

# COMMUNITY HUBS in HALTON



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# Contents

- 1. Introduction..... 1
  - 1.1 Questions Raised..... 2
- 2. Why A Community Hub?..... 3
- 3. Benefits of a Community Hub ..... 4
- 4. Limitations of and Barriers to Implementing Hubs ..... 5
  - 4.1 Time for Planning ..... 5
  - 4.2 Integrated Service Delivery ..... 6
    - 4.2.1 What Are Integrated Services? ..... 6
    - 4.2.2 Barriers to Integrated Service Delivery ..... 8
    - 4.2.3 Additional Barriers to Community Hub Development..... 9
  - 4.3 Community Infrastructure and Public Properties ..... 9
    - 4.3.1 Access to School Space and Using Schools as Community Hubs ..... 10
- 5. What Is a Community Hub? ..... 12
  - 5.1 The Importance Of ‘Community’ In Community Hubs ..... 13
  - 5.2 What Makes a Community Hub/Neighbourhood Centre Different? ..... 13
- 6. Purpose of A Community Hub ..... 14
  - 6.1 Community Building ..... 14
  - 6.2 Service Coordination and Delivery ..... 15
    - 6.2.1 Difference Between Integration and Co-Location of Services..... 15
  - 6.3 Placemaking..... 16
- 7. Types and Characteristics of Community Hubs..... 16
- 8. Community Participation and Engagement ..... 18
- 9. The Halton Perspective ..... 21
  - 9.1 Leadership ..... 22
  - 9.2 Financing..... 22
  - 9.3 Neighbourhood Hubs ..... 23
  - 9.4 Shared Spaces in Usable Spaces ..... 23
  - 9.5 Limits to Space ..... 24
  - 9.6 Shared Resources, Shared Program Beyond Co-Location..... 24
  - 9.7 Hubs as Connectors..... 24
  - 9.8 Hubs as Knowledge Exchange, Shared Learning ..... 24

9.9 Processes.....	25
9.10 Identified Issues.....	25
10. Future Planning: A Journey into Hub Development in Halton .....	26
10.1 Understand Local Needs and Demands of Community .....	27
10.2 Establish A Clear Vision and Mission with The Community .....	28
10.3 Collaborate, Develop Partnerships, and Build Relationships.....	28
10.4 Develop Strategic Objectives .....	28
10.5 Develop A ‘Business’ [Planning Pathway] Model for Hub Development.....	28
10.6 Secure Support and Resources .....	29
10.7 Acquire Assets .....	29
10.8 Establish an Appropriate Governance Structure .....	29
10.9 Implementation and Sustain Operations .....	29
11. Future Planning Framework: A Suggestion.....	30
12. Conclusion .....	33
Appendix A - List of Interviews .....	34
Bibliography.....	35

## 1. Introduction

The Premier’s Advisory Group on Community Hubs published their report *Community Hubs in Ontario: A Strategic Framework and Action Plan* in August 2015. The report uses a flexible, community-driven definition of hubs and focuses on ways the Province can support community planning, integrated service delivery, and the community infrastructure needed for a vibrant network of community hubs across the province.

The Ontario government’s community hubs initiative was an important policy recognition of developments that had been underway for a number of years in communities across the province – specifically, growing trends in network-building and collaborative activity among independent community organizations and social agencies to combine their capacities and resources for impact on shared areas of concern. Civic and community stakeholders see an opportunity in the provincial government’s commitment to “community hubs” for developing and advancing their collaborative work.

The work of the Advisory Group has spurred discussions in communities about the efficacy of hubs and what form they might take to meet the diverse needs of people. This dialogue is also growing across Halton. There has been an increasing expressed need for and interest in the development and expansion of community hubs.

Community hubs are an alternative approach to delivering services in a holistic manner guided by the principles of community involvement and partnership. As reported by the Mississauga Halton LHIN, there is a high demand for a “one-stop-shop” by the residents of Halton. Although community hubs have been around for decades, momentum surrounding hubs has increased due to Premier Wynne’s interest and her appointment of a Community Hubs Framework Advisory Group. While the provincial government has taken steps to tackle community hubs through various engagement processes, important questions remain such as:

- How exactly do we define a community hub?
- What is the purpose of a community hub?
- Who is better off because of community hubs?

Given the importance of the subject, the Region of Halton and Community Development Halton (CDH) embarked on building a broad-based conversation about and understanding of community hubs. The purpose of this paper is to create a background document that speaks to an understanding and development of hubs within the Halton context. This document explores different models of hubs, their characteristics, their role in community, their strengths and weaknesses in supporting planning, service delivery and community infrastructure and, importantly, community well-being.

CDH engaged with community agencies, grassroots community-based organizations, and selected community members across Halton’s municipalities, exploring the multiple definitions or understandings of ‘hubs’ and their role in the development of community

well-being in Halton. These discussions also assessed the readiness of community to embrace hubs as a model of collaboration and integrated service delivery at the local level as well as the barriers to hub development in Halton.

The goals of this background paper are to:

- explore the many different definitions and understandings of community hubs;
- outline the different types and characteristics of community hubs;
- identify some of the challenges and limitations related to hubs, and;
- review the experiences of countries such as the United Kingdom and Australia in the development of hubs.

It begins with a generic examination of hubs and then focuses on the community aspects. This information forms the background to and context for the development of intentional and planned hubs in Halton.

### **1.1 Questions Raised**

Through the course of the conversations with Halton leaders, several questions were raised that would have to be considered as further conversations on the development of community hubs are convened.

One set of questions revolved on the why of community hubs:

- What is the problem we are trying to address through the development of community hubs?
- What is the political agenda behind the interest in community hubs?
- Who needs to be around the table in the development of community hubs?
- Is there a continuum of community hub models?
- What does hub development mean when attached to a recreation facility and what are the implications for the role of local municipalities?
- What has triggered this conversation about community hubs?

Several of the questions had to do with the composition of a community hub:

- Is a community hub primarily a co-location of agencies?
- If an agency offers an array of services, is this considered a community hub?
- How do we differentiate between two different roles that hubs can play, i.e., bringing service users to services, or bringing services to service users?
- Is a community hub only defined by social services and does that weaken the idea of a hub?
- What is meant by integrated service delivery?
- Are community hubs just the 21st century version of a multi-service centre?
- Are community hubs just about service efficiency?
- What can support existing hubs and what are the barriers to a good use of hubs?

There were questions centred around control and leadership:

- Who will take the lead?
- How should hubs interact with community?
- Are hubs really hubs when driven by professionals and not community controlled?
- Are community hubs a new or different way to serve a community's needs?
- What issues or challenges will hubs resolve?
- How will hubs meet human needs?
- What is the relationship of social needs to community?
- How do hubs build community?
- What will be the impact and value of community hubs?
- How do neighbourhood and community needs differ?
- What are the different scales of interaction?

## **2. Why A Community Hub?**

Evidence supports the argument that community hubs make a difference. In a report written by Community Hubs Australia (2015), evaluations found that hubs are not only effective in achieving their own objectives, but that they have a positive impact on the local communities in which they are located.

Currently, Ontario has a population over 13 million. It is estimated this population will grow by 31 percent over the next 2 decades. As a result, there will be an increased need for government funded services and programs that respond to the unique needs of the province's growing and increasingly diverse population (Pitre 2015). There is parallel need to implement new strategies where necessary to ensure effective delivery of these services.

The government of Ontario has highlighted five benefits of community hubs:

1. School-community partnerships;
2. Ability to respond to local needs;
3. More efficient and sustainable services;
4. Improved access to services and better outcomes for people, and;
5. Social return on investments. (Pitre 2015, 8)

The province argues that a community hub will assist in exploring innovative solutions to issues such as lack of accessible services and inadequate service delivery.

While the province focuses primarily on the financial and physical infrastructure value and efficiency of community hubs, there are many social benefits that come with community hubs as well. The literature suggests that community hubs can make a tremendous difference in community services. In fact, in Australia, it was found that community hubs have allowed local community services to be more connected and collaborative, more accessible and available, as well as more effective for service users (Community Hubs Australia 2015).

Community hubs are believed to assist in building cohesive and more resilient communities. In fact, community hubs have the power to bring community members together, assisting them to form new relationships and support networks that did not previously exist. This is facilitated through community-based activities that bring people together and by the fact that community hubs are community-led. Community hubs also hold out the prospect of providing more effective services, since they can be shaped to be responsive to the needs of people in the communities in which they are located as well as being more easy to access.

