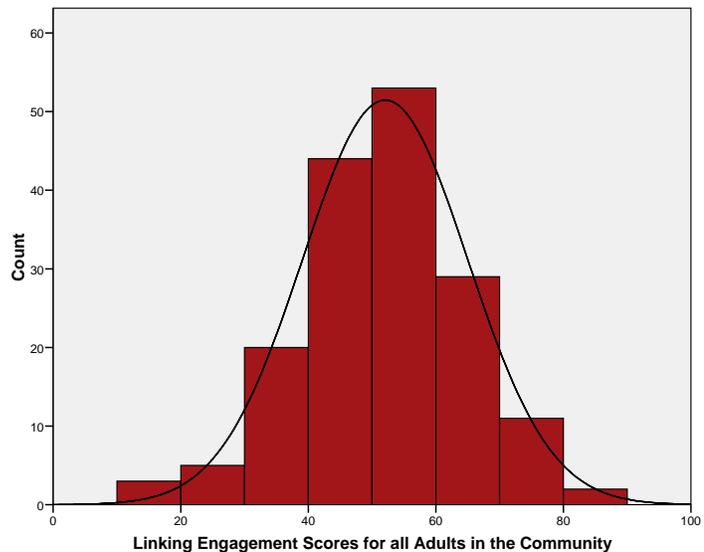


Figure 18. Linking engagement distribution

Linking engagement was less widely varied in the community than linking trust. The vast majority of adults scored between 40 and 70 on the scale and the largest group scored in the 50s. This pattern suggests that most members of the community had a moderate level of engagement, but few were highly engaged and few were highly disengaged.



Several demographic factors were related to differences in linking engagement. Education level had the strongest relationship with linking engagement. Adults with bachelor's degrees or beyond had an average score of 57.7 as compared with a score of 41.8 for people with a high school education of less. Age was also a factor, with the youngest group of adults having less linking engagement. Household income was also a significant factor, but the pattern was less clear. Adults in low income households had the lowest levels of linking engagement, and adults in high income households had the highest levels of linking engagement, but adults with moderate incomes had slightly higher linking engagement than adults with middle incomes.

Table 15. Differences in linking engagement among adults

Gender	Linking engagement not significantly different among people with different lengths of residence.	
Age	Age 18-29.	45.5
	Age 30-39	50.1
	Age 40-49	53.2
	Age 50-59	55.8
	Age 60 or older	53.4
Length of residence in community	Linking engagement not significantly different among people with different lengths of residence.	
Education level	High school diploma or less	41.8
	Associate's degree or some college	50.4
	Bachelor's degree or beyond	57.7
Household income	Low income (less than \$25,000)	46.2
	Moderate income (\$25,000 to \$44,999)	50.9
	Middle income (\$45,000 to \$74,999)	48.8
	High income (\$75,000 or more)	56.3

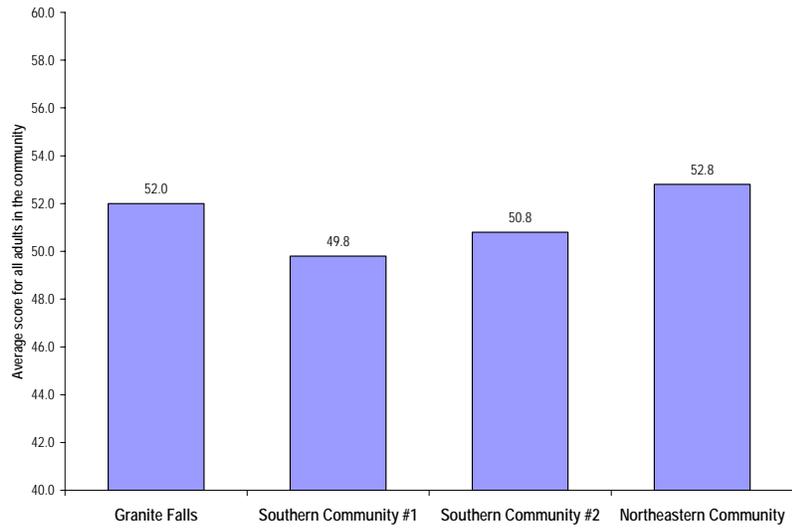
Table 16 compares the responses of adults and youth to several survey items related to linking engagement. Adults in the community are frequent contributors to charity, but they had less frequent involvement in community meetings or other efforts to solve community problems. Youth involvement was at an even lower level than adult involvement. For example, nearly half of adults and nearly three-fourths of youth surveyed had not attended any public meetings in which there was discussion of school or town affairs during the past year.

