

Part II: Community Consultations

Historical Perspective of Regina North Central Demographics

Regina North Central originally served as the home for labourers of European descent who worked in conjunction with railroad construction, services, and facilities and in the early development of Regina's industrial area.

Amendments to the Indian Act in the 1960's meant that Status Indians were no longer penalized for leaving Reservations and establishing homes elsewhere. Many chose to exercise that option and took up residence in Regina North Central. Consequently, the demographic make-up of North Central in terms of ethnicity has changed dramatically in the intervening years. Regina North Central's current population numbers approximately 12,000. Of those roughly 1/3 or 4,000 people are of Aboriginal ancestry. The balance of the area's population is made up of European and other ethnic and cultural groups.ⁱ

It is not a prosperous area, nor is it an area comprised solely of what is often thought of as traditional families. According to the 1996 Census figures, 50% of the households are below the Statistics Canada LIC vs. 18% for Regina as a whole and 35% of Regina North Central households are headed by single parents. The average family income in Regina North Central of \$27,545 was less than half of that of the rest of Regina (\$56,615) in 1996.ⁱⁱ

Review Of Selected Past And Current Rehabilitative Initiatives

During the 1980's the Saskatchewan Housing Corporation examined strategies for the revitalization of inner-city areas of Regina including the Cathedral District and Regina North Central.

It was believed that replacing 10% of the housing stock with double-density new construction would revitalize and help ensure a healthier, well-maintained inner-city neighbourhood.

However, when the same principles were applied to North Central there was a concern that replacement of merely 10% of the housing stock would not be sufficient to ensure its revitalization due to a number of characteristic and demographic differences (e.g. smaller lots and 4,000 more residents). It was surmised that 20% would produce the desired result but with 3620 dwellings in North Central the task was not deemed practical.ⁱⁱⁱ

Twenty years later, the Cathedral area has become a success story and North Central continues to suffer. It is possible that some of Cathedral's achievement resulted from the movement of disadvantaged residents to areas such as North Central when housing

improved and the costs to own and rent increased accordingly, making the Cathedral area less affordable.

The migration to North Central may indeed be a factor, but it is not the sole determinant factor. It is also necessary to consider other social and economic aspects of Regina North Central that may inhibit present and future community progress.^{iv} It is necessary to consider the cost of poverty itself.

The literature indicates that poverty is omnipresent on many North Central blocks and has an insidious effect on many of the residents, particularly on the community's children and youth.^v

Nevertheless, it must be remembered that the children currently being raised in North Central are the community builders of tomorrow. If they have a decent place to live and grow, where they can get a good education and have good job prospects, then the future of the North Central area and for Regina as a whole can be very good. However, without decent housing, education and job prospects their future may be bleak and Regina will not benefit from the realization of their full potential in the future.^{vi}

Moreover, the literature indicates that poverty, poor accommodations, lack of educational and occupational prospects are presently having a markedly negative impact on the area. Overcoming problems borne of those factors is North Central's primary challenge – both currently and in the years to come.

Steps to meet the challenge are presently being undertaken. A number of responses to the difficulties confronting North Central have been made by the many grassroots organizations that work in the area. These organizations attempt to address pressing issues such as prostitution, AIDS, poverty, family violence and childcare.^{vii} The community-policing program and community schooling^{viii} are other positive attempts to resolve some of the issues that need to be addressed.

The First Nations and Metis communities in North Central have taken the initiative in improving the educational prospects for youth residing in the area and beyond.

A three-year plan has been formulated to develop and implement an Urban First Nations/Metis Education Model. It has been decided that a pilot project will be conducted at Scott Collegiate and Albert School^{ix} in the heart of Regina North Central. Much work has been completed on this project and it should see fruition soon.^x

The Regina Health Authority, the Department of Social Services and other agencies are also committed to helping bring about positive change, through initiatives such as the Drug Strategy Project^{xi} that are currently under way.

The North Central Community Consultation Process

The North Central Community Partnership conducted a qualitative survey of North Central residents between December 2002 and February 2003.

Seven consultants were hired and trained to conduct the survey. The Terms of Reference for the survey were approved by the Board of the North Central Community Society^{xii}. Members of the survey team were either residents of North Central Regina or had roots in the community. The survey team contributed to the formulation of the survey instrument^{xiii} that was administered to approximately 450 residents spread out over 46 blocks of North Central Regina selected by the Board.^{xiv} As well, two senior's groups and two youth groups were given the opportunity to participate in the survey process.

