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PROPOSAL FOR
A DEMONSTRATION PROJECT
BOYLE STREET/McCAULEY NEIGHBOURHOODS

PROPOSAL DESIGN

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COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT WORKER

Submitted to:
Health and Welfare Canada
Welfare Grants Directorate
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INTRODUCTION

As a result of a request from a local Alderperson in Edmonton regarding a problem related to youth residing within the Boyle Street/McCauley area and the need to look into some possible solutions, a series of meetings evolved over a period of six months.

These meetings saw representatives of some seventeen agencies or institutions who are working in the area represented. The initial focus of the meetings was to look at the "youth problem". It soon became evident, however, that the problems encountered by young people residing in the area were only symptomatic of a large societal problem common to similar areas of large urban settlements in Canada.

The focus of the community meetings then centered on ways to deal with the larger problem - how to bring about an awareness within the community that would enable individuals to not only better cope with their environment, but would see the eventual outcome of planned social change to provide a more pleasant and acceptable environment, complete with positive support systems, so that all residents, including young people, would feel that this was their community.

The result of this focus is presented herewith. The design of the proposal includes a brief overview of urban life as it pertains to neighbourhood environment. Particular emphasis is placed on the Boyle Street/McCauley area which is currently experiencing great pressures - both social and economic.

The proposal then highlights specific examples of what has taken place in the community - both from a programming aspect and individual stories of life in the area.

Because of numerous studies and reports which have been produced with reference to the area, selected excerpts are included to show what has been recommended in the past but which has produced no substantial action on behalf of decision makers up to this point.

The uniqueness of this proposal coming from the area is next outlined in the process to be used in developing a sense of community within the area as well as outlining the possibilities for quality life experiences which should evolve as a result of the process.

A specific proposal is then outlined calling for a basic funding commitment from the Federal Government.

The proposal concludes with a listing of those agencies or institutions who are supporting this request for assistance.

The significance for this project in other inner-city neighbourhoods across Canada should be quite evident. If it is not, then it is only because of the design of the proposal and is not indicative of the intense need which this proposal hopefully reflects.

I. GENERAL OVERVIEW

It is agreed by many futurists and urban analysts that if our society is to at least continue its present standards that the full potential of our citizens must be allowed to develop.

It is also widely agreed that where this potential is not allowed to develop, many social problems begin to emerge (e.g., crime, unemployment, apathy). At present in many communities, there is no alternative available for the development of this potential.

If individuals know and share a common purpose and the need for sharing in community projects, cohesion takes place across a broad front, thus reducing loneliness and other problems related to alienation.

Enhanced participation in decision making also takes place when people have more control over their own lives in areas such as food production, utilities, community upkeep and so on. Examples abound of situations where, when citizens understood that they would control their environment, they became committed to improving their communities.

In Calgary, citizens in the communities of Inglewood-Ramsay, Hillhurst-Sunnyside and Bowness-Montgomery all went through a consciousness raising process, the results of which are changing the physical and sociological patterns within each community. Consciousness raising, as used within this context, refers to a process which serves to help residents of the area identify what kind of a community they have, what roles they play within that community and what potential exists for their community provided they are willing to do something about exploring and implementing appropriate alternatives.

A similar awareness, spurred on by a Federal Government incentive plan, is beginning to produce results within the Norwood community in Edmonton, which will eventually change the entire community as it exists today.

In the meantime, the Boyle Street/McCauley area continues to experience a multitude of problems related to a lack of awareness amongst the permanent residents of the neighbourhood as to what the potential for the area might be. The area is very vulnerable at the moment - both from an economic (e.g., redevelopment pressures) and a social (e.g., transients, ethnic pockets) perspective.

Although many agencies continue to operate in the area serving to allow individuals in the area to cope with their environment, and although numerous studies have been completed which designate this area as one deserving priority in terms of upgrading, redevelopment and rehabilitation, the fact remains that there has been little overall change in the physical and sociological patterns of the area over the past decade or two. There are numerous alternatives available to bring about the desired change to an involved community. One of the alternatives which we considered to be most viable, is outlined in Part IV of this proposal.

