



Building Blocks for Place-Making Policy

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Our Goal – Sustainable Communities

That is, communities that achieve harmony in the development of civil society, economy, environment, culture and political institutions.

(Polèse)

This takes a breadth of thinking and citizen involvement, nationally and locally, that far surpasses current approaches to urban issues in Canada today.



The Challenges

1. Every place has different assets, needs and capacity for change.
2. Each order of government and their agencies have a role to play. Civil society and business also have roles.
3. The division of responsibilities today will not deliver sustainable communities. Each actor lacks capacity (and often political will).
4. No one can do it alone.



Ingredients for Success

- A local champion to give leadership.
- A civic culture of creativity (doing things differently, better).
- Equitable participation by local stakeholders.
- Institutional intermediaries to connect with senior governments.
- Adequate financial and technical resources.
- Strong accountability mechanisms, based on an agreed set of indicators to track progress.

(Bradford)



Implications for National Policy

- Bottom up definition of needs.
- Responsive senior governments.
- Collaborative decision-making
 - Across the local community
 - Across senior government departments and agencies
 - Vertically between governments and communities.
- Menu-driven agendas with a range of supports at provincial and federal levels.
- Decentralized delivery via officers with a) autonomy to act; b) good facilitation skills.



Gaps in Policy Capacity

No government has perfected the art of pooling departmental resources, but they are experimenting.

- Municipalities:
 - Strength: Local responsiveness/delivery
 - Weakness: Limited policy capacity and tools
- Provinces:
 - Strength: More tools, some delivery capacity
 - Weakness: Only 1 or 2 cities + many small ones
- Federal:
 - Strength: All cities and communities, some tools
 - Weakness: Limited delivery capacity



Requirements: Senior Governments

- Pool departmental resources into single windows.
- Delegate authority to act to local officials.
 - Train them in facilitation/capacity-building (Torjman)
 - Arm them with a menu of policy responses to local needs (Maxwell)
 - A new approach to accountability vis-à-vis “partners”
 - A new relationship with non-profits



Mobilize the Non-profits

- Non-profits have unique qualities:
 - Where all local actors can activate their citizenship
 - Rooted in community, trusted, responsive
 - Access to hard to reach citizens
 - Full of committed, talented people
- But action is handicapped by funding methods, accountability regimes and lack of respect
 - Accountability is essential, but it should focus on outcomes not pennies. (CCSD, CPRN, Imagine)



Answers to Panel Questions

- Place is an essential, missing ingredient in public policy.
- National interests are served by sustainable communities.
 - Well-being is generated by a mix of universal and place-based policies. (*Séguin and Divay*)
- Communities have the central role in defining needs and executing solutions.
- The non-profit sector is a lead player in making both happen.



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