

**Social Planning Council of Ottawa  
Public Consultations**

Priority on People

**CONSULTATIONS ON  
OTTAWA'S  
DRAFT HUMAN SERVICES PLAN**  
January and February 2003

**Summary Report**

**Report Released April 2003**

This consultation process was a joint project of  
the City of Ottawa  
and the  
the Social Planning Council of Ottawa



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## TABLE OF CONTENTS

<b>EXECUTIVE SUMMARY .....</b>	<b>3</b>
SUMMARY OF KEY RECOMMENDATIONS FROM THE NINE CONSULTATIONS.....	3
<b>THE PROCESS .....</b>	<b>5</b>
<b>WHAT WE HEARD .....</b>	<b>7</b>
A) COMPLETE LIVEABLE COMMUNITIES.....	7
B) REACTION TO THE DRAFT HUMAN SERVICES PLAN.....	8
i) <i>What Participants Liked About the Draft Human Services Plan.....</i>	8
ii) <i>What Participants Did Not Like About the Draft Human Services Plan.....</i>	8
iii) <i>Priorities for Action.....</i>	9
1. Create quality affordable housing in all neighbourhoods.....	9
2. Reduce poverty and the economic gap.....	9
3. Focus on employment at liveable incomes for marginalized workers.....	9
4. Develop a public transportation system that is efficient, accessible and affordable.....	10
5. Maximize opportunities for inclusion and for a healthy, active lifestyle.....	10
6. Support a comprehensive regulated childcare system.....	10
7. Establish mechanisms for communities to determine local priorities.....	10
8. Achieve high standards for emergency and protective services.....	10
9. Provide strong supports for community infrastructure.....	11
10. Establish clear monitoring measures and means of accountability.....	11
C) SHARED VIEWS ON MONITORING.....	11
D) SHARED VIEWS ON CONSULTATION.....	12
E) SPECIFIC INPUT FROM INDIVIDUAL MEETINGS .....	13
i) <i>Focus on Rural Residents January 15, 2003.....</i>	13
ii) <i>Focus on Suburban Residents, January 20, 2003.....</i>	14
iii) <i>Focus on Urban Residents, January 23, 2003.....</i>	14
iv) <i>Focus on Residents from Diverse Cultural Communities, January 27, 2003.....</i>	15
v) <i>Focus on Low Income Residents, January 30, 2003.....</i>	16
vi) <i>Focus on People with Disabilities February 3, 2003.....</i>	17
vii) <i>Focus on Families February 6, 2003.....</i>	18
viii) <i>Focus on Aboriginal Concerns February 12, 2003.....</i>	19
ix) <i>Focus on Seniors February 12, 2003.....</i>	21
<b>LIMITATIONS .....</b>	<b>22</b>

## **Executive Summary**

In December 2002, the City of Ottawa released a draft Human Services Plan, one of five plans being developed within the Ottawa 20/20 growth planning process. The Human Services Plan is intended to create a 20 year plan to deliver focused, flexible and sustainable Human Services. The Social Planning Council and City of Ottawa collaborated to create a consultation process on the draft which would provide opportunities for input from residents from all parts of the City, including historically marginalized groups.

Nine consultation meetings were held in January and February 2003. A meeting was held for each of the following groups: rural residents, suburban residents, urban residents, low income residents, residents with disabilities, residents from diverse cultures, families, seniors, and the Aboriginal community. A total of 328 people participated in the consultations, representing a broad cross section of the community. Discussions at each consultation were organized to gather the maximum input from participants.

Overall, there was a significant degree of common ground expressed in each of the consultation meetings, with the exception of the Aboriginal consultation which addressed a different set of questions. As well, distinct suggestions came from each meeting, reflecting the particular concerns of the target population for that meeting.

A report on the input from each meeting was provided to the City within days of each consultation. This report summarizes the input from all the meetings. As well, students from Carleton University participated in this project, researching community views on consultation. Their report is available separately, on the Social Planning Council's website at [www.spcottawa.on.ca](http://www.spcottawa.on.ca).

### **Summary of Key Recommendations from the Nine Consultations**

1. Include fewer priorities, list specific short term actions in clear, implementable language to which the City can be held accountable. Use action oriented language.
2. Create quality, affordable, accessible housing in all neighbourhoods, including implementing the City's Affordable Housing Action Plan. Bring the Official Plan in line with the Human Services Plan with respect to affordable housing.
3. Reduce poverty and the economic gap. Ensure on-going provision of basic and essential services and supports.
4. Focus on access to employment at liveable incomes for marginalized workers, in particular create access to employment opportunities and establish strong links with the Talent Plan to create jobs at liveable wages for all ages, abilities, backgrounds.
5. Integrate a plan for affordable, accessible, efficient public transportation across the City as part of the Human Services Plan.
6. Maximize opportunities for inclusion and for a healthy, active lifestyle, specifically
  - a) support affordable opportunities for physical activity, recreation, and involvement in the community, with special attention to the needs of seniors,

youth, people with disabilities, low income residents, and members of culturally diverse communities