II. NEIGHBOURHOOD EXAMPLES AND CASE HISTORIES

What is presently happening in the Boyle Street/McCauley area in 1976? Social problems abound with increasing incidence of crime, alcohol related problems, drug related problems, problems of the elderly and the young, questionable businesses and so on.

Actual documented cases of youth problems occurred as follows in a playground in the area this summer (1976):

Glue: A nineteen year old boy who looks fourteen or fifteen years is usually spaced out from glue sniffing. He also uses barbiturates which he claims are prescribed for him. His behaviour is not disruptive at the playground but he is hardly a good example to younger children. He was picked up one day and charged with theft of \$500.00. The following day he was back at the park.

Problems such as the above are indicative of a greater problem - the adults who are responsible for the socialization of the child. The following example reported by a recreation worker on the same playground early this summer serves as a good illustration:

My first encounter with the native adults was at 10:30 a.m. About 14, men and women, were clustered around the wading pool, drinking cheap wine and being very boisterous. The thought of drinking, smoking and swearing around their children, never bothered them because this type of social setting is a common practice for the area.

Later, as the alcohol took its effect, the adults intended to devise a way to satisfy their need for entertainment. Each parent in the group called over their child and commenced to make the children fight each other. About six fights took place between the children, with each losing child receiving a blow, to the back of the head, from the parent.

None of the adults, around the wading pool, suggested that this might be harmful to the child. Instead, it turned out to be good amusement because it decided a winner and loser, both for the parents and children.

But youth are not the only people who are going through the painful process of coping with a harsh environment.

As noted later in this proposal, there is a high number of senior citizens residing in the area. Many of these people are finding it difficult to cope with their environment. Some of these difficulties are reflected in their behaviour; sometimes the difficulties are very personal and subsequently hard to determine the effect of their problems on the neighbourhood environment.

Some examples are available however. Child molesting is a somewhat frequent occurrence in the area. A documented example from a neighbourhood playground illustrates a case in point:

Molester: This senior citizen induces children to his living quarters. He was known to police for his activities but, until the playground leaders were told by other children what was going on, the leaders were uninformed. Police were called one day to the fellow's apartment where they arrested the offender. He was seen a few days later walking with two children near Boyle Street Park.

A recent study completed within the past two months dealing with the incidence of alcohol and drug abuse amongst the elderly gives some idea of those personal problems which have a profound effect on the nature of the community.

A small sampling of senior citizens in the area indicated that out of 17 people interviewed, 94 drugs were being used which in turn averages out to 5.5 drugs per person. Of the total number of 94, 43 of these were depressants such as sedatives or pain killers. Six of the seven people using alcohol in the survey were defined as alcoholic (i.e., chronic, usually daily, consumption of alcohol to the point of intoxication). Some of the alcoholics also had depressant drugs in their possession.

Admittedly, the sample is too small to contain valid predicability within the area. Nevertheless, the sample is somewhat indicative of what is taking place amongst a large number of senior citizens in the area.

Once again, the manifestation of the problems of loneliness, alienation and isolation is portrayed through the abuse of alcohol and drugs.

Identification of some of the problems does not imply that programs have not been provided in the area or that they are not being provided at this time.

A number of programs have been initiated by agencies and institutions in the area to try and meet the needs of the individuals and their problems.

Examples of the programs include such things as a community based income tax service. The need for such a service is clearly evident from two case histories of individuals residing in the area being bilked out of large sums of money by "private" income tax firms.

Case #1

Client went to Q & R Income Tax Service to have his income tax return completed and to "get some cash". He was told that his rebate would be \$1,900.00 by a Q & R employee. Q & R told him orally they would give him \$200.00 "on the spot" and \$700.00 when they received the tax refund from Revenue Canada. The client received the \$200.00 but, despite several letters and verbal requests to Q & R, never received the \$700.00. Client was referred to Legal Aid Services but as yet, not aware of the outcome.

Case #2

Client believed he had a tax return of \$600.00. A friend of his took him to Q & R Income Tax Service for which he received a \$10.00 finder's fee. Client received \$20.00 and was told more money would be forthcoming upon receipt by Q & R of his tax rebate from Revenue Canada. Client returned several months later and was refused any more money; he went back recently and found the office closed down. His friend who received the finder's fee is acting as a witness for the client in present court action.

