November 2023

Think Big
Act Together

A Collective Impact Approach to Community Development:
Summary Report

Introduction

Purpose

This review was undertaken by the City of Sudbury Community Development leadership for the purpose of understanding current community engagement practices, strategies and staff capacity related to social housing residents within the Community Services Division.

This report provides a summary of findings, feedback, recommendations and community engagement sample activities that can be used to strengthen community engagement approaches allowing residents within Sudbury's social housing communities to thrive.

Methodology

The following actions informed the findings and recommendations found in this report:

- A review of documents provided by the City Community Services leads
- A review of online literature relevant to the City's community services
- Meetings held with lead staff to deepen the understanding of current engagement approaches, challenges, assets, and opportunities
- Social housing and infrastructure site tour

Preliminary Observations:

Guiding Questions

To better understand and identify opportunities for community engagement that would improve the social, economic, health and well-being of social housing residents and communities in Greater Sudbury, the following guiding questions were used:

- What actions would have the most impact for the lives of people experiencing poverty?

- What are the elements that cause the most strain for social housing providers and how can they be addressed?

- What does a good model for program delivery look like given the current resources and opportunities available in Sudbury?

Preliminary Observations:

Strengths, Challenges & Opportunities

Community-Based: Residents & Community Sites

Social housing residents would benefit from having formal pathways to access community services, and formal structures for voicing their needs and priorities that can be used to identify priorities and opportunities for community engagement, development and prosperity.

Key observations:

1. Social housing residents face geographic, social, and economic barriers to accessing agency-offered services.

2. Social infrastructure located in proximity to social housing communities appear to be under-utilized and under-accessed by residents (e.g. the connection with schools, recreation centres, private gyms, social clubs, etc.) and have no direct service orientation to social housing resident.

3. Community priorities and needs that are unique to each site are not consistently collected, identified or reported on, which makes it challenging to develop effective community-driven strategies.

4. Select sites have identified a tenant vulnerability rate above 33% and mental health and addiction is a key challenge that is impacting communities' ability to thrive.

5. Limited access to youth mental health supports and lack of coordination of care is creating additional barriers to social and economic stability.

6. There is a lack of social connection between town home units and buildings.

Internal Infrastructure: Community Development Division

Staff are highly knowledgeable about foundational community development principles and they have a core understanding of local community trends. This strength is enabled through, the cross-functional approaches utilized by the Community Services Division to identify and address emerging issues. Team leads are eager to improve service coordination and delivery models.

Key observations:

1.There are no formal community engagement processes or engagement opportunities within social housing communities that would lead to community development. Staff enabled community engagement has been focused on tenancy management.

2.Community challenges are hidden, unknown or unaddressed unless it negatively impacts tenancies, especially related to mental health and addiction.

3.Resident-facing communication channels for generating resident involvement and sharing community development information do not currently exist.

4.Post-COVID 19 restrictions, building amenities remain under-utilized, with previous use- of -space partnerships choosing not to reactivate community spaces.

5.There are existing funding and staffing resources within the City, agencies, and institutions which are not coordinated or leveraged for effective community development.

Service Sector: Community Partners & Service Providers

The City has a high number of service delivery agencies that can provide support to social housing communities within proximity, however there is a lack of effective service coordination.

Key observations:

1.There is no clear strategy on how agencies are activated to support the social housing sites and residents and inconsistent service coordination in the provision of programs and services.

2.There is an inconsistent approach to ensuring residents are connected to available workforce development opportunities which would facilitate economic stability.

3.There are low levels of onsite, agency-operated programs and services that would provide direct access to residents.

4.There is no formal process to facilitate easy access for community groups to animate spaces for the benefit of social housing communities

Recommendations:

1. Policy Administration: Intentional in Every Way

Engagement doesn't live in a box, think outside of the box, and think together.

The culture and framework from which institutions operate will determine the success of long-term community engagement outcomes. Having a formal engagement framework will enable all community development stakeholders (staff, agencies and community partners) to understand community goals and the appropriate level of community engagement required.

