

Harbour Landing Pilot Project Final Report

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Executive Summary

Recreational and social programming and services, including community events, are delivered through a variety of operating models in Regina. One of these models is the Community Association (CA) system. This is a model of community development whereby voluntary organizations provide recreation and social programs and services that enhance the quality of life of the residents within each area of the City. The CAs provide community programming at the neighbourhood level in addition to functioning as a vehicle for grassroots community engagement and participation.

The CAs are separate legal entities and autonomous bodies that receive the on-going support of designated Community Consultants and the Parks, Recreation & Cultural Services department of the City of Regina. The Community Consultants provide perspectives on priorities, problem-solving support and assist with connecting the CAs to resources within the City of Regina.

According to *Design Regina: The Official Community Plan* (2013) 'Guidelines for Complete Neighbourhoods' (2013), the City is committed to building complete neighbourhoods that are "living, dynamic and unique entities that evolve over time". This concept of "complete neighbourhoods" suggests that in order to adequately respond to and effectively identify community needs, engage residents and create complete neighbourhoods, the City needs to develop a criteria and model to enhance the creation of new CAs.

In May 2019 the City of Regina requested consultant responses to a Request for Quotations for the Harbour Landing Pilot Project in Regina, Saskatchewan. The stated goal of the pilot project was to develop and establish a CA to represent the Harbour Landing neighbourhood and develop a model to guide the development of new CAs within the City of Regina. The strategy is the result of the pilot project.

Based on the HLCA development and lessons learned through the project, this model identifies the following seven step model to support the development of new Community Association in the City of Regina:

- a. Establish the need for the development of a new CA.**
- b. Organize and host a public introductory "open house" meeting**
- c. Identify and recruit a working steering committee.**
- d. Develop a detailed project workplan and timeline.**

- e. Organize and facilitate a minimum of 7-8 engagement sessions over an 8-week period.
- f. Transition steering committee to board of director positions and the CA to operating independently.
- g. Document findings.

"The process was a great way to engage with other community minded people in my neighbourhood. I thought the sessions were well organized, and I continue to want to become more involved as a Board member. We have big plans for this amazing community"

- Wes Kosteroski, HLCA Board of Directors Co-Chair

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1. Introduction

According to the City of Regina's (City) *Neighbourhood Support Model Toolkit* (2016), the City's vision statement, to be "Canada's most vibrant, inclusive, attractive, sustainable community, where people live in harmony and thrive in opportunity" provides the municipality with a strategic focus for the future of Regina's community life and neighbourhood development and sustainability. Community Associations (CAs) play a vital role in the health, safety and well-being of community members and strong, inclusive neighbourhoods. The health of this delivery system and its sustainability is a primary objective of the City as these volunteer organizations are fulfilling an integral role in the system of program and service delivery. As urban development continues to grow within Regina, City Council and the Administration are dedicated to responding to the growing needs of new community developments through the establishments of new CAs.

The Harbour Landing (HL) urban development began in 2010 and was the City of Regina's first master-planned community of a larger scale in almost 20 years. According to the "Harbour Landing - A Community by Dream" website (2019), there are just under 14,000 residents living within the HL community spanning over 780 acres of land.

Located in the south-west corner of the City, the community consists of a variety of locally owned and chain businesses, office spaces, a variety of housing options and an abundance of many well-maintained and manicured green spaces, parks, walking paths and recreational spaces.

The community has been designed to create a sustainable neighbourhood with direct access to all amenities within the community geographical parameters. According to the 2019 City of Regina's Neighbourhood Profiles (2016 Statistics Canada Census of Population) the community also represents a uniquely culturally diverse neighbourhood with 33.9% of its population identifying as immigrant.

It has been more than 30 years since the City of Regina has established a new Community Association therefore there was an identified need to develop a model for CA development. The following framework is essentially a guide for future CA development or amalgamations of current CAs.

"I love that if we don't want to leave the community, my family really doesn't need too. We love living in Regina and visiting other areas but also love that everything we need and some of the City's most beautiful green spaces and parks are nestled right in our own neighbourhood".