The firm of Degelman Research conducted two focus groups on March 1, 2003. The main intent of the focus group exercise was to do an in-depth exploration of the quantitative findings arising from the door-to-door interviews conducted for the survey.^{xv} A related facilitated community meeting was held in March for Regina North Central residents.^{xvi}

The primary topics covered in the survey, the focus groups and the meeting were:

- The most positive aspects of living in Regina North Central
- Pressing problems or concerns in the community
- Identification and assessment of possible initiatives to address the major issues

Responses to the survey by the whole of North Central were tabulated and analyzed. A further breakdown of the data based on geographic location within the community was then made.

To facilitate a comprehensive portrait, the survey results were essentially divided in two based on the geography of North Central. The demarcation line was Elphinstone Street. Data gleaned from respondents living in the area of Elphinstone Street to Albert Street were designated as being from within area #1, or East North Central. Data coming from respondents living in the area from Lewvan Drive to Elphinstone Street were designated as being from within Area #2, or West North Central.

Anecdotal evidence related by the Community Consultants suggests that the residents of North Central were, in the main, enthusiastic about participating in the survey process. This perceived high level of cooperation might be attributable to many factors including the method by which contact with the respondents was initially made and the nature of the survey itself.^{xvii}

Confirmation of the validity of the Community Consultants impressions in this respect lies in the fact that people who were not able to be respondents at the time of the survey, requested inclusion in the process by phone long after the survey itself had ended.^{xviii}

Survey Results

North Central's community character can be described as feisty and resilient. The residents, as represented by this survey, are, by and large, optimistic about the future. It is a guarded optimism, though, tempered with realism. In the survey the residents acknowledged that there are many problems in North Central but the area's problems were not viewed as insurmountable. However, the respondents recognized that in order for the problems to be overcome, they must first be addressed.

The source for the resident's optimism stemmed from the many good qualities that they perceive in their neighbourhoods. The positive aspects that were noted lay with the spirit of community in North Central and in its economic and physical attributes.

Many said that neighbors watch out for each other in this part of the city much more than is the case in other sections of Regina. This fact was frequently cited as one of the area's most positive traits. Although many respondents themselves contemptuously described North Central as "the hood", many others noted that their families live close by and that, for them, North Central is their home. It is their home within their home of Regina. They strongly indicated that they wouldn't want to live anywhere else.

Other respondents noted that they live in North Central principally because it is affordable. North Central is not a wealthy area and many of the respondents said that they reside there because of the reasonable rents. Other respondents noted that the area gave them the opportunity to become homeowners because of low purchase prices and low taxes. For them North Central is an attractive area because it contains "starter homes". Others have built or purchased in the area because they can have nice centrally located accommodation without becoming "house broke" in the process.

Many respondents were enthused by the mature and diverse nature of the community and the locale in general. Many applauded the presence of various programs, facilities and services in their specific neighbourhoods.

However, even the most enthusiastic respondents tended to recognize the need to revitalize North Central. Many respondents complained about the look of their neighbourhoods. Rundown properties and inadequate housing made it difficult to maintain a positive view about this section of the city for many of the respondents.

It was noted too, that the rundown appearance of North Central frequently gives a bad impression of Regina to visitors from out of town. In this regard it was noted that football games at Taylor Field and events such as the Agribition and the Exhibition all occur within the boundaries of North Central. It was felt that sprucing up this section of Regina would help Regina put its best foot forward.

Conversely it was noted that visitors to the area frequently show a great deal of disrespect for North Central and its residents through activities such as littering and generally engaging in "trashy" behaviour.

A need to revamp the area's infrastructure was often recognized in the survey. The poor condition of the sidewalks and roads were recurrent themes in this regard. As well, better street lighting was frequently advocated as a means of dealing with a matter of great concern for North Central residents - crime.

Many respondents were uneasy about the amount of crime in North Central. Violence, theft, property damage, evidence of drug addiction and prostitution in the form of discarded condoms and needles were cited as sources of apprehension by many of the respondents.

However, the respondents indicated that not all portions of North Central experience the same level or types of crime, even though all are affected by it. North Central covers many square miles. The disruptive presence of prostitution, for example, may be a pressing concern for one part of this designated section of Regina, but has no direct bearing on another portion of North Central. It, too, is effected though because the sex trade damages the reputation of North Central as a whole.

The bad reputation it endures not only affects the morale of North Central residents, it is also perceived to have the net effect of lowering property values in this entire section of the city. Crime in North Central thus has psychological and substantive ramifications beyond its immediate victims.

Actual crime, the threat of crime, and the perception of crime drags the reputation of North Central down. Moreover it negatively effects the city of Regina as a whole.