According to My Community, an organization in the United Kingdom, community hubs can also provide early intervention strategies; in fact, community hubs can assist people through difficult times before they escalate into larger issues. Community hubs can also take on a holistic approach and because of this are able to assist people in accessing a wide range of services and activities (My Community 2016). This mirrors the planning for community safety and well-being that is currently underway in Halton through an initiative of the Halton Regional Police Service, which is focussed on factors that will make the community safer and healthier for all.

Community Hubs Australia (2015) has identified reasons why community hubs are worth investing in. First, they note that, for a variety of reasons, traditional service delivery methods do not reach the most isolated or marginalized populations: some service users may feel uncomfortable visiting government or agency offices; some may not be able to access services due to transportation barriers, and; some may lack trust in these government services. These factors can all determine whether or not someone can access a particular service. Whatever the reason may be, community hubs can start breaking down these barriers by connecting individuals who may be hard to reach or are vulnerable, providing them with supportive community-led services that are conveniently set in one location.

### **3. Benefits of a Community Hub**

Community hubs situated in Australia have yielded significant results. In an evaluation of six different National Community Hub Programs in Australia, it was found that community hubs have a positive impact on local communities and that there were high rates of satisfaction among community members related to their operation and their engagement of their service users (Community Hubs Australia 2015). Focussed on newcomers and families who were refugees, the evaluation found that service users felt they were treated with respect and were more engaged and connected to services and their local community (Community Hubs Australia 2015).

It was also found that families who used these community hubs felt extremely positive about their child or children's future and that they were much more knowledgeable about community services and where to find them if needed (Community Hub Australia 2015).

These community hubs also assisted with enhancing respect for cultural diversity in schools and led to more culturally inclusive environments (My Community 2015).

#### **4. Limitations of and Barriers to Implementing Hubs**

The strategic framework and action plan released by Karen Pitre identifies and outlines various barriers that can impede the development of a community hub. These barriers were identified using feedback received from numerous stakeholders across the province. The Province categorized the stakeholder's responses into three categories:

1. Time for Planning
2. Integrated Service Delivery
3. Community Infrastructure/Public Property

The following are limitations and barriers as outlined by the Province, with additional material from the broader literature.

##### **4.1 Time for Planning**

The planning needed to establish a community hub plays an instrumental role in its development. To develop an effective community hub, the planning process, whether undertaken locally or in coordination with the Province, needs to involve the "right" partners at the table and must be co-ordinated (Pitre 2015). Adequate time to plan is a necessary condition to hub development.

The three major barriers in relation to coordinated planning are:

- The lack of a provincial community planning table
- Lack of leadership and accountability
- The existence of multiple planning tables

(Pitre 2015)

Community hubs have a mandate that emphasizes nurturing strong communities through program delivery as well as building social networks with community members and local partners (Dunston 2015). Eliminating geographical boundaries, designating leadership roles and introducing a provincial community planning table, will all assist in easing the planning process necessary for hub development.

**Pitre (2015) identifies several additional local planning challenges as well:**

- Time consuming and expensive to:
  - Conduct a needs assessment of the community
  - Identify what services are needed to ensure that community's needs are met
  - Developing and maintaining partnerships
- By-laws that conflict with the development of a community hub
- Unaligned funding processes as well as different eligibility criteria for funding
- Burden on school boards to determine education requirements for community

- No specific criteria to detect the viability of public ownership of surplus
- Local planners and community groups have no access to inventory of surplus public properties

The Ministry of Municipal Affairs is in the process of exploring possible policy changes that would dismantle barriers to integrated service delivery planning and promote partnerships between local, regional, and provincial levels of governments. There is also a need to understand the role of the nonprofit sector in this partnership development. The Province has stated that it will continue to work with local partners to remove any barriers that hinder local planning processes.

## **4.2 Integrated Service Delivery**

### **4.2.1 What Are Integrated Services?<sup>1</sup>**

Integrated service delivery refers to a number of service agencies working together to collaborate and coordinate their support, services and interventions to clients. The focus is generally on clients, or client target groups, who have complex needs that require services from several agencies.

Some efforts may be one-off, but more typically, there will be a system developed that enables agencies to meet or communicate and possibly streamline processes to provide ongoing coordination.

The primary purpose of integrated service delivery approaches is to improve outcomes for clients. How this is achieved, and the factors that are important, will vary according to the service settings, agency capabilities and specific needs of the clients. They may include:

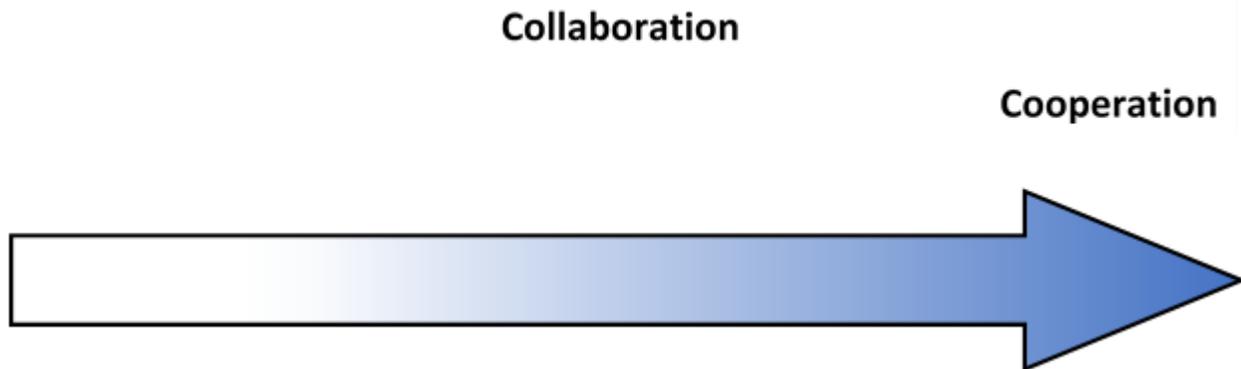
- Improving communication between agencies to monitor client progress and changes and be more responsive to these;
- Identifying areas of duplication, working at cross-purposes, or what is creating confusion for clients about who is doing what;
- Developing one plan for the client which includes the work being done by/with all agencies. This plan may also include actions and responsibilities the client agrees to do;
- Building understanding and capacity between the agencies – such as sharing practice frameworks and legal and funding limitations – so they can work together more effectively and generally support each other in their service delivery;
- Identifying systematic issues that create problems for clients, and for services to meet client needs. This may include identification of client groups or needs that “fall between the gaps.” Ideally, there will be a process whereby these issues can be brought to the attention of decision-maker, and;

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<sup>1</sup> Queensland Council of Social Services, *A Guide To Integrated Service Delivery To Clients For Community Service Organizations*, October, 2013 [http://communitydoor.org.au/sites/default/files/A\\_GUIDE\\_TO\\_INTEGRATED\\_SERVICE\\_DELIVERY\\_TO\\_CLIENTS.pdf](http://communitydoor.org.au/sites/default/files/A_GUIDE_TO_INTEGRATED_SERVICE_DELIVERY_TO_CLIENTS.pdf)

- Development of streamlined processes which can provide more seamless services to clients, such as a common referral or assessment process.

## Co-location



Integration – process along a continuum<sup>2</sup>

- **Co-location:** refers to having all agencies in one location such as: legal services, mental health services, health services, social services, or case management services. Having services in one location can reduce the travel and time costs associated with participation of clients. Co-location also makes for easier accessibility between agencies that can help to promote collaboration among groups of service providers and professionals.
- **Collaboration:** entails a higher level of integration than co-location. It refers to agencies working together through information sharing and training, and the creation of a network of agencies to improve the client experience. Collaboration is a necessary step for reducing the gaps in services for clients. By sharing knowledge, agencies and professionals can improve the referral process to other services offered by the centre. The more knowledge professionals have about the different services, the easier it is to ensure “needs-based” recommendations are available to clients.
- **Cooperation:** is defined as professionals communicating and working together on a client’s case. Effective cooperation, through good communication, is central to improving outcomes. When professionals work well together, costs can be lowered, services are not duplicated, and the identification and response to client needs can occur more quickly.

Integration revolves around the need to be fluid and to establish a range of different services – whether health, community or social – in order to ensure that a community’s needs are being properly met (World Health Organization 2008). Integrated services do

<sup>2</sup> OECD, Integrated Services and Housing Consultation, *Integrating service delivery: why, for who, and how?* November, 2012

not necessarily mean that all services offered at a community hub must fit easily into one package; integration is more about providing access to services that are not disjointed and that are easy to navigate (World Health Organization 2008).

