

Community Benefit Coalition: Community Benefits Framework & Downtown Event and Entertainment District

Saskatoon Poverty Reduction Partnerships

June 14, 2023

Topic:

- The Community Benefit Coalition, convened by SPRP and its community partners, recommend that the City of Saskatoon take proactive steps in developing a community benefits framework to ensure the **Downtown Event and Entertainment District (DEED)** delivers tangible benefits to the communities it impacts and serves.

Recommendation:

- The Community Benefit Coalition recommends undertaking two specific approaches to development projects or major infrastructure initiatives delivers measurable, tangible, and accountable social benefits to communities it impacts and serves, which includes:
 - Implementing Community Benefit Agreements in the development of the **DEED** to provide for targeted social benefits (e.g., living wages, meaningful employment, environmental protections, accessible public washrooms, affordable housing and transportation)
 - Enhancing social procurement policies and practices, building on the City's existing procurement framework, to support social enterprises
 - Ensure infrastructure developed is useable by all

Background:

- Community benefit frameworks are strategic approaches municipalities adopt to ensure that development projects or major infrastructure initiatives provide tangible benefits to the local community.
- Community benefit frameworks help to establish guidelines, policies, or agreements that outline the specific community benefits developers must deliver in exchange for development approvals or public investments.
- Community benefit frameworks may vary in scope and approach across different municipalities in Canada. Some examples of Canadian municipalities that have implemented such frameworks to promote positive outcomes for their communities:
 - **City of Toronto** - has a community benefits framework that aims to ensure that development projects benefit the local community. Under this framework, developers are required to enter into Community Benefits Agreements (CBAs) for certain projects. These agreements outline specific benefits such as affordable housing, local job opportunities, and community infrastructure investments the developer must provide in exchange for development approvals.
 - **City of Vancouver** - has a community benefits policy that applies to major infrastructure projects. The policy aims to ensure that these projects contribute to community well-being by promoting local employment, training opportunities, and social procurement. It emphasizes workforce development, inclusion of underrepresented groups, and support for local businesses.

Considerations:

- A community benefit framework would ensure that development projects and major infrastructure initiatives, such as the **DEED**, deliver tangible benefits to the local community.
- There are many different approaches to developing a community benefit framework, but two specific pathways or tools that can support the broader framework include: community benefit agreements and social procurement.
- By initially focusing on these two pathways, the City of Saskatoon can lay a strong foundation for the broader community benefit framework. These pathways can serve as crucial components in establishing an effective and inclusive framework that maximizes community benefits.
- While both community benefit agreements (CBAs) and social procurement involve promoting social outcomes, they differ in their focus and approach.

Community Benefit Agreements

- CBAs are binding agreements between developers, governments, and community-based organizations that ensures the inclusion of specific social benefits for communities in major development projects, such as job creation, affordable housing, liveable wages, infrastructure improvements, or environmental protections.
- CBAs are typically project-specific and address the impacts of a particular development or investment on a specific community. They aim to ensure that the community benefits from the project in a tangible and meaningful way.
- CBAs can help municipalities secure tangible social and economic advantages such as job creation, affordable housing, environmental protections, or improved infrastructure, while also empowering communities, promoting social equity, and fostering social and economic growth.
- CBAs also benefit private developers. By aligning with community needs and aspirations, developers are better able to create successful projects that foster goodwill and come in on-time and in-budget. CBAs can help to achieve this by:
 - building positive relationships between developers and community stakeholders and partners,
 - provide developers with access to valuable resources and expertise in the community, ensures certainty and stability, and
 - establish long-term relationships with community organizations.
 - reduce project opposition and project delays.
- By leveraging CBAs, the city can maximize the positive impact of capital projects and create a sustainable and thriving city for its residents.

Success Story: Vancouver Olympic Village

- A community benefit agreement was used in the development of the Vancouver Olympic Village between the City of Vancouver, a developer (i.e., Millennium Developments), and a community agency.
- This CBA led to a total of 120 jobs for targeted inner-city residents and \$42 million in procurement to inner-city businesses.¹

¹ Community Benefits Ontario. 2017. *Boldy Progressive, Fiscally Balanced: A Community Benefits Policy Framework for Ontario*. https://theonn.ca/wp-content/uploads/2017/04/Community-Benefits-Policy-Framework_03-13-17.pdf

Social Procurement

- Social procurement focuses on leveraging purchasing power to generate social value and positive social outcomes in the procurement process itself.
- Social procurement is a broad activity that can apply to various procurement activities across different sectors. It is not limited to specific projects but encompasses ongoing procurement processes.
- Social procurement processes and approaches consider social, environmental, and economic factors when making purchasing decisions to support equity-deserving groups, local businesses and service providers, and other community initiatives.
- One way social procurement policies and approaches can be transformed is by incorporating a supportive framework for social enterprises to thrive and make a positive difference in their communities.
- A social enterprise is an organization that focuses on social objectives and aims to serve the public good. It operates profit-generating businesses alongside social programs or support services. The income generated by these businesses is often reinvested to fulfill the organization's social mission.
- The City can enhance social procurement practices to harness greater social benefits for the community is to establish targets or quotas for social enterprises in procurement processes. This means allocating a certain percentage of contracts or purchases to be exclusively reserved for social enterprises, or other social benefit criteria.
- Municipalities can also work to streamline and simplify procurement processes, making them more accessible and manageable for social enterprises. This can involve reducing administrative burdens, providing guidance and support, and implementing clear criteria and evaluation methods that consider the social value and impact of the enterprises.
- By creating a level playing field and integrating social value considerations into procurement decisions, these policies foster the growth, sustainability, and social impact of social enterprises and the communities they serve.

Success Story: Eglinton Crosstown LRT Project

- Eglinton Crosstown LRT project in Toronto, which incorporates a community benefit framework, included the following requirements in community benefit agreements used:
 - 10% of the work hours for construction of the project would go to apprenticeships for equity-seeking groups such as young people, women, and minority workers in the local area
 - Opportunities for provision of goods and services from local businesses and social enterprises be supported
- As of 2021, the project has generated 429 hires through the community benefits program and approximately \$830,000 in purchasing from social enterprises.²

² Baker, Kumsa. 2021. *Eglinton Crosstown project brings positive benefits to community*. North York Mirror.

https://www.toronto.com/opinion/eglinton-crosstown-project-brings-positive-benefits-to-community/article_10719f76-e3ae-5c42-ad80-6f9c2923cdd6.html?