Regina has repeatedly earned the unfortunate designation as Canada's "Crime Capital". Much of the city's crime does indeed occur within the confines of Regina North Central. If Regina is ever going to improve its reputation, it is going to have to meet the challenges posed by revitalizing this section of the city.^{xix}

The Most Positive Aspects of Living in the North Central Area

Question: " What do you like most about North Central?"^{xx}

1. Affordability

Many residents noted the affordable nature of the area as a positive attribute. Economical lots, low prices for homes, low taxes and reasonable rents were all cited as favorable features of North Central. Sample responses:

- Community as a whole
 "Cheap to build"
 "Cheap rent"
 "Cheap taxes"

- East North Central
"Reasonable real estate prices"
"Property taxes are low"
"Cheap lots [at] time of purchase"
- West North Central
"[I] can afford to buy a house here"
" Good prices. Wartime houses! [I] love the crescents"

2. Central Location and Ease of Access

North Central was deemed to be a very convenient place to live by many respondents. It was noted that several of Regina's attractions are located within its parameters. Good bus service and proximity to major thoroughfares were also favorable features mentioned by respondents in this regard. Sample responses:

- Community as a whole
"The location. ...It's close enough to downtown and the bike path - not next door but not that far"
"The most convenient place to live, you can go anyplace in the city in ten minutes"
- East North Central
"...Close to everything...close to downtown, Agridome, Taylor Field"
"Close to work"
" Very central, thus the name"
- West North Central
"[The] Lewvan and Ringroad are near"
"It is central. Close to school and church... hospital"
"The convenience to downtown and Taylor field, bus routes, schools, Exhibition Park, the Field House, the Hospital"
"Good bus routes"

3. Mature Area

The fact that North Central is one of Regina's older areas was seen as an element in its favor by many of the respondents. They noted the presence of trees, older homes, established parks and schools as being assets to this locale. Sample responses:

- Community as a whole
"Lots of parks ... rinks to go skating"
"Schools and daycare"
"The schools are really good"
"[I] like [the] older style of houses and the developed land"

- East North Central
"The big beautiful homes. If money was put into it, it would be like the Cathedral area everybody would want to live in North Central"
"The trees. The over arching elm trees"
- West North Central
"[There's a] nice park to play around in"
"[It's full of] people who grew up in this neighbourhood. [There's a] sense of roots and community"
"The houses all have character"
"All the big trees ... has a lot of shade"

4. Diversity

Many respondents view North Central as a vital and vibrant area of Regina due to its cultural diversity. Sample responses:

- Community as a whole
"...The great diversity of people"
"Cross-cultural mixture has always been interesting to me"
- East North Central
"It's a vital place to be"
"The non-uniformity of the people and the homes"
- West North Central
"People are respectful"
"The friendliness of the First Nations people"

5. Other

Many other positive aspects of North Central were identified. They included the sense of community in the area, existing programs and services, and the "down to earth" nature of its residents.

- Community as a whole
"People are very supportive of our business, people use this store on a regular basis"
"People are just easy to talk to"
"Stability. [It's] like own little town"
"The coming together of people when an issue needs to be raised, there are people to help out"
"My neighbors give me support and watch my house"
"The community events - gym night at Sacred Heart and Scott"

- East North Central
 - " When my kids were in high school there ...[were] a lot of programs – free swimming and other advantages to living in the area. Otherwise we would not ...[have been] able to afford the programs offered in other areas"*
 - "Soul's Harbor North Central Family Centre"*
 - "The Friendship Centre"*
 - " It's Aboriginal and it's very community minded. The community is very prepared to deal with issues and I really believe that they want to improve so they will work together to help it"*

- West North Central
 - "The school is very close and they offer a lot in that school that other school's don't - Cree and the Japanese language"*
 - "Quiet area"*
 - "The neighbors are awesome"*
 - "People are more down to Earth in this area"*
 - "[It's full of] people who grew up in this neighbourhood. [There's a] sense of roots and community"*

Identification of the Major Problems

Question: "What do you like least about North Central?" ^{xxi}

1. Dangerous Area

Violence, theft, rampant substance abuse, discarded drug paraphernalia and disruption to neighbourhoods by the presence of the sex trade were all cited as factors that make sections of North Central dangerous and undesirable.

2. Poor Housing

Many respondents saw lack of quality housing and poor property maintenance as major problems for the area. Renters and homeowners alike expressed dismay over the condition of many of the existing rental properties in North Central. Renters because they do not like to live in squalor and homeowners because they don't wish to see their property values diminished further.

3. Youth and Children at Risk

Neglect of children was seen as a major problem in this portion of Regina. Concern was expressed over the welfare of the children and over the presence of gangs in North Central. There was also an expression of fear over criminal activities engaged in by youth in general.

4. Poverty

Many respondents noted that poverty is a factor in many of the challenges facing North Central including crime, substance abuse, poor housing and the negative impact it has on children and youth.

