

TODAY'S MENU

Enriching Livability Through Partnerships in the City of Edmonton

STARTERS

Co-existence—Two organizations providing similar services, but without formalized coordination, agreement or accountability.

Service Agreement—City holds an organization accountable for specific services via formal contract and fee.

Collaboration—Often established via sponsorships, grants, donations to achieve a defined outcome.

Joint Venture—Formed when outcomes require the joint efforts of two or more entities thru shared resources, accountability, risk and decision making.



ENTREES

Why Partnerships? - The dynamic challenges and services demanded by communities need coordinated efforts by the city and its neighboring communities, businesses, non-profits, residents and staff teams. Cities can no longer do this alone or they may struggle to be competitive in the 21st century.

Create a Dedicated Partnership Team—Complete with charter, mission, vision, clearly defined roles & expectations, operating in a “hub-and-spoke model throughout the organization.

Develop and Maintain a Focus on Design—Adopt definitions of relationships & partnerships, align with vision & strategic plan, create information-sharing opportunities, inventory internal resources, train, elicit feedback and achieve incremental results in a disciplined manner.

Be a Results-Based, Data-Driven Team—Develop a rubric to evaluate potential & existing partnerships, designate team as clearinghouse for partnership decisions, inventory partnerships, proactively seek joint ventures, measure only what is important and quantify ROI.

SIDES

Process—Complement your entrée with a dose of detail in how to begin a culture change process, how to engage staff, effective focus group & ice-breaker models and learn how to overcome staff hurdles.

Leadership ICMA Consulting—Satisfy your appetite to learn just how a LICMA consulting team scattered across the country can become an extension of your staff and provide expertise, energy and innovative tools that won't ever make it to the shelf.

DESSERTS

Research and Theory—For those who are not yet full, bite into the rich taste of ingredients that helped establish direction and guidance in establishing a culture of high-performance partnerships.



Link to full Capstone Report:

http://icma.org/m/en/university/leadership_development/leadership_icma/capstones

Leaders at the Core of Better Communities



OUR STORY

Leadership ICMA responded to a request for peer assistance by the City of Edmonton, Alberta, Canada (Edmonton) to evaluate how to best use partnerships to accomplish the Transforming Edmonton vision. Edmonton's Community Services Department is taking the lead on creating a more structured and strategic approach to managing current partnerships and identifying and implementing new partnerships. The team conducted a literature review, on-site staff focus group, and interviews with leading municipalities in this field. The team researched public-private organizations and U.S.-based local governments to find examples that could guide Edmonton in building a new partnerships initiative based on: *Return on investment; Performance measurement; Strategic value; Partnership agreements/contracts; Staff and leadership engagement*. This report is the product of that research, including three case studies and recommendations.

Case Studies

Of comparably sized cities or counties, there are only a few that have a comprehensive and coordinated partnerships program. According to one of the communities interviewed, they are aware of fewer than 20 such programs in the U.S. in total, and few are in a sustainable state – the roster is in flux with offices appearing and disappearing with staff and policy changes. Three communities stand out though, based on how they started and where we believe Edmonton is headed: *Fairfax County, Virginia's Office of Public Private Partnerships (OP³); Denver, Colorado's Office of Strategic Partnerships; and Boston, Massachusetts' Mayor's Office of New Urban Mechanics*.

Recommendations

Examples of true, high-performing partnerships are rare because they are “difficult to create and even harder to sustain,” according to a 2003 report by the National Academy of Public Administration. While it's not uncommon for organizations to recognize the value of partnerships and dedicate resources to their development, the ones leading the pack go significantly further. Resources are not only dedicated, they are aligned according to a strategic vision, with driving force, superlative communication methodologies, and unwavering performance measurement. We have four primary recommendations with action steps for each; these are detailed fully in the recommendations section. These recommendations are based on conversations held with Community Services Department staff, case analysis, literature review of public-private partnership research, telephone interviews with U.S. local governments that are operating at a level to which Edmonton aspires, and lessons learned from high performance organization leadership curriculum. We envision a future for Edmonton where partnerships are not created scattershot or managed by and for a single department, but in a coordinated and efficient way, sharing information across city teams, creating more true joint ventures for the city, and making more connections between groups with similar interests in making Edmonton a great community to live, work, and play. The recommendations are:

1. Create a dedicated partnership team;
2. Develop and maintain a focus on design;
3. Establish the partnership team as a results-based, data-driven entity; and
4. Develop a robust and relatable communications strategy.

The Leadership ICMA Edmonton Capstone Team was made up of Mike Bennett, Administrative Services Director for the City of Hickory, NC; Tony Cain, Assistant City Manager/Chief of Public Safety for the City of Hillsboro, TX; Rob Carty, ICMA's Director of Career Services; and Lena Stevens, Resource Conservation Coordinator for Decatur, GA. The complete report can be found at http://icma.org/m/en/university/leadership_development/leadership_icma/capstones.