- Lauren Brenesh, HLCA Board of Directors Co-Chair

2. Project Overview

The HL community was originally represented by the Albert Park Community Association (APCA). The APCA officially began offering services to HL residents in January 2016. In April 2017, 3 APCA Board of Director positions were filled by HL residents. In May 2017, City of Regina Councillor Bob Hawkins approached the City of Regina Community Services Department to proceed with exploring the development of an independent CA in HL.

In June 2017, a public engagement meeting was held, and a HL Community Association (HLCA) Steering Committee was formed consisting of 11 HL community members. After subsequent meetings and discussion between the HLCA Steering Committee and the APCA from September – November 2017, 3 main options emerged: 1.) status quo with HLCA Steering Committee members and APCA participating in one association; 2.) create a formal agreement between HL members and APCA for a defined period of 1-2 years and that agreement to be evaluated to determine success in meeting community needs; and, 3.) continue engagement with HL residents to determine community interest in the development of an independent HLCA.

On October 3rd, 2018 the HLCA Steering Committee and APCA met and after discussions of the 3 options, it was decided that the HLCA Steering Committee would join forces with the APCA to create a new amalgamated CA. Discussions continued on a potential rebranding strategy for the APCA however the APCA noted that more consultation from the larger community was required in order to proceed further.

In May 2019 the City of Regina released a Request for Quotations (RFQ) to local consultants for the Harbour Landing Pilot Project. Danielle Goulden, primary consultant with One Seed Consulting, submitted a proposal and was awarded the contract. The consulting agreement between the City of Regina and One Seed Consulting was signed at the end of June 2019 and shortly thereafter the consultants met with the temporary City of Regina project leads to discuss the project, gather additional information and determine next steps for the development of the HLCA. Shortly after the first initial meeting, the consultants met with Bill Ursel, Coordinator of Community Capacity Building and Bobbie Selinger, Manager of Community & Recreation Programs from the City of Regina who were identified as project leads from the City moving forward. The consultants and City project leads met on a bi-weekly basis to develop and review workplans, timelines, engagements session outcomes, deliverables and other issues as required.

3. Engagement Findings

As outlined in the RFQ, the consultant was required to organize and facilitate up to 5 engagement sessions with an established HLCA Steering Committee. The focus of the engagement sessions was on logistical requirements of a new CA including legalities, organizational plans, program development and event planning. The following sections outline the successes and challenges identified throughout the project.

a. Successes

Given the process of previous 2017 engagement with HL community members and establishment of the HLCA Steering Committee, a dedicated group of community residents was previously established and re-engaged for the establishment of a new steering committee. Out of the initial 21 email addresses that the introductory email was sent to, 5 community members responded stating their interest in involvement with the CA development. This vital group of community residents were positive, dedicated and enthusiastic about the potential CA development and communicated that given HL's growing population and growth in both residential and commercial developments, the timing of the new CA development was optimal. The group was also knowledgeable about the previous processes with the APCA and familiar with CA organization and operations.



The consultants and initial steering committee decided that in order to ensure that the entire community had the opportunity to be involved, they would hold a public introductory “open house” meeting to introduce the project, recruit more steering committee members and collect community volunteers and newsletter distribution lists through the distribution of a sign-up postcard. The public meeting was attended by over 20 community members and proved an effective relationship-building and community engagement strategy. The consultants also invited attendees to share program ideas using post-it notes which was then used for future program development discussions.

Although initially the condensed project timeline (6 weeks) during the summers months was viewed as a potential barrier to the development process, the timeline created a continual weekly & bi-weekly momentum that proved an effective model to completing the required deliverables as outlined on the RFQ. There were few engagement session absences among the steering committee and generally members came to sessions engaged and prepared to complete the work.

“I was very excited to receive the email from the City about the new association. Our community is ready and the APCA was ready to support our transition. Our community is growing every day and we are unique. The timing could not have been better”.

- Sheila Hovanak, HLCA Board of Directors Treasurer

Given that there was a need for the HLCA to be a community-lead and community-driven process, the consultants chose to use a more informal focus group model for the engagement sessions. Engagement session agendas were sent prior to the sessions and all work completed to date was reviewed after the agenda review to highlight the work

“We are a very culturally diverse neighbourhood and our CA needs to contribute to intercultural exchanges between different groups of community members. Our children attend these schools together and we all walk these paths and play in these parks together – it is a very unique community model that has evolved naturally and now we have a Community Association that represents that”.