5. Other

The survey respondents identified many other problems including lack of business amenities, poor civic services, a need to upgrade the infrastructure, and the negative reputation of the area as undesirable features of North Central.

Community Aspirations

Question: "If you could have one wish to make North Central a good place to live, what would it be?"^{xxii}

1. Safer Community

Many respondents indicated that they wished there could be an increased sense of safety and security through an eradication of crime in North Central. Prostitution, drug abuse, violence and theft were identified as major problems that they wished to see addressed. Confronting these issues is a precondition for revitalizing the area in their view.

2. Better Housing

Better housing in North central was an equally important wish for many of the respondents. They felt that this need has arisen because there is a lack of accountability on the part of landlords. The solutions suggested by the respondents ranged from a desire to see stricter regulations enforced to the implementation of incentives and programs that would enable more home ownership by neighbourhood residents.

3. Better Environment for Children and Youth

Many respondents stipulated a better environment for children and youth as their primary wish for improving the community. The view was often expressed that young people would be less likely to get into trouble if they had more organized activities to participate in.

4. Less Poverty

Lessening the grip of poverty on North Central was seen as the best means of revitalizing the community by a substantial portion of the respondents. Many possible approaches to dealing with poverty were suggested including more education, more employment, more social assistance and a more efficient use of existing social programs, facilities and services.

5. Other

There were numerous other wishes expressed to improve North Central. They included: the wish that residents would take greater pride in the area, that there would be a less negative view of the area by the rest of Regina, and for the presence of more cultural and recreational activities and facilities and for mutual respect and harmony between all people living in this community.

North Central Community Partnership Qualitative Research Report

Recommendations Synopsis ^{xxiii}

The Degelman Research firm conducted two focus groups on March 1, 2003. The main intent of the focus group exercise was to do an in-depth exploration of the quantitative findings arising from the door-to door interviews conducted for the survey. The following is a synopsis of that report's recommendations.

1. Safety

The Degelman Report notes that the focus groups identified the following as the most effective ways of making North Central safer:

- Improved policing in North Central
 - rectify the problem of slow police response
 - extend community policing hours
 - increase the police presence on the streets
- Keep youth off the street
 - extend hours of operation for recreational facilities
 - develop an art program for youth to enhance the area's architecture
 - offer music, art and sport programs for youth
 - open an establishment designed to be popular with the young but not conducive to substance abuse
 - have regular Teen Nights like East Regina
 - have "drop-ins" at local churches
 - develop a supervised latchkey program for children
 - have supervised events in the parks
- Develop Neighbourhood Watch style programs
 - encourage more involvement by residents in watching out for one another

2. Housing

The Report notes that the focus groups identified the following as the most effective ways to improve the housing conditions in North central:

- Make landlord's more accountable through licensing and enforcement of strict standards
- Provide home ownership opportunities to resident's ala Habitat for Humanity and the Neighbourhood Home Ownership Program
- Develop programs that encourage property maintenance
- Enforce Regina's Property/Yard Maintenance Bylaws

3. Youth Issues

The Report dealt with Youth issues. In addition to making North Central safer by keeping youth off the streets, it was felt that it was desirable to keep youth in school. Suggested steps included:

- Financial or other inducements to stay in school
- A truant officer
- Render dropouts ineligible for social assistance
- Develop early intervention programs for identified and targeted children who are at risk for dropping out
- Get the message out that school attendance is mandatory, not optional

4. Community-based Service Groups

Participants felt there might be duplication of the provision of services in North Central. The participants did not see a need for a new community centre in North Central, since there is already one in existence. It was felt that the community centre programs should be offered for all area residents, not just youth. It was also felt that the community centre should be both a social and program centre.

The focus groups members perceived a lack of awareness regarding available services. It was suggested that attempts should be made to increase the level of awareness among the area's residents on this matter and on the community resources available through the Albert Scott Community Centre.

Other suggestions made by the focus group participants included maintaining reasonable rental rates for the community centre facilities, ensuring the promotion of new crime and housing programs and initiatives and the creation of a fund raising club.

5. Community Development Initiatives

The participants were of the view that people's perceptions of North Central will not be substantially changed unless there is actual change in the area or attempts are made to address the issues of crime and the condition of the area itself. However, some remedial suggestions were made that gained favour by the participants including promoting the area's positive points, encouraging a neighbourhood cleanup, fostering a celebration in recognition of the diversity in the area and developing a volunteer pool.

