

Community Action Network Terms of Engagement

Background

On June 10, 2001, City Council unanimously adopted recommendations from the Mayor's Task Force on Community Involvement and Volunteerism, including a recommendation to initiate Community Action Networks (CANs). Working in partnership with the Sudbury Roundtable on Health, Economy and the Environment, the City of Greater Sudbury (CGS) introduced the concept of CANs to help in the planning, budgeting and implementation of community initiatives. CANs were also identified as a valuable resource in the encouragement of civic engagement within the Healthy Community Strategy (HSC) and the Regional Centre of Expertise on Education for Sustainable Development.

CANs bring people together to build a healthy community giving each resident of the City of Greater Sudbury an opportunity to have their voice heard at city hall. The Constellation City Report noted that residents in the former outlying areas felt disconnected from the city. CANs were established to help provide a better line of communication between the community, Council and City staff. Such groups embody the values that are reflected in the HCS, which identifies four pillars: Active Living/Health Lifestyle, Natural Environment, Economic Growth, and Civic Engagement/Social Capital.

Benefits of Community Action Networks

CANs work collaboratively to advocate for positive change and the betterment of the community.

- **Enhancement** in the overall quality of life in the CGS by addressing issues within the four HC Pillars: social, environmental, active living and economic.
- **Awareness** of the services offered by the CGS and other community organizations to local residents.
- **Participation and involvement** in project planning at the community level through **identification and prioritization** of community needs at a local level; taking action to address each priority individually.
- **Promotion of community inclusiveness** to ensure all residents have the opportunity to participate and be heard.

What Community Action Networks Are Not

- Ratepayer associations
- Groups focusing on a single issue or mandate
- Political entities
- Policy creators
- Are not responsible for City personnel

Development of the Terms of Engagement

Since 2004, 16 CANs have been established within the CGS in partnership with the community, Council and CGS staff. CANs can bring a unique perspective of a particular area, reflecting the values and needs of residents living within the community. Each CAN operates in their own unique manner, allowing for flexibility in the operational methods of the executive.

In January 2007, the Constellation City Report called for the development of 'Terms of Reference' to better define the role of CANs helping to outline their responsibilities to the communities they represent. The

report noted that in developing a Terms of Reference for CANs, *“the city risks losing the grassroots nature that has made the CANs a success to this point.”* As a result, the Terms of Engagement establish guidelines which provide direction for CANs, staff and Council.

The revised **Terms of Engagement** are intended to accomplish the following:

- Reflect and embrace the grassroots nature of CANs and the unique community that each represents.
- Provide a fluid framework that is more representative of how CANs develop and change over time.
- Set minimum eligibility criteria for a group to be considered a CAN.
- Detail the expectations for CANs and their responsibilities to the community which they represent and to the city as a whole.
- Ensure that relationships between CANs, Council and City Staff are mutually respectful.
- Provide an inclusive and respectful environment that supports positive interaction between CAN members.
- Identify administrative and financial support provided to the CANs from the CGS.
- Ensure that ultimate responsibility and decision making rests with the elected City Council.
- Create increased awareness of HCS and its connections to the CAN priorities.
- CANs are unique and reflect the diverse needs of each community. They are open to new members and encourage acceptance and inclusivity.
- Encourage active involvement and participation in CAN activities.

CAN Minimum Eligibility Requirements

- Community driven and lead
- Non-profit in nature
- Open and transparent to the public
- Strive to represent the broad interests of the community
- Encourage active participation from all residents across a variety of ages and interests
- Reflect the cultural diversity of the community
- Actively participate in CAN Summits and other learning opportunities
- Meet a minimum of five times per year
- Knowledgeable in the HCS

How will Eligibility Be Measured?