Among other things, these "discounters" do serve a real need as they are one of the few sources of hassle-free quick money. They provide the kind of money that low income families often need, if they have to move, ward off creditors or if the bread winner loses his or her

job. But above all else, the fact remains that the most unsavory aspects of this kind of "service" is that it takes advantage of genuine financial desperation.

As a means of alleviating the financial desperation of the residents of the neighbourhood, a pilot community income tax service was undertaken in 1975-76 with very gratifying results. The intent is to continue this service on a more permanent basis.

Other programs initiated by various agencies operating in the Boyle Street/McCauley area included an outreach "home visiting" program as an extension of one of the neighbourhood schools (i.e., visiting "problem" families who are represented in the school), neighbourhood dances which subsequently attracted many transients who began to abuse alcohol at the functions, a community newsletter and summer childrens program, recreation opportunities amongst residents, transients and "street people" and volunteer program to assist recreation personnel at neighbourhood playgrounds. Most of these programs were summer programs and do not continue on a regular basis.

On-going programs are offered by numerous agencies operating within the area and they all are aimed at providing the opportunity for residents and transients in the area to better cope with their environment.

What is not being done and that which cannot be done by existing agencies due to lack of physical and human resources as well as energy is the overall development of the neighbourhood. This development would be concerned with the problem families and individuals who utilize the area, but would be more concerned at developing the awareness of the residents of the area who are not "problem" people (i.e., working with all the people in the area - not just those whose need is visible and all too apparent).

Other studies and reports have indicated some characteristics of the area which are relevant to this proposal and the following section of the proposal addresses itself to identifying some of those characteristics.

III. RELEVANT INFORMATION FROM PREVIOUS STUDIES AND REPORTS

As mentioned previously, several studies compliment the design of this proposal. A portion of the summary of the Edmonton Inter-faith Study of the Boyle Street/McCauley area of 1974 indicates that these two neighbourhoods have been left open to continued deterioration, spot development without any overall objectives, exploitation by transportation planners, Stadium developers and real estate speculation. The Inter-faith study reflects a concern that older neighbourhoods must no longer be used merely for traffic conducts and redevelopment opportunities of real estate firms. It is felt that the cost both socially and emotionally is too great to be tolerated.

The Stadium Impact Study commissioned by Action Edmonton and completed February 25, 1975, indicates that if social consequences in this area are to be anticipated, an awareness of present circumstances is needed. A process to be discussed later in this proposal can offer the direction from which on-going changes can be evaluated. A skeleton profile of the McCauley/Boyle Street area reflects five major items of concern. Other items of concern too numerous to mention can also be documented.

- a) a higher proportion of low educational attainment levels reside in this area,
- b) a higher proportion of lower status occupations are present in this area,
- c) a higher proportion of recent foreign born immigrants live in this area,
- d) a higher proportion of older people also live in this area (3,494 - 1975 Civic Census),
- e) there is a higher proportion of older and lower standard housing, with a high incidence of rental housing, low housing value and high rent levels in this area.

The L. J. D'Amore report (1975) indicates clearly that the Boyle Street/McCauley areas are deficient in open space, recreation facilities, day care centres, adequate housing and various elements of health, social and legal services. D'Amore points out that there is a definitive need

for more emphasis on preventive services and the adoption of a holistic approach to human development services.

The report looks upon human development from several angles which include the evolution of programs that reinforce the cultural identity of various entities including the Native North Americans, Italians, Portuguese and other populus. A need arises in which to focus on evolving programs and "socializing space" which would bring the diverse segments of this community together. There is an additional need to involve persons with the ability to motivate, encourage and give young people in this area a "model" to emulate. To accomplish this task, a recreational program is required which will involve the young people in useful and challenging skills. Such programming would need to be reinforced by a preventive social services philosophy and special educational services.

L. J. D'Amore and Associates Limited of Montreal felt that with proper programming an integrated community could develop which would build on strengths and resources now existing among the community groups, organizations and networks in the area. This would later provide opportunities for the community to assume responsibility and exercise decision making power.

References

Inner City Schools Report, Edmonton Public School Board, 1968.

Edmonton Inter-faith Society, Interim Report, Boyle Street/McCauley Project, Edmonton, 1974.

Stadium Impact Study commissioned by Action Edmonton, 1975.