North Central Community Facility Feasibility Strategy^{xxiv}

In the Fall of 2002, an Ad Hoc committee was organized to develop a feasibility strategy for an integrated community services approach in Regina North Central.^{xxv} Acting in conjunction with the North Central Community Partnership the committee participated in the focus group exercises and held a community meeting in March of 2003. The following are pertinent excerpts from the Feasibility Strategy Report emanating from those and other committee activities.^{xxvi}

According to the Report, the residents identified the current problems associated with program and service delivery use as:

- a duplication of services and programs
- poor communication among service providers
- competition for limited dollars
- little communication with residents about the types of programs and services available in the neighbourhood
- a lack of understanding and co-ordination among service providers^{xxvii}

According to the Report, residents offered the following suggestions to improve the services being delivered in North Central:

- increase access to information on programs and services
- establish a single access point number that residents can call to receive information and advice on services and programs
- establish a better referral system
- increase awareness about events and programming
- have the North Central Community Society newsletter regularly published and distributed^{xxviii}

The Report reached the following conclusions:

- Residents indicated their preference for programs and services that any other neighbourhood would have. Prevention and recreation programs were emphasized over intervention and treatment initiatives, particularly for families. Residents are asking for assistance in the prevention and reduction of crime and to clean up the neighbourhood. Some concrete solutions involving the community were proposed related to improving the as-built environment and reducing crime. These measures should be initiated by engaging the community.
- There was a low level of interest in more intervention and treatment type programs. This may not mean that intervention and treatment programs are not necessary, but has more to do with the priority of the individuals participating in the consultations. It is suspected that transient populations and individuals severely distressed or disadvantaged did not participate in the consultations. As is common in many studies, even those using a variety of research methods, such as phone surveys or door-to-door interviews, it is difficult to get input from “hidden” or hard-to-reach populations.

- Most people in North Central expressed a need for the co-ordination of programs and services but are not convinced that a facility in North Central will have the desired affect of integrating and co-ordinating services to residents. ^{xxix}

The Report goes on to note that the following four issues are of the greatest concern to the neighbourhood:

- crime prevention initiatives
- co-ordination of programs and services for residents with multi-needs
- community cleanliness/improvements to the as-built environment
- leisure-time programs to engage the residents, particularly families, in community-building^{xxx}

Advisory Group Meetings

Two advisory group meetings were held as part of The North Central Visioning Process.^{xxxi} The North Central Community Partnership relayed pertinent information to the Advisory Group prior to the initial meeting including the survey results and a recap of activities undertaken by the Partnership to date. It was noted that those activities included:

- An historical demographic survey
- A review of past and current rehabilitative attempts for the area
- Interviews of stakeholders and other interested relevant parties ^{xxxii}
- The creation of an Advisory group^{xxxiii}
- Exploration of models of inner-city rejuvenation^{xxxiv}
- Engagement of Federal, provincial and civic levels of government and First Nations and Metis representatives in the project process.
- Conducting a preliminary analysis of the project based on five primary areas in need of attention
- Development of a strategy to engage the North Central Community in the visioning process and formulation of the questions to be asked
- Conducting community consultations through surveys, focus groups and a public meeting
- Starting the process for identifying initiatives for early implementation.

First Advisory Group Meeting Synopsis^{xxxv}

The April 25th meeting was a successful crucial step in the attempt to forge a vision for Regina North Central. The participants were invited to engage in the process because they are seen as key members of the community. The participants were provided with detailed information concerning Regina North Central both prior and during the meeting. This information was largely derived from a survey of the views of Regina North Central residents that was conducted during the Winter of 2002-2003. That survey ascertained the likes and dislikes of community members as well as their aspirations for the community. Other relevant and purely factual (as opposed to matters of opinion)

material also emerged from the survey and other forms of community consultation and research was presented at the meeting.

The visioning process was premised on a few assumptions. The first is that change is not easy and does not occur in a vacuum. The second is that a community derives strength from its capacity to take charge of its destiny. The third is that in order to take charge of its own destiny, a community must indeed have a vision. The vision itself must be long-term, lasting and involve the community. Visioning is a process of connecting. The underlying questions that are asked through the visioning process are "Where are we now?" "Where are we going?" and "What do we want?"

In order to facilitate discussion and the visioning process the larger group was divided into three sub groups for the completion of three tasks. The composition of each group varied for each task.

Task 1

As part of the process to determine where Regina North Central is now, the first task assigned was concerned with the identification of resident's values, strengths and aspirations.

Method

Based on their insights and the material presented preceding the meeting and at the meeting, participants were asked to render a profile of typical North Central residents, and in so doing they were asked to examine "What do the people of North Central really feel?"

Results

It was noted that there is a great deal of diversity within Regina North Central making it difficult to determine what constitutes a "typical" North Central resident. It was noted too that North Central is the home for large numbers of Aboriginals and Non-Aboriginals alike and that there are distinct cultural differences between these groups. It was further noted that those differences should be acknowledged and respected.