When looking at community hubs and integrated services, the degree of integration and the degree of comprehensiveness of services are useful concepts. The Ontario Hospital Association (2012) defines these in the following way:

- **Degree of integration** – how formalized the clinical, management and governance linkages between health [and social] service providers are
- **Degree of comprehensiveness** – the range of services that are locally available and co-located

(Ontario Hospital Association 2012, 14)

For example, one way a community hub can allow facilitate service integration is by having all co-locating agencies meet monthly or by forming sub-committees that work together to address issues. Together they can meet “to address specific situations regarding clients facing elevated levels of risk, and develop immediate, coordinated and integrated responses through the mobilization of resources” (The Hub and COR 2016, 1). Another example is a community hub that has its partnering agencies meeting once a week, while another community hub’s partnering agencies may only meet once every other week. This supports the notion that integration should be viewed as a continuum rather than a binary concept. Due to each community hub’s diverse and varying needs, the level of integration should depend on the hub.

Integrated services are about developing cohesive and reciprocal partnerships among service users, the different social and health services that will support these service users, and the organizations and agencies that offer these services as well. Integrated service delivery models aim to create integration across a network that seeks to address and support community needs and offer resources and services in a collaborative environment (Mulligan 2010). Integrating services is a long and ongoing process requiring local agencies and community organizations to work collaboratively to provide joint services that will benefit the communities they pledge to serve (Mulligan 2010).

#### **4.2.2 Barriers to Integrated Service Delivery**

Integrated service delivery is different than service co-location. Integrated services can be an important element in the development of a hub; however, there are numerous barriers that hinder a hub’s ability to become truly integrated.

These barriers include:

- Start-up funding
- Funding silos
- Transfer payments and accountability
- Measuring inputs and not outcomes

- Sustainable funding
- Privacy legislation
- Local capacity and resources

(Pitre 2015)

#### **4.2.3 Additional Barriers to Community Hub Development**

The Australian Hubs Strategy Group (2007) has identified additional barriers that can impede the development of a community hub:

- Unable to initiate planning processes;
- Challenges with staffing (e.g., recruitment, roles, having the time to develop and engage staff);
- Collaborating to create a joint vision;
- Managing multiple partnerships;
- Managing community expectations once a community hub is established/built;
- Finding a fit between existing organizations that have their own way of operating;
- Scepticism;
- Potential segmentation of roles internally and externally; and
- Dealing with change.

(Hubs Strategy Group, 2007, 23-24)

#### **4.3 Community Infrastructure and Public Properties**

In the context of developing community hubs, there are there are many challenges that relate to community infrastructure. In some communities, there are underutilized spaces, while in others, space is greatly limited (Pitre 2015). Despite having programs and partnerships established, many agencies cannot find appropriate space (Pitre 2015). Given that the Province is the primary owner and/or capital contributor to many of Ontario's public places, it has a particular responsibility for addressing many of the issues associated with community infrastructure. (Pitre 2015).

The barriers community hubs face regarding public properties and available space include:

- No accessible comprehensive public database;
- Planning in silos;
- Sale at fair market value;
- Circulation process for surplus property;
- Access to school space and using schools as community hubs;
- Capital funding for community hubs;
- Property management, liability and security issues; and
- Design of new buildings.

(Pitre 2015, 27-28)

### **4.3.1 Access to School Space and Using Schools as Community Hubs**

One of the topics that has received much attention in conversations about hubs has to do with school space in the community. Schools are viewed as a natural setting for enhancing community capacity (Graves 2011). There are currently three school-based hubs in Halton. Located in Burlington, Acton and Milton, these hubs are operated by the Our Kids Network.

Most schools are very supportive of sharing their space with the community. However, the Ministry of Education only funds spaces that are occupied by students, so schools are often required to subsidize the community's use of their space (Pitre 2015). This can be burdensome for schools; it should not be the school board's responsibility to ensure that community services be offered and paid for (Pitre 2015). There is a need for a partnership between school boards and the provincial government to assist in easing this burden. In addition, locating community hubs within schools results in significant challenges that must be taken into consideration related to security and a range of potential liabilities (Pitre 2015).

With an increasing number of schools being closed throughout the province, discussions have revolved around the idea of developing community hubs in either occupied or unoccupied schools. However, there are a few limitations that need to be addressed. To begin, when a school integrates and functions as a community hub, factors such as "privacy and information sharing, budgeting and measuring results, leadership capacity", must be taken into account (Horn, Freeland, and Butler 2015, 4).

To have a full integration of social supports, community hubs require organizational and leadership management that may be beyond the skills or expertise of a school leader (Horn, Freeland, and Butler 2015). This is often because school leaders rarely have the necessary experience or training in other fields are needed to establish and develop an effective community hub (Horn, Freeland, and Butler 2015). School leaders must be given opportunities to develop these skill sets.

The Ontario Catholic School Trustees' Association has also outlined some challenges in relation to funding, infrastructure, and hiring of staff:

- The school board does not have enough resources to fulfil requirements needed to build or modify space for services such as daycare;
- Custodian staff are usually unavailable in the summer due to regional policies that force them to take vacation time during the summer months;
- Difficult to coordinate between agencies and ministries to develop a community hub that has proper implementation and long-term viability;
- Cost sharing agreements between multiple tenants;
- Financial burden of endeavouring to manage properties and tenants in community hubs for school boards, and;

- Due to the limited resources of nonprofit agencies, school boards are often forced to bear maintenance costs which are not sustainable since these costs are not part of a board's mandate regarding students and education programming.

(Burtnik 2015)

In addition to discussions concerning the potential risks community hubs may bring to a school, there have also been questions about whether school physical space is appropriate and/or adequate in responding to a community's needs. Would schools, currently occupied or unoccupied, need to be retro-fitted or re-designed to foster a more inclusive environment? Would a school-based community hub be able to successfully address the needs of all community members and not just students and their families? Although there have been some successes with renovating unoccupied schools and restructuring them into community and cultural centres, such as Queen Elizabeth Park Community Centre in Oakville, whether this can be done for a community hub is uncertain.

As of May 6, 2016, the Ministry of Education announced its plan to begin implementing steps in response to the issues addressed in Pitre's Strategic Framework and Action Plan. The Ministry's objectives were "removing barriers to community hubs, providing integrated service delivery to communities, and respecting the importance of local planning decisions." (Matthews and Sekaly 2016)

In actioning this commitment, the Ministry made amendments to Ontario Regulation 444/98 – Disposition of Surplus Real Property that would "ensure additional consideration of community and provincial interests when disposition of surplus school property occurs." (Matthews and Sekaly 2016) Some additional examples of Provincial steps to meeting this goal included: extending the surplus school circulation period from 90 days to 180 days, and expanding the number of public entities eligible to receive notification of surplus school property disposition (Matthews and Sekaly 2016). These changes are significant because they will allow community organizations to receive additional opportunities to purchase or lease surplus school properties (Matthews and Sekaly 2016).

The Ministry of Education also announced that they will provide new capital funding programs that will permit school boards to support the creation of community hubs in school space (Matthews and Sekaly 2016). Funding will go towards creating new child care and family support programs, retrofitting existing child care spaces, and renovating surplus school spaces to make them more appropriate and accessible. The Ministry also announced that it will provide funding to school boards to assist in renovating surplus school spaces to fit the needs of a specific community partner and the people they serve, as well as build replacement space into a school to assist a community partner that may be operating in a school that is either shutting down or being consolidated (Matthews and Sekaly 2016).

With respect to the Halton region, the Halton District School Board has changed its policy regarding the development of new partnerships for sharing unused space and co-building with community partners. This means that:

“New schools, additions and significant renovations may be considered as opportunities for partnerships. Site size, topography and other restrictions may limit partnership opportunities. The Board will evaluate each capital construction opportunity on a case by case basis to determine whether partnership may be appropriate and advantageous. As part of the Long-Term Accommodation Plan process, the Board will notify the entities on the notification list 1 to 3 years prior to the potential construction start date of a new school or significant addition... For space that is suitable for facility partnerships and is available for the long term, the Board will be expected to consider declaring the space surplus and circulating it for lease through O. Reg. 444/98” (Halton District School Board 2016, 3).

While school boards face many challenges in supporting the development of community hubs in their schools, it is clear that they have a significant role to play in the discussion of community hubs.

## 5. What Is a Community Hub?

There is no generally accepted definition of a community hub as it is a term that is driven locally and varies in meaning depending on its context. For instance, in contemporary urban design and community planning, community hub is a term that is regularly used to identify a safe space that connects neighbours, creates a sense of belonging and inclusion, and has services defined as important by the community.

We can infer that the word ‘community’ involves space that is publicly owned and developed to address a local population’s needs (Rossiter 2007). As for the word ‘hub’, this term implies a central meeting point where different services or people can come together (Rossiter 2007). Therefore, we can assume that a community hub is a conveniently located and publicly owned space where numerous activities, services and events can occur as a way to effectively build social relationships between community members and local community organizations. The name ‘community hub’ is not fixed; depending on the location of the facility or a community’s preference, terms such as neighbourhood centres can be used as well.