Table 16. Linking engagement survey items

How many times in the past twelve months have you?		None	1 to 6 times	7 to 12 times	More than 12 times
Donated money, goods, or services to a charity?	Adults	4.8%	45.2%	25.9%	24.1%
	Youth	31.6%	59.0%	6.8%	2.6%
Attended any public meeting in which there was discussion of school or town affairs?	Adults	44.9%	40.1%	8.4%	6.6%
	Youth	71.8%	25.6%	2.6%	0.0%
Joined together with others in your community to address an issue?	Adults	50.0%	39.2%	7.8%	3.0%
	Youth	79.5%	12.8%	6.0%	1.7%
Been In the home of a community leader or had one in your home?	Adults	60.5%	33.5%	5.4%	0.6%
	Youth	59.0%	29.1%	9.5%	2.6%
Tried to get your local government to pay attention to something that concerned you?	Adults	62.3%	28.7%	6.0%	3.0%
	Youth	85.5%	10.3%	4.3%	0.0%

Figure 19. Linking engagement in Granite Falls compared with other communities

How did Granite Falls compare to other communities in linking engagement? Granite Falls ranked second among the four communities in this sample. All four communities averaged close to the 50 benchmark on this measure.

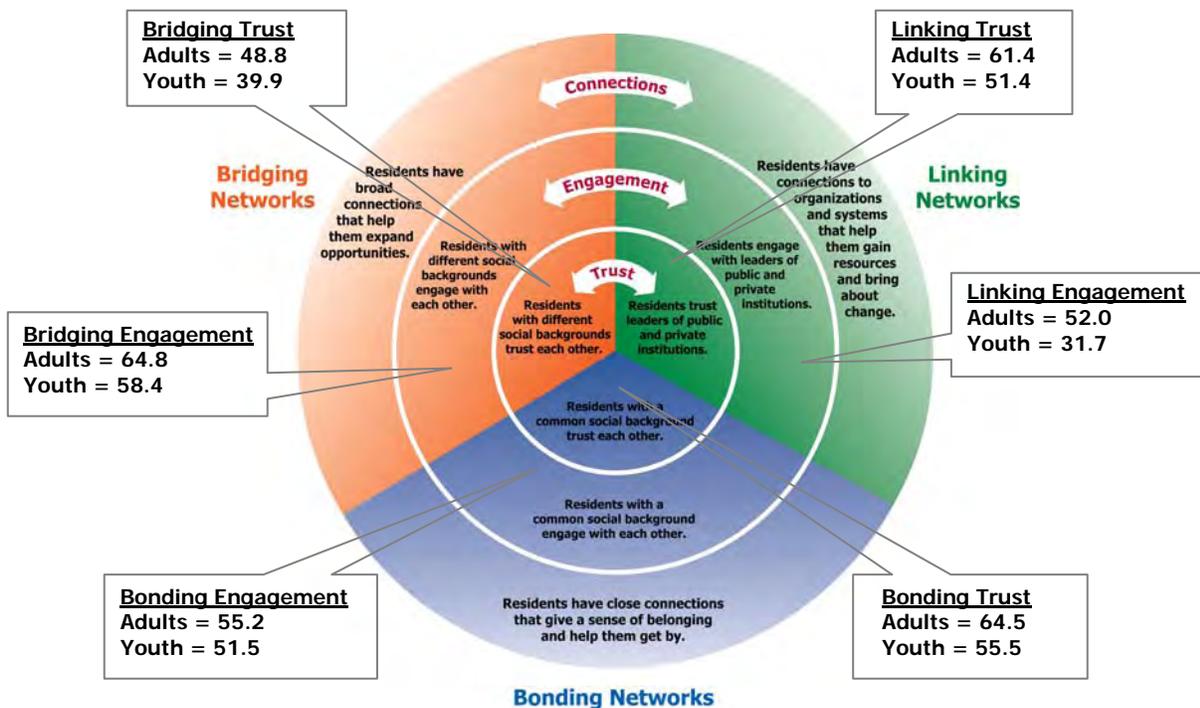


A Closer Look

The whole picture