While it may not be possible to neatly pigeonhole North Central residents, a few common traits, values, and emotions were identified in the discussions.

It was thought that Regina North Central residents are not strangers to adversity and are adept at overcoming it. However, overcoming adversity and struggling to meet the basic needs of life often means that the larger picture cannot be seen, despite the fact that there is a desire for an overall better life on the part of a typical member of this community. It was felt that there is recognition that the community and individuals within the community need assistance at this point in order to become self-sufficient and self-sustaining in the future.

It was felt that the negative view of Regina North Central by other Reginans is a point of contention for the typical North Central resident. Particularly because the "typical resident" has a sense of pride in their heritage and in the North Central community itself. Regina North Central is home for its residents and a typical North Central resident feels that it should be respected by others as such.

Nonetheless, a typical North Central resident recognizes that there are indeed problems within this community and desires improvements - whether it be in respect to increased safety, better services and amenities, better housing or more decorous surroundings.

Finally commitment to family and family concerns was identified through this exercise as a common feature of the typical North Central resident regardless of racial or ethnic origin.

Task 2

As part of the process of ascertaining where North Central is going, or could be going, the groups were assigned the task of writing newspaper headlines concerning Regina North Central in the future.

Method

The groups were asked to generate headlines describing life in the community as they see it being in 2020. It was noted that projected headlines of this sort reflect 3 distinct trains of thought:

- **Conservation**, or a minimum amount of change
- **Revitalization**, or the same strategies with improvements, and
- **Redevelopment**, or a fundamental shift in direction.

Conservation, revitalization and redevelopment thus defined were to be used as the starting point for the discussions by the groups.

Results

Although the results marked a fundamental change, the route taken to get there was one of revitalization as defined in this exercise.^{xxxvi}

Academic achievement by North Central students was a common theme for headlines written by the three groups. A significant increase in homeownership by North Central residents was also a theme common to all three groups. All three groups deemed the successful advent of cultural events and/or facilities in the community worthy of headline stature too.

Increased safety or lack of crime was emphasized by two of the three groups while the third emphasized an acceptance of North Central residents of the Regina Police Services and acceptance of North Central residents by the Regina Police Services in the form of a resident attaining the position of Chief of Police.

Task 3

Describe the North Central community in the future.

Method

The groups were asked to write a paragraph describing North Central Regina in the year 2020, reflecting what people want to preserve, create and change.

Results

Group One Feedback

- Our community will be a safe and thriving place that supports family and children to grow together to achieve their full potential. Working together, our community will reflect our cultural and economic diversity to support a range of business and social supports for everyone.

Group Two Feedback

- Improved and affordable comfortable housing, scaled to human needs, replacing used-up housing
- Safe community
- Preserving existing trees
- Promote walking to amenities/services in the community
- A youth-friendly community supporting those seeking identification, validation, acceptance and meaning, with the ability to see a future, a reason to hope and a sense of direction
- Community services available in a centre
- A youth centre that assists individuals to see the future and the opportunity for choices
- See a family-friendly community rooted in social support, enjoying adequate housing
- Walking access to 'good food' grocery store and other services
- Physical and recreational opportunities
- General uplift in educational opportunities
- Provision of ways for overcoming barriers such as lack of money, addictions and poor housing

Group Three Feedback

- North Central is more than an attractive and inviting neighbourhood; it is a community. The residents are unified across ages and cultures. Opportunities are both affordable and accessible. The opportunities are within the physical environment of safety, play, quality education, health care and innovation for all. Strength is gleaned from the residents' diversity and thriving and healthy families. The successful work of all community partners contributes to this vibrant community. North Central is a safe and caring community where pride in the community is a watchword.

There were three primary objectives for the April 25 Advisory Group Meeting:

- the development of alternative scenarios of the future for North Central
- evaluation of those scenarios
- the development of a vision statement for North central

Attaining these objectives was a necessary precondition for the successful completion of the overall goal of these meetings. The overall goal is to develop an Action Plan to achieve the emerging vision for Regina North Central's future. Developing the groundwork further for an Action Plan was the specific purpose for the second advisory group meeting held on May 2, 2003.

Second Advisory Group Meeting Synopsis^{xxxvii}

Background

The minutes and a synopsis of the initial Advisory Group Meeting held on April 25, 2003 were circulated to participants prior to the May 2nd meeting. The synopsis noted the principles underlying the visioning process and the method that was employed to forge the basis for a Vision Statement at the April 25th meeting. The synopsis noted that the Vision Statement is but one step in the overall process. The synopsis noted that the focus of the May 2nd meeting would be to develop a foundation for an Action Plan based upon the April 25th Vision for Regina North Central. The Action Plan is the next essential step in community development for Regina North Central utilizing the visioning process.