A community hub is a conveniently located place that is recognised and valued in the local community as a gathering place for people and an access point for a wide range of community activities, programs, services and events.

Rossiter 2007

Community hubs “are places that are integrated, both in terms of the programs, activities and services that occur within them, and in terms of the physical and social relationships with surrounding uses such as local shops, activity centres, public places and transport nodes” (Rossiter 2007, 2). A community hub can be a single multipurpose facility with

multidisciplinary employees that hosts various services, programs, and activities, all of which are well coordinated.

A community hub can also act as a gathering place for local community members to come together to meet, collaborate, and build relationships with each other. Some even identify community hubs as a central meeting point that allows for communities to live, build social capital, and grow. In brief, a community hub is the concentration of various activities and services that are not only accessible to all within the same proximity, but serve the needs of all community members.

### **5.1 The Importance Of ‘Community’ In Community Hubs**

Community hubs do not just provide services for the community, but are orchestrated and driven by the community as well. One understanding of the role of community is that local community members must be involved in the decision-making process on how services in the community hub are programmed and their buildings are managed, as well as be engaged in supporting service delivery through volunteerism (My Community, 2016). Although community hubs are generally owned or managed by a community organization, they can also be owned or managed by public agencies or local authorities who receive feedback and input from the community (My Community, 2016).

### **5.2 What Makes a Community Hub/Neighbourhood Centre Different?**

As mentioned previously, community hubs are often labelled neighbourhood centres and in this document the terms are used interchangeably. For instance, neighbourhood centres in Toronto have been serving as hubs and addressing the unique needs of the communities they serve for over 100 years. A community health centre can also be categorized as a health hub given the focus on health.

Although they share similar characteristics, community hubs/neighbourhood centres are different from a traditional community, recreational or service centre because they use a hub service model. By utilizing local buildings and land, a community hub *can* locate itself within an array of different community facilities such as a library, school, early learning centre, community health centre, seniors’ centre, church, or any other form of public space (Pitre 2015). What makes a community hub different from a service centre or even a library, is that it is built to be *multipurpose*; community hubs are place-based, providing a central location that offers a wide range of needed, integrated and interrelated health and social service as well as offering cultural, recreational, and green spaces for all community members.

Another key difference between community hubs/neighbourhood centres and service centres are that community hubs engage community at a collaborative level. The co-locating of services is a critical component of a community hub; however, research finds that in order for a community hub to be seen as a hub and responsive to the unique needs of its community, services need to be more than a cluster of services within the same proximity (Rossiter 2007).

## **6. Purpose of A Community Hub**

To summarize, a community hub consists of publicly accessible services, spaces, resources, and activities that respond to the ever-changing needs of a community over time. These services are reflective of the community's self-identified needs and are co-located, integrated and delivered by the community under a nonprofit community-based governance. The purpose of a community hub is to narrow the gap that currently exists – and continues to grow – between local communities and government policies (Torjman 2006). A community hub should improve a community's access to services and activities.

Community hubs can also assist in building social capital within communities. Building social capital refers to identifying and connecting local community members and organizations to each other; it is also about encouraging broader participation and engagement from the community through the development of social relationships (The Saguaro Seminar, Harvard Kennedy School of Government 2013). This is because social networks have value and are crucial to developing the community partnerships necessary for a community hub.

Social capital is a term that signifies trust, reciprocity, knowledge, and cooperation (The Saguaro Seminar, Harvard Kennedy School of Government 2013). Community hubs have the opportunity to facilitate the growth of social capital as they bring together a range of community members, community organizations, health and social services and connect them to the community through the utilization of a communal space that offers diversity.

Also, community hubs are able to provide school boards with the opportunity to create and secure space that will actually enhance their responsiveness to the educational programming needs of their students (Burtnik 2015). In fact, Burtnik's submission on community hubs (2015) stated that using schools to offer a "one stop shop" for community, social and health services allows for families to have their needs fulfilled. In addition, some community school hubs' purpose may be to decrease the experience of poverty for students and their families (Haig 2014).

A review of the literature indicates that community hubs have three primary purposes: community building, service coordination and delivery, and placemaking. (Rossiter 2007)

### **6.1 Community Building**

One purpose of a community hub is to assist in the community building process. Community building is about increasing relationships and connections between community members. It also involves strengthening and promoting common community goals (Rossiter 2007).

#### **Community/neighbourhood hubs assist in community building by providing:**

1. A setting or space where community members can congregate and work on community projects;

2. A central meeting point where people with common community interests can gather collectively;
3. Sources of information and resources for community members to learn how to access networks, services, resources and so on; and
4. A local source of support for community building.

(Rossiter 2007, 4)

## **6.2 Service Coordination and Delivery**

The second purpose of a community hub is to enhance and create inclusive services for community members by having these organizations work collaboratively together to co-locate and co-plan.

### **6.2.1 Difference Between Integration and Co-Location of Services**

A hub that is integrated combines different programs with the intent of supporting a local population and offering a seamless variety of services (Ontario Municipal Social Services Association 2015). The services available in this kind of hub are able to ‘piggy-back’ on each agency’s resources, in effect streamlining, coordinating, and improving efficiencies and effectiveness” (Ontario Municipal Social Services Association 2015, 6). Duplication of services within hubs should be lessened through collaborative practices.

Meanwhile, hubs organized around co-location require each agency to function independently and preserve different funding resources (Ontario Municipal Social Services Association 2015). These agencies may share resources such as a meeting room or community kitchen, but each agency operates separately from the other, providing different services but still sharing the same space (Ontario Municipal Social Services Association 2015).

“Integration is best seen as a continuum rather than as two extremes of integrated [or] not integrated” (World Health Organization 2008, 1). This is because integrated services can be implemented or delivered in different ways depending on context. For instance, a full and seamless integration of services might be feasible for one community hub and be able to positively reflect and address the community's needs, while in other cases, an integration of services might only be utilized and be effective for certain services or programs, and therefore complete integration may not be appropriate.

Advantages to co-locating services may include:

1. Increasing convenience for service users who require access to multiple services;
2. Generating greater awareness and interactions between services;
3. Assisting in increasing collaborative working relationships and cross-referring of service users;
4. Providing opportunities for capacity building among services;
5. Sharing meeting rooms, training facilities and other resources to create greater access to services for all; and

6. Improving 'backroom' efficiencies for service providers which will assist with human resources as well as administrative activities.

(Rossiter 2007)

Barriers and/or disadvantages to co-locating services may include:

1. Reluctance from service providers to co-locate due to concerns surrounding service identity and/or use of space;
2. Lack of time and flexible funding to ensure that co-location is successful as well as drafting up agreements and policies for co-locating arrangements;
3. The need for careful planning in case the partnering organizations have incompatible procedures and service delivery; and
4. An inability to work cooperatively or collaboratively during implementation process for facility planning, administration, programming, management, funding, and ownership.

(Rossiter 2007)

### **6.3 Placemaking**

Placemaking refers to the enhancement of the physical quality and appearance of public place in order to achieve a more attractive and appropriate environment for the community to use. This usually involves integrating community facilities such as libraries and community centres with local shops, public transportation, schools, and parks (Rossiter 2007). However, successfully achieving this requires more than just the co-location of services in a multipurpose facility, but rather requires cross sectoral linkages (Rossiter 2007). The third purpose of a community hub is to assist in creating a physical space that can be multipurpose and utilized in a wide variety of ways. While the three objectives that were outlined above are seen as the primary purposes of a community hub, it is important to note that these are generally believed to be the basic foundations of a community hub and that additional purposes can and will arise. In general, a community hub can enhance public services so that they are more accessible and efficient for its local population. Community hubs should foster social cohesion and allow communities to become more liveable (Mississauga Halton LIHN, 2015). However, a broader definition would see "place" as a concept integrating both physical location and natural and built environment on the one hand and the social and economic relationships that play out in that physical location on the other hand (Community Development Halton 2013).

## **7. Types and Characteristics of Community Hubs**

Due to community hubs being based on a community's need for certain services and resources, various types or kinds of hubs will be created or adapted depending on the specific community. For instance, in the Mississauga Halton region, the LHIN (2015) has identified a need for an integrated community health hub or centre. "Ontario's community health centres commonly strive to deliver services that are comprehensive, accessible,

client and community centred, interdisciplinary, integrated, community governed and grounded in a community development” (Collins, Resendes, and Dunn 2014, 17).