Figure 20 shows the whole social capital picture for Granite Falls adults and youth. Overall, the picture is a positive one with adult averages over 50 for five of the six scales. The areas of strength for Granite Falls, with adult averages over 60, are bridging engagement, bonding trust and linking trust. There are high levels of contact among people from differing social backgrounds, and high levels of trust among people with common backgrounds and of leaders of public and private institutions. The areas of strength for youth are bridging engagement and bonding trust, but in general the community's youth have lower levels of social capital than adults. Knowing these areas of strength is key for planning action to improve the other three aspects of social each type of network, namely bridging trust, linking engagement and bonding engagement.

Figure 20. The whole picture for adults and youth

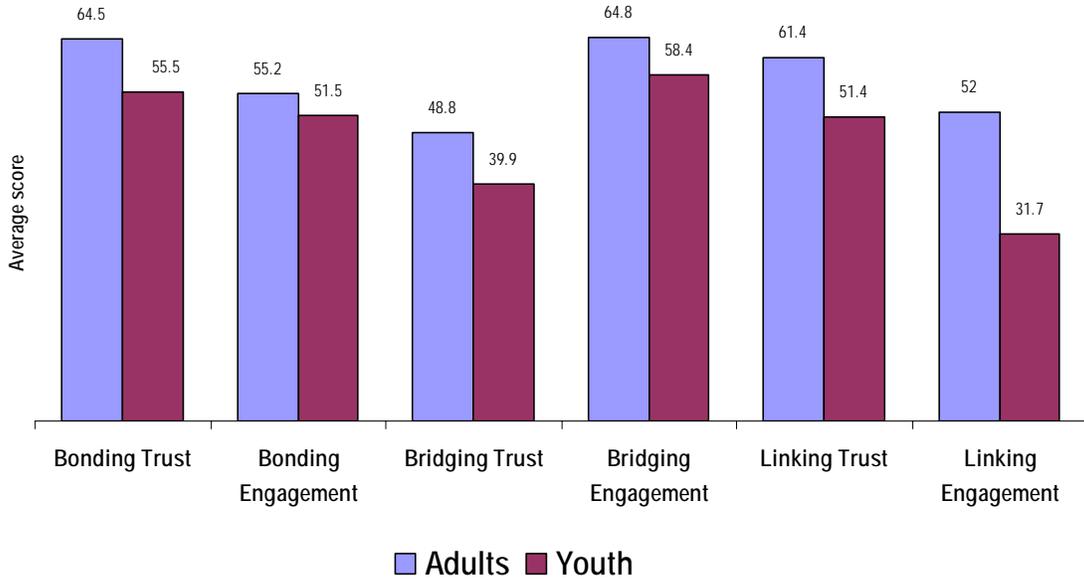


Comparison charts

Differences between adults and youth

Figure 21 directly compares the differences between adults and youth in each measure of social capital. Youth had lower averages in all types of networks, and most notably in linking engagement and bridging trust.