- b) enhance supports for seniors and people with disabilities to remain in their home and community.
7. Support a comprehensive regulated, affordable, and flexible childcare system.
8. Establish mechanisms for communities to determine local priorities.
9. Achieve high standards for emergency and protective services.
10. Provide strong supports for community infrastructure including community centres, libraries, resource centres, meeting places, parks, and enhancement of community networks and social supports.
11. Include an additional Ottawa 20/20 principle: official bilingualism for Ottawa including a full spectrum of French and bilingual services / information / programs offered across the City. Include clear actions to achieve this.
12. Create a clear policy statement whereby accessibility for people with disabilities is built into every aspect of the Human Services Plan and the city's programs and services. List specific actions to support the policy with a focus on the high rate of poverty among residents with disabilities and the general lack of accessibility (see page 16 for details). Create a body responsible for implementation of accessibility for people with disabilities.
13. Keep the diversity policy statement and address cultural diversity issues through economic strategies as well as in relation to services. Create a standard that all services must accommodate cultural diversity. Establish a high profile municipal office that is responsible for implementing and monitoring cultural diversity policy across all departments, including hiring practices (see page 15 for details).
14. Incorporate the direction set out in "Charting A Course that Honours the Wisdom of Aboriginal Culture". Approve the Aboriginal People Strategic Action Plan and direct its' implementation within all departments of the City. Establish an Aboriginal Strategic Action Planning Council and Aboriginal representation on City advisory committees. Develop an accountability framework. (See page 19 for details.)
15. Work with rural communities to find better ways to respond to rural issues.
16. Work with community representatives (geographic and communities of interest) to develop appropriate service delivery models, outcomes, and a formula to determine the need for services which is not based on population numbers.
17. Institute a mechanism for impact assessment of policy, program and financial decisions to ensure decisions are consistent with the Human Services Plan and to determine differential impacts for low income residents, members of diverse communities, Aboriginal residents, and rural residents.
18. Establish clear monitoring measures and means of accountability.
19. Continue to consult extensively with the community, and be more transparent in the response to input from the community.

## The Process

The Human Services Plan is one of five plans being developed within the Ottawa 20/20 growth planning process. Its goal is to deliver Human Services to protect the City's human strengths while addressing its human needs. The City of Ottawa released the first draft of the Human Services Plan in December, 2002. The Plan set out long term policy themes for the 20 year life of the Plan and a five year action strategy which focused on three priority areas of change.

The Social Planning Council of Ottawa and the City of Ottawa undertook a joint venture to create a consultation process which would gather meaningful community input and address several challenges. The City was anxious to hear from a broad cross section of residents from all parts of the City, but there was considerable "consultation fatigue" in the City after a year and a half of Ottawa 20/20 consultations. As well, the Ottawa 20/20 process had acknowledged a need to involve historically marginalized groups in the consultation processes. The Plan was lengthy and very detailed. It would be challenging to gather meaningful input from groups of residents on the entire plan in a two hour consultation. Finally, the schedule for approving the plans in the Ottawa 20/20 process required that the consultation process be completed by mid- February 2003.

The Social Planning Council and the City of Ottawa jointly hosted an urban meeting, a suburban meeting and a rural meeting. Each of these was open to the public and was publicized widely. There were an additional three meetings, jointly hosted, one each for low income residents, residents with disabilities, and residents from diverse cultures. These three groups had been identified by the City and the community as under-represented in the Ottawa 20/20 consultations. These three meetings were by invitation, with the invitees representing a broad cross section of residents and organizations from within the designated community. These six meetings followed a similar format, with discussion groups. Four of these six meetings were in French and English.

The Social Planning Council organized three additional meetings, which were made possible through the assistance of students from the Masters of Social Work program at Carleton University. These focussed on the perspective of families, seniors and the Aboriginal community, and followed a slightly different format. The Social Planning Council, with the cooperation of the students, partnered with an agency serving the target population in order to conduct the outreach. These meetings were intended to include more limited participation, with one discussion group discussing the draft plan and one exploring long term consultation processes.<sup>1</sup> In the end, the family focussed meeting was opened to the general public and included several discussion groups.

The consultation with the Aboriginal community was structured around an Aboriginal-directed consultation process which had taken place in the summer of 2002 with Elders and other members of the Aboriginal community. This process had led to a document entitled Charting a Course That Respects the Wisdom of Culture, which set a clear plan of action. The intention of the consultation on February 12, 2003 in this process was to recommend changes to the draft Human Services Plan which would keep the focus on the agenda which had been developed within the Aboriginal community during the

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<sup>1</sup> The discussions of longer term consultation will be compiled by the students in a separate report which will go to participants, the University and the City later in the spring, and will be available on the Social Planning Council's website [www.spcottawa.on.ca](http://www.spcottawa.on.ca).

summer. For this reason, the participants did not discuss the same questions as were discussed in the other eight consultations.

A total of 328 people participated in the nine consultations, representing a broad cross section of the community. Participants included people experienced with consultations and people who had never before participated in public consultations. Within days of each meeting, the Social Planning Council provided the City with a report of the information and recommendations which participants had shared. The City used this information to revise the draft Human Services Plan.

This report is a summary of the main points from all the meetings.

The Social Planning Council would like to thank all those who participated in the consultations, the participants, the notetakers, the students, and the facilitators. As well, we would like to thank the three agencies who worked with us to organize the three extra consultations, specifically Centretown Community Health Centre, West Ottawa Community Resource Centre, and Wabano Centre for Aboriginal Health.

## WHAT WE HEARD

There was a remarkable degree of common ground expressed at eight of the nine consultations.<sup>2</sup> This section summarizes the main points shared across the discussion groups in these eight consultations.

### a) Complete Liveable Communities

The draft Human Services Plan proposed that "...building safe and healthy communities is a core goal of the Human Services Plan. ...there is a need to develop a flexible standard for the "complete community".<sup>3</sup> Participants at the consultations were asked their idea of "complete, liveable communities".

