

## **What We Heard: Finding Common Ground Stakeholder Workshops April 16, 2014**

### **#1 Education and awareness**

#### **What do you like?**

I like “highlighting... locating non-market housing in all areas of the city.” Alongside “for realizing broad public benefit,” this is the key to conveying the big picture and providing a meaningful context within which specific projects can be discussed. I like that it “should precede the identification of specific sites.” Everyone should be, but is not, aware of the city’s commitment to a new way (integrated versus segregated, and how to do it) and the rationale for it (eg. win-win). This will increase support for “doing their part” and the surprise won’t be as sharp when housing is one day proposed within their own neighbourhood. Equipped with the overall plan/strategy and the best practices, residents and businesses will be better able to respond at a more advanced level.

Dispels myths - more info is good - language is important. The fact that housing is critical. "Out in Front" of proposals no element of surprise contributes towards "transparency". Best practices show evidence of success. More info needed to community (not the proponent). Resources could be in libraries, City Hall, etc. Authenticity of engagement with greater community supports Non-market housing in all neighbourhoods.

I think we need to get "out front" of actual proposals and share with the community the City goals and strategies with respect to non-market housing. Moving away from "charity marketing" to social marketing. Capture connectedness between communities and their mutual experience. Key words like "charity" need to be replaced with something else. Human Rights code requires education and awareness. Long-term payoff to changing of attitude.

#### **What needs to be considered in implementation?**

It is important for the plan to resonate, if success downstream is to be expected. Getting feedback could indicate how good communication has been, where and how it could be improved or has been successful. Work here will translate into developing funding criteria that is used in the 3rd recommendation which will be seen as credible and be received well. In conjunction with improved funding decisions, this initiative can lay the groundwork for consultations on specific proposals to take a less circuitous route.

Educating students in schools, churches, etc about homelessness and affordable housing. Use leaders for support at Community meetings. Process and details of engagement process (e.g. meeting format) are important. Clear definition of roles for politicians and administration.

#### **What are the potential roadblocks?**

Lack of leadership. Lack of understanding that mixed housing has always been there. Resistance to additional new projects. Conversation may be too late. Some lack of trust exists that public engagement is a “hat” that gets put on and taken off. Need a genuine commitment (not a guilt trip) to strategy (focused on the long term, not just a short time). Research not getting

out to stakeholders in timely fashion. Short campaigns to educate exist but ongoing education is needed. A lack of information, understanding, and language around non market housing.

Number of projects already in neighbourhoods. People will want to talk about specific projects. Who will take the lead? Issue of Human Rights requires ground rules. Use of "Campaign" implies short term approach.

Careful with "good news" stories bearing in mind storytelling should be by "community" about a successful project and their contentment. Focus on well-being, nature of community and not people living in it and use neighbours as validators. Mistrust of City talking points telling everyone non-market housing is good - when, where, and why is important. Market housing promotes exclusivity - development industry promoting this. UDI advertising and imagining of neighbourhoods.

Term "non-market" housing is too broad - need to refine terms from supportive to social versus affordable (management and operations of different types of housing). Research needed to answer property values, crime rates, parking impact questions. Planning Academy might be a way to provide training on housing or a non-market housing course to understand and address NIMBYism. City-wide priority (10 yr plan to end homelessness) Homeward Trust and homeless housing must happen across the city. A toolkit for community leagues to deal with developers and management of new non-market housing as well as a guide to Good Neighbour Agreements could help overcome some of the roadblocks.

### **Miscellaneous**

ECOHH already has been doing education and awareness, and could also have a role with training/facilitation with items 1 & 2 (eg. recent leaflets dispelling myths on affordable housing). Revitalization team would like to provide ongoing consultation with education awareness "campaign" as the mature neighbourhoods are their targeted areas.

### **#2 Evaluation criteria**

#### **What do you like?**

I like "foster trust in the process and decision making" by ensuring the criteria are thoroughly spelled out and the information is timely. Again, the better informed stakeholders are, the more meaningful can be their participation. Clarity is needed around the language used in the recommendations. Harmonizing criteria is needed between decision making bodies (City and Homeward Trust). Clear, objective evaluation criteria is needed as well as transparency. This involves the City, Housing Providers, Province, Homeward Trust together and in sync.

Some stakeholders believe Homeward Trust doesn't have clear and objective criteria for their projects - this is an important recommendation. Publishing criteria is good but needs to be made known to the public. It's a good idea to have expectations of thorough consultation. In past Homeward Trust invited EFCL to sit on a project review panel, however the environment wasn't right for that. Moving forward there could be opportunities to involve community leagues.

I like “foster trust in the process and decision making” by ensuring the criteria are thoroughly spelled out and the information is timely. Again, the better informed stakeholders are, the more meaningful can be their participation. Support language around clarity of recommendation. Harmonizing criteria between decision making bodies (City and Homeward Trust).