Recommended Actions:

1.1 Develop a bespoke engagement framework based on an engagement spectrum (IAP2, AB community development, community priorities, etc.)

1.2 Utilize population-based engagement strategies that match engagement approaches and community development outcomes to specific populations.

1.3 Identify high impact services based on the needs of social housing residents and work with providers to identify ways of removing barriers to program access.

1.4 Explore how policies can use an equity-based approach to prioritize social housing residents by removing the barriers to easily access programs and services furthering the City's equity, diversity and inclusion goals and enabling access for people facing multiple socio-economic barriers.

1.5 Utilize a community-based approach which prioritizes social housing sites in the deployment of health services with the goal of bringing services directly into communities.

Bright Ideas

Population-based engagement strategies can look like:
- a focus on seniors (access to health services, food security and social programming)
- a focus on youth (opportunities for sports leadership, skill building, training, arts)
- a focus on single parents (access to health services, food security, PTA)

Work with partners to prioritize access to social housing residents:
- Implement mobile clinics and targeted doctor registration in communities
- Offer priority registration to recreation programs or reserved spots for equity-deserving families/youth

Recommendations:

2. Be Intentional about Collaboration and Collective Impact

We are all in this together!

The concept of collaboration in the community development context is to work in partnership and utilize the strengths, assets, and opportunities of stakeholders and partners. This requires the identification of common ground and collective mandates to address the specific needs of communities. The result is co-created solutions and aligned resources that create collective impact.

Recommended Actions:

2.1 Utilize existing research and the results of asset mapping to identify core areas of community need and identify key partners that can me et identified needs.

2.2 Strengthen service integration with other City departments to develop collective impact targets and outcomes that can measure the effectiveness of service delivery and community engagement activities.

2.3 Identify leads within the Community Development division to engage with potential community partners external to the City and leverage the strengths, assets and resources of all stakeholders to align various programs which can resource social housing initiatives.

2.4 Generate multiple community engagement opportunities for residents (e.g. Greater Sudbury's Economic Development team facilitates the deployment of resources to inspire economic, culture, and social growth. These programmatic areas could be leveraged to align with community development goals within social housing sites).

2.5 Investigate community space utilization and explore all possibilities of partnering with community agencies to provide population-specific programing in available spaces in alignment with identified community development goals.

2.6 Identify social housing community leaders to serve in an advisory capacity as partnerships, programs and initiatives are identified and brought into community. Utilize community leaders to develop engagement strategies that will prepare communities to welcome and integrate service providers.

2.7 Develop community engagement strategies that will prepare the community to be ready to welcome and accept agency staff delivering on-site activities.

Bright Ideas

Library programs can be intentionally promoted at social housing sites:
The library's *Explore Kits* can be leveraged to plan a community-based outing for residents, this would help build deeper connection to surrounding services.

Partnership with Sudbury Fire Services:
Work with Fire Services to host a fire safety campaign which could lead to a resident-facing safety lunch & learn, a community barbeque or a bingo night.

Work with Sudbury Waste Management:
Implement a community green animation initiatives to involve residents in reducing waste, composting and recycling like bike repair programs or clean-up days.

Recommendations:

3. Work Towards Social Transformation

Noting for us, without us. **Intentional in every way, we start by strengthening roots.**

A common challenge with community development program design and delivery is that projects are innovated in an office, utilizing data, and with the best thought leaders. Often, the benefiting community is of one of the last stakeholders to be engaged. Programming is treated as a present delivered rather than a gift being co-created. For the most effective program design, community must be involved in the development process. This requires supporting the community to engage meaningfully.

Enhancing community capacity to engage in higher level thinking, organizing, peer-support, and resiliency starts with building connections amongst residents and leads to the community mobilizing around issues. Building community capacity will facilitate easy program delivery as the community will be able to engage using peer leadership and relationships of trust to spread the word and mobilize.