– Vinit Patel, HLCA Board of Directors

completed by the committee. Tables were organized in a circle format or meetings were held around one large table. This “round-table” meeting model encourages equal participation among attendees and was accompanied by a clear focus, comprehensive agenda, and strong moderators. All sessions were held from 6:30pm – 8:30pm but sessions frequently went over the 2-hour timeframe. Light refreshments and coffee and tea were also served at each session.

It was also important to the steering committee that the HLCA Board of Directors and committees reflect the unique cultural diversity of the community. After the public meeting, the steering committee expanded to include 5 community members who identified as newcomers to Canada. The steering committee and now HLCA Board of Directors not only reflects the cultural diversity in the area but also brings a variety of skills sets from the health, non-profit, accounting, finance, and administration sectors.

b. Challenges

As noted in the previous successes section, the condensed timeline during the summer months was originally anticipated as a significant barrier to the pilot project. Although it did not appear to have a significant effect on the project, one of the challenges of the timeline was that certain engagement session topics required significantly more time than others. Given the condensed timeline, the topics that took more time consumed time allocated for other topics. In particular, transitioning the HLCA steering committee into a working Board of Directors and how to organize CA membership and fees required significant discussions among the group which left less time for discussions on volunteer recruitment and retention, funding structures, further program development and other first year of operation action items. Information on these topics was placed in a PowerPoint presentation and the consultants encouraged the CA to review the presentation in more detail in the near future.

A second identified challenge was that the pilot project timeline did not sync well with the City of Regina program development and leisure guide submission requirements. As discussed with the Community Consultants, community programming usually runs from September – December and January – April. Given the HLCA’s development timeline, the CA would not have been able to advertise in the fall guide and the October 11th deadline for winter program submissions also proved difficult for the CA given the operational tasks that needed to be completed in addition to program development.

A third identified challenge was the “one-off” tasks that surfaced throughout the project but were not originally identified in the workplan. These included but are not limited to, community outreach and engagement communication/technological needs (i.e. HLCA emails & domain), a lack of understanding on board meeting formats that required additional training with the new HLCA Board of Directors, requests for the further development of marketing materials for the HLCA previously used for CA development activities and events (volunteer recruitment postcards, logo contest poster, Facebook images), policy development workplans and templates, and CA membership structures.

Lastly, transitioning the HLCA Steering Committee to a Board of Directors was an unexpected challenge. The level of interest in executive board positions was identified as a possible issue of contention for the new CA. The consultants invited the 5 steering committee members that volunteered for executive positions to an informal lunch to discuss the positions and qualifications of steering committee members. After discussions, the group agreed upon the best course of action for their executive committee positions. The informal lunch meeting also served as a relationship-building opportunity for the executive committee.

Pending the transition, the HLCA board communicated that they were hesitant to operate independently without the consultant’s guidance, especially regarding program development and CA workplan. It was important that the Community Consultant attend the last meeting with the CA to introduce herself and discuss the role of the Community Consultants. It was also important that the CA understand that the Community Consultant was not assuming the role of the consultant but would be a support for the CA moving forward. The consultant also offered to volunteer time to the CA to develop a detailed workplan and timeline to assist the CA with organization and operations.

4. Suggested Model for Future CA Development

In May 2019 the City of Regina requested consultant responses to a Request for Quotations for the Harbour Landing Pilot Project in Regina, Saskatchewan. The stated goal of the pilot project was to develop and establish a CA to represent the Harbour Landing neighbourhood and develop a model to guide the City of Regina in the development of new CAs. The following step-by-step model is the result of “lessons learned” during this pilot project.

This model identifies 7 steps to support the development of new CAs. It should be noted that the following steps and their order will largely be dependent on the level of community engagement.

a. Establish the need for the development of a new CA.