### **What needs to be considered in implementation?**

Process and details of engagement process (e.g. meeting format) are important. Clear definition of roles for politicians and administration. How do human rights relate to having criteria which identify the use and scale. When is it an informing role versus consultation? Homeward Trust’s consultation decision tree is in development to recognize local context. Housing providers are operating in an environment with little funding. Considerations around the time frame for consultation and operating in “hot” housing market were raised. It was thought that the responsibility for selection criteria is not only on the funders but that a council endorsed approach may also be needed. Linking to recommendation 1 and taking the “One City” approach was thought to be valuable. A departure from the idea that all people need to be close to supports was voiced. Language and nuances regarding what is considered geographically close to supports (eq. transit dropping etc) was raised.

Transparent criteria is more than just having criteria. How are these criteria being shared, and whether they are accessible are key questions. Links to education, awareness and communication are vital. Part of the City’s job is to promote criteria and funding approval process (funded staff allocated). Right now it’s fallen to the proponent. How to do more than is required regarding information versus consultation. Do not require if zoning/use is consistent?

Set criteria from beginning on what is or isn’t in scope when consulting. It was thought that “If projects are applying public funds, there should be an onus on the funder to meet criteria including public awareness about the project (Homeward Trust receives government funds from all orders of government). Do the use of “public funds” carry an onus to consult in addition to project criteria being met? Some stakeholders mentioned that Use Classes should focus on the building form and not the occupant.

Projects in the past have ignored concentration of social housing (eg. McCauley experience). City’s policy of a min of 5% and maximum of 20% affordable housing per neighbourhood. Desire for criteria to look at poverty levels in neighbourhoods when locating new projects as well as scale of building and number of units/tenants. It was suggested that there is not a clear correlation between poverty and presence of high non-market housing ratios. Requirement for services close to low income populations was seen as problematic. It was suggested that satellite services in communities outside of downtown was needed.

Stakeholders supported a social mix model good that seamlessly integrates into neighbourhoods avoiding stigma. Transparency was desired. Need measurable evaluation criteria / indicators of success. Need disclosure of outcome measurements (lots of good research around Housing

First). Would like to see community voice in existing, or “to be developed” criteria. Publishing criteria itself versus reasoning behind approval or rejection of a project.

### **What are the potential roadblocks?**

Bureaucratic language. Harmonizing at government level (of criteria) = potential for politicizing criteria (province) lack of resources to evaluate proposals.

Who is community - cultural group, city, abutting property owners, renters? Disparity of influence another way of validating who should be involved. Missing clarity on planning process (compliance with ARP). Need use classes for supportive housing projects other than apartments.

Need to start at Zoning Bylaw. Generic "government" programs should have criteria (not tied only to HPS). If funders require consultation they need to both fund and dictate how it's done (need a guide). Permanent Supportive Housing zone should be applied to housing with medical supports. Current regulations lack clarity regarding supports on-site or off-site (group homes/congregate living).

Realities of:

1. Ownership attached to community consultation process idea.
  2. Limited funding sources criteria (timeline a funds are not allocated to construct; \$ amount.
  3. Regulations (Zoning Bylaw) related to implementation need to be built-in.
- Criteria may be present at Provincial level but not transparent enough, fast timelines make the process inaccessible to communities.

From past experiences, it's hard to get info from proponent. Uncertainty around ability of funders to publish criteria or decisions made around criteria. Conflicting criteria between Province and Homeward Trust exists.

### **Miscellaneous**

City level work on policy level - too much devolved to agencies without funding (leadership role). The Ways involved a lot of input from community, so staff can stand behind these plans. Need to align policy with decision making criteria - make a land use called "supportive housing" and allow it everywhere (independent living x institutional care). Define what is "clinical" in Zoning Bylaw.

Need to know how to access criteria Homeward Trust website (how does Joe Public know). Clear ground rules for consultation that consider human rights perspective and the five gradients of supportive housing from Homeward Trust/Homeless Commission.

Community League's are volunteer run and not able to make commitments.

1. Need City Council endorsement / buy in to ensure ongoing commitment when Council's change.

2. Need Council directive and budget to Administration to develop a comprehensive approach from initial concept through to approvals and upon completion of projects and into successful management models. The process to enable this recommendation to become a reality.

Neighbourhoods that have high levels of poverty do not have the same voice as wealthy (e.g. Terwilliger). Issues around fundraising, funding timelines and consultation process, need to be reconciled? Can consultation be handled before funding comes through? When to engage or not is not so cut and dry.