Overview

The May 2nd meeting commenced with an overview of the process to date and a caveat concerning the future of this endeavour. Among other things, it was stressed that the North Central Community Partnership was established to foster a grassroots vision for Regina North Central and that the endeavour has been successful thus far. However, experience has shown that a grassroots initiative such as this will only maintain its success if the community continues to exercise control over the process. To reach successful fruition for this project the community must not relinquish its control to government bureaucracy. Ideally inspirational leaders should emerge to act as liaisons between the community and the powers that be and to champion the interests of the community.

That is to say, in this regard, the government should not be doing for the people what the people can better be doing for themselves. Control over the pillars of the Action Plan that is formulated through this process should be retained at the community level to ensure its successful implementation.

Perspective

It was noted that communities are built by adopting an assets perspective as opposed to a needs perspective.

Challenges and Principles of Community Development

The participants were asked to bear the following challenges and principles in mind when completing the day's exercises.^{xxxviii}

Challenges of Community Development

- Balancing the needs for long-term solutions against immediate circumstances that require immediate attention.
- Sustainability i.e. "development that meets the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs."^{xxxix}
- Economic difficulties: communities are facing simultaneous challenges of increased demand for services and fewer resources to meet those demands.
- Shifting responsibilities: Local communities are increasingly expected to deal with issues that were previously seen as the responsibility of the Federal and Provincial governments such as drugs, gangs, the homeless and patterns of development.
- Community skepticism that results in lack of community participation.
- Community power is currently dispersed and thinly distributed. There is an increase in diversity resulting in micro-communities within a larger community. Effective decision making becomes more difficult when more people are clamouring to be heard. Leadership in this social environment is difficult. The question becomes "Who is going to champion the interests of the overall community while being responsive to the competing views of a diverse community?"

Community Development Principles

- Equity
- Participation
- Community Building
- Cooperation and Collaboration
- Self-reliance/Community Centred
- Integration
- Interdependence
- Living Within Ecological Limits
- Capacity building
- Diversity
- Appropriate Indicators

Assumptions

The exercises conducted at the initial meeting tended to produce results that marked a fundamental shift in direction. However, the principle that emerged is that the method employed to get these results can more accurately be described as coming from an assumption of "Revitalization". The "Revitalization Assumption" is based upon current but refined strategies for community development. All further exercises in this process should be based upon the assumption that current strategies should not be abandoned but, rather, refined.

Exercises

The process followed at the second Advisory Group meeting was a mixture of individual and group exercises. Limitations to the composition of the groups were set to ensure that there would be a diversity of viewpoints throughout the process.^{x1}

Twelve broad-based categories concerning the needs of North Central and the capacities that should be enhanced were identified.^{xii} Through individual votes, priority was assigned to the following four categories: Housing, Education, Safety, and Capacity Building. As a group exercise, participants were asked to devise a General Action Plan based upon these prioritized categories. Specifically they were asked to address, "What will be done?" "Who is responsible"" When will it be done?" and "How will it be done".

^{xiv} Please see the map as reproduced in Appendix I.

^{xv} Please see "North Central Community Partnership Qualitative Research Report, March 2003" by Degelman Research in Appendix II. That report notes:

Focus group sessions seek to develop insight and direction rather than quantitatively precise or absolute measures. By reason of the size of the groups, it is understood that the work is exploratory in nature. The findings cannot be projected to any larger population, but were developed for the purpose of qualitative rather than quantitative frame of reference. As such, the findings should be regarded as directional only. (at p. 6 of the Report)

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^{xvii} A day or so prior to attempting to conduct an interview a drop off of written material was made to individual dwellings advising the residents that someone would be stopping by shortly to discuss conducting an interview. The pamphlet explained the nature of the survey and gave a phone number to call in the event that a face-to-face interview was inconvenient. The pamphlet was essentially the same as the Terms of Reference reproduced in Appendix I. Please see the North Central Community Partnership Terms of Reference and Community Survey in Appendix I.

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- Step one in the feasibility strategy was to research the service and program needs of the North Central neighbourhood from the resident's perspective. The City of Regina, in conjunction with the North Central Partnership Project, agreed to research and gather information that would provide the committee with a view to the needs and preferences of the residents in order to assist the committee in determining future action related to an integrated service model.