Most participants placed a high value on

- affordable, accessible housing for a range of needs
- meaningful employment at decent wages
- measures to address poverty
- support for inclusion of people with disabilities, people from different cultures, help to keep seniors in their own communities and homes, and greater opportunities for youth (recreation, employment and equitable education)
- strong social and health services, recreation, libraries, licenced childcare
- support for quality emergency and protective services
- access to parks, green spaces, walking routes and bicycle routes, and
- inclusive communities that include opportunities for work, housing, leisure and community interaction.

Most participants agreed that the following were important to have across the City but not necessarily in each community :

- an efficient, affordable public transit system
- income and unemployment supports, especially access to meaningful jobs at liveable wages (participants noted there was hardship in all communities)
- effective emergency and protective services
- a plan for inclusion of people with disabilities, including integrated local services / programs, transportation, real accessibility of public spaces, incentives for accessibility in new private housing, education programs to change attitudes

The following were identified as gaps or elements missing in our communities :

- affordable, accessible housing
- an adequate public transportation system
- adequate access to employment at liveable wages
- adequate incomes for people unable to work
- equitable access to public education at all levels
- adequate access to existing services because of barriers (cost, transportation, not accessible to people with disabilities, not appropriate or accessible to residents with diverse backgrounds, etc.).

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<sup>2</sup> The Aboriginal Consultation discussed different issues than the other eight. Their views can be found at page 18, and are not reflected in this section on views shared at the eight consultations.

<sup>3</sup> City of Ottawa, Ottawa 20/20 Human Services Plan Priority of People Draft, December 2002. Pg. 34

## **b) Reaction to the Draft Human Services Plan**

Next, participants talked about the draft Human Services Plan, particularly the priority action areas.

### **i) What Participants Liked About the Draft Human Services Plan**

Participants strongly approved of the general direction in the draft Human Services Plan, particularly:

- The wholistic approach to issues, with the focus on quality of life, and the same themes across all the Ottawa 20/20 plans (Official Plan, Talent Plan, etc.)
- The focus on the local community being in the best position to determine their own needs and priorities, and the Communities Policy Statement as a guide for resources allocation
- The inclusion of affordable housing, specifically, rent geared to income housing and affordable home ownership across the City including rural areas
- Strong support for a strategy for workforce development to achieve meaningful employment for all
- The shift to prevention strategies, with several important cautions. The shift cannot happen at the expense of intervention services, which are stretched to the limit and must be adequate before moving on to prevention. There was scepticism that in the past there has been a reduction in intervention activities, but little or no shift of those resources to the prevention field.
- Support for the community capacity building / community development approach reflected in the Plan, with the caution that capacity building must focus on the outcomes for individuals
- The focus on successful aging, if it includes addressing the needs of seniors with disabilities (including responding to the high incidence of hearing loss).
- The focus on public safety, particularly the safety concerns of people with disabilities
- The focus on disease prevention, with the emphasis on a "determinants of health - community health" approach, not a medical model
- The emphasis on increased partnerships, but with important cautions, listed below. Participants strongly supported enhanced partnerships between the City and the community organizations, agencies, and schools
- The willingness on the part of the city to work with existing infrastructures that were created by the individual communities before amalgamation, including the implication that there would be increased support for and collaboration with volunteers and volunteer organizations.

### **ii) What Participants Did Not Like About the Draft Human Services Plan**

Most participants cautioned that the draft Human Services Plan was too ambitious to be implemented. In all of the consultations, participants emphasized the need for the Human Services Plan to set fewer priorities, have a clear implementation strategy for each (including cost and timing), and clear monitoring mechanisms. Participants also highlighted the following:

- The Partnership Policy Statement needs more clarity. There was concern about public-private partnerships, specifically how the City would ensure impact of the partnerships were to the community's benefit. Participants in several

- consultations were explicitly opposed to private partnerships for the provision of major and essential services, and in the case of capital projects, unless ownership of the assets could stay with the City
- The language in the Partnership Policy Statement of "doing more with less" and "strategic investment" could be an excuse for not investing city funds
  - The language "doing more with less" was found to be offensive. Some were uncomfortable with the emphasis on cost efficiency, and many supported increased taxes as a necessary and positive step to ensure implementation of the Human Services Plan
  - There is very little in the Human Services Plan with respect to addressing the barriers people with disabilities face in participating in every aspect of city life
  - There is very little focus on seniors
  - The plan must be better co-ordinated with the budget and with other Ottawa 20/20 plans, especially the Official Plan, the Transportation Plan, and the Talent Plan. In particular, there was concern that the Human Services Plan does not address affordable, accessible public transit and the Human Services Plan and the Official Plan have some contradictory provisions:
    - the definition of "affordable housing" in the Official Plan is inadequate
    - some land use provisions in the Official Plan will make rural affordable housing difficult to create
    - the Official Plan provisions may block local solutions regarding facilities and services.

### iii) Priorities for Action

Participants were asked to list the most important actions the City could take to achieve complete, liveable communities and to address the priority areas listed in the draft Human Services Plan. As well, they were asked to rank the actions listed in the Plan.<sup>4</sup> In many cases, participants were reluctant to prioritize the options within the Plan, on the basis that policies were related and had to be implemented as a package to be effective. Nonetheless, ten themes recurred over and over again, pointing to a strong consensus that the Human Services Plan should include action in these areas.