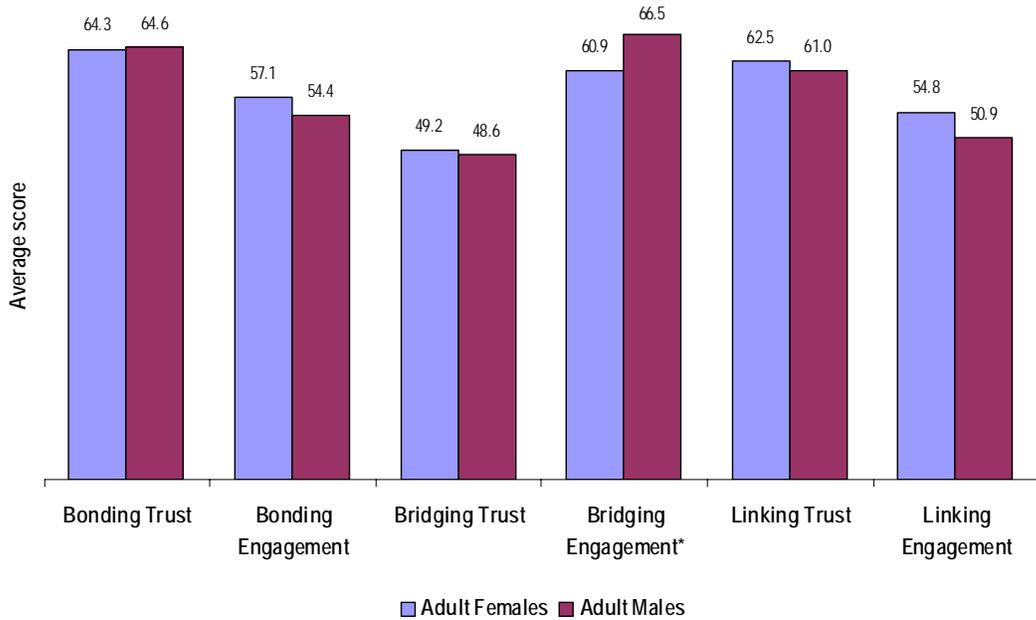
Figure 21. Differences between adults and youth across the six social capital measures



Differences among adult men and women

Figure 22 shows the differences between adult men and women in each dimension of social capital. In most aspects of social capital, Granite Falls adult men and women had similar levels of trust or engagement. The only exception was in bridging engagement. Men had significantly higher levels of bridging contact in the community than women, although women still had an average score of over 60.

Figure 22. Differences between men and women across the six social capital measures

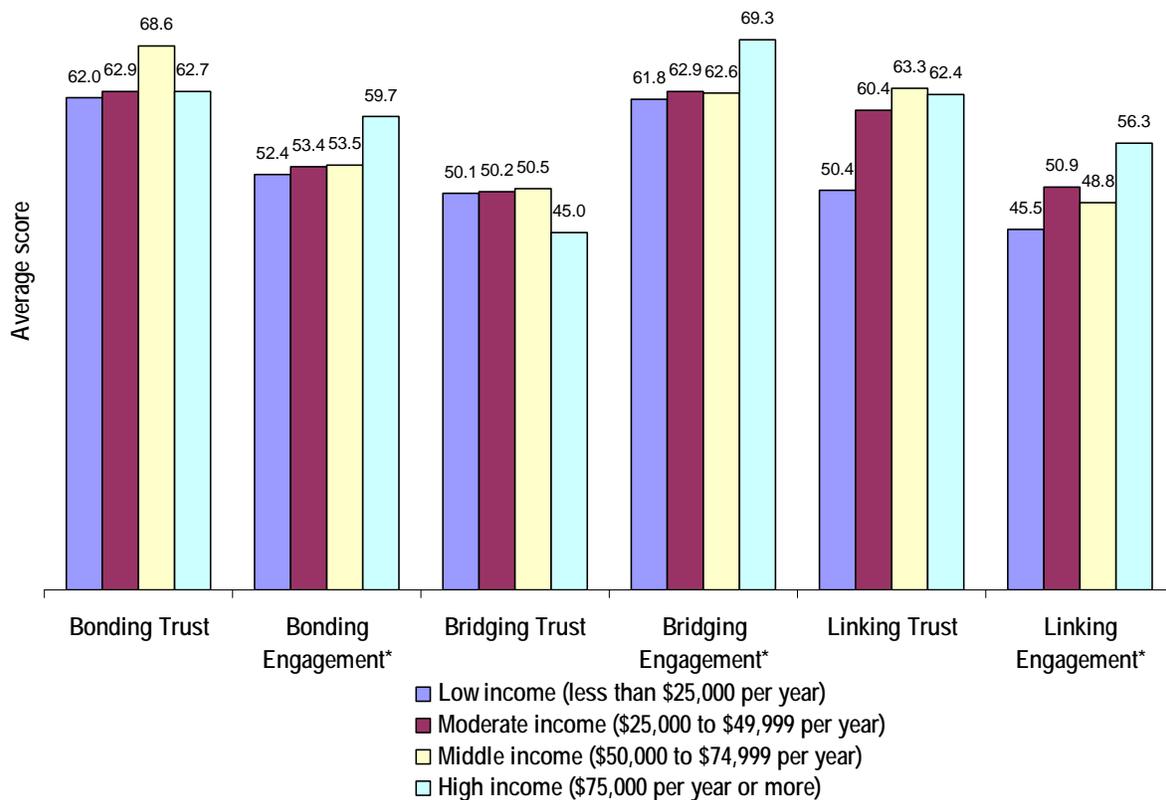


*The difference between men and women in bridging engagement is the only difference in scores that was statistically significant. In other words, the men sampled were significantly more likely than the women sampled to have strong bridging ties.