### **#3 Provide training and guidance for engagement**

#### **What do you like?**

Improved engagement absolutely necessary. Capacity building and material support is important. The preparation for community interaction is key and lots of community consultation is terrible for many reasons, so training is important. There should be support for consultation provided and it should broaden the responsibilities for consultation.

#### **What needs to be considered in implementation?**

This will be a continually ongoing learning process. There will always be lessons learned. The nature of the 4th recommendation could be overhauled to be compatible with this recommendation such that there's a body whose task (rather than being judges) is to help with organizing the process to ensure timely access to all information and dialogue is efficiently coordinated.

Who should do this? EFCL? City? Homeward Trust? Different communities have different capacity to be engaged. Some community leagues are very active, some are inactive. Even though the EFCL is not a proponent organization it would also benefit from this training and support.

Information resources are needed, including paper resources, videos, and other communication materials. Having experts who can attend meetings to speak to issues would help too. Support should include opportunities to meet with someone to plan consultation, not just support with materials.

This support shouldn't necessarily come from the City. The City should fund training, but not by City staff. ECOHH might be an organization who could provide training, but the work should be housed in a community based entity. Consultation models should follow best practices, not antiquated ones or just whatever is trendy

Support should include help identifying who to talk with. Beware of off-the-shelf consultation packages delivered to every organization. Instead, a new custom made consultation approach should be used for each project. Certain housing types require more training and better consultation than others. Training can't be one size fits all.

The magnitude of training / support required depends on the proponents and their projects. Communities need training as well as proponents but how should that work? Training should really set a common expectation for consultation / engagement so proponents and communities make a common expectation of the process. Proponents should be taught to make a case supported by data of how their project will affect and impact the community.

### **What are the potential roadblocks?**

This could be confused with producing a handbook on how to bypass the neighbours, which is to be strongly avoided.

No immediately apparent home for this training role. Potential lack of confidence in the neutrality of the training / support organization and in its expertise. Finding the right home for this support is difficult due to a lack of community trust. Proponents recognizing the need for consultation training early enough to seek help / support / training.

### **Miscellaneous**

EFCL does not want The Pause to end until issues around policy and transparency are resolved. Educational programming (such as the planning academy) to explain the differences between housing types could be helpful. Support the establishment of a consultation network that could meet monthly, have an online forum, or connect otherwise so individuals and groups can learn from each other. This can also work outside of affordable housing.

### **#4 Review Panel**

#### **What do you like?**

This concept is an innovative way of getting people together. A good cross section of individuals, including education is important. Information to residents about what is happening is important. Reduced fear resulting from a panel in a convening role could alleviate burden on daytime volunteers and create a common understanding. Early engagement is essential to allow productive discussion around operational issues. Need expert facilitation to support dialogue.

Looking for what's practical and reasonable. A panel of three independent wise heads respected in community appointed by City Council provides legitimacy and fairness to a panel's mandate.

A panel piggybacks on other recommendations. There are circumstances where existing processes don't work; when this happens a panel would meet a need. Potentially creates another avenue beyond courts / SDAB. Not necessarily about decision making but about creating space for engagement and dialogue. Not adversarial but rather about reaching agreement.

Creates an opportunity for parties to articulate positions and to build compromise.

A neutral facilitator could really help with building trust. Existence of formal panel would carry weight even without regulatory or policy support. Informal authority is powerful.

Could fill role - when negotiation breaks down. Gets people to talk - could reach compromise.

Potential to depoliticize decisions... maybe. Potential to ensure proper consultation happens. Potential to evaluate the quality of consultation.

### **What needs to be considered in implementation?**

Council buy in and support are needed. Perhaps GNA's are a useful substitute for a panel. Good will is essential. Require a skilled facilitator to prevent process from aggravating the relationship. Setting up a framework to continue relationship. Nova Place in Norwood (24/7 care) is an example of good management practice. Who would hear recommendation? Perhaps the project funder. The order of implementation of recommendations is important.

The idea of setting up an intermediary between participants is premature because it is not compatible with what needs to be done first, which are improvements to public engagement as proposed in recommendations 1, 2 & 3. Given the level of changes and perseverance needed to develop constructive dialogue, the development of this alternative would limit the extent of those efforts at this critical point in time. Efforts seen to develop this panel will undermine the credibility of other efforts (to engage).

Given the time constraints of stakeholders volunteering their time, improving the meaningfulness of participation is critical to successful engagement. Extra layers of bureaucracy/process to navigate frustrate and tend to amplify resource/time imbalances. This recommendation works on the basis of a panel composed of members who are perceived as impartial and trusted by all sides. Such a panel may not be realistic. Therefore, instead of creating a forum for safe discussion and collaboration, the process can resemble a game. Counter productively, this could set-up entrenched adversarial roles of participants.