- Each CAN will conduct a visioning session to identify the community's strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats (SWOT Analysis).
- The priorities identified in the visioning session should be reviewed annually.
- Meetings will be advertised and open to the public.
- The Community Development Coordinator will be informed of CAN activities in a timely manner (i.e. meeting dates, agendas, minutes and newsletters).
- Individuals appointed or elected to executive positions within the CAN should be community members in that respective area.
- The CAN will seek community input and participation when initiating projects
- Each CAN will strive to engage the various service clubs and associations, and businesses within their area.
- Attendance at CAN Summits and other learning opportunities

Community Action Network (CAN) Terms of Engagement

Following the CGS's Public Participation Policy, the CAN's Terms of Engagement helps to define the interaction between Council, City Staff and CANs through the process of informing, consulting, involving and collaborating.

Inform

- Provide a Community Development Coordinator (CDC) as the primary liaison between the CGS and the CAN
- Identify a directory of key contacts from all departments within the CGS
- Provide information about CGS programs, policy change and opportunities (i.e. CANmail)
- CDCs are not required to attend all CAN meetings, however they are available to respond to CAN inquiries
- CANs assist in disseminating information to the local area.
- Provide a forum for CANs to exchange information and best practices with one another (i.e. CANmail and CAN Summits).
- CANs serve as a primary point of contact for the community for CGS projects and initiatives (HCS).

Considerations:

It is important that all information provided is timely, clearly defined and easily understood as well appropriately targeted to members of the CANs and that the basic concepts are in line with the H.C. priorities.

Consult

- Encourage feedback when considering policy change or developing new ways of doing business that require community input
- Community consultation can be facilitated through CANs
- Attendance at CAN meetings to discuss issues or projects relevant to the CAN (i.e. promoting HCS)
- CANs provide feedback representative of the broader community
- Help to connect with other community champions.

Considerations:

This type of engagement involves seeking community views regarding specific issues.

Involve

- Work directly with CANs to understand concerns at the community level
- Cooperatively develop solutions which will address the identified community needs
- Ensure CAN input is reflected in any directions chosen
- Communicate with CANs on how public input impacts final decisions
- CANs work with the CGS to increase awareness of participation in existing CGS programs.

Considerations:

This type of engagement is more of a process than consultation and is most effective when all relevant groups and individuals within a community are involved. The CAN requires a high level of organization for involvement to be effective, which details how decisions are made and the roles of all involved.

Collaborate

- Work cooperatively with CANs to develop community partnerships to deliver outcome-based projects and programs
- Encourage partnerships with other community groups to nurture civic pride and engagement at the local level (i.e. service clubs, schools, etc.)
- CAN is working in each of the four pillars of the HCS (Active Living/Healthy Lifestyle, Civic Engagement/Social Capital, Natural Environment, Economic Growth)
- CAN reflects the cultural diversity of the community or neighbourhood it represents

Considerations:

To have successful collaboration, CANs must be truly representative of their communities. They should have representation from youth, seniors and the private sector. There should be representatives from service clubs and associations from the area. CANs need to be open and inclusive to all residents, and need to encourage participation from the community at large.

Administrative Support

Those CANs meeting the minimum eligibility requirements will receive the following administrative support from the CGS:

- Meeting space
- CAN Reference manual
- Office space (if available)
- Printing of 3 newsletters annually
- Mysudbury.ca website space and training
- Promotional space in Leisure Guide (general CAN info)
- Liability coverage for approved CAN activities
- CANmail

Funding Recommendations

In addition to the administrative support previously outlined, each CAN is eligible to receive the amount of \$2,500 per year. The funds are intended to cover costs associated with promotion of activities, photocopying, mailings, developing websites (other than mysudbury.ca sites), and other day-to-day expenses. CANs looking for financial support for outcome based projects have the option of requesting funds from their City Council representative, community sponsors or by submitting grant applications where eligible.

CANs are required to prepare an annual financial report in order to remain eligible for funding.

The report should include an outline of recent accomplishments, and should include a list of groups and associations affiliated with the CAN. Money is provided to CANs for annual operating expenditures and should not accrue over the years.