Recommended Actions:

3.1 Create a culture of engagement within each social housing site by working with residents to create a local community development agenda including learning from best practices, identifying community-specific development needs, bringing together relevant community partners and service providers, and identifying potential sources of funding.

3.2 Work with residents to create low risk opportunities that build a sense of community through social events. This would include staff working together with residents to identify inclusive events, and supporting residents with setting agendas and bringing everyone together.

3.3 Nurture the spirit of volunteerism by providing opportunities for residents to take initiative, give back to their community, and supporting them to build transferrable skills that can be applied to employment.

3.4 Resource priorities by identifying diverse sources of funding and establishing community program funding streams, similar to a standard grants program, that create low-barrier processes to support local, resident-led initiatives. Support tenants to apply for funding and generate site and demographic-specific ideas for social transformation.

Bright Ideas

Build On Best Practices:
Review what worked really well by conducting lessons-learned exercises to understand what activities and actions to continue implementing and which do not effectively serve community.

Organize a Food Festival:
Work with resident leaders to organize a local food festival event with staff supporting to bring together agencies, employers, health services are integrated into the event and can be present to directly connect residents to services.

Use Multiple Methods to Resource Resident Priorities:
Agency funding, funding from other City Departments, corporate donations etc. can be used to fund and provide in-kind resources for resident-led initiatives.

Recommendations:

4. Focus on Economic Development

As A Child I Dreamed of Being Poor

A devastating phenomenon that exists within the social identity of low-income housing communities is the internalization of poverty stigma (Walker & Robert, 2014). This impacts people at an individual, family, and community level and leads to a internal cycle of belief that poverty is the only option (no one will hire me because I live in government housing.) The lack of meaningful economic integration reinforces the notion of being a second-tier citizen and perpetuates intergenerational poverty.

Residents living in social housing often live at the fringe of economic inclusion. Their financial instability impacts a variety of social and health outcomes (Mickelson & Williams, 2008). Guiding and empowering residents to create their own economic stability is one of the most powerful community engagement tools to support residents to thrive.

Recommended Actions:

4.1 Identify and build strong partnerships with local employment, training and cooperative agencies that can implement referral pathways and placement opportunities for residents.

4.2 Engage residents in the process of identifying community-specific employment needs to better understand what approaches are needed (who is facing barriers to employment? Who is employed and seeking better opportunities?) and identify appropriate local opportunities.

4.3 Develop a workforce development strategy by engaging with local businesses to understand needs and develop work training programs to enable social housing residents to easily access opportunities.

4.4 Develop or identify low-barrier scholarships, bursaries or learning grants programs for youth and adults who are social housing residents and provide onsite opportunities for residents to receive first-hand information and support in applying.

4.5 Work with relevant City departments to revise the City's economic development strategy to include employer activation for hiring residents within targeted housing sites.

4.6 Utilize every opportunity to invest in and employ social housing residents by developing an employment pipeline for roles within the City.

4.7 Create opportunities to support resident businesses by leverage social procurement policies and processes that can be utilized across divisions to identify and support resident-led vendors to obtain contracts with the City.

Bright Ideas

Develop the Pipeline:
Start with forecasting workforce needs, identifying low-barrier resident employment opportunities, and supporting residents to get through the screening and interview process using staff or resident volunteers as ambassadors.

Focus on Workforce Development:
Work with agencies and employment service providers to bring relevant training programs to residents (eg. if the City is planning to hire 50 lifeguards recreation staff next summer, can relevant training be provided to interested residents (lifeguard certification, first aid, food handlers etc.).

Develop Branded Employment Programs:
Develop employment programs that cater specifically to social housing residents (e.g. Creating Bridges, CommunityWorx, Business from the Streets).

Recommendations:

5. Focus on Food Security

When We Eat Together No One Is Left Hungry

In relation to the hierarchy of needs, access to food is foundational to nurturing a healthy community. Mobilizing the community around food supports is a strategy that never fails to strengthen community connections while addressing an immediate, pressing need.

