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A PROPOSAL FOR A THREE YEAR COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT PROJECT
IN THE GREATER McCauley District
OF
EDMONTON, ALBERTA

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This proposal is submitted by the Edmonton Social Planning Council, and has been prepared in cooperation with staff from the City of Edmonton Social Services Department and other agencies who are concerned with the Greater McCauley area.

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INTRODUCTION

During a six month period in mid-1976, a series of meetings evolved in Edmonton's inner-city area. These meetings came about as the result of a request from a local Alderperson. The initial focus of the meetings involved a problem relating to youth residing in the Boyle Street/McCauley area, and the need to look into possible solutions to this problem.

These meetings saw representatives of some seventeen agencies, or institutions, who were working in the area. Although initial concern was with the "youth problem", it became evident that the problems experienced by young people residing in the area were only symptomatic of a larger societal problem common to similar urban areas across Canada.

At this point the focus of community meetings shifted to center on ways of dealing with the larger problem. The question became one of how to develop a sense of awareness amongst residents and how to best utilize existing dormant physical and human resources available within the community. Such awareness would not only better enable individuals to cope with their environment, but would more importantly see an eventual outcome of planned social change. This change should provide residents with a more humane and acceptable environment, complete with support systems so that all residents (including young people) could feel that this was truly their community.

It was felt that a community development process could best bring about the necessary sense of awareness amongst residents of the area. A proposal was developed and submitted to the Welfare Grants Directorate of Health and Welfare Canada in September 1976. The proposal outlined a "demonstration" project which would ~~through a community development process lead to a new~~ awareness and feeling of community amongst the residents of the Boyle Street and McCauley neighbourhoods.

When funds were not immediately forthcoming from this source, representatives from the original group met to discuss the proposal, and alternative sources of funding. The proposal was then redrafted in an attempt to further clarify and specify its original intent. This proposal is the product of the process outlined above.

The following sections of this proposal will provide the reader with an overview and general description of the proposed project, and with further sections dealing more specifically with various elements relating to the proposal.

GENERAL OVERVIEW

A basic tenet of this proposal is that society must allow the full potential of its citizens to develop if it is to continue at or above our present standard. Where such potential is not allowed to develop, many social problems begin to emerge. Presently, in many communities, there is no alternative available to promote the development of this potential. This proposal is meant to address such a situation in the McCauley neighbourhood of Edmonton.

The following are major goals of the project:

- development of a sense of awareness among residents,
- facilitation of a sense of common purpose and sharing in community projects,
- the development, by residents, of action plans to address those problems which they perceive in the neighbourhood,
- activating resident skills.

Project Methodology

Numerous alternatives are available to bring about the desired evolution of an "involved" community. The community development process outlined in this proposal is felt to be the most viable for McCauley. The term "community development process" as used in this proposal is meant to indicate a program involving a "community self-help methodology"⁽¹⁾. It may be further specified as "locality development" in the sense of Rothman's⁽²⁾ categories of models of community practice. Major elements of the process usually include the following:

- initial impetus coming from "outsiders",
- a limited geographic base,
- a focus on dealing in the local issues,
- development of a mass based democratic organization, and
- the utilization of a variety of tactics.