1. Create quality affordable housing in all neighbourhoods
  - particularly an increase in housing for low income people (rent geared to income), people with disabilities, community-based long-term care facilities and housing for seniors in the community of their choice (including rural areas), supports for aging in place, and City leadership on encouraging mixed housing in neighbourhoods.
2. Reduce poverty and the economic gap
  - including adequate incomes for people who cannot work and increased supports to the poor
3. Focus on employment at liveable incomes for marginalized workers
  - increase the representativeness of the City workforce (hiring people with disabilities, from diverse cultures, and from rural areas.)
  - create employment opportunities at liveable wages

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<sup>4</sup> Each discussion group ranked the actions under one of the three priority areas. In some cases, participants worked from a summary of the actions.

- remove barriers for people having difficulty accessing reasonable employment (especially people with disabilities and residents with foreign credentials). Develop a framework for recognition / acceptance of foreign-acquired training / skills
  - create strong links with the Talent Plan to ensure access for all ages, abilities, backgrounds
4. Develop a public transportation system that is efficient, accessible and affordable
    - would include affordable transit to the city, means to travel between the communities, transportation which is affordable for seniors, youth, people with disabilities and people with low incomes, and accommodations for the full range of abilities
  5. Maximize opportunities for inclusion and for a healthy, active lifestyle
    - support affordable opportunities for physical activity, recreation, and involvement in the community, with special attention to the needs of seniors, youth, people with disabilities, low income residents, and members of culturally diverse communities
    - enhance supports for seniors and people with disabilities to remain in their home
    - place a greater emphasis on supports for the inclusion of seniors, youth, people with disabilities, low income residents, and members of culturally diverse communities in all aspects of City life (including social and cultural). Establish the standard that services, events and facilities must accommodate and include people with disabilities and people from diverse cultures
  6. Support a comprehensive regulated childcare system
    - would require a system of high quality, universal, affordable, flexible regulated child care, with a strong focus on licenced childcare from infant care to school age (9-12 year olds)
  7. Establish mechanisms for communities to determine local priorities
    - include participation by geographic communities and communities of interest in priority setting, implementation and monitoring
    - set a baseline of services which should be in every community. Establish a community based process for deciding on other needs which would recognize different densities, different neighbourhood strengths and weaknesses, diverse needs of communities of interest.
    - Design programs in collaboration with those who will be using them.
    - Keep local control of community institutions, programs, and facilities. Use community associations and other existing networks.
  8. Achieve high standards for emergency and protective services
    - would include acceptable response times, accommodation of people with disabilities and from diverse backgrounds, creation of an Emergency Preparedness Plan to include maintaining power (heat/hydro), highlighting safety and prevention programs

9. Provide strong supports for community infrastructure
  - including community centres, libraries, resource centres, meeting places, parks, and enhancement of community networks and social supports
10. Establish clear monitoring measures and means of accountability

As well, participants shared some general suggestions for the City on implementing the Human Services Plan :

- Address rural concerns more effectively
- Engage other key players (most commonly identified were the National Capital Commission, the Province, the Federal government, local schools, and in some cases, the business sector and the media)
- In general, participants supported seeking other revenue sources. Several participants supported an increase in property taxes. Participants in several of the consultations recommended that the move to increase revenues through user fees should be reconsidered
- Create better access to information about what is available
- Learn from models from other jurisdictions.

### **c) Shared Views on Monitoring**

Participants were asked, "What would be a meaningful way to measure if we are seeing improvement over time?"

There was cynicism about implementation of the Plan, in relation to the breadth of the plan, the 20 year time frame, and whether Council would allocate money to enable implementation. The plan needs to have fewer but clearer goals and actions in order to have effective monitoring. Participants felt monitoring was key to establishing credibility. Participants recommended that the City, in consultation with the community, should identify a timetable for implementation and identify in the Human Services Plan a process for monitoring and accountability.

Participants suggested the City develop a report card which would be prepared either annually or every few years, keeping track of all sub-components of the HSP. The report card would include benchmarks, performance measures, measures against outcomes, measures of change. The specific indicators should be developed in consultation with the community. (Many specific indicators were suggested, and included in the reports to the City). Some supported using independent bodies outside the City to undertake the monitoring and preparation of the report.<sup>5</sup> Others felt the city has a responsibility to monitor whether the standards / targets within the Plan are being met in specific communities. There was broad agreement that report should be widely distributed, and that at a minimum, Councillors and City staff should hold community meetings where the community would have the opportunity to questions: "Are we meeting expectations? Are we achieving the objectives? What were we able to do? What did we not do?"

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<sup>5</sup> The Social Planning Council's "Social Trends" model (1975 – 1985) was suggested as an excellent and comprehensive qualitative and quantitative tool for measuring progress, which was developed through public consultations.

Some discussion groups suggested the baselines had to be established in relation to what *local communities* determined were priorities, rather than in relation to *overall* (one size fits all) goals.

The city must establish transparency and communicate the rationale for decisions, whether decisions matched community input or did not match. Participants in all the consultations favoured a process to monitor decisions made by councillors to see if they are consistent with the plan. Participants in half of the consultations supported a process of impact analysis, which would require an assessment of the possible differing impact a decision could have on different populations in the community.

#### **d) Shared Views on Consultation<sup>6</sup>**

Participants strongly supported consultative approaches in principle, but, based on past experience, were sceptical of the degree to which the City is responsive to community input. Ongoing and improved consultation is necessary, especially:

- providing more time
- increased electronic access
- more focused consultation with special groups
- alternative formats and consultation processes not based only on reading/writing
- more outreach for hard to reach residents
- involvement of all sectors (private sector, other levels of government, agencies, recipients of services)
- working with community organizations to reach the public.