As illustrated through previous discussion, just because a facility co-locates its services and calls itself a hub, does not necessarily make it a hub. It is important in this context to recognize that co-location is very different from integration; while co-location of services can have a positive impact, it does not necessarily make a facility a community hub. A community hub is about the intersection of services and a partnership between different community organizations, something which takes time and careful planning to accomplish.

Rossiter (2007) has identified two types of hubs, district hubs and neighbourhood hubs. A **district hub** involves specialized services that involve health and aged care services, social and recreational activities, family and children’s services, and so on (Rossiter 2007). A **neighbourhood hub** is more generalized and focuses on information and resources for the community, building social interactions, creating meeting spaces, providing child care as well as fostering community development (Rossiter 2007).

Rossiter (2007) identifies 7 key characteristics for a successful community hub:

- Clustering of various community facilities and social services;
- Allowing the community’s unique needs and assets to shape and guide community hub;
- Ensuring that various community services are available throughout the day and meeting the community’s needs and support the community’s strengths;
- Engaging community members and identifying the hub as a focal point for the community;
- Ensuring that the hub is readily accessible and available to all community members;
- Building the hub into a place where community members feel proud of the space and feel a strong sense of ownership of it, and;
- Providing a friendly and welcoming environment that encourages people to interact in the public realm and with other community members and partners.

Some additional characteristics that have been identified for community hubs include:

- Providing public spaces that are accessible for community programs and events;
- Providing resources and knowledge to develop and operate community programs (e.g., employment, health, social supports, recreation, etc.);
- Supporting community engagement, volunteerism, and capacity building;
- Must be accessible to the entire community and engaging of diversity; and
- Ability to link resources across different sectors.

(Toronto Neighbourhood Centres 2015, 2)

There is a strong emphasis and need for community hubs to offer a wide variety of social and health services, resources, recreational activities, and programs. A community hub must foster a safe and inclusive environment and establish itself as a public space that can

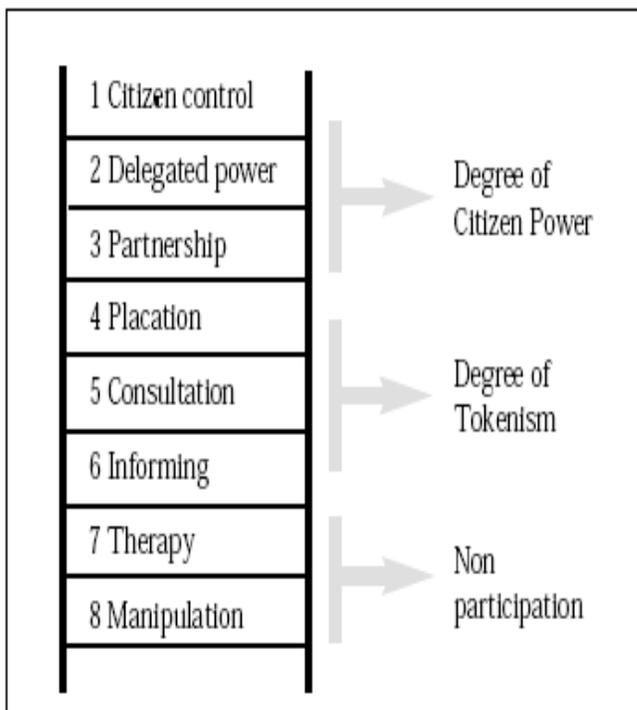
be utilized by the whole community. By offering diverse programs and services, community hubs can eliminate stigma and discrimination against those who may use its services. This is because the community hub will be providing support and services to all members of the community and not just one specific population.

An important principle of a community hub is to offer universal programs and to not have eligibility requirements for services. As a result, the entire community is able to develop a sense of ownership of the hub and to assist with creating a community that is more cohesive and connected.

## 8. Community Participation and Engagement

The ‘elephant’ in the discussion about community hubs is the need to understand the dynamics of and meanings associated with the word “community,” a word used ubiquitously in the discussion of hubs in undefined concepts such as community engagement, community participation and empowerment. What meanings are attributed to these words and how will they influence hub development?

Community Development Halton’s study, *Where We Live Matters* (2013), explores fully the issues of citizen engagement and empowerment, along with the dilemmas these concepts can pose. The paper establishes that there is general agreement that community, that is, resident participation, is a critical success factor in effective place-based (neighbourhood) community work. Disagreement arises around the degree of control that residents should have. The document explores this issue in considerable detail:



Sherry Arnstein's Ladder of Participation

It is at the moment of “changing their adverse circumstances” that residents may collide with the limits of empowerment and participation. In fact, all citizen participation or resident engagement processes that have been offered or supported over the years by decision and policy-makers run up against the litmus test of citizen impact: how much weight is actually given to citizen perspectives when it is time for decisions to be made?

This is more than a rhetorical question. We have already

seen that the intersection between community building and the ability to effect change is mediated by the openness of processes and institutions in the larger community and their responsiveness to community determined goals and dreams.

In her article, oft-quoted by others, *A Ladder of Citizen Participation*, Arnstein deals openly with the fact that citizen participation is about the distribution of power in our society. Although this naked assessment may be unpopular, it is critical to understanding community work. She notes that:

... [citizen participation] is the redistribution of power that enables the have-not citizens, presently excluded from the political and economic processes, to be deliberately included in the future. It is the strategy by which the have-nots join in determining how information is shared, goals and policies are set, tax resources are allocated, programs are operated, and benefits like contracts and patronage are parceled out. In short, it is the means by which they can induce significant social reform which enables them to share in the benefits of the affluent society. (Arnstein, *A Ladder of Citizen Participation* 1969, 216)

Arnstein indicates that her ladder of participation is intended to be provocative and lays out issues related to power clearly and succinctly. Her ladder suggests that as one rises on the ladder, the degree to which citizens have control over outcomes derived from the participation process increases.

In work funded by the Joseph Rowntree Foundation in 1994, Wilcox built on Arnstein's work and reframed participation in the context of a pluralistic society with competing interests and an array of stakeholders. Specifically, he reframes Arnstein's eight rungs on the ladder to five stances that characterize how power can be actualized in designing and implementing citizen participation processes. These are, in order of increasing power and control for citizens:

- Information
- Consultation
- Deciding together
- Acting together
- Supporting independent community interests (Wilcox 1994).

He notes that:

The ladder of participation model... suggests some levels are better than others. In this framework I suggest it is more of a case of horses

for courses – different levels are appropriate in different circumstances. (Wilcox 1994)

He also acknowledges that “the ‘lower’ levels of participation keep control with the initiator – but they lead to less commitment from others” (Wilcox 1994).

Wilcox’s *Guide* was designed for people planning participation processes and he is clear about critical factors such as power and control:

The initiator is in a strong position to decide how much or how little control to allow to others – for example, just information, or a major say in what is to happen. This decision is equivalent to taking a stand on the ladder – or adopted (sic) a stance about the level of participation.

Understanding participation involves understanding power: the ability of the different interests to achieve what they want. Power will depend on who has information and money. It will also depend on people’s confidence and skills. Many organisations are unwilling to allow people to participate because they fear loss of control: they believe there is only so much power to go around, and giving some to others means losing your own. However, there are many situations when by working together everyone can achieve more than on their own. This is one benefit of participation (Wilcox 1994).

Within this discussion related to citizen participation, it is important to note that people more readily support a future that they themselves helped dream and create. Looking at large institutional failures to undertake change effectively, Wheatley goes so far as to suggest that the way we traditionally “do” change in fact kills creativity:

The assumption is that people do what they’re told... People don’t support things that are forced on them. We don’t act responsibly on behalf of plans and programs created without us. We resist being changed, not change itself. (Wheatley 2011, 45)

From the perspective of how decision makers structure citizen participation, once a community has reached a state of readiness to begin to plan for and take action to achieve change, tactical choices become important. To a large degree, the processes that a community adopts in order to achieve a change will be determined by a number of things. Critical to the choices it makes will be where the locus of change is located:

- First, if the locus of the change that is sought is totally within the community and external resources or policies are not implicated, then there are few to no concerns about the way in which decision-makers in the larger community structure citizen participation and;
- Second, if the change that is desired does require changes in policies from external organizations or a realignment of resource allocation, communities need to determine which avenues of participation are open to them and whether they can be leveraged to obtain the desired change or not.

