

# **Social Development Strategy Review**

myPG Social Development Workshop

March 4, 2010

## INTRODUCTION

Social development demands a collaborative and integrated community-wide approach. The community of Prince George needs a comprehensive and overarching social development strategy that identifies actions and goals which everyone can commit to. A great deal of work has already taken place on local social development priorities; the goal now is to transform our understanding of the community's vision into actionable strategies and measures of success that can be used by a broad cross-section of the community.

The Social Development Strategy Workshop has an ambitious agenda which takes into account the considerable amount of groundwork completed prior to the start of myPG. The overarching goal of the workshop is to facilitate cross-jurisdictional, multi-agency partnerships and strategies which will address Social Development vision and goals developed following analysis of the myPG envisioning phase and a related archival data/literature review.

The purpose of the social development strategy review is to build on our knowledge of existing relevant strategies, with the objective of:

- **Corroborating the myPG data analysis:** Do the themes identified in the myPG visioning phase reflect the priorities identified by the community in other social strategies?
- **Acknowledging the current initiatives** that relate to the myPG themes: What are the existing programs and initiatives that already work towards the priorities identified by myPG?
- **Identifying gaps** in the themes from myPG: Are there community priorities which have not been identified by myPG?

We reviewed a number of local strategies which had been developed on a collaborative, cross-jurisdictional approach. These included:

- *Strategic Plan, Network Environment for Aboriginal Research BC (NEARBC) Conference*
- *Strategic Action Plan, Community Partners Addressing Homelessness*
- *Post-Event Report, Linking Planning and Health Conference*
- *Homelessness Intervention Project (HIP) Detailed Ministry Action Plan, Ministry of Housing and Social Development*
- *Strategic Plan, Prince George Active Communities Project*
- *Prince George Heritage Strategic Plan*
- *Cultural Plan for District of Fraser-Fort George*
- *Prince George Social Plan 2002*

In addition, we reviewed current initiatives which reflected the community's social development goals. These included:

- *Welcoming and Inclusive Communities and Workplaces, Immigrant and Multicultural Services Society*
- *Prolific Offender Management Pilot project, Ministry of Solicitor General and Public Safety*
- *Homeless Intervention Pilot Project, Ministry of Housing and Social Development*

- *Healthy Eating, Active Living (HEAL)*, Northern Health
- *Assets and Gaps Inventory*, Community Partners Addressing Homelessness
- *Communities That Care*
- *Stone Soup*, Northern Health
- *Beyond Homelessness Standing Committee*, City of Prince George

The following review will summarize the major strategies, identifying areas of corroboration with the myPG themes. The review will then identify myPG themes which are not well-supported by existing strategies, as well as themes emerging from the strategies which are not reflected by myPG.

## **MYPG THEMES**

- a. **Community Identity:** Have a clear identity that the community can be proud of, with a strong downtown and strong connection to its rivers and natural surroundings.
- b. **Community Connections:** Be a friendly and supportive community that has opportunities to connect and a vibrant cultural life rich in the arts.
- c. **Equity and Inclusion:** Be a community where diversity is welcomed and improved educational and social services are accessible and affordable.
- d. **Safety and Security:** Have a safe and secure community, with a focus on downtown safety.
- e. **Health and wellness:** Be a healthy and active community that offers abundant recreational opportunities and access to local food.

## KEY THEMES

The social development goals identified by the community in the myPG visioning phase are closely corroborated by a review of other relevant strategies. The most common theme areas were:

- Community identity
- Community connections
- Equity and inclusion

The theme of community safety and security, although undoubtedly important, appeared in only one of the strategies, the Prince George Social Plan.

Other strategies were adamant about the need for partnerships and collaboration as a goal; although this does fall into “Community Connections”, it might be useful to more explicitly about collaboration as a goal for myPG.

Another key theme that arose was the need for capacity building, both for the community as a whole so there was more education and awareness of social issues, but also in terms of the internal expertise of individual organizations. Many of the strategies highlighted that Prince George has a great deal of resources already; the goal should be to mobilize and facilitate the cross-fertilization of ideas and skills.

Overarching, rather than topic-specific, goals would help to complement the myPG theme areas. While communities most commonly use a topic-specific approach to social planning, another approach is to identify the common, overarching goals that would help to advance the social development agenda in its entirety. The City of Toronto, for example, has 3 simple goals for its social development plan:

### **Strengthen Communities**

- Actively support the building of community capacity
- Encourage participation in communities and government
- Increase access to community space

### **Invest in a Comprehensive Social Infrastructure**

- Identify areas for strategic investment in social development
- Increase the effectiveness and co-ordination of planning activities
- Extend social monitoring and reporting
- Evaluate program success
- Seek more fair and flexible sources for city revenue

### **Expand Civic Leadership and Partnership**

- Work towards a joint strategy for social development in the regional area
- Work with other municipalities to develop a national urban agenda
- Strengthen the city's role as advocate

Incorporating a similar set of goals into myPG might help to complement the larger agenda.