Most participants felt consultation processes should be in every ward on setting priorities, implementation and monitoring. It should include consultation with community associations and existing networks including social service networks. In several of the consultations there was recognition that neighbourhood based consultation and accountability does not benefit historically disadvantaged populations (such as culturally diverse residents or people with disabilities) and therefore, there would need to be additional models and mechanisms to ensure accountability to these groups.

In all the consultations, participants were adamant that consultation must be tied to accountability. There was a range of opinions as to the best specific mechanisms to ensure accountability, but there was general agreement that

- accountability must be measurable - through some form of regular report card
- the formal bodies within the City are the ones to be held accountable i.e. Council and its' committees, individual councillors, City staff, and organizations sub-contracted by the City; and
- accountability needs to be to formal networks of residents (Advisory Committees, existing community associations and networks, or a newly created group with this specific mandate) with extensive opportunities to reach out beyond these structures to involve the broader community.

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<sup>6</sup> Please see also the full report on community views with respect to on-going consultation, prepared by the students assisting in this project. The report is available on the Social Planning Council's website at [www.spcottawa.on.ca](http://www.spcottawa.on.ca).

## **e) Specific Input From Individual Meetings**

The common concerns and recommendations which are listed above represent a remarkable level of agreement among the diverse participants in the consultations on many issues. Clearly this provides the City with important insights into key concerns and expectations of a broad cross section of Ottawa residents in relation to the Human Services Plan.

In addition, the Ottawa 20/20 process placed a significant value on respecting and accommodating differences in the community, including the views of groups that have traditionally been under-represented in consultation processes. The consultation process was designed to pay attention to the similarities and the differences between people from different parts of the City and from different groups within the City. For this reason, it is important to take note of the additional concerns and observations from residents which reflects the particular focus of each meeting

### **i) Focus on Rural Residents January 15, 2003 (43 participants)**

- Rural areas face a tremendous shortage of services. In addition, the distances and lack of public transportation make many of the existing services difficult to access. In particular, participants identified a need for:
  - Complete recreational facilities for all ages/abilities (different options were suggested including major sports and recreational complex, swimming pools, transportation and events between villages)
  - Access to health centres and preventive and primary health services – create some services in the communities and provide transportation to specialized services
  - An accessible community centre / resource centre as the hub of each community (new multi-use, affordable and accessible facilities)
  - Increased services and increased resources to existing services for seniors and for people with disabilities, including youth with disabilities. A major concern is isolation and the need for people to move out of their community in order to get services
  - More employment, recreation and social services for youth
  - Social support, for example, financial supports, suicide prevention, family counselling
  - Access to transportation including Para Transpo, which is currently too expensive in the rural areas
- Funding and other support is needed for volunteer infrastructure. There is a strong tradition of volunteerism, but volunteerism requires some paid people with skills to direct and coordinate efforts
- Support for community education is important in increasing accessibility
- Need greater flexibility in creating partnerships in rural areas, as resources are not the same as in urban areas
- Need equalization of facilities, services and programs between school boards and between urban and rural schools
- Need improved access by the public to City staff, through implementation of a protocol (Voice mail was unpopular with many participants.)
- Sustain and protect the rural areas and create rural opportunities for employment

- Would like improved connections between the Arts and Heritage Plan and the Human Services Plan
- Work with the community to develop a formula to determine need for services which is not based on population numbers alone, since urban models of service delivery and measures of need will not work in the rural areas.
- Rural residents have fewer and fewer avenues to address their issues, from a rural perspective. There is great cynicism about the ability to address rural concerns, if the ward boundary changes go through
- Survey the rural community about satisfaction and measure equalization of services, facilities and programs across the City

**ii) Focus on Suburban Residents, January 20, 2003**

(44 participants)

- Housing, employment and child care are closely related – there cannot be one without the other
- We don't have a passing grade with respect to emergency response times across the City. The City should beef up police, fire and ambulance services and should move the emergency services back to the local communities, especially the volunteer fire departments. The changes since amalgamation in this regard have not worked well for the rural areas
- Better support for a bilingual City and for francophone heritage and services, with specific actions in the Plan on this
- The Human Services Plan needs to include the City collaborating more with the Province on big ticket items
- There is a general shortage of affordable services in the suburbs (recreation, health social services, services for youth and seniors), which is made more difficult by inadequate public transportation in off-peak hours
- There is a need for well planned communities that include a greater mix of housing, higher density (but not too high), as well as employment and services
- There must be income supports for working people and affordable housing options so that residents can stay in suburban communities of their choice
- Create employment in the area of social development (childcare, creating housing...) as a means to increase employment at liveable wages
- Community Places and Spaces are the bricks and mortar of the community. If that is done right, the rest will follow. Place a greater emphasis on access to facilities that support the arts, culture, community infrastructure, recreation and local heritage
- Public information kiosks could be used to collect information / opinion as well as give out information
- Consultation on the basis of the urban / suburban / rural distinction has some merit since there are different issues, different economies of scale, etc.
- There is a need for consultation on what quality of life means in different communities (urban, rural, suburban).