Potential panel process - 2 phases. Phase 1: facilitated meeting between interested parties (with non-City rep as facilitator). Phase 2: Only if issues remain unresolved the panel could address the question of what is the balanced way to deal with this?

Panel would issue recommendations to City Council. Would need to be grounded in policy or have a clear consistent criteria for decision making. A panel would need to consider all types of housing, not just non-market. A panel could be tried as pilot to determine if the approach is useful.

Residents would need to be highly represented as a part of panel process. Rationale for panel needs to be clearly articulated. Key question for panel include: what is the issue? Is an extra layer of authority necessary? Arbitration and mediation are different and mediation is better.

How do you structure it so that it doesn't shortcut the consultation process. How do you make sure the review panel has some "teeth"? A mediating role would be helpful potentially, but not waiting until all else fails because that is fraught with governance issues. Another question might be whether only the failed projects go to the panel or should all projects go?

### **What are the potential roadblocks?**

Should include a mix of diverse stakeholders, perhaps including City staff. Will need a mechanism or process to resolve stalemates. Name might be problematic. Could require immense daytime volunteer time.

If #4 is an opt out for # 1, 2, 3, then #4 fails. Roadblocks could include mixed mandates, ongoing issues, and operational considerations. Choosing who is on the panel to ensure legitimacy is a difficult task? Burn out over time may become an issue. Resources required for consultation may be an issue. Putting a spotlight on an issues that may not be an issue may do more harm than good? Where should we focus?

If consultation is done effectively (with inclusive community input) the panel may not be required. A panel may not be required to facilitate dialogue. There are other engagement formats - especially if parties are willing to talk. Without a solid mandate or Policy Framework, it has no decision-making power. A panel could become a forum to continue engagement discussion. It is possible that recommendation #2 (training) would accomplish the same objections.

Some do not like the language of arbitrator / tribunal. It may be too legal sounding and formal rather than about negotiation. Sets up another body and won't address/consider broader community concerns - wouldn't gain trust of community. Wouldn't necessarily address trust issues, especially if initial engagement has failed.

Certain inner-city neighbours may not be ready for the panel concept due to recent history. It is difficult to know what role a review panel would have if no Council decision (rezoning) is triggered. A panel could inform Council or Funders but not SDAB. If the panel is seen as an end run around consultation it could undermine good faith engagement. Could become like the Ontario Municipal Board, with its inherent problems.

Could positions all non-market as contested and bad and should be opposed. Community, Social Work, Homeward Trust, have reservations. So much thought still needed to figure out the details. How would you identify wise people?

### **#5 Other Recommendations identified in the Report**

The report identified interdepartmental issues and potentially conflicting mandates but didn't resolve internal administrative issues or the tight timelines for funding that prevents fuller engagement.

The quality of consultation may be poor, but other issues such as location choice can be poor too. Planning department takes a neutral role, but they should actually take positions based on stated City-policy. City Council and Administration must do more to ensure sites for non-market housing are secured through the policy and planning process. Need to find ways to expand non



market housing throughout the City including designating some of the surplus school sites for non-market housing, including permanent supportive housing.

Both through City policy and by seeking amendments to the Municipal Government Act, require developers to set aside (reserve) land for non-market housing in all new neighbourhoods. Residents considering moving to new neighbourhoods are likely to be less opposed to non-market housing if they know every neighbourhood in both the City and region will have a minimum percentage (for example at least 5% of total housing units). Although such a policy could see some community and development industry opposition adopting the above policy will send the message that every Edmonton neighbourhood will be mixed income and inclusive going forward. This speaks to Edmonton values of inclusion and fairness.

Scale & Design: The report moves in the right general direction; it is thoughtful and you can clearly read the background research supporting it. I found the comment on the study findings regarding that there is less interest in design and scale of project at odds with the findings. I heard the comment on design quality and scale in our meeting and these two themes are discussed regularly in the neighbourhoods and business community as well, in fact its a very common theme in each community I've ever worked in. Just try to get a project funded without good design of the property or if the property is dwarfing the local developments around it, and you'll be very quickly opposed. Scale and design are closer to a best practice. Scale and design also factor into the "double standard imposed by the funding" and within the "post development management" "content" comments as well.

Role of the City: Please take a look at the role of the city as described within the report. It's still muddy. The role of "City as Developer" is well established within municipalities. Specifically, there is impartiality provided via the Current Planning Development section who has a regulatory role. Support is provided via the Policy support section provided by the Housing Branch. The City, even if playing Project Developer (even if supported by the MDP and other Policy layers) is required to meet the regulatory requirements as in the case of any developer. When "support housing staff" are to play a role in supporting the project, they need to separate from the development / regulatory staff in current planning and make it clear they are not in a regulatory role. The report should describe how this works. Especially since the findings speak to the confusion by the housing project developers as to the role of the city.