Recommended Actions:

5.1 Work with residents to identify community-specific food program solutions that span the spectrum of food insecurity needs.

5.2 Identify communities that currently have the infrastructure for successful food and gardening programs (community gardens, commercial kitchens).

5.3 Identify resident leaders that are interested in food programming and gardening and support them to lead and launch community gardens and food programs.

Bright Ideas

The spectrum of food security needs can be addressed with a spectrum of services (i.e. Food banks for free food, food markets for healthy fresh food).

Where community kitchens exist, develop food cooking programs where food can be prepared and distributed to residents.

Develop neighbourhood food sharing events (Taste of...) that are social gatherings built around food, or have residents create their own soup kitchen.

Immediate Next Steps:

Focus on Staff Engagement & Capacity Building

- Engage key staff in developing engagement blueprints to address local priorities that will lead to the development of site-specific and issue-based community engagement workplans.

- Use an *equity-centered design thinking* approach to enhance staff capacity to create innovative and bespoke community development projects.

- Conduct individual one-on-one and group meetings with staff leads to develop engagement related goals, performance indicators, relevant metrics and subsequent work plans.

- Work with staff to identify opportunities for staff to build rapport and trust with community and between community members

Focus on Effective Partnerships

- Create partnership development strategies that identify that most pressing partnership needs and develops bridges with agencies and service providers within the City that can provide community development and on-site programming.

- Develop a working group of employment service providers who can collaborate to offer job training and placement support to residents.

Prepare for Meaningful Community Engagement

- Identify communities that are ready to engage in community development activities based on a an appropriate readiness assessment.

- Develop a results-based accountability reporting structure to measure and tell the story of community impact.

Guiding Principles

Using community development principles for meaningful engagement

Be Asset-Based
Focus on the ABCDs — asset-based community development throughout engagement practices

Prioritize Equity
Understand power and oppression, these dynamics form the foundation to take equity action

Be Tenant-Centered
Focus on the priorities which matter the most to tenants

Be Intentional
Engage with intention, every social interaction has a purpose

Collaborate
Work in collaboration, this will enable collective impact

Focus on Effective Communication
Keep your stakeholders (tenants, agencies, partners, funders, etc.) apprised of progress, challenges, and solutions.

Think Sustainably
Build community capacity to be less reliant on you. Engage to share knowledge and resources.

Value Local Leadership and Expertise
Residents are the experts of their own experiences, meaningfully involve them, honour their contributions and help build their capacity to organize the community

Appendix 1:
Community Engagement Activity Examples

Actvity	Description	Pop-ulation Focus	Outcome Focus
Community Annual Forum	Provide general updates to residents on key activities, building maintenance, opportunities, etc. use a multiple station format so residents go to the station of key interest.	All	Keep residents informed of overall social housing strategies / policies and local community engagement plans
Parent-Children Homework Club	Parents and volunteers to create safe spaces for young people to do homework together with support of parents/tutors	Parents Students	Academic achievement
Movie Night	Fun nights for families to come together in common spaces or outdoors.	All	Relationship building and opportunity for staff to provide key messaging to residents
Sports League	Development of youth through sports leadership.	Youth	Youth development and employability
Bingo Night	Fun way of bring residents together. Key messaging and outreach for other programs.	Seniors	Reducing social isolation, relationship building
Coffee Socials	Coffee in the common spaces (lobbies, courtyards, etc.) for residents to meet staff, agencies, etc.	Seniors	Pathway to further engagement