**iii) Focus on Urban Residents, January 23, 2003**

(65 participants)

- Most important was the need for a policy on bilingualism, on francophone heritage, services and access, and a clear implementation plan for this policy

- There was strong support for intensification, creating a mix of housing in each neighbourhood, and planning for complete communities (housing, employment and leisure within walking distance). This was related to a significant interest in expanding public transit and reducing car use. Some participants were nervous about the community design plans
- There were concerns with the definition of “affordable” in the Official Plan, and a concern that this would likely have a negative effect on the ability to create affordable housing under the Human Services Plan
- There was some concern that the City would be determining priorities (as per the Partnership Statement and the Prevention Policy) despite the wording of the Community Policy Statement which proposed the community would determine priorities. Participants favoured the community deciding
- Participants supported a stronger emphasis on social determinants of health including poverty, recreation, social opportunities, and access to transportation
- One of the discussion groups identified the need to enhance asset based community development, community economic development, and community financial institutions
- Some participants noted the City could proceed immediately with actions that do not have cost implications
- There was a high level of concern about the general shortage of affordable and accessible community facilities and the inadequacy of supports for seniors, people with disabilities, youth, low income residents, Aboriginal residents, francophones, tenants, and residents from diverse backgrounds and the general shortage of affordable and accessible community facilities. For example, it was noted that there is not one long term care facility in Ottawa which can accommodate deaf seniors, despite the high incidence of hearing loss in seniors.

**iv) Focus on Residents from Diverse Cultural Communities, January 27, 2003**  
(45 participants)

Participants in this consultation were encouraged to discuss the Diversity Policy Statement as well as the three five-year priority areas.

- Participants liked the Diversity Policy Statement in general, particularly
  - The move away from an ad hoc approach
  - The emphasis on working with community representatives to develop appropriate delivery models, to identify specific needs of each community, and to develop strategies and outcomes
  - The plan to build capacity of the community by providing targeted grants, including enhancing the ability to engage in the grants process
  - The focus on accountability and monitoring
- However, there were concerns with the following:
  - The language under the diversity section is weak and needs to be more action oriented
  - There is no definition of diversity. The policy should specifically address cultural diversity and have other statements for other groups in the population
  - Some felt the language of “integration” had negative connotations (as opposed to equality)
  - The Policy Statement does not incorporate the recommendations of the DiverCity report, which represented a consensus within the community

- Diversity must be addressed in terms of economic strategies as well as in relation to services. For example, increasing the diversity of the municipal workforce and linking funding and purchase of service to the implementation of employment equity are essential actions
- Accommodating the needs of diverse residents must be part of the mainstream expectation of how services are designed and provided. Organizations which receive funding should be required to show how they accommodate the changing nature of the population
- Work more closely with the communities to develop appropriate funding structures, service delivery models, and equity targets (indicators of inclusion)
- Many participants did not like the competitive element with respect to funding. They recommended a less competitive model. Use 'collaborate' instead of 'compete' in the action statement and develop a strategy to make that concrete.
- Address the unique needs of immigrant women
- There is a need for better access to training and training money/credit (especially for those with children)
- Establish a high profile municipal office that is responsible for implementing and monitoring cultural diversity policy across all departments.
- Provide supports to community organizations so they can build the capacity of the community to participate in meaningful ways in consultations
- Review emerging tools assessing accessibility, social inclusion, etc.

**v) Focus on Low Income Residents, January 30, 2003**

(34 participants)

Participants in this consultation were encouraged to discuss the Poverty Reduction and Increasing Self Sufficiency Policy Statement as well as the three five-year priority areas.

- Participants were pleased with many aspects of the Poverty Reduction Policy
- Supports and services are important, but the key issue in addressing poverty is to increase the income of the low income individual
- Need a clearer strategy for creating opportunities for employment at liveable wages
- Need to see an increased focus on preventing homelessness through eviction prevention and supporting tenants
- Implement actions as a package to be effective (esp. income, housing, food, and transportation), and make this the focus of neighbourhood strategies.
- In addition to the items identified as common to all groups, participants placed a high value upon greater access to education (all levels), increased incomes, green spaces, supports for disadvantaged people incl. people who can't work, more integrated neighbourhoods, rent control and housing standards, community policing.
- How will the City define the "floor below which no citizen should be allowed to fall"?
- The action with respect to food security is positive, particularly if it means helping people get more income so they won't have to use food banks. There was some concern that a community development strategy may be too slow to address the pressing needs for adequate food now
- Many participants disagreed with using National Child Benefit Supplement money for programs. This money should go directly to families
- Need to see support for advocacy and political work with the different levels of government, particularly around the completely inadequate social assistance incomes and affordable housing

- In ensuring that children have an equal start, place more emphasis on licensed child care (including flexibility) and less emphasis on school readiness
- Develop strategies to safeguard opportunities / avoid the erosion of what low income people have, as generally happens over time.
- Work with the community to find out what exists, what is needed, what works, and what doesn't work.

**vi) Focus on People with Disabilities February 3, 2003**  
(36 participants)

Participants in this consultation discussed the sections of the Diversity Policy Statement which address disability issues, as well as the three five-year priority areas.