Differences among income groups in the community

As shown in Figure 23, residents with higher incomes tended to have higher levels of bonding, bridging and linking engagement, but income had less effect on trust levels in the community. Interestingly, the wealthiest respondents had the lowest levels of bridging trust, but this finding was not statistically significant. Still, it is important to note the income did not have a direct effect on trust in any of the types of networks, so trust is probably not the biggest barrier to involvement of low income residents of Granite Falls in community life.

Figure 23. Differences between income levels across the six social capital measures

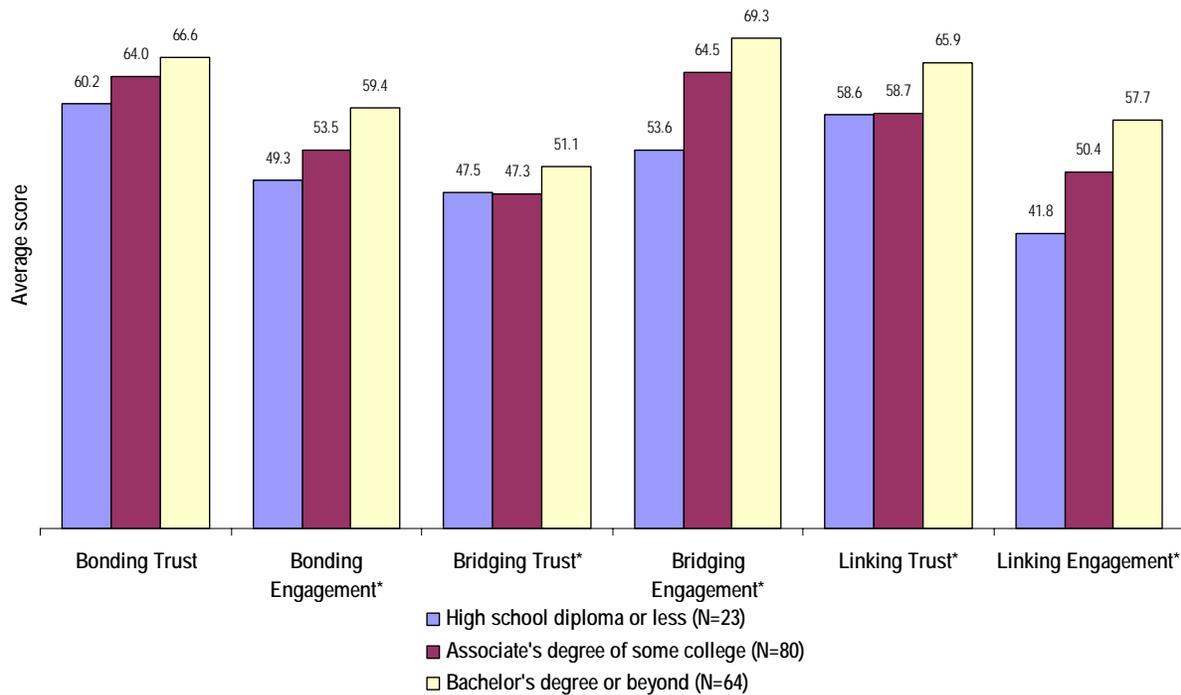


*The differences between income categories in bonding engagement, bridging engagement, and linking engagement were statistically significant.

Differences by education level in the community

Educational differences among adults had a significant relationship to five of the six social capital measurement scales. Adults with higher levels of education, particular with a bachelor’s degree or beyond, had more bonding engagement, bridging trust, bridging engagement, linking trust, and linking engagement than adults with lower levels of formal education. This patterns suggests the importance of reaching out to adults with less formal education in efforts to strengthen the community or plan for the future.