## STRATEGY REVIEW

### Strategic Plan, NEARBC

Network Environments for Aboriginal Research BC recently hosted a conference about Aboriginal health, resulting in a strategic plan. The goals outlined focused on building community capacity to for health research and health careers, addressing health issues holistically, and improving accessibility to services. This correlates with the following myPG goals:

Community identity	Community connections	Equity and inclusion	Safety and security	Health and wellness
		✓		✓

However, the strategy had a considerably level of focus on capacity building, which was not a myPG goal.

### Strategic Action Plan, CPAH

Community Partners Addressing Homelessness completed a Strategic Action Plan in 2009. Their goals were to build internal capacity and create a welcoming, inclusive community presence; create an informed, engaged community; and build partnerships and sustainable community approaches to address homelessness. This correlates with the following myPG goals:

Community identity	Community connections	Equity and inclusion	Safety and security	Health and wellness
	✓	✓		

However, the strategy also highlighted capacity building, both capacity building as well as for the general public in terms of more information and awareness about homelessness issues.

### Homelessness Intervention Project, Action Plan

The Homelessness Intervention Project (HIP) Action Plan offered several government recommendations on homelessness. These included setting a comprehensive homelessness plan, with rigorous target setting and data gathering through homeless counts, and designating clear leads and roles and responsibilities. It also advocated for ensuring that people leaving health care, child protection and correctional facilities were not homeless on their release.

Community identity	Community connections	Equity and inclusion	Safety and security	Health and wellness
	✓	✓		

These recommendations are more specific to the issue of homelessness but they do point to more general themes of creating coordinated responses, and maintaining rigorous standards and clear roles and responsibilities. It was also apparent that clear systems and structures were needed. It was identified that municipal governments should lead in conducting homeless counts. This points to the need for municipalities to taking on a facilitation role.

### Strategic Plan, Prince George Active Communities Project

The Strategic Plan for Prince George’s Active Communities Project revolves around four visions:

- Plans and Policies - Develop, implement and support plans and policies that promote physical fitness, healthy eating and overall wellness amongst residents of Prince George.
- Opportunities and Participation - Engage, mobilize, encourage and recognize community efforts to provide opportunities for physical activity and healthy eating.
- Supportive environments, collaborations and partnerships - Facilitate and integrate physical activity and healthy eating in supportive environments that improve community capacity and value and contribute to an active lifestyle.
- Communication, education, community identity and involvement - Create an Active Community Health Strategy that will be identifiable and recognizable for all residents which will educate, secure support and assist in making informed positive choices and changes about physical activity and healthy eating for life.

They overlap very closely with the themes identified in myPG, also making explicit the need for collaboration and partnership, as well as education and communication.

Community identity	Community connections	Equity and inclusion	Safety and security	Health and wellness
✓	✓	✓		✓

### Linking Planning and Health

The post-event report from the Linking Planning and Health conference, while not specifically resulting in a strategic plan, did identify major community goals and ideas. The goals centered on implementing existing plans, e.g. the Active Transportation Plan, the Active Communities Plan, as well as leveraging planning philosophies and processes such as Smart Growth, the ICSP, and neighbourhood plans. Some of the various ideas, on the other hand, were particularly relevant in their focus on increasing linkages and cross-disciplinary approaches, collaborating and information-sharing.

The need to facilitate and use existing resources should be highlighted and incorporated into the myPG themes.

Community identity	Community connections	Equity and inclusion	Safety and security	Health and wellness
✓	✓			✓

### City of Prince George Corporate Strategic Plan

While the City of Prince George’s Corporate Strategic Plan does cover a broad range of goals and objectives, there are certain theme areas that do focus on social development. These include: building stronger neighbourhoods; improving health and safety; increasing civic pride; and creating a more inclusive community. The Corporate Strategic Plan’s social goals correlate strongly with those of myPG, with the exception of “safety and security” which is not addressed by the Corporate Plan.

Community	Community	Equity and	Safety and	Health and
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identity	connections	inclusion	security	wellness
✓	✓	✓		✓

**Prince George Heritage Strategic Plan**

The Heritage Strategic Plan focused on the idea of heritage, a relatively small part of the broader social development agenda. However, the mechanisms identified do closely reflect those of myPG, such as promoting better community partnerships, and improving heritage awareness and communication.