- Participants were unhappy that there is very little in the draft Human Services Plan on inclusion for people with disabilities
- People with disabilities want to be able to do what people without disabilities do as a matter of course. Making this happen is everyone's responsibility, with City leadership
- Rather than a charitable framework, need more of an emphasis on "maximizing our assets" and all the things people with disabilities have to offer but are blocked from contributing because of barriers
- Participants liked the proposal to go beyond the requirements of the Ontario Disabilities Act and the fact that there is a municipal committee responsible for this
- The main issues for participants were the high rate of poverty among disabled residents (including inadequate Ontario Disability Support Plan rates), barriers to employment, need for affordable and accessible housing, need for transportation, access to education, inequitable access to existing services (including Emergency and Protective Services), creating opportunities for recreation, socializing, volunteering, etc. None of these are explicitly addressed in the Human Services Plan
- Create a clear policy statement whereby accessibility and diversity by design is integrated into every part of the Human Services Plan - the long term themes, the three priorities and all the Policy Statements. Include a definition of disability which includes the full range of disabilities – physical, sensory, developmental, learning, etc. (The ODA definitions of "disability" and "barrier" would be a good model.)
- To support the policy, list in the Human Services Plan specific actions which create access to existing services, amenities and facilities through accommodations and education, specifically:
  - include the accommodation of people with disabilities in all planning, training, policies, annual budgets (a specific budget line for every department), human resources processes, events, processes, the policy and procedures manual for every department with annual reporting
  - have concrete goals and timelines for all City events and facilities to be accessible / barrier-free and advertised as such, including public buildings, major events, consultation processes, recreation programs, shelters, housing department, long term care facilities (esp. for deaf seniors) etc. Make it a standard requirement to provide a range of accommodations at events and facilities (including barrier free access and attendants).
  - include as a requirement of funding that organizations demonstrate how they provide services to and integrate people with disabilities

- ensure all emergency services (911, Fire, Ambulance, Police, Emergency Preparedness, Victim Services, shelters) are fully accessible, including the department having the necessary training, technology and resources (not currently the case, for example, inadequate TTY use)
- create a body responsible for implementation of accessibility for people with disabilities
- incorporate the recommendations contained in the recently released study by the Coalition for Participation and Inclusion
- state concrete measures in the Human Services Plan to reduce isolation, increase access to opportunities for employment, recreation, socializing, participating in normal activities - cost, transportation and barriers related to inaccessibility are all part of this.
- The City partner with disability-focused community organizations by funding on-going public education for City staff and the public on accommodations / disability
- Work with private establishments (apartment owners, stores, ...) to increase accessibility
- Empower a taskforce to monitor and advocate regarding the economic advantages of making Ottawa a highly accessible City (e.g. in terms of attracting tourism, attracting retirees to move here, reducing retrofit costs, optimizing quality of life, etc.).
- Ensure proper accommodations for people with a variety of disabilities at all consultations
- The Plan must be available in alternate formats.

**vii) Focus on Families February 6, 2003**

(36 participants)

- Participants liked the theme of a "City of Villages" (communities) and the possibility of similar levels of service across the City for major services
- The Plan should include a Family Policy Statement
- The Plan should include a Monitoring Policy Statement and a relationship to the annual budget process
- Only one department (Emergency and Protective Services) is identified for enhanced investment. Need much more
- Affordable housing has been a recurring theme for years and is fundamental to everything else
- Need a clearer definition in the poverty statement of how the "floor" will be determined
- Part of a healthy lifestyle is being employed: reflect this in the prevention section
- Participants were displeased with the focus on the Early Years and believed the broader community felt the same. There is a need to focus more on all age groups and provide integrated supports through all the life cycles
- The policies under the Safe and Healthy Communities should be implemented as a package, and not separated or prioritized
- We must not be fooled by the image of comfortable suburban neighbourhoods. There is tremendous hardship in these neighbourhoods, stemming from unemployment. It is hitting the skilled and the unskilled alike and there are inadequate supports in the suburban and rural areas to deal with unemployment and poverty

- The other challenge in the suburban areas is the long hours which some parents work. The children and the whole family units are stressed because of this. Programs like school feeding programs would help everyone
- With the large size of the wards, it is difficult for one councillor to know / serve all needs in the community. This means City staff must be more responsive to the community, there needs to be transparency in progress toward stated goals, and there need to be greater supports to community organizations to address issues, even complex issues such as housing
- Local residents will take action to meet housing needs if they are provided with some supports
- Until there is action on housing, and to increase supports for seniors and youth, there will be cynicism about these processes. The same issues continue to be raised, with very little result
- Have this specific group get together again in two years to assess priorities / progress
- A 20 year plan is impractical. Focus on a more realistic time frame

**viii) Focus on Aboriginal Concerns February 12, 2003**

(13 participants)

In the summer of 2002 the Aboriginal community living in Ottawa undertook an Aboriginal driven consultation process to determine what "A City that Honours the Wisdom of Aboriginal Culture" would look like. The process started with a Consultation with Respected Elders (July 22, 2002) and was followed by a community consultation on Victoria Island (August 9, 2002) which included representation of Elders, youth, all the First Nations in Ottawa, Métis, and some Inuit.

From this process, the Aboriginal community developed a position paper, which has since been forwarded to the City. This position paper formed the basis of the input for the consultation of February 12, 2003 on the draft Human Services Plan. Members of the Aboriginal community participated in the consultation in good faith, but in the knowledge shared by the Elders, that policy has not worked to the advantage of Aboriginal people. The intention of the meeting was to recommend changes to the draft Human Services Plan which would keep the focus on the agenda which had been developed within the community during the summer.

