



HRSDC



Hamilton Roundtable for Poverty Reduction



*“One Thing We Learned”
Saskatoon’s Station 20 West Initiative
October 7, 2008*

Station 20 West is a community economic development initiative that represents a sustainable approach to the long-term social and economic revitalization of Saskatoon’s west side core neighbourhoods. It is a product of community collaboration and partnership building. We recognize the capacity and diversity of our core neighbourhoods and the commitment that our partners bring to this project. Station 20 West also responds to some of the significant health and economic challenges that many residents face including lack of access to affordable, quality groceries, significant health disparities and poverty.

Station 20 West is a social movement that shines the light on the strength and diversity that the core communities bring Saskatoon. Station 20 West will play a vital role in the economic and social development of Saskatoon, while improving the lives of the residents and families who live in the core.

The presentation will tell the story of how Station 20 West came to be, based initially on a dream of providing food security and access to food for the five core neighborhoods of Saskatoon. It will cover major collaboration challenges and how these challenges have been addressed. For more information about Station 20 West, visit: www.station20west.org

The October 7 presentation was hosted by:

- Maria Basualdo, Community Liaison Officer, Community-University Institute for Social Research
- Len Usiskin, Executive Director, Quint Development Corporation
- Karen Archibald, Executive Director, CHEP Executive Director
- Faith Bodnar, Executive Director, Station 20 West

One thing Sherri learned from the presentation:

It became clear to me in the Station 20 West discussion that there is really no such thing as risk-free collaboration. If we accept the fact that there is inherent risk in these arrangements, then we need to ask ourselves about the possible steps that can be taken to lower or minimize this risk. I heard two discussed yesterday. The first involved the importance of garnering local support early on in a process so that citizens can act as allies if and when necessary. A second involved action at the political level – making sure that all political parties are informed of the objectives and

*Sherri Torjman, Vice-President
Caledon Institute of Social Policy*



The Caledon Institute is the lead organization for the “Community-Government Collaboration on Policy” project.

Caledon’s ongoing mission is to

work associated with the effort. Again, there is no guarantee than these strategies will be successful (the project had actually tried the latter). But I do think we need to keep asking ourselves about risk mitigation and build a body of knowledge from our collective lessons.

One thing Anne learned from the presentation: The presenters' determination and continued work on behalf of their community and its needs throughout the past decade speak for themselves, even if they were misunderstood in certain quarters. The questions they raised to themselves and to the group are not easily answered, but they are already weaving their way into the work we are doing to help other communities consider their own forays into collaboration.

One thing Jane learned from the presentation: The synergy is interesting – our organization is engaged in a similar reflection about space. We've bought a building and after hearing about the relationships with government partners, we wonder which kind of partnerships it's best to put your energy into developing. If we're in the business of building lasting relationships, where do we go to find those connections? What do commitments actually mean? What happens when resources are on and off the table?

I was also very interested in the kind of governance structures partner groups had considered for the original Station 20 West plan. The task of serving one's own mission has to be balanced against the energy it takes to govern a space used in cooperation with others.

assist in the development of sustainable, practicable social policy. Our interest in establishing a community of practice around community-government collaboration grew from a number of previous initiatives. These included our work with Vibrant Communities to establish Policy Dialogues with government partners and subsequent Government Learning Circle initiatives.

*Anne Makhoul, Principal Project Officer
Caledon Institute*



*Jane Rabinowicz, Executive Director
Santropol Roulant*



Santropol Roulant is a youth-led organization that lives its mission: to break social isolation and increase the food security of Montrealers living with a loss of autonomy. We

keep one foot in the world of daily front line services and the other in the realm of long term social change. Experimenting with ways to magnify our work, particularly through shared learning and peer exchanges around the policies that impact our membership is what attracted us to this innovative project. Our particular policy focus will be to track the reorganization of the provincial Healthcare Network (launched in that 2004 with bill 83), and find a relevant way to share this information with our peers in the “community care” sector in Montreal.

One thing Scott learned from the presentation:
Your comments about the people from the system co-locators continuing to feel supportive and invested in the project speaks to the differences between human nature and systems nature. How is it that systems composed of people who “get it” can’t seem to collectively get on board politically? I seem to face some of this within my own system as a municipal government and I haven’t quite wrapped my head around the reasons. I am, however, the eternal optimist and believe that we are making incremental improvements in the right direction. Thanks for continuing to feed the collective wisdom!

One thing Caroline learned from the presentation:
The lesson for me here was about community resilience and the power of a good idea. In the end, there was a demonstration of huge community support which also shows that there is a solid base in communities in Canada for trying to solve the problems of the marginalized and disadvantaged parts of the community.

Scott Cameron, Manager, Social Planning Department, The City of Red Deer



Operating within a municipal context, the City of Red Deer Social Planning Department strives to support healthy child development, reduce inequalities associated with income and social status, and leadership in the creation of inclusive social and physical environments. The Department achieves its outcomes through community development activities, allocation of municipal, provincial and federal resources, building capacity within the human services sector, social research and social policy development. As the Social Planning Department works closely within other municipal departments and with the provincial and federal orders of government, the opportunity to learn and collaborate with other communities exploring social policy development has been most beneficial.

Caroline Andrew, Dean, Social Sciences University of Ottawa



The Centre on Governance is part of the Faculty of Social Sciences at the University of Ottawa. It defines itself as a research centre that works primarily with partners outside the university and is interested in the ways universities and university researchers can work with communities, civil society organizations and governments to work on the “wicked problems” of our society – those problems that require the combined action of a very large range of actors – public, private, civil society. We are therefore extremely interested in better understanding how to learn to collaborate across sectors and levels and how social policy development can best emerge from these processes of collaboration.

One thing Katherine learned from the presentation:
Through this presentation, I came to appreciate the absolute fragility of community alliances in the face of changing political conditions. Is there some way that this reality can be addressed as part of a collaborative risk analysis?

One thing Andy learned from the presentation:
While there is a temptation to identify all interested parties as partners, being a true partner requires a level of involvement and commitment – a real personal stake in the success or failure of the project – that only the residents of the downtown core (individuals and CBOs) had. This lesson might help guide us in identifying partners for future collaborative efforts.

One thing Liz learned from the presentation:
The one thing I learned is that the balance and tension between developing relationships for the long term and the need to generate short-term results is a delicate balance. While relationship building is critical, you do need to identify wins and show progress.

I also learned more about the challenges of dealing with partners from different sectors. We may have certain ways of working and priorities which may come into conflict with partners.

Katherine Graham, Dean, Faculty of Public Affairs, Carleton University



Katherine Graham is Professor of Public Policy and Administration and Dean of the faculty of Public Affairs at Carleton University. She is

internationally recognized as an expert on governance and citizen engagement. Much of her work has focused on urban and local governance, including community capacity-building.

*Andy Horsnell, Program Associate
Community Services Council
Newfoundland and Labrador (CSC)*

CSC is an independent organization promoting social and economic well-being. Its goal is a prosperous and inclusive society that supports individuals, families and communities. Its mission is to encourage citizen engagement, to promote the integration of social and economic development and to provide leadership in shaping public policies.

*Liz Weaver, Director
Hamilton Roundtable for Poverty
Reduction (HRPR)*



HRPR is a cross-sectoral community planning table which has a strategic focus on poverty and the aspiration of making Hamilton the best place to raise a child.

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