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- In order to gain the perspective of the neighbourhood residents and agency representatives and service providers, community members residing in North Central were consulted to identify the types of services needed in North Central. In addition, research into recent reports prepared for the United Way of Regina and Regina Regional Intersectoral Committee, and Ranch Ehrlo Society and Ehrlo Community Services was completed.
 - A facilitated public meeting was held in conjunction with the North Central Community Society, the North Central Partnership Project, and the City of Regina. Forty-five residents, (approximately one-quarter self-declared as Aboriginal) gathered in March to discuss the types of programs and services used and needed by residents of North Central.
 - Two focus groups were facilitated by the North Central Partnership Project involving sixteen residents of the North Central neighbourhood representing a good cross section of the population.
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xxvii Please see p.6 of the Report

xxviii Please see p. 7 of the Report

xxix Ibid.

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xxxii In the process of gathering information representatives from various organizations and groups were consulted. The list includes:

- Ed Bloos – Food Bank
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^{xxxiv} Inner City neighbourhood deterioration and ways to rejuvenate and develop these areas has been a focus of attention for many municipalities across North America and other parts of the world for many years. There are a number of success stories where housing projects, business development, different education delivery models and community involvement in the process has resulted in a better quality of life for all residents. Examples exist in Columbus, Ohio and Baltimore, Maryland. Winnipeg appears to be experiencing positive development in some of its worst neighbourhoods. Lessons learned from these positive experiences can be used with regard to Regina North Central where applicable.

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- Living Within Ecological Limits –Processes, structures, and initiatives that respect ecological limits to human economic activity are encouraged.
- Capacity building –The acquisition of relevant skills for community development by individuals and institutions should be promoted.
- Diversity – Community development activities vary from community to community because differing communities have differing needs.
- Appropriate Indicators – Evaluations should be based upon appropriate community derived indicators rather than through conventional measures and standards.

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Footnotes

ⁱ Please see the "North Central Neighbourhood Profile: Synopsis in Appendix II According to Saskatchewan Health Data, North Central's population was 12,154 in 2001 and 3,886 North Central Residents are Registered Indians.

ⁱⁱ The boundaries used to designate "Regina North Central" may vary slightly between the 1996 Census and this current study. For the purposes of the North Central Community Partnership Community Survey, "Regina North Central" was defined as being between Albert Street on the East, Lewvan Drive on the West, the CNR tracks on the North, and the CPR tracks on the South. Please see the map in Appendix I.

ⁱⁱⁱ From information gleaned through conversations with Saskatchewan Housing officials. The Municipality also had its vision and plans that supported such a strategy and included support to infrastructure and programs like the Inner-City Housing Stimulation Strategy. Community wellness programs such as the creation of the Neighbourhood Community Associations and attention to recreation and healthy use of open spaces have also had a positive impact.

^{iv} Please see the "North Central Neighbourhood Profile: Synopsis in Appendix II

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^{vi} Please see " A Focus on Regina's Children and Youth: A Summary Report" by the Council on Social Development Regina, Inc., February 2003

^{vii} Please see the "North Central Neighbourhood Profile: Synopsis" in Appendix II According to the synopsis there are "40 organizations comprising about 10% of the agencies and programs listed in the Human Services database compiled by Regina Police Services have service facilities or mailing addresses in [the] North Central Neighbourhood." – at p. 2 of the Synopsis

^{viii} A "community school" is defined in the "Community Consultations for Albert Community School and Scott Collegiate Interim Report" as " A Saskatchewan Learning initiative designed for elementary schools in communities with a given number of 'at-risk' children. The program provides funding to these schools to facilitate the involvement of community services, as well as parents, in fulfilling the needs of students."

"At risk" is defined in the same document as a "Term that describes students who, for a variety of reasons such as behavioural, economic, cultural, physical, or mental, are in danger of being unable to complete K-12."

^{ix} The goals of the initiative are:

- 1) To establish a partnership and identify and respond to the needs of the First Nations and Metis communities in the urban education system
- 2) To improve the school completion success rate of First Nations and Metis students in the city of Regina
- 3) To alleviate any systemic barriers to student achievement and school completion that may exist in schools.
- 4) To work towards providing high quality education for all students

The Guiding Groups for this initiative are the File Hills Qu'Appelle Tribal Council/-O-Tee-Paym-SooWuk Metis Local/Regina Health District/ City of Regina/ Canadian Heritage/ Saskatchewan Learning/ Regina Public Schools.

^x A proposal to develop and implement a First Nations Education Model was initiated by the File Hills Qu'Appelle Tribal Council in November of 2000. A working group was established to pursue the development of a model to be piloted in the Regina Public School System. The Western Region III of the Metis Nation of Saskatchewan approached the committee and requested that they be included in the development of the education model. A community consultation was held at Scott Collegiate in March 2001. The initiative grew out of these consultations. An Interim Report concerning this project by the Saskatchewan Instructional Development and Research Unit of the University of Regina was issued in April 2003.

^{xi} For more information on this project please see www.reginahealth.sk.ca/programs/drug_strategy/

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