Community Hubs: Public Spaces to Serve Communities

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COMMUNITY HUBS IN ONTARIO:
A Strategic Framework & Action Plan

An accessible version of this report is available at:
ontario.ca/communityhubs
3. GOALS

a. Students should have the opportunity to attend elementary and secondary school in their home community.

b. School boards, including co-terminus boards, and municipalities should work together to build creative partnerships that allow community resources and services to be delivered in conjunction with education so that schools evolve into community hubs.

c. When surplus space develops in a school due to enrolment decline, the school board and the municipality should work together to identify community uses for the space before considering closure of the school.

d. The input of students, parents and the community to the student accommodation review process used by school boards should be respected and valued.
Premier Wynne Appoints Community Hubs Advisory Group

Experts to Help Develop Innovative Framework to Revitalize Public Spaces

April 8, 2015 1:00 P.M.

Ontario has appointed nine members to the Premier’s Community Hub Framework Advisory Group. The group will work with the Premier’s Special Advisor, Karen Pitre, to review provincial policies and develop a framework for adapting existing public properties to become community hubs.

A community hub can be a school, a neighbourhood centre or another public space that offers co-ordinated services such as education, health care and social services.

The nine members announced today have specialized knowledge and expertise in a variety of areas, including education, finance and community building. They will consult widely with community groups and other partners to harness a broad range of perspectives which will inform the government’s approach to moving forward with community hubs.

Providing high-quality, accessible and efficient community services is part of the government’s plan for Ontario. The four-part plan is building Ontario up by investing in people’s talents and skills, building new public infrastructure like roads and transit, creating a dynamic, supportive environment where business thrives, and building a secure retirement savings plan.

QUOTES

“Community hubs are an important part of our efforts to make public services more accessible and efficient for the people of our province. I want to thank all of the members of the advisory group for lending their expertise to this project. With their help, we can ensure our framework will drive economic competitiveness, foster social cohesion and make communities more liveable.” - Kathleen Wynne / Premier of Ontario
QUESTION

Who should own our school buildings?
The mandate of the Advisory Group:

- Review provincial policies and develop a framework for adapting existing public properties into community hubs
- Inform the government’s approach to moving forward with community hubs

Over the first 90 days, the Advisory Group:

- Gathered targeted input
- Engaged community organizations and other groups to ensure the framework addressed local needs
- Examined best practices
- Engaged across Ontario ministries and communities
Overview: Strategic Framework and Action Plan

• Community Hubs in Ontario: A Strategic Framework and Action Plan was launched on August 10, 2015.

• The report is divided into key sections (details on subsequent slides):
  o **The Journey So Far**: Overview of process/engagement leading to development of Strategic Framework and Action Plan
  o **What We Heard**: Summary of feedback heard through engagement process
  o **Strategic Framework**: Proposed vision, principles, and goals for community hubs in Ontario based on feedback received
  o **Action Plan**: Recommendations to government to advance community hubs vision and remove barriers
The Journey So Far

- Launched designated Community Hubs website (including survey and email address): www.ontario.ca/communityhubs

- Received over 6,000 hits on website

- Over 400 responses to online survey

- Heard from more than 350 organizations

- Held over 70 meetings with stakeholders (sector organizations, provincial ministries, and local service providers from multiple sectors)

- Engagement took place with a broad range of individuals, sectors, communities and interests from across the province
What We Heard: Key Themes

Feedback received through the engagement process identified recurring themes:

1) **Coordinated Planning** (challenges and the need for improved co-ordination within the provincial government and local communities)

2) **Client-focused Service Delivery** (including barriers related to program silos, funding, and local capacity/resources)

3) **Community Infrastructure / Public Property** (barriers to accessing public space, building design, and challenges with government mandate to sell at fair market value)
Strategic Framework

• Vision

“"We want Ontario to be the best place to work, live and raise a family, and community hubs are a part of that vision.”

• - Kathleen Wynne, Premier of Ontario
Strategic Framework (con’t)

• **Principles**

1) Community planning is done locally with strong local leadership
2) Community needs should drive integrated service delivery
3) Community use is an integral part of provincial public asset planning
4) Community hubs are built through collaboration and shared responsibility
5) Strengthening communities requires provincial leadership
Strategic Framework (con’t)

• **Goals**

• **Co-ordinated Planning:** A coordinated system of planning that encourages partnerships and builds on what works

• **Client-focused Service Delivery:** A delivery system that provides integrated services to people in their communities