It has been the experience of the CDH team that the language related to citizen participation, couched as consultation, information and opinion seeking, too often fails to identify the limits to participation. People are consulted, but, as Arnstein notes, there is “...no assurance that citizen concerns and ideas will be taken into account.” Ruth Grier, a former Minister of the Environment in the Province of Ontario, put it quite bluntly in a CBC interview in 2009:

We need a genuine collaboration – not the kind of collaboration we have done in the past where we invite everyone to the table and get their opinion and then we do what we were going to do anyway... (Grier 2009)

As suggested earlier, resident-led and controlled initiatives may encounter real challenges when the changes they seek intersect with the larger community because changes in policy or resource allocation controlled outside the local community are required. (Community Development Halton, 2013: 24 -27)

*Where We Live Matters* documents that when competing interests at larger decision-making tables occur, generally speaking, it is those with power who are likely to see their interests met, not those in communities particularly disadvantaged communities.

## **9. The Halton Perspective**

Over the last year, Community Development Halton (CDH) has been engaging leaders in the health, education, and social services sectors in conversations about collaborative work and community hubs (see Appendix A). Through these conversations, it was evident that there is a strong desire to work together, that community hubs are about inviting community partners who can create synergy and that collaboration and coordination is more important than integration.

As people discussed community hubs and their place in Halton, the language that wove through the conversations contained words such as network weaver, collaboration, partnership, gathering, democratic public space, quality of life, social inclusion, social capital, and synergy. These terms are helpful in framing the discussions that ensues.

Based on the conversations, there were common threads of how hubs could be those places that provide services to people of all ages and stages of life, supporting intergenerational opportunities and decreasing stigma as people from all walks of life interact with each other. There needs to be a holistic approach for community hubs to thrive and hub development requires time, focus, resources, and staffing for community planning. Finally, there was a desire expressed around the creation of some sort of meeting point or roundtable to initiate dialogue between all of the community actors who are integral to hub development.

## **9.1 Leadership**

One area that was important in many of the conversations was leadership. Leadership is critical throughout the entire process in the development of community hubs in local community. Conversations indicated that goals need to be clear and that there needs to be intentionality and resources, bringing people together to talk about common issues as related to serving community.

Respondents also thought that collaboration is critical, that involving community and empowering community are key ingredients in successful hub development. It also must be intentional community that is created within a hub environment, with a focus on creating relationships and community within that space. It is about how to better serve people. This requires a focus on interaction to form a service system that is interdependent and holistic.

There was discussion on the need for financial leadership as well. There is still some uncertainty as to the level of financial support that will be provided by various levels of government, so the conversations focused on the limitations of moving forward on hub development in the absence of dedicated resources. Respondents also indicated that there needs to be less bureaucracy involved in the development of hubs. With the uncertainty of dedicated resources, people felt that the longer the process of hub development takes, the more people will drop off from participating in the process.

## **9.2 Financing**

As the conversations focused on the way in which community hub development might be financially supported, there were some that felt this is where the discussion breaks down. There are many interests involved, all the way from grassroots community to formal organizations, up to local, provincial, and federal levels of government. Discussion on what may or may not be funded within the context of a community hub included elements of funding envelopes for community development and how to appropriately support the informal pieces of community hub activity. Some of the conversations did look at other funding opportunities, such as social enterprise, as part of community hub activity and how capital held in foundations might be leveraged for local development.

Within the conversations on funding, there was discussion about the Local Health Integration Network (LHIN) model, as a number of organizations within the Halton community receive funding support through this body. The LHIN model focuses on co-location of health serving agencies; in essence, a health centre or hub. The challenge to this

model is that the services that the LHIN would be supporting would be health related and thus, a broader array of community support services beyond health, while supporting the social determinants of health, might be difficult.

### **9.3 Neighbourhood Hubs**

As dialogues were carried out on community hubs, another term that was used within this context was neighbourhood hubs. There was an understanding among several of the respondents that community hubs need to be neighbourhood based services and be led by the people who walk through its doors, so that it is inclusive. This might even include elements of participatory budgeting. Respondents felt this would provide access to supports that are near vulnerable people and perhaps leverage gathering places that already exist within community. This reflects the common thread in conversations around the large challenge of transportation within Halton, thus making geographic placement important in any community hub development conversation.

There was a sense that involvement of community within the design of hubs was critical and provides community control over the kind of services and programs that are delivered through a community hub. Each neighbourhood is unique and there is a need to know the agencies, communities and needs that are out there to provide a robust selection of programs to attract people. This allows for community to have a sense of appropriation.

Community hubs are about inviting community partners who can create synergy within parts of the local community. Neighbourhood needs can be addressed by hubs and provide not only a charitable response to need, but also focus on elements of justice that support neighbourhood development.

### **9.4 Shared Spaces in Usable Spaces**

The conversations about community hubs in Halton also provided the opportunity to explore making space in our communities to support various kinds of activities. One such discussion was around the concept of makerspace as a creative space idea where people gather in a place of vibrant learning and innovation. There was general consensus that co-location can lead to some efficiencies and perhaps some shared planning on responding to community.

As schools are often mentioned in conversations about community hubs, there was discussion that wondered about the opportunity as new schools are developed in Halton. This was a possible opportunity to build community hub activities into the design, in partnership with municipalities or other community partners

Several respondents said the important elements of community hubs were that they would be a neutral space, a comfortable space and a safe place.

Having organizations together under one roof, can build on successes and provide a safe space for community, a place to exchange information, strategize on how to support people, and provide wraparound services to people through case management.

## **9.5 Limits to Space**

In all the conversations, what space to use and where was a constant element. Aligning location, available space and community need is the challenge, especially in a community such as Halton with its diverse geography. There are limited spaces to offer as community hub space and where space is available, it tends to be in older neighbourhoods where need may be different than what is being proposed for community hub activity.

A challenge when looking at schools is that available space in schools is often on the second floor, which provides additional challenges for using this space for community use during the school day.

## **9.6 Shared Resources, Shared Program Beyond Co-Location**

In the conversations about sharing resources and program activity, there was a desire to move to collective action and community impact. Respondents also talked about moving to integrated intake processes and integrated service plans that provide respect for the client. The development of integrated services provides the opportunity to build trust in various forms. They may be through informal ways and conversations where team building and commitment are critical.

## **9.7 Hubs as Connectors**

Many of the conversations highlighted the opportunity that community hubs act as connectors across people and organizations, at all levels of community. Hubs can be seen as builders of social capital in community through the development of active partners in those community gathering places. This gathering place helps to confront a society of isolation, respecting the need of humans to congregate, exchange and talk.

A common thread was how community is critical, that it is about people not programs. Community hubs are the hook to engage people and create multiple layers of support. Hubs have the possibility of touching the life of everyone, which provides opportunity for intergenerational and multigenerational activities and connections. It is about people connecting and providing the space for good local conversations. This might be reflected through community-led programming that is not always about providing service, but focused on engaging people.

Several respondents indicated that collaboration and coordination is more important than integration. Community hubs need to be centered on people of all ages, a safe place to loiter (for example, children and youth), to collaborate, work together, and be culturally aware. Community hubs need to be that safe, welcoming access point that builds on natural gathering places. They need to be those organic spaces, that are about local democracy, about issues that matter and issues that emerge.

## **9.8 Hubs as Knowledge Exchange, Shared Learning**

Building on the concept of hubs as connecting places, there were conversations around how community hubs can be that space of exchanging knowledge and shared learning.

Community hubs should be those places that foster conversation and gather people together in a process of common problem solving. This is where the opportunity for community innovation lies. As people exchange their knowledge and learnings, it encourages collaboration and supports the development of assets within community.

## **9.9 Processes**

When discussing the processes involved in the development of local community hubs, respondents highlighted that this work is dependent on building relationships. It is critical to leverage partnerships to make these efforts successful. There is a need to identify what a community looks like, what the community need might be before identifying the services and programs that might be delivered through a community hub.

This requires community to have those important local conversations that develop relationships where control of the conversation and development remains local. The challenge is to work through language that can be confusing – are we talking about community hubs or neighbourhood centres? How do we get to the place of understanding what community needs versus what community wants? What is really needed and what can be put to the side?

There was a thrust to make sure that community hubs prevent segregating services for people in poverty. We can not necessarily use an institutional model in the development of community hubs. There is a tension between the charity model and advocacy that needs to be addressed in these conversations. This requires a balance of expectations and ownership, reflected in service organizations often being scared or terrified of community involvement and control.

## **9.10 Identified Issues**

As the conversations occurred, there were several issues that people identified that would have to be considered in the development of local community hubs in Halton. One common issue was how the province had released its report on community hubs with no real sense of direction and no clear definition of community hubs. More clarity is needed on what the province is proposing and advocating for in terms of community hubs, in addition to more funding.