Establish an identified need and community interest for the development and establishment of a new CA through community consultations and an organized engagement process. This could

occur through an online survey, meetings with community champions advocating for CA creation, etc. If determined that the development of a new CA is warranted, project lead(s) collate contact information collected during the consultation/engagement process of community members interested in being involved with the CA development process. The City of Regina designated Community Consultant for the community in question should be involved from the beginning of the needs assessment and/or could serve as the project lead. The sustainability of the potential CA is also a key consideration in this step and should be considered before moving to the next steps.

If an external consultant is contracted for the CA development, they should be engaged at this step. The City of Regina connects the list of community members collected during the community consultations/engagement process with the consultant(s) through an introductory email.

b. Organize and Hold a Public “Open House” Introductory Meeting

Project lead(s) organize and facilitate a public “open house” information meeting to introduce the project to the community, introduce the project lead(s), and recruit community residents to a CA steering committee. Invitations are sent to a previously established list of community members collected during the community consultation/engagement step as well as advertised on public notice boards, community hubs, social media, etc. A community engagement exercise can also be facilitated during the public meeting to collect feedback on community program needs and wants. After the public meeting, project lead(s) sends communication to amalgamated list of community members highlighting the next steps, timeline and inviting them to the first steering committee engagement session.

Note: Advertise the public meeting at least 7-10 days in advance of meeting to ensure the community is aware of the event via posters in community centers, schools, social media, etc.

c. Identify and Recruit a Steering Committee that Represents the Diversity of the Community

During the first engagement session, project lead(s) identify a group of engaged and dedicated community residents to establish a CA steering committee that reflects the diversity of the community and are knowledgeable of the needs of the community. This group will guide the CA development process to ensure the process is community-lead and community-driven.

An additional desired outcome is that the steering committee evolve into the CAs first Board of Directors which should be discussed at the first session. Recruitment of this group may be ongoing as more community members become aware of the project. The steering committee is encouraged to “shoulder tap” community members who may want to become involved in the steering committee; keeping in mind that the committee must represent the diversity within the community.

Note: It is important to discuss the potential transition of this steering committee into a Board of Directors positions at this stage to ensure the committee is aware of the roles and responsibilities involved and has time to contemplate their future role with the CA.

d. Develop a Project Workplan and Timeline.

Project lead(s) work collaboratively with the steering committee to develop a clear workplan and timeline to guide the development process. The steering committee will take a lead role with CoR support to review bylaws, mission, vision and programs. The development process should include 5-7 engagement sessions focused on:

- i. Incorporation of the CA and bylaw development.
- ii. Establishment of mission and vision for the CA and development of a program that addresses a priority for the working group or a broader group of community residents.
- iii. Action items for first year of operations including policy development, volunteer recruitment and retention, program development, event planning, community outreach, funding structures/fundraising strategies and opportunities, and administrative/technological needs (bank account, domain, email, electronic documents, etc.).
- iv. Transition plan for CA to become an independent organization. Underscore support from CoR and autonomy of CAs.
- v. Project wrap-up and discussion of any additional items defined by the working group.

e. Organize and Facilitate 5-7 Engagement Sessions.

Project lead(s) organizes and holds 5-7 weekly or bi-weekly engagement sessions to complete the deliverables as detailed in the project workplan and timeline. Engagement sessions include but are not limited to incorporation, bylaw development, board roles and development, development of a mission & vision, program development, policy development, volunteer recruitment & retention, funding structures & fundraising strategies, first year of operations work-plan, and administrative & technological needs.

Note: Plan for engagements sessions to occur within 2-2.5-hour periods or longer.

Note: Determine in advance who is responsible for meeting site requirements/bookings, meeting agendas, meetings minutes, and the development of any presentations (if required).