D'Amore, L. J. et al, Social Impact Study of the Stadium for the Commonwealth Games, March, 1975.

IV. DESIRED PROCESS

Accepting the position outlined in Part I of this proposal indicates that what is needed in the Boyle Street/McCauley area is not more services and a proliferation of various service delivery systems (one need only refer to the previous studies mentioned in Part III to note that there are an adequate number of service agencies presently operating in the area to handle the various needs of the individuals residing in or passing through the neighbourhood) but rather a consciousness raising process as defined earlier to help the residents determine what they want and how they can get it.

For this to happen, citizens require knowledge of what factors within their environment that they are able to control. Some of these factors include density of development, access to recreation, parks and social services, standards of housing and education, funding sources and resources, access to decision making at the Municipal, Provincial and Federal Governmental levels and soon. This knowledge can be gained through the employment of skilled facilitators whose prime purpose would be of developing the awareness and skills of those people residing in the area.

Concern has developed amongst various agency employees who are working in the Boyle Street/McCauley area that they are working with the results of problems rather than working with the problems or causation factors related to social problems. Some of the results of problems in the area include:

- a) high concentration of individuals receiving public assistance,
- b) alcoholism,
- c) youth behaviour,
- d) single parents,
- e) concentration of underprivileged senior citizens,
- f) substandard shelter.

These concerns demand that agency people devote all their energies towards helping individuals cope with their environment.

The social problems that are not being touched include:

- a) lack of knowledge (where to go, how to go, what to do, etc.),
- b) limited employment opportunities,
- c) no common purpose or understanding of what that might mean to the individuals, which results in
- d) a lack of commitment on the part of the permanent residents of the area.

What then is needed for change to occur is the commitment of neighbourhood residents, agency employees and politicians at the Municipal, Provincial and Federal Governmental levels towards establishing a common purpose and need for sharing in community projects.

The process to be used should be the community development (C.D.) process. This process concerns itself with causes or prevention rather than symptoms.

The community development process as defined for the purposes of this project is seen as being most appropriate for this area for a number of reasons:

1. From purely an economic perspective, the C.D. process begins to show people that dependency on social assistance or short term funds for marginal services are not the only alternatives available to residents. As a result non-productivity of individuals who exist on public money (i.e., social assistance, temporary funding) becomes productivity using skills and resources which up to this time remain as untapped potential within the individual.
2. From a physical perspective, the rehabilitation of an area serves to make the area a desired locale for residency.

How does the community development process facilitate these perspectives? The C.D. process utilizes the following philosophy:

- a) each one of us has untapped potential,
- b) the process deals with identifying problems - not just issues,
- c) the process, through the new awareness of the participants, identifies alternative solutions,
- d) as a result, there needs to be and in fact develops, a significant participation component based on
- e) the raising of the self-worth of the individual.

At present, funds are allocated to the Boyle Street/McCauley area only in terms of direct benefits to be derived by society. Examples include more policing of the area, high degree of public assistance payments, temporary funding programs for senior citizens, ethnic groups and community school programs. The C.D. process goes beyond this point and develops the roots of the community.

The tasks or specifics of the community development process as envisioned within this proposal would, in sequential order, be as follows:

- a) Hire a staff of two or three community development workers.
- b) Procure a suitable site within the community. The building should be a focal centre and easily visible with freedom of access (e.g., corner storefront). The site would be used as a drop-in centre, information and referral and so on.
- c) Workers would spend three to six months familiarizing themselves with the community by walking in the area, talking to residents, agency personnel, businessmen and so on. Workers would also observe the environment with which they must facilitate the process.
- d) Workers begin to respond to the needs expressed by the residents (i.e., what do you want to do about the problem).
- e) Workers would begin to facilitate interaction amongst community residents in an objective manner (i.e., worker is not part of the community) so as to bring about change in the community.
- f) Workers facilitate the means whereby residents begin to develop some alternative directions in which the community might wish to proceed. (Raising the mental health level of the community.)

It should be noted that such a process would in no way tolerate the preservation of the status quo.

Another obvious alternative to developing the Boyle Street/McCauley neighbourhood would be that of removing all residents from the area and redeveloping the neighbourhoods for commercial or higher income level residential purposes.