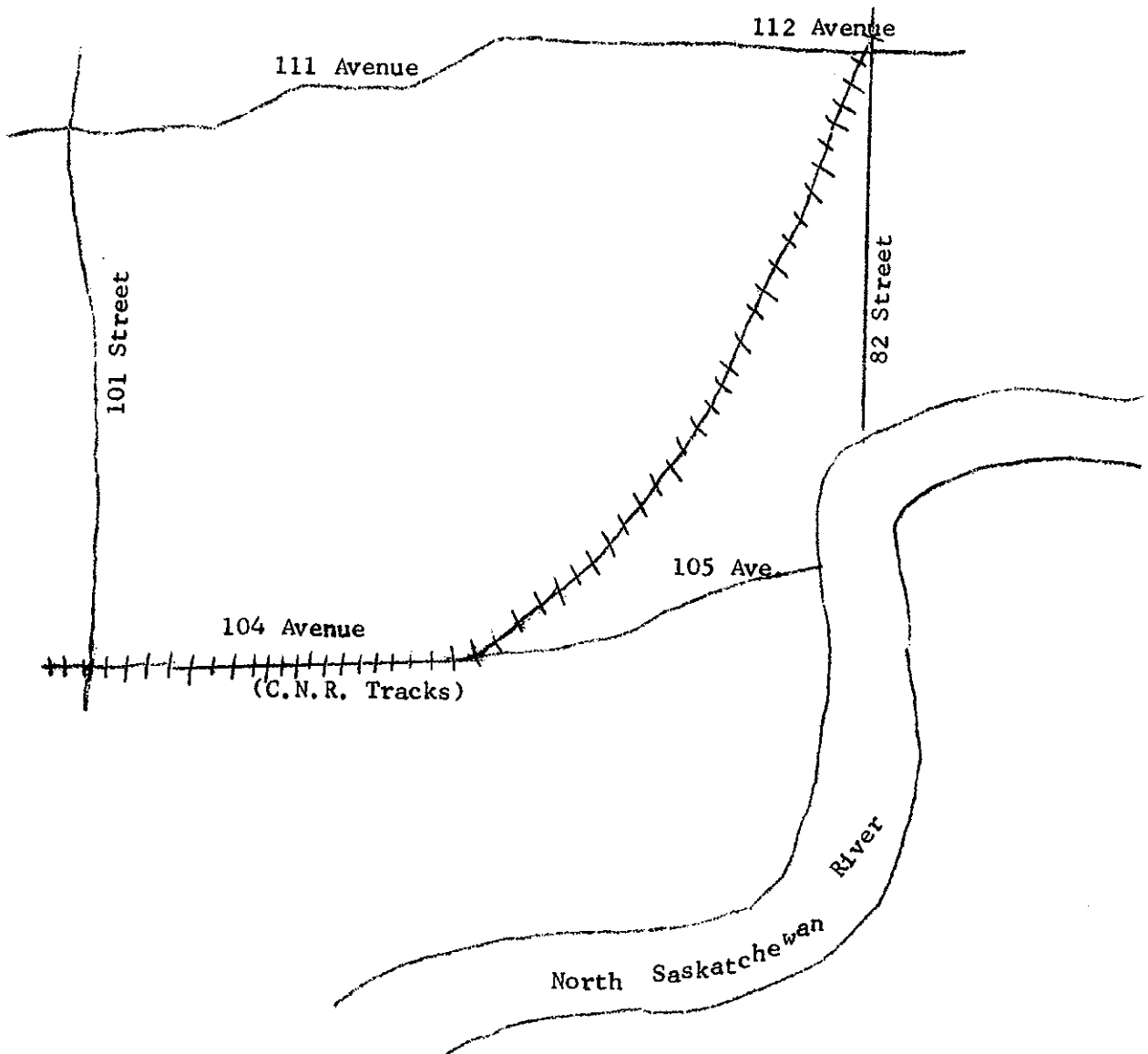
Although professionals may be essential to a community development process, the intent is not to do things for, or to, the community, but rather to build on existing community strengths, so that residents may become involved in doing things for themselves. It is this process, unique for the McCauley area, which is herein proposed.

There are numerous examples of neighbourhoods which have undergone, or are now undergoing, such a consciousness-raising process. The results of the process have meant economic, physical and social changes in neighbourhood environments, brought about by citizen participation in, and control of, planned change. Some examples include: Canora, Norwood, Oliver and Riverdale neighbourhoods in Edmonton; the communities of Inglewood-Ramsay, Hillhurst-Sunnyside and Bowness-Montgomery in Calgary; and, the Don Vale Riverdale and Trefann Court areas of Toronto.

A number of stages may be foreseen in this particular project. These would include:

1. approval of the proposal, accompanied by the commitment of adequate funding
2. the development of a community advisory group, and the hiring of staff
3. a process of growth of awareness amongst residents of McCauley
4. planning and action undertaken by residents of the community
5. As termination of the developmental stage of the project approaches, the residents will assume complete control of the ongoing aspects of the community development process.