Schools indicated that they were not consulted in the development of the provincial hubs report. There was some discussion about how the timing of community hubs discussion is a precursor to the timing of closing schools. School board representatives were clear that the primary focus of schools is for education and they are not in position to subsidize other community groups. They felt that groups with financial resources will find their own space. School board representatives also talked about how the fit between high school students and public may be more successful than elementary school aged children and the public due to the vulnerability of children.

Several people interviewed felt the Province is focused on bricks and mortar and co-location. Community hubs are broader than one sector, but this discussion of hubs

highlighted the competition among organizations in positioning themselves in hub development. Having a community hub focusing on a specific population leaves people vulnerable to further segregation and stigmatization. There are pressures to monetize programming. Hubs were also seen by some respondents as possible rationalization and efficiency of services for governments.

When discussing how integrated services may develop, it was indicated that deep issues, policy, and culture change are challenging. There would need to be work at the governance level of organizations. There is also a need for problem solving, where people and organizations come together, dialogue, collaborate, share evidence, and identify solutions.

When the discussion focused on available physical spaces to use for community hub development, one common theme was how cost of space is a barrier. Community spaces in churches provide challenges when not all people accessing the space share the same religion or belief. It is also challenging to create safe and neutral spaces in schools. Municipal community centres that are community services and recreational centres may not always be a fit, as they were not necessarily intentionally built as a hub of care around and responsive to a community. There was a desire by several respondents to see how relationships could be further developed with municipalities, with some indicating this might be more easily done at the regional level since that is where the responsibility for social service delivery lies in Halton.

Finally, social capital was identified as critical but the province does not mention it in their report. The need to make sure that community hubs do not stigmatize population groups is important. How hubs can be a place to develop capacity that looks more upstream in terms of prevention addresses the relationship between social determinants of health and community.

## **10. Future Planning: A Journey into Hub Development in Halton**

This section of the document turns to how planning processes may be created in Halton that are holistic and recognize the continuum of hubs and the important contribution of each not only to the health and well-being of individuals and families but also, importantly, to a socially cohesive and inclusive Halton.

We start with a reflection of a conversation in a book that you probably read as a child or may even be reading to a grandchild. It is a conversation between Alice and the Cheshire cat in Wonderland.

“Cheshire puss, would you tell me please, which way I ought to walk from here?”

“That depends a good deal on where you want to get to,” said the cat.

“I don’t much care where,” said Alice.

“Then it doesn’t matter which way you walk,” said the cat.

“...as long as I get somewhere,” Alice added.

“Oh, you’re sure to do that,” said the cat “if you walk long enough”

(Lewis Carroll, *Alice in Wonderland*)

This document contributes to the journey of those in Halton interested in understanding and exploring the role of hubs in the social development of this region and as the conversation between Alice and the Cheshire cat illustrate, it is important to determine collaboratively why, where and how those of us in Halton will walk a path to hub development.

This document has pointed out the benefits and contributions and challenges of different types of hubs operating in different levels of geography that affect positively the health and well-being of people. It discusses the role of hubs in creating vibrant communities marked by engaged and empowered communities. As the Hubs Strategy Group (2001) points out, the development of a hub is not a linear process; it is important to recognize that planning and establishing a hub will be both a process and a point to arrive at.

My Community (2016) network outlines eight steps for planning a ‘community’ hub. Many of these steps are also discussed as good practices, with the addition of a ninth, in a document of the Our Kids Network entitled, *A Toolkit to Outline the Development of the ‘Hub Model of Integrated Services’ in Halton*, (2010).” They are:

1. Understand local needs and demand of community;
2. Establish a clear vision and mission *with* the community;
3. Develop partnerships and build relationships; build buy-in;
4. Develop strategic objectives;
5. Develop a business [planning] model for hub;
6. Secure support and resources;
7. Acquire assets;
8. Establish an appropriate governance structure.
9. Implementation and sustainable operations

(My Community 2016, 34; Mulligan 2010, 61)

Activities that are considered necessary to the fulfillment of the steps to the development of hubs are suggested below. Not discussed in the steps are the questions: how do we incubate the development of hubs? how do we support progress moving through the steps? And what infrastructure is needed to support advancement? These questions are addressed in a proposed constellation model to incubate hub development in Halton. First, however, this document will review the nine planning steps that are necessary in any hub development process.

## **10.1 Understand Local Needs and Demands of Community**

- Demographic data
- Network mapping
- Asset maps

- Needs identification
- Community engagement
- Community conversations
- Social service and health serving agencies – what they see, new trends, growing trends, gaps

## **10.2 Establish A Clear Vision and Mission with The Community**

- Why, where and how
- Basis of communications, publicity
- Understanding, commitment and buy-in
- Basis for involvement, support, and collaboration
- Focuses strategies and actions

## **10.3 Collaborate, Develop Partnerships, and Build Relationships**

- Evidence based dialogue and consensus building processes
- Identify shared values
- Generate shared understanding, shared goals
- Network weaving
- Cross community engagement – i.e. community leaders, faith leaders, politicians, civil servants, and public agencies
- Social capital development, collaboration
- Identify a local planning table(s) -clusters

## **10.4 Develop Strategic Objectives**

- Identify strategic objectives to fulfil hub mission
- Identify actions to fulfil strategic objectives and mission
- Actions move to impact
- Confirm community ownership of the process

## **10.5 Develop A ‘Business’ [Planning Pathway] Model for Hub Development**

- Planning process supported and financed
- Planning for sustainability, resilience, and flexibility
- Recognition of funding and jurisdictional barriers
- Determine hub type and geography: Region, municipality, wards, neighbourhood
- Establish long-term funding
- Grant funding, Siloed funding
- Multiple accountabilities
- Multi-stakeholder agreements
- Design community engagement and decision-making process, working *with* not *for*
- Understand and nurture relations among agencies of the nonprofit sector – silos, competitiveness, conflict, working with not for
- Collaborative governance and management

- Understand and resolve issues associated with use of public space/schools
- Design creative 'business' or planning pathway

### **10.6 Secure Support and Resources**

- Education, outreach – building blocks of buy-in such as councillors, funders, health and social serving agencies, local community
- Flexible adapting to changing needs, maintaining relevance
- Partnership

### **10.7 Acquire Assets**

- Identify gathering places, importance of geography
- Physical asset acquired: asset transfer, purchased directly or designed and built
- Role and possibility of use of public space

### **10.8 Establish an Appropriate Governance Structure**

- Governance structure to reflect hub model
- Governance structure supports: engagement, capacity building, ongoing assessment of purpose and responsible stewardship of resources

### **10.9 Implementation and Sustain Operations**

## 11. Future Planning Framework: A Suggestion

As Community Development Halton (CDH) engaged leaders in the health, education, and social services sectors in conversations about collaborative work associated with hub development, it was important to recognize in Halton that there are clearly existing and thriving collaborative initiatives and emerging opportunities. However, there is no overarching planning framework for these developments at the local or regional level but rather, as the Special Advisor noted, multiple planning tables usually organized by field of service (Pitre, 2015). At the same time, there is no interest in a highly controlling and directing planning body for collaborative or community hub development. Planning and development in this area must be a cooperative undertaking for success.