Actvity	Description	Population Focus	Outcome Focus
Fitness Programs	Walking clubs, tai chi, yoga, stretching, etc. facilitated by instructors pro bono from agencies, colleges, etc.	Seniors	Increase health and decrease social isolation
Social Action Committee	Issue-based group formed with residents, agencies, and staff to mobilize around local issues.	All	Resident leadership development to organize events & initiatives to further engage community
Paint Night	Open to all for a guided art painting night, coupled with refreshments, informal discussion on community priorities, and connection with other residents	All	Community beatification project (lobby artwork, mural, community clean-up, etc.)
Community Trips	Sports games, museum, arts and culture shows, concerts, etc. Discounted or donated tickets.	All	Build rapport and connections with and between residents / communities.
Food Bank	Volunteers organize and distribute donated food.	ODSP / OW	Reducing social isolation, relationship building, food security
Games Night	Safe space for people to come together to socialize, play games, break bread, etc.	All	Relationship building Space activation
Good Neighbour-hood Wellness Check	Door-to-door wellness checks organized by select volunteer residents who are partnered with agency staff.	Tenants with vulnera-bility	Support vulnerable residents access services

Actvity	Description	Population Focus	Outcome Focus
Greening Better	Beautification initiatives for flower planting.	Adults	Inspire local pride
Year End Celebration	Celebration and volunteer recognition event. Food, raffles prizes, games, certificates of appreciation, etc.	All	Annually recognize resident and agency contributions
Halloween Event	Fun for everyone. Opportunity to support community organizing.	All	Encourage community building
Thanks-giving Day	Supports food security and brings people together living in social isolation.	Seniors & vulnerable residents	Reduce social isolation
Dance Competition	Performing arts development – support youth development, mental health, socialization with positive mentors, etc.	Youth	Youth confidence development and pathway to further engagement on employment
Community Improvement Ideas Fest	Priority setting process best coupled with a large scale community event – outdoor movie night, Canada Day, etc.	All	Determine community priorities and solutions / residents take ownership of community
Social Media Engagement	Work with resident and youth leaders to promote opportunities with their social media. Create social media groups for each site.	All	Community ownership of information sharing

Actvity	Description	Population Focus	Outcome Focus
Bicycle repair Program	Bike repair, tuning, and refurbishment. Diverts bikes from the landfill. Partnership with the police – unclaimed recovered bikes and donated back to the community.	Youth / All	Inspire local pride
Declutter Days	Support households to properly discard excess items from their homes. Triage discarded items to garbage, recycling, refurbishment, donation, etc.	All	Fire safety, environment, community health

Appendix 2:
Employment Engagement Examples

Actvity	Outcome Focus
Food Handler Certification	Increased employability of residents. Local catering opportunity. Trained residents who can support food initiatives and community events.
Life Guard Training	Upskill residents to be employed in city offered jobs
Employment Fair	Connect residents to employers
Painters Training Program	Support residents to create social enterprise, job placement, and/or skills for community improvements
Internship Program	Connect residents to city job placements. Enables residents to build rapport with city departments
Employment Intake	Organize resident employment and training need
Financial Literacy	Build capacity of residents to manage finances
Summer Youth Employment	Support older youth to get jobs to supervise younger youth during the summer
Regional Labour Forecast	Identify employer requirements and develop job training programs for residents

References

Mickelson, Kristin & Williams, Stacey. (2008). Perceived Stigma of Poverty and Depression: Examination of Interpersonal and Intrapersonal Mediators. Journal of Social and Clinical Psychology - J SOC CLIN PSYCHOL. 27. 903-930. 10.1521/jscp.2008.27.9.903.

Walker, Robert, 'Poverty, Shame, and Stigma', The Shame of Poverty (Oxford, 2014; online edn, Oxford Academic, 21 Aug. 2014), https://doi.org/10.1093/acprof:oso/9780199684823.003.0004, accessed 15 Nov. 2023.

Affordable Fun

Leisure Programs

Recreational Swims

Public Skating

Ski Hills

Holiday and PD Day Programming

City Initiatives

Complete Streets

Large Projects

Construction Projects

Engagement Opportunities

Net Zero Greater Sudbury

Most Popular

Waste Wise

Jobs at the City

Sudbury Landfill Livestream

Property Taxes

Transit

Livestream Council and Committee Meetings

Adopt a Pet

Stay Connected

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