This and other alternatives at this point in time are far more detrimental to quality living experiences than is the maintenance of the existing neighbourhood. For example, relocating senior citizens, single parent families and the working poor to suburban areas where there are no corresponding support systems, serves only to bring about an isolation which in turn detracts from any sense of quality living.

Let us then preserve what we have and create an acceptable environment.

V. SPECIFIC PROPOSAL

Specifically, what is required for this project is as follows:

- a) The establishing of an interim community steering committee - composed initially of agency representatives and some citizens from the community with the aim to make the committee a citizen Board with agency representation.
- b) The hiring of two - three skilled community development workers (in terms of life experiences and training), who would be responsible to the community through the citizen community Board.
- c) Physically visible space would be rented or leased to allow the project to be physically visible in the community.
- d) The duration of the project would be a maximum of three (3) years. The purpose of the project is outlined in Part IV. The results we believe would be extremely beneficial to not only the residents of the area and the City of Edmonton, but to other urban centres experiencing similar environmental problems.
- e) Initial budget of \$50,000/year for three years:

Salaries:	\$ 36,780
Rent:	6,300
Supplies, etc.:	5,720
Evaluation:	1,200.
- f) An evaluation component would be designed by independent evaluators, whose services would be purchased on a per year basis. The purpose of the evaluation would be to determine the on-going effectiveness of the project and secondarily to provide necessary documentation for purposes of utilization of similar processes in other urban centres.

VI. SUPPORTING PARTICIPANTS

Agencies which are included as supporters of this proposal are as follows:

Edmonton Social Planning Council
Boys' and Girls' Club of Edmonton
Bissell Centre
Boyle Street Co-op
Alberta Alcohol and Drug Abuse Commission Area Staff
Edmonton Parks and Recreation District Staff
Edmonton Social Services Social Planning Staff
Alberta Social Services and Community Health Area Staff

APPENDIX A

MCCAULEY PROJECT - EDMONTON

Community Workers Job Descriptions

The Area:

The McCauley district of Edmonton is an older, residential area adjacent to the rapidly expanding downtown commercial centre of the city. It is an area rich in various ethnic groups, where the housing stock is generally good, and compared with other areas of the city, the stock of rental accommodation is disproportionately high. In the past twenty years the population of the area has fallen from about 11,000 persons to 9,000, and this declining trend is expected to continue for the next few years. It has been estimated that by 1980 the population of McCauley will be around 7,800.

Despite its declining population, the area itself is giving increasing cause for concern to social service agencies. More than 20% of the families with children at home in the area are single parent families, and over 12% of the population is senior citizens. The average family income for the area is roughly half the average for the city as a whole. Early in 1976, a number of representatives from both private and government agencies met together to discuss the problems of the area, and agreed that as an alternative to allowing McCauley to deteriorate into a ghetto, a better solution might lie through an imaginative community development approach.

The Community Workers Duties:

It is proposed that three community workers be hired, to work exclusively in the McCauley area. Two of these workers would be well qualified experienced workers, while the third would be a newly trained, or semi-trained person, drawn ideally, from the community itself.

The community workers would be responsible directly to a community board, which would eventually consist of a majority of local residents. The community workers' primary task would be to get to know the area, and its problems, as defined by both the residents as well as professional workers. Initially, a community base, such as a corner store would be established, and the workers would operate from that facility. This store front location would provide a focal point for the community, where residents could meet either around specific issues, or merely to gain some mutual support. Although eventually volunteers would administer an information/referral service, initially, the community workers would be involved quite heavily in operating this service.

Once the community workers have thoroughly familiarized themselves with the area, and with the residents, they would draw on their skills to assist individuals in a variety of ways, to devise strategies for social action. This would be a slow, frustrating process for the workers, and initially a considerable amount of time would be directed in supporting groups formed around comparatively trivial issues. However, the long-term goal of the workers would be, through a gradual confidence building process, to develop dormant community skills, and facilitate the creation of a healthier, more ^{self}sufficient community.

The Community Workers' Qualifications:

The community workers would possess appropriate professional community development qualifications, and/or considerable practical experience of community development in an urban setting. They would be expected to work some unsocial hours, up to a total of 37 hours a week, and their salary would be in the range of \$12,000 to \$18,000 per annum.