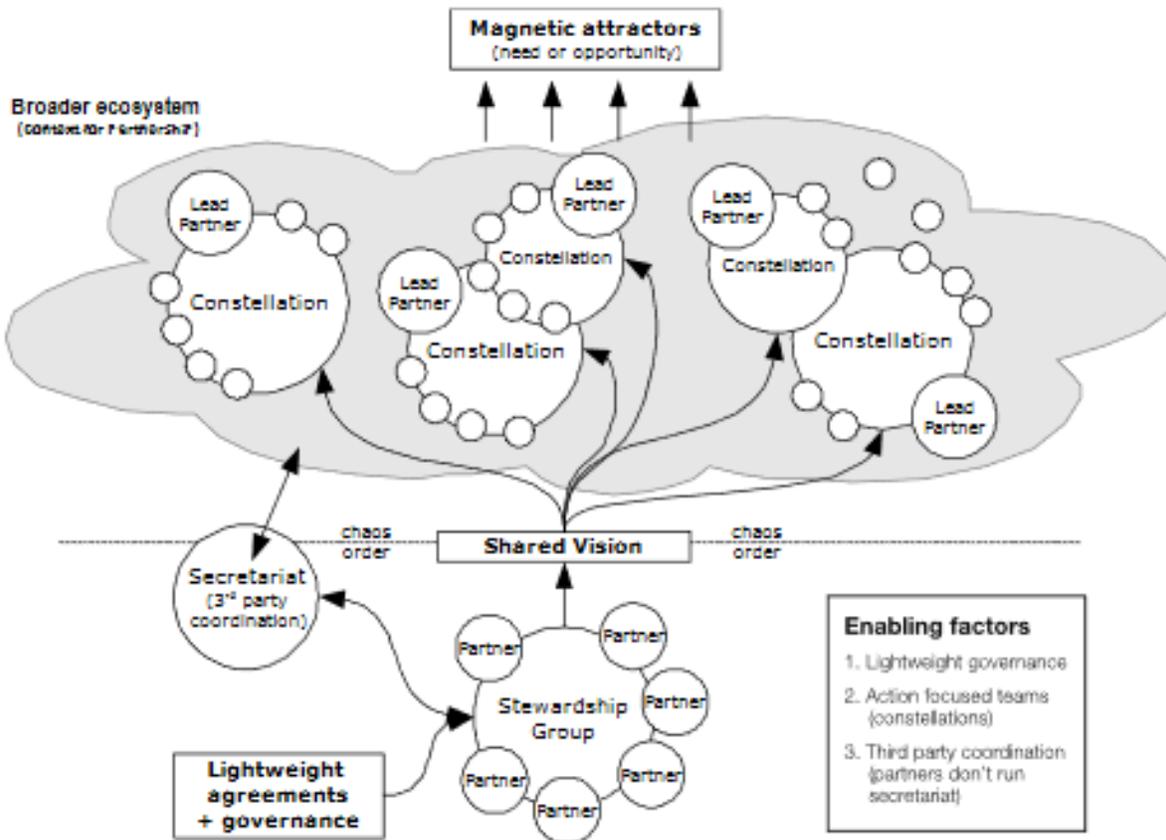
How then to create a local or regional planning framework for community hub development? Perhaps, adapting the “constellation model” proposed by Tonya and Mark Surman (2008) offers some promise.<sup>3</sup> The constellation model refers to a collection of community partners (stewards) committed to a shared purpose that intentionally provides the space and support for smaller groups among their number to self-organize around specific initiatives that are consistent with and reflect the larger shared purpose. The overarching stewardship structure is not highly directive, but provides “lightweight governance” or oversight to the development of the overall shared concept or purpose. Partners organize themselves into “action-focused work teams” to achieve specific objectives, driven by their own energy and commitment to the task.

The constellation model in generic terms is diagrammatically portrayed on the following page. Rather than a typical hierarchical structure showing a static set of relationships among the players around an issue, the diagram reflects a dynamic set of relationships among committed participants centred around a shared vision.

How could this approach be adapted to the issue of “community” hub, or collaborative services in Halton? In this case, the “magnetic attractor” is the opportunity presented by the provincial government’s interest in and support for community hub development, consistent with the interest and actions of the community and service sector (civic, health, education, and social service organizations). The “shared vision” is to promote and support connected, coordinated service delivery to people and communities, recognizing that this will be most effectively done through partnerships and collaborations rather than highly centralized corporate models. This is particularly true when the hub development is responding to service and social development initiatives at the smaller geographies (neighbourhood) of community. Since there are a variety of different areas involved, marked by distinct organizational cultures and experiences, what is required are “lightweight agreements” to explore and develop hub development in self-selected areas from which all contributing partners (“stewards”) can learn and benefit.

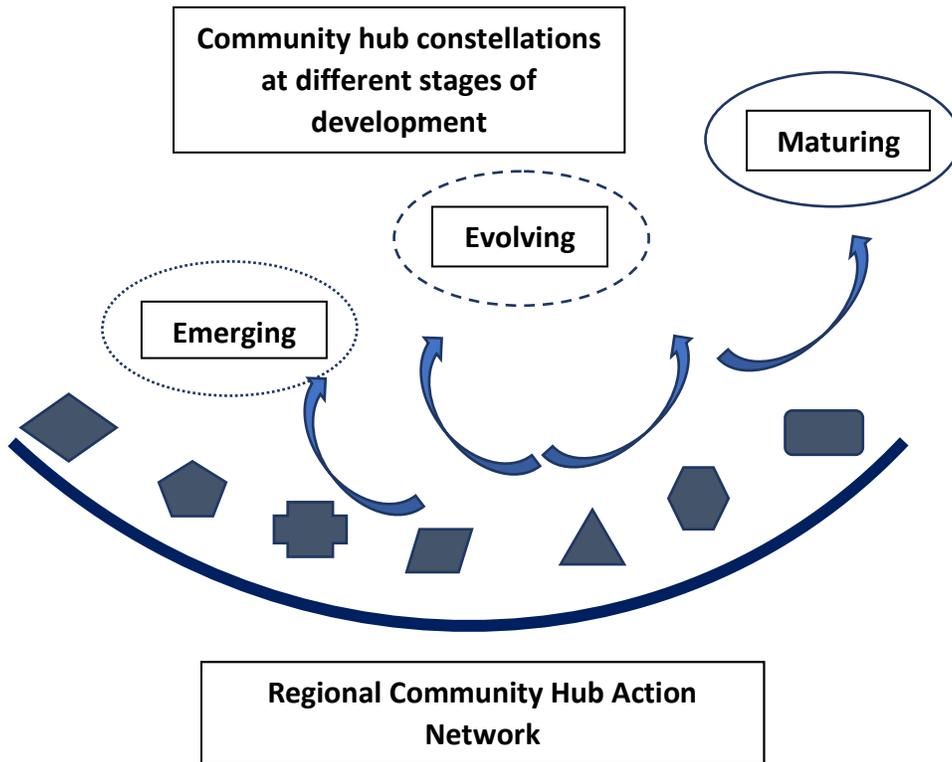
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<sup>3</sup> Tonya Surman and Mark Surman (2008). Listening to the stars: the constellation model of collaborative social change. *Social Space*, pp. 24-29.



A hub or community hub planning framework for Halton might be pictured as shown below. Organizations and agencies active or interested in hub development come around a table under an agreement to learn together and support each other in hub development and collaborative work. They may commit to hold educational and shared learning sessions from each other’s work, meeting perhaps three to four times a year. Among these “stewards” of community development there will already be some that are partnering in collaborations that may be well-developed and that may be able to offer support and guidance to others at earlier stages of development. Others will be organized and evolving and still others just in the formative or emergent stage. Again, participants self-select into these circles of activity. The benefit of creating a space for this range of activity and a table convened regularly to stay connected in common purpose is shared learning, mutual support, and awareness of collaborative activity throughout the region.

As described in the Surman’s paper, it is recommended that an intermediary body not directly involved in any area of direct service would serve as a secretariat to convene the Regional Community Hub Action Network and keep track of and provide updates on hub developments.



## 12. Conclusion

Evident through this report, it can be conceived that there is not just one universal type of community hubs; rather each community hub can be conceptualized, defined, and developed in numerous different ways depending on the needs of the community it serves. A community hub is not only unique, but contains specific resources, programs and a wide variety of social and health services that assists in implementing local and community-based solutions and supports.

The development of a successful and fully integrated community hub requires working at a community level and working *with* community members and forming local partnerships; a top-down approach cannot be employed. Rather, it is immensely important for the province, as well as local municipalities, to partake in a collaborative approach in the development of a community hub.

A community driven, collaborative, neighbourhood-based approach between government agencies and communities must also be implemented to adequately address the many challenges communities may encounter in the development of a community hub. Community hubs have the power to not only be the solution to ensure that a community's needs are being met, but also to instil empowerment, to increase social capital, and to build inclusive and cohesive communities.

## **Appendix A - List of Interviews**

- Kate Powers – Links2Care
- Michelle Knoll – Oak Park Neighbourhood Centre
- Jody Orr & Ancilla Ho Young – Halton Nonprofit Network
- Brenda Hajdu & Meaghan Richardson – Food For Life
- Sara Collyer – Open Doors
- Rebecca Barrows-Vrankulj – Milton Community Resource Centre
- Ron Shantz – Frontline Outreach
- Gary O’Neill – Kerr Street Mission
- John Smith – Support and Housing Halton
- Elena DiBattista – Our Kids Network
- Liane Fernandes & Susan Swartzack – Mississauga Halton LHIN
- Representatives from municipal Public Libraries – Milton (Mark Williams); Halton Hills (Geoff Cannon); Burlington (Judy Hyland and Rosemary Minnella); Oakville (Florence DeDominicis)
- Representatives from Halton District School Board - Domenico Renzella, Gerry Cullen
- Representatives from Halton Catholic District School Board – Tim Overholt, Superintendent of Education; Giacomo Corbacio, Superintendent Facility Management Services; Frederick Thibeault, Administrator Planning Services
- Brad Park – United Way of Oakville
- Jeff Ward & Sue Ann Ward – St. Luke’s Anglican Church (Oakville)
- Nick Milinovich & Dave Stewart – Halton Regional Police Services

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