• **Community Infrastructure/Public Assets:** A system that maximizes the use of public assets for community benefit
• The Action Plan includes the **recommendations to government, all of which have been accepted:**

  o **Foundational recommendation** to create a provincial lead to oversee the implementation of the Strategic Framework and Action Plan

  o **27 Action items** in 7 areas:
    1) Integrated Service Delivery
    2) Develop a Provincial Strategy for Public Properties
    3) Remove Barriers and Create Incentives
    4) Support Integrated and Longer-Term Local Planning
    5) Ensure Financially Sustainable Community Hubs
    6) Increase Local Capacity
    7) Evaluate and Monitor the Outcomes
• 1. Integrated Service Delivery
  • Establish incentives for agencies/organizations that demonstrate integrated service delivery.
  • Simplify transfer payment accountability requirements to increase funding flexibility and reduce administrative burden for service providers.
  • Leverage existing work to establish protocols that protect privacy while allowing appropriate sharing of client information.
  • Evaluate the effectiveness of current and planned provincial integrated service delivery projects to examine opportunities as they might apply to community hubs.

• 2. Develop a Provincial Strategy for Public Properties
  • Assemble a comprehensive inventory of provincial and provincially supported public property, including those owned by the broader public sector (e.g., Community Health Centres, child care/early learning centres, libraries, elder person centres, affordable housing, schools, hospitals, colleges, universities, etc.).
  • Using this inventory, conduct analysis on opportunities for service delivery integration and co-location.
  • Change the disposition process for surplus public properties to review public needs and explore the feasibility of potential partnerships before a final decision is made.
2. Develop a Provincial Strategy for Public Properties (cont’d)

- Review the government mandate to require disposition of public properties at fair market value, including those owned by the broader public sector, and develop methodologies for conducting cost-benefit analysis of surplus properties that consider broader social and economic benefits to the communities.
- Build a broader and more complete realty circulation list and ensure sufficient time to review surplus properties before disposition.
- Develop measures to analyze the community use of provincially supported properties to better inform decision-making on surplus space.
- Implement a short-term strategy for schools.

3. Remove Barriers and Create Incentives

- Continue to work with stakeholders to identify and find solutions to additional barriers that prevent the establishment of community hubs.
- Simplify the capital approval process for community health agencies (e.g., Community Health Centres) and offer flexibility in design, funding and operating requirements to enable programming that reflects community needs.
- Increase LHIN’s capital approval authority for community health projects.
- Review the liability, security, access and property management issues to maximize use of school space by community partners.
• **4. Support Integrated and Longer-Term Local Planning**
  • Require integrated planning to ensure client-focused service delivery regardless of **jurisdictional boundaries** (provincial, municipal, school board, health and agency).
  • **Working with the municipal sector** and local stakeholders, explore opportunities to use **provincial policy levers and legislation** to strengthen and better enable community hubs.
  • Explore how public buildings can be designed and built with greater consideration for **multi-use, inter-generational** and **long-term** requirements to meet the needs of today and tomorrow.

• **5. Ensure Financially Sustainable Community Hubs**
  • Explore the use of **innovative financing models** for community hubs, including social enterprise, social finance (e.g., Social Impact Bonds), public/private partnerships, and Alternative Financing and Procurement (AFP).
  • Revise the **Infrastructure Ontario Loan Program** to expand eligibility.
  • Leverage provincial programs (e.g., ServiceOntario and Employment Ontario) as ‘**anchor tenants’** to support community hub establishment and long-term sustainability.
  • Review options to **leverage municipal financial tools** including business incubators, municipal capital facilities agreements and development charges, to support the creation of new community spaces.
6. **Increase Local Capacity**

- Engage experts and local practitioners to develop a **resource centre** for service providers to support the establishment of community hubs and provide training for providers.
- To support local planning activities, and in keeping with the Province’s Open Government initiative, make **government data** such as demographic, GIS mapping, service planning information and the surplus public properties inventory **publicly available online**.
- Explore opportunities to support **virtual community hubs**.

7. **Evaluate and Monitor Outcomes**

- Working with the Treasury Board Secretariat’s new Centre of Excellence for Evidence-Based Decision Making, develop an **outcomes-based evaluation and measurement** structure.
Three Goals of the Strategy

• 1) Coordinated Planning

• (2) Client-Focused Service Delivery

• (3) Community Infrastructure / Public Property
Implementation

• “...Our government is fully supportive of the recommendations laid out in this report, and we will continue to work with our partners and stakeholders to transform public service delivery to better meet the needs of Ontarians.”

•- Kathleen Wynne, Premier of Ontario
Implementation (con’t)

• Special Advisor will continue to engage the government and stakeholders to inform the implementation of the recommendations:
  o Input/feedback will continue to be accepted through community.hubs@ontario.ca email address
  o The website (www.ontario.ca/communityhubs) will remain active

• A Deputy Ministers’ Implementation Committee has been assembled to oversee government-wide implementation:
  o Lead ministries assigned to each recommendation and implementation work planning underway on all recommendations (timelines dependent on each recommendation)
  o Work on recommendations will be done in concert with other aligned recommendations
Questions?

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