Figure 24. Differences between education levels across the six social capital measures



*The differences between education categories in bonding engagement, bridging trust, engagement, linking trust and linking engagement were statistically significant.

Community input

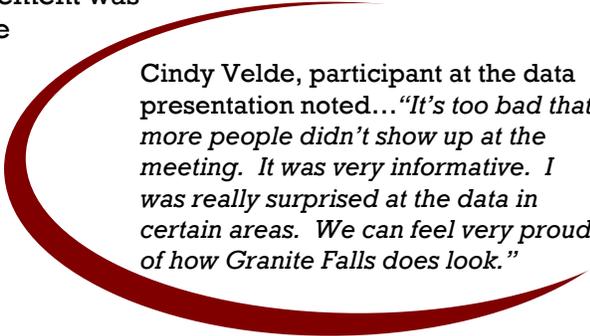
A data presentation with the survey findings was shared with the planning team on March 6, 2008. At that time, individuals had the following comments to offer as they reflected on that information they had just received. They noted that:

- Individuals new to the community seem to go through a period of community/group acculturation before really being accepted and trusted.
- The community has strong bonding networks and weaker bridging trust, which may explain why people new to the community might have a more difficult time establishing networks.
- Youth may have time management issues – this could be the reason for low engagement.
- Youth don't seem to have an interest in engagement outside of their peer groups.
- Youth and adults will be (and have been) very engaged when crisis has hit our community (i.e. floods).
- Trust has to be earned. (How can we give people opportunities to earn trust?)
- We should learn to give people a second chance.
- Is there a common definition for "being too busy?"

Many at the session commented that they thought that previous "disaster situations" (tornadoes and flooding) may have increased the quality and quantity of social capital.

During the data presentation, notes were also taken by Scott Tedrick, a local newspaper reporter. He observed that there was a focus, relative to that indicated in the survey, that outsiders needed to earn trust. The comment was made that “the community doesn’t adjust to them, but rather they adjust to the community.” In addition, it was perceived that newcomers would have trouble breaking into cliques in the community. One suggestion to address this was offered, suggesting that “community members should go out of their way to attend another group or invite somebody else along.”

Tedrick also noted that the amount of time someone has available, was seen as relative to engagement in the community. Time management was considered a big issue, again reflective of the survey, that limited people from not only finding time with their own groups, but do something outside of their traditional group for social interaction.



Cindy Velde, participant at the data presentation noted... *“It’s too bad that more people didn’t show up at the meeting. It was very informative. I was really surprised at the data in certain areas. We can feel very proud of how Granite Falls does look.”*

Insights for Action

Strengthening networks

Things you can do to strengthen **bonding networks** are....

- Turn off the TV and computer and spend time with others
- Participate in groups, clubs, and community activities
- Play games or cards with your neighbors
- Join a project with others with similar interests
- Exercise together or take walks with family or friends
- Form or join a bowling team, golf team or other sport
- Hold a neighborhood get together

Things you can do to strengthen **bridging networks** include....

- Welcome new and lonely residents and youth into activities
- Volunteer in your area of interest
- Invite and support people from diverse religious and ethnic backgrounds to be involved

Some things you can do to strengthen **linking networks** are....

- Provide input into community issues and decisions
- Link your outside contacts to needs and interests of the community
- Attend regional, statewide or national meetings
- Help create a shared agenda to be funded
- Form a regional or statewide network

Community strengths to build on

- ▶ **LEADERSHIP.** There are institutions willing to provide leadership, such as Yellow Medicine County Family Services and the Granite Falls Senior Center, to move initiatives forward.
- ▶ **HISTORY.** In times of crisis (tornadoes, flooding, etc.) the community has worked well together. We need to learn from this and capitalize on it for non-crisis initiatives.



Areas for attention



- ▶ **ENGAGEMENT.** To get folks engaged and involved in community issues and efforts requires addressing the obstacle of time demands.
- ▶ **ETHNICITY.** Young people have more exposure to ethnicity. What can we learn from them?
- ▶ **YOUTH.** Youth scored lower than adults in all the measures. What does that mean for our community?
- ▶ **MINNESOTA NICE.** The lowest score was in Bridging Trust and the highest score was in Bridging Engagement. How do we break the cycle of “MN Nice”?
- ▶ **DEMOGRAPHICS.** The trend in this community is for an increase in older adults. How will we address the changes an aging population will present?