GREATER McCauley AREA



DESCRIPTION OF THE GREATER McCAULEY AREA

McCauley is an older inner-city neighbourhood, bound to the north by 111 Avenue, to the south by CN Railway and 105th Avenue east of 96th Street, 101st Street to the west and 82nd Street to the east (see map - census tracts 44 and 45). The population of the area has fallen from about 11,000 to 9,000 persons over the last ten years, during which time the proportion of senior citizens resident in the area has increased. In addition, during this same period, McCauley has experienced a decline in the population under the age of fifteen.

Residents of the McCauley area originate from a variety of ethnic backgrounds, including the Ukraine (22%), Britain (20%), Italy (15%), France (8.1%), Poland (7.5%), Germany (6.1%), Asia (4.8%). In addition some 3.2% of the local residents are of either Native or Eskimo extraction⁽³⁾. The area traditionally has served to meet the needs of newly arrived immigrants to the city and because of the availability of relatively cheap accommodation in the area, it continues to perform this valuable service. In recent times, increasing numbers of Portuguese, Native and Asiatic people have taken up residence in the area.

The average age of dwellings in McCauley is 43 years, and during the last decade, as the D'Amore study has noted⁽⁴⁾, there has been a sharp drop in the numbers of single owner-occupied homes and a significant rise in the proportion of rental accommodation.

Income levels amongst the population in McCauley are extremely low, being only about 2/3 of the city average⁽⁵⁾. This can partly be explained by the large numbers of senior citizens and persons on public assistance in the area, plus the fact that recent immigrants tend to receive lower wages than more established residents of the city. In addition, a significant proportion of people in the area are single parents, on extremely low incomes.

Finally, two other special characteristics of the area should be noted: firstly, that there is a distinct lack of community organizations in the area, and secondly, that there is a deficiency of over six acres of parkland in McCauley⁽⁶⁾.

In many ways, McCauley is a 'forgotten' community, bordered by the massive new Commonwealth Games Stadium on one side, by a rapidly developing downtown commercial sector on the other, and ironically, by a Neighbourhood Improvement Area on a third side. Lacking any form of effective community organizations, the residents of McCauley, which is zoned for commercial and higher density residential development, seem powerless to stop the disintegration of the community. Currently, there exists a chronic lack of facilities in the area, and this shortfall is likely to get worse as the demographic spread of the area changes. It is predicted for instance that more walk-up apartments will be constructed in the area over the next few years, and that this will lead to greater demands for child minding services as more young families move into the area.

The D'Amore Report⁽⁷⁾ also noted a general lack of drop-in facilities in the area for the elderly, single mother, teenagers, and Native residents.

The McCauley area at the moment desperately needs some mechanism which will restore it to a balanced, healthy community. As the D'Amore Study noted, 'many inner city parents are lonely and alienated, and experience difficulties in many areas including marital problems, unemployment, alcoholism and feelings of social isolation and inferiority' (8).

As evidence of a deteriorating 'quality of life' of many of the residents of the McCauley area, one can look at the steady increase in crime statistics and suicide rates for the area. Figures within both these categories reveal numbers considerably higher than other areas of the city. For example, the numbers of police warnings given to juveniles resident in that area of the city within the three month period from November 1974 to January 1975 were about double the city average. Similarly, the figures for suicides in recent times indicate a rate for McCauley of some eight

times more than the rate for a more affluent suburb of the city⁽⁹⁾. This same study of suicide patterns in Alberta also noted that in many cases suicide followed a significant period of drug and/or alcohol abuse by the victim.

According to the various studies of the McCauley area that have been conducted over the last couple of years, the picture of the community which emerges is one where large numbers of people are suffering from a sense of helplessness and hopelessness and function at an extremely low level.