1. Engagement Session #1: Governance

- i. Determine steering group (20-30 min)
- ii. Incorporation (20-30 min)

- iii. Bylaw Development (30 min) – provide and review pre-drafted bylaws for editing
- iv. Community Engagement & Participation (i.e. CA membership) (20-30 min)
- v. City of Regina role, engagement and participation in process (15-20 min)

2. Engagement Session #2: Board & Program Development

- i. Review of outcomes from previous session (s) (20-30 min) (all drafts of documents are sent to steering committee at least 3-4 days in advance for review)
- ii. Board of Directors structures, roles and job descriptions (20-30 min)
- iii. Board of Directors meeting structures and formats (20-30min)
- iv. Program development (30-40 min)
- v. Community Open House planning (15-20 min) (if required)

3. Engagement Session #3: Vision & Mission & Program Development cont'd

- i. Review of outcomes from previous session(s) (15 min)
- ii. Vision, Mission and Guiding Principles (60 – 90 min) (review of existing CA examples followed by focus group brainstorming session)
- iii. Finalize program development (20-30 min)

4. Engagement Session #4: Additional Actions Items

- i. Review of outcomes from previous session(s) (15 min)
- ii. Volunteer recruitment & retention (20-30 min)
- iii. Future program development (15-20 min)
- iv. Community outreach methods ((15-20 min)
- v. Workplans/Strategic planning (20-30 min)
- vi. Funding structures (15-20 min)
- vii. Committee development (i.e. programming, policy, event, etc.) (15 minutes)

5. Engagement Session #5: Wrap-up

- i. Review of outcomes from previous session(s) (15 min)
- ii. Final Board of Directors determined (15-20 min)
- iii. Discussion of any additional items as defined by the steering committee (30-40 min)
- iv. First CA Board of Directors meeting discussion (15-20 min) (first meeting can proceed engagement session or be planned for another day)

f. Transition New CA to Operating Independently

In collaboration with the Park, Recreation and Cultural department and Community Consultants, the project lead(s) assist the new CA transition to operating independently.

g. Document Findings

Project lead(s) document process in pilot project report for the City's records.

5. Recommendations

The recommendations presented herein are suggested strategies for the City of Regina. These recommendations are based on the experiences of the consultants during the HL Pilot Project and are intended to guide the development and sustainability of new CAs within the City of Regina. It is important to recognize that these recommendations and strategies will largely be dependent on the demographics and level of community engagement within that community. These recommendations espouse a clear philosophy that regards community residents as the primary experts and organizers in the CA development process. It was imperative that the HL Pilot Project be a community-lead and community-driven process with any external consultants and City of Regina acting as a support system.

- a. Community members are consulted and engaged during all CA development processes including the CA needs assessment phase. Identified via Council, CoR staff.
- b. Clearly define the role of CoR staff. Introduce the role of the City of Regina in the development process and introduce role of the of Community Consultants (in the development process and ongoing) in beginning stages of project. – Presentation at the Open House/Community Meeting-
- c. All project lead(s) meet weekly to discuss workplan, timeline and other issues as required.
- d. All engagement sessions are minimum of 2 hours in length and follow “round-table” focus group format that encourages equal participation among attendees and is accompanied by a clear focus, comprehensive agenda, and strong moderators.
- e. Project lead(s) (the leads may be the CCs with Coordinator overseeing) meet with Community Consultants prior to beginning engagement session to discuss level of involvement in the process and collect additional information on CA structures and operations (i.e. phases, funding structure, membership structures, program development, etc.). Map out the full range of tasks at the very first session and add items that community members would add/missing steps, etc. Note that the agenda for each engagement session will be provided at each session. It is important that this process does not overwhelm the volunteers.
- f. Anticipate certain topics requiring more discussion time and plan accordingly.
- g. Ensure all work completed throughout the process is distributed to the steering committee for review and feedback. This also reduces review time during engagement sessions.
- h. Anticipate potential skill-set gaps and plan accordingly (i.e. policy writing templates).

- i. Project lead(s) engage in ongoing and open communication with both steering committee and City of Regina team.
- j. All engagement sessions focus on both deliverables as well as capacity-building and relationship-building among the steering committee. It is important that committee members feel their voices are being “heard” and opinions are valued.
- k. Transition of steering committee to CA Board of Directors and the CA to working independent of the project team is developed and incorporated into workplan prior to initiating engagement sessions. – Early on clarify this process with the community volunteers.
- l. All work is connected back to Neighbourhood Support Model Toolkit to guide the operations of the CA moving forward.
- m. Ensure the CA Steering Committee is representative of the community’s cultural diversity and demographics. Can occur by re3searching community demographics and reaching out to faith-based groups and other existing cultural organizations in community.