Next steps for the community



The Team will:

- Analyze the bonding, bridging and linking networks and analyze ways to leverage the strengths to build upon weaker areas.
- Share presentations on survey data with local clubs and groups to generate discussion.
- Sponsor action planning events to engage the community in building social capital.

The Design Your Community Team met on June 25, 2008. At this meeting they further defined their opportunities for action.

They agreed that the purpose of the Team is to:

- Promote interest in Granite Falls' community by members who reside in the area.
- Extend an invitation to community members to become involved or more involved in activities, decision-making, and development of Granite Falls.

“I think this initiative is a wonderful thing for the city to be engaged in. I hope that Granite Falls, by coupling physical infrastructure with the social capital, can make a lot can happen. There seems to be a lot of energy and to move to bring the city together.”
 Jerry Schaefer (lives outside of Granite Falls)

- Provide avenues to generate new leaders for positions within community structure by seeking out persons not typically involved and providing them with training, guidance, and support for those new roles.
- Create a forum for anyone to come forward with ideas that would better the Granite Falls community. Provide resources that are helpful and encouraging.

- Seek persons interested in developing a Community Fund that could provide fiscal resources to projects.
- Establish an on-going Steering Committee to oversee these developments and encourage continued growth and involvement.

The community has plans for sharing survey results and gathering community input.

Specifically, the next steps for the Team will be to:

- **Organize a community forum to share the social capital survey results.** This event, designed to be a FUN event with other activities included, will focus on: 1) sharing information from the community survey, and 2) discussing the strengths and areas of concern for Granite Falls.
- **Extend invitations to community members to become involved on the Steering Committee.** The focus here is to strengthen community engagement and support for the effort.
- **Choose one-two new initiatives to begin.** Some possibilities include:
 - Community fund
 - Leadership training
 - Community activity
 - Parks development
 - Art meander
 - Other

The Community Foundation Committee

- In seeking members for this committee we will explain to people the benefits to being on the committee. We will assure they will have opportunities to participate in leadership training and that they will have access to existing resources like City Council, EDA, County Board, and other resources. They will be given tools to encourage ideas from the community. The "terms" would be limited.

The purpose for the Community Foundation Committee will be to:

1. Serve as a catalyst for improvements in the community.
2. Be a resource to persons interested in pursuing activities in the area, and
3. Be a fund-raising entity to assure there are financial resources available for projects identified by the community.

Initially the committee efforts would involve doing projects as well as continuing to increase social capital in our community. Many projects would/could have outcomes for both.



**Next Step Suggestions:
Community Groups and
Clubs...**

Groups can:

- Reach out to those with less social capital to include them in networks
- Be intentional in building social capital as you go about your work
- Consider training in leadership and facilitation

You can:

- Read more about social capital
- Capitalize on your own social capital to build and strengthen networks.
- Get involved in your community!



**Next Step Suggestions:
Individuals...**

Social capital is built through hundreds of actions, large and small, that you take every day.

- ▶ Seek ways to nurture trusting relationships.
- ▶ Engage with others in your community.
- ▶ Get involved.

Each one of us in our own way is a builder of social capital.

References

Scheffert, Donna Rae, Jody Horntvedt and Scott Chazdon, *Social Capital and Your Community*, University of Minnesota Extension, May 2008.

Authors

Scott Chazdon, Research and Evaluation Coordinator

Jody Horntvedt, Extension Educator and Associate Extension Professor

Tobias Spanier, Extension Educator and Associate Extension Professor

Contributors

Ryan Allen, Assistant Professor, Hubert H. Humphrey Institute of Public Affairs

Donna Rae Scheffert, Leadership Development Specialist and Extension Professor

The Granite Falls *Design Your Community* team

Thanks

Our thanks to the members of the Granite Falls community for their input and involvement throughout this assessment process

Source

University of Minnesota

Extension Center for Community Vitality

For more information, please contact:

Program Leader, Leadership & Civic Engagement

University of Minnesota, 458 Coffey Hall

1420 Eckles Avenue, St. Paul, MN 55108

612-624-4226 or 612-624-7714

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