SPECIFIC PROPOSAL

Specifically, this project would require:

- 1) The establishment initially of a steering committee, consisting of a range of professionals and semi-professionals, but with the intention of 'phasing in' more community residents, and 'phasing out' the professionals over time so that the project would eventually be managed by an elected community board, representative of the area.
- 2) The hiring of two skilled, trained, experienced community development workers, and one part-time less qualified person.
- 3) The leasing of a property, possibly an old corner store, in a prominent location within the area.
- 4) The purchase of the services of independent evaluators, on an annual basis, with the purpose of determining the ongoing effectiveness of the project, and also to prepare documentation which could be utilized in other Canadian urban centres.

It is proposed therefore that the absolute minimum budget for this project would be \$50,000 a year for three years, made up of the following:

Salaries	38,000
Rent	5,000
Supplies, etc.	5,000
Sundry	1,000
Evaluation	1,000
Total	<u>50,000</u>

THE COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT PROCESS

As has been mentioned previously, there is currently a notable lack of community organization in McCauley, and all the discussions concerning this proposal to date have involved persons who were not resident in the area. Moreover, it is unlikely that persons with the right combinations of skills and knowledge for the community work proposed here would be residents of the area. The first task of the community work staff once hired would be, after locating a suitable premises, to make contact with local residents and to familiarize themselves with their needs. The next step would then be to establish a set of priorities and short term goals. For example, if an urgent problem identified by residents were the lack of child minding services, the community worker might set himself the task of bringing together residents with these similar concerns and assisting them to set up a cooperative nursery. Alternatively, if teenage deviancy were a concern, community workers might attempt to make contact with the youth in the area, and plan with them an appropriate strategy. Perhaps, a glue sniffing teenager might develop 'a sense of worth' after being encouraged to act as a volunteer to senior citizens. A bored delinquent might be helped if pressure were put on the City Council to provide more open space.

IMPLICATIONS OF THE COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT PROCESS

Although the community development process is often given impetus by outside elements, it should become a process directed by the community itself. With a goal of community self-determination, initiators of such community development processes can make no guarantees about the eventual outcomes. The only predictable outcome of a successful community development process is the development of a greater awareness amongst the participants. Any changes which might occur in McCauley, as a result of such a process, should come about as a direct product of resident participation in and control of planning and decision making processes. Experience shows that residents may find a variety of ways to address the "problems" of their neighbourhood. It is possible that certain solutions adopted by residents may seem unconventional and/or threatening to people outside the neighbourhood. The value of the process remains in the enhanced awareness and participation available to citizens.

EVALUATION

As has been mentioned previously, this proposal is for a unique community development project to be established in the McCauley area of the city for a fixed number of years (three). It is not being suggested here, however, that in that period of time the complex set of social problems which currently exist in McCauley would be solved, but rather, it would be hoped that at the end of this three year period some fairly conclusive evidence would exist to show that projects of this type can be used effectively for finding solutions to similar problems elsewhere.

A major assumption which lies behind this project is that the potential to make a useful contribution to society exists in everybody, but, for various reasons, some people need some form of facilitating mechanism to be available, to assist them to eventually improve their own quality of lives, and that of other residents of the community in which they live. For a project of this kind to succeed it will be necessary that the staff hired have the right kind of skills, and that the board has a clear idea of both the long and short term goals of the project. Thus, both for the day to day functioning of the project, and for its long term operation, it is vital that some evaluation component exists from the outset.

Below are some guidelines which should assist the project staff and board to develop a more sophisticated evaluation methodology at a later stage:

1. The goals and objectives of the project - short-term and long-term.
2. The target group.
3. The techniques and methods to be employed.
4. The facilities required.
5. A description of roles of staff and board members.
6. The numbers of volunteers recruited, groups formed, individuals helped, etc.
7. A description of the nature of relationships with other agencies in the area.
8. Ways in which the program has been effective.
9. Use of the media and why used.
10. Other sources of funding.

Of course, project staff and board members would expect funding agencies to have an input into the preparation of a more specific evaluation methodology.

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Master Plan 1970-1980.
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- (8) Op. cit. 4.
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