Community identity	Community connections	Equity and inclusion	Safety and security	Health and wellness
✓	✓			

**Cultural Plan for Regional District of Fraser – Fort George**

The Cultural Plan focused on building the internal capacity of the culture sector, advocating for strengthening the human infrastructure, having a better leadership and management structure, and having better planning and data collection templates. The goals do not closely align with myPG because they are quite specific. However, the aim of capacity building is one that is reflected in other strategies.

Community identity	Community connections	Equity and inclusion	Safety and security	Health and wellness
✓				

**Prince George Social Plan**

The Prince George Social Plan, created in 2002, worked towards objectives in many different areas: housing; health, education and welfare; unemployment and poverty; community safety; substance misuse; downtown revitalization; and recreation.

The strategy focused significantly on the need for affordable housing, and the need to address the causes of homelessness. It also recommended certain programs be put in place, such as youth centres, and affordable recreation, which would help to improve a sense of social inclusion.

Community identity	Community connections	Equity and inclusion	Safety and security	Health and wellness
✓	✓	✓	✓	✓

## **CURRENT SOCIAL DEVELOPMENT INITIATIVES**

### **Welcoming and Inclusive Communities and Workplaces**

Immigrant and Multicultural Services Society, Initiatives Prince George, and the Chamber of Commerce are finalizing a project for the Welcoming and Inclusive Communities and Workplaces Program (WICWP). The primary goal of WICWP is to support inclusive, welcoming and vibrant communities where immigrants can realize their full potential, racism is eliminated, and cultural diversity is valued and celebrated. The program funds initiatives that will foster welcoming communities by building capacity building at all levels, developing broad, long-term partnerships across sectors and stakeholder groups, and serving as a catalyst for systemic change.

### **Prolific Offender Management Pilot Project**

Prince George is the pilot site of the Prolific Offender Management Project, run by the Ministry of Solicitor General and Public Safety. The project brings together resources from enforcement agencies, regional health authorities, housing services, Ministry of Housing and Social Development, Ministry of Children and Family Development and Adult Forensic Psychiatric Services.

The project uses increased supervision and timely intervention with a small group of prolific offenders to address the issues that fuel criminal activity.

These interventions can include: referrals to drug treatment programs; seeing mental health professionals on a regular basis; and referrals to job or housing programs. Pilots will be evaluated to determine how much crime declines in each community and what approaches work well with these offenders.

### **Homeless Intervention Pilot Project**

The goal of this project is to reduce chronic homelessness. The Homelessness Intervention Project will align several government ministries, health authorities, the non-profit sector and other agencies that address chronic homelessness and establish an immediate integrated homelessness intervention project.

Integrated, cross-agency teams will find housing and support services for chronically homeless people through coordinating resources, data, policy and client information. Initially, the outreach teams will be tasked with two basic goals: to immediately reduce homelessness in these communities and to create a more integrated, synchronized approach to the delivery of services to the homeless.

Over time, the government will put in place a management system with enhanced reporting that will enable communities to maximize and prioritize outreach, housing and support services for the chronically homeless. Through this approach, the communities will be in a better position to address the client population that is the most difficult to house: chronically homeless with severe mental health and addictions complications.

### **Stone Soup**

Stone Soup is a collaborative food security project which involved community agencies, the Aboriginal Friendship Centre, and focused on the “most poor, most food deprived in the city”.

It involved an action research project to identify the barriers to accessing healthy and affordable food, and to address issues that would speak to the community at large. Participatory research has led to a Community Food Action Assessment, while a community kitchen has opened in the Friendship Centre's new lodge as well as kitchen facilities that can be accessed by other community groups.

### **Communities that Care**

Communities That Care (CTC) is a risk-and-protection-based system that helps communities to engage in multi-level, multi-sectoral prevention planning and implement evidence-based programs. The purpose is to prevent common youth problems (substance abuse, delinquency, violence, teen pregnancy, school drop-out, and mental health difficulties) and promote positive youth development. The approach has five phases, each accompanied by specific training sessions for community leaders and volunteers. These sessions are, respectively, community readiness, community mobilization, community risk, protection, and resource assessment, community strategic planning, and community plan implementation and evaluation. The strategy supports communities in selecting and implementing existing evidence-based programmes that fit the risk profile of their community.

### **Beyond Homelessness Standing Committee**

The Beyond Homelessness Standing Committee was formed by City Council following a delegation to Portland to examine the city's successful Housing First Program. The Committee's mandate is to work closely with others to eliminate homelessness by:

- helping to develop a strong community based vision for safe and affordable housing in the city;
- providing a structure to support integrated and coordinated response to housing and its related issues;
- developing a unique and made in Prince George model that demonstrates innovative and collaborative partnership in moving a community forward; and
- celebrating and supporting innovation and successful initiatives that are in place, in progress or emerging.

The Committee is also implementing a Downtown Clean and Safe program and supporting the development of a Downtown Health Centre and a mixed housing development.