Ensuring CANs are Sustainable

In addition to the administrative support provided by the CGS, learning opportunities and CAN Summits to assist with CAN sustainability will also be offered. CANs are expected to have members attend these learning opportunities as part of their eligibility. CAN Summits provide excellent networking opportunities and allow CANs to share ideas and best practices. To date some of the learning opportunities provided at

the CAN Summits include presentations by Rainbow Routes, Greater Sudbury Police Services, and Volunteer Sudbury/Ontario Summer Games. Other topics covered have included HCS updates, social networking, youth engagement, and risk management.

Topics to be addressed at future CAN Summits may include:

- Volunteer recruitment
- Facilitating group discussions and effective meetings
- Conflict resolution/Consensus building
- Engaging seniors/private sector
- Strategic planning
- Special event organization
- Developing project proposals
- Succession planning

Reporting back to Council

As with all other community groups, CANs may request the opportunity to present before Council. Presentations to Council provide CANs with an opportunity to update Council on their current projects and priorities.

HOW THE CITY OF GREATER SUDBURY ENGAGES CANs (A VISUAL REPRESENTATION)

	Inform	Consult	Involve	Collaborate
Overview	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •To provide information to increase the community's understanding of issues and decisions made for the CGS, for example: updates on progress of HCS and the Sustainable Mobility Plan 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •To seek community level input regarding plans, policy and procedures •Seek input regarding HCS 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •To work directly with the public throughout the process to ensure that public concerns and aspirations are consistently understood and considered •Community to identify projects within the 4 pillars of HCS 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •To partner with the public in each aspect of the decision-making process including the suggestion of alternative ideas and the identification of preferred solutions. •Develop how to carry out HCS to entire community.
CAN Stages of Development	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •Few active members •Informal operating structure •Undeveloped ties with local associations •Introduction of HCS 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •Loose structure (Co-Chairs) •One or two active projects •Some key community organizations involved •Obtain input regarding HCS •Relate priorities and projects to the HCS 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •Some working committees •Well organized with regular meetings and broad community involvement •Work in multiple Healthy Community pillars but not all •Develop priorities and align with HCS 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •Youth, senior and business representation •Community associations well represented •Functioning sub-committees and executive/Recognition of HCS within planning and priorities
Leadership	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •Staff guiding process 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Key community champions identified to work with staff 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Transfer of leadership to community • Established executive in place 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •100% community driven •CAN Executive developing new leaders (succession planning)
CAN Responsibilities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •Disseminate information received to local community •Identify additional community partners •Work with CGS to increase participation in City programs (Community Clean Up, Trails, etc.) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provide feedback which represents the broad community • Identify community partners 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Lead, engage and mobilize community groups and members • Use visioning sessions & SWOT Analysis to identify community priorities 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •Involve and engage existing local community associations •Explore external funding opportunities to assist project funding •Pursue projects linked to HC Strategy
CDC Role	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •Help navigate/guide CAN •Respond to inquiries •Educate CGS departments and Council regarding CANs •Introduce HCS 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •Animator •Keep other departments & Council informed •Identify link(s) of project to HC pillars 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •Enable •Facilitate •Keep other departments & Council informed •Create link(s) of project to HC pillars 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •Project support •Access to resources •Keep other departments & Council informed •Encourage CANs to pursue projects that link to the HC pillars
Other City Staff				

Community Action Network Terms of Engagement

Responsibilities	<ul style="list-style-type: none">•Respond to CAN inquiries•Provide information through brochures, media releases, public meetings, etc.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">•Survey CANs regarding potential policy changes•Attend meetings, as requested with CANs to discuss plans and alternatives	<ul style="list-style-type: none">•Engage CANs at the onset when considering changes to policies, procedures, etc.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">•Work with CANs at all stages to realize outcome based projects (i.e. trails, parks, etc.)
Council Role	<ul style="list-style-type: none">•To listen•To provide information	<ul style="list-style-type: none">•To solicit feedback•To provide information	<ul style="list-style-type: none">•To be involved in the decision-making process	<ul style="list-style-type: none">•To use CANs as a community sounding board