The consensus of the participants was that the the following changes should be made to the draft Human Services Plan:

- Policies and actions related to Aboriginal residents should not be under the "Diversity" section
- Start the Human Services Plan with a preamble which gives a context for the relationship between Aboriginal residents and the City, honouring the historic context and the current contribution. The Aboriginal community is offering a lot to the City (economic impact i.e. the community gives as well as has needs) and would expect recognition of that in the document
- Include a definition of "Aboriginal" which includes First Nations, Métis and Inuit. Participants clarified the discussion is about Aboriginal people living in urban areas, not "urban Aboriginal people", as all have Nations to which we / they belong

- The front of the Human Services Plan should include a picture of an Aboriginal and include the symbolism of the circle - bringing all people together
- Incorporate the direction set out in “Charting A Course that Honours the Wisdom of Aboriginal Culture”, specifically:
  - Have more specific mention of the Aboriginal community in all the five existing policy statements
  - Establish a 6<sup>th</sup> principle in the Human Services Plan which states, “Approve the Aboriginal People Strategic Action Plan and direct its' implementation within all departments of the City including:
    - a) Supporting the participation and involvement of the Aboriginal community in city governance through Aboriginal representation on City advisory committees and the initiation of an Aboriginal Strategic Action Planning Council. The "Aboriginal Strategic Action Planning Council" (ASAPC) is consistent with one of the recommendations from Victoria Island which called for a separate advisory committee which would address research, health and social services, and economic and community development. The Aboriginal community will determine the appropriate make-up for the ASAPC, i.e. the process for determining the representation, and the individuals to be selected, through a community-based process which would include all sectors of the Aboriginal community, including Inuit representation.
    - b) Sharing and respecting Aboriginal traditions and culture in the development of city programmes and services, policies and strategic directions, including a "requirement to consult" with the Aboriginal community, sensitivity and awareness training for City staff and support for Aboriginal Awareness Week.
    - c) Investing in opportunities to showcase and honour Aboriginal culture, art and heritage. (This should extend to other communities as well.)
    - d) Supporting a holistic and culturally based approach to services for Aboriginal people, including health, social, recreational, spiritual and family needs and Aboriginal specific determinants of health. Implementing the Aboriginal People Strategic Action Plan will lead to the creation of culturally based services, will allow for innovation and new directions, and will lead to support for the community to address its' own priorities (e.g. honouring the Elders, restoring the traditional role of women in all aspects of government and community life
    - e) Develop an accountability framework on the delivery and impact of City services, policies, strategic directions and programs for Aboriginal people
- Future consultation would have to respect how the Aboriginal community does consultatin. There is a need to broaden consultation within the Aboriginal community, including ensuring Inuit representation

**ix) Focus on Seniors February 12, 2003**  
(12 participants)

- The City should take a more co-ordinated and inter-departmental approach to the issues affecting seniors including recreation, transportation, etc.
  - Key issues for seniors in the City are:
    - Affordable housing, especially when fixed incomes meet ever rising rent;
    - Transportation, including effective snow and ice clearing on sidewalks, at curbsides, at bus stops, and around public buildings
    - Supports for independent living (which also has an economic aspect) and
    - Better information on what is available. "Face-to-face" is most effective, so the City should get out more to community groups and work more with the agencies and recreation programs who have direct contact with seniors.
  - Would like to see more emphasis in the Human Services Plan on employment for seniors, as a poverty reduction strategy, because life expectancy is longer, because a lot of seniors are retiring at a later age, and to promote interaction among the generations to remove the social stigma of the perceived incapacity of seniors
  - The City should work more to strengthen tenants associations so they can provide a variety of programs (e.g. recreation), do stronger outreach, and track how many fixed income tenants must move because of rent increases
  - Health issues are important so seniors don't have additional expenses. As part of this, the City needs to provide greater support to community health centres, as they are a better model for providing health services to seniors and others
  - The City could provide more support (including services in kind) to the community agencies which have picked up a whole range of necessary services
  - Elder abuse is a real problem (including in seniors residences). The police department has to do a better job and that requires training
  - Participants felt the emergency medical services were very good, prompt, well equipped and trained, but would like more of a community police presence
  - More support for childcare is an important seniors issue - it gives parents the time to be more attentive to their seniors and to volunteer
  - No more contracting out. The City needs to support unionization of workers, including its' own workers, to ensure people have liveable wages.
  - We need better strategies to ensure seniors from diverse multi-cultural groups have access to existing services and programs. This could be achieved in co-operation with the community agencies and multi-cultural organizations
  - There is a need for more education against racism (part of prevention), including the police department being educated about hate crimes.
  - "Get a finger on the pulse" of baby boomers' expectations for the future
  - Volunteerism is very important to keep our social services in place, but participants felt it was on the decline and most seniors agencies were having problems getting volunteers. This could be partly addressed through a City-sponsored volunteer education program, particularly targeting baby-boomers. There can be a lot of action from the grass roots level if people are inspired (e.g. they see what others have done and then put the same in place)
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- We have to re-consider the reliance on volunteers for social and health services. If we don't have volunteers we have to raise taxes. It is a "terrible thing" to put forward a plan where the aim is lower taxes.
- One participant like that the seniors planning table was not under the umbrella of the City and, therefore, could go beyond the City's mandate in it's work.

## Limitations

- a) Special outreach strategies were used successfully to involve people who traditionally face barriers to participating in municipal consultations. However, while all of the meetings had a good cross section of participants, it would have been possible to broaden participation if circumstances had permitted. In particular :
    - The timelines for approving the final Human Services Plan required a very rapid consultation process. Had there been more time for outreach, publicity and a greater variety of dates and locations it would have been possible to involve more people from different sectors.
    - Location was a factor for many people. For example, rural residents were frustrated that there was not the opportunity to hold consultations in several of the rural communities.
    - As a cost consideration, some of the consultations were by invitation. As invitees sent their regrets, other groups or individuals were added to the invitation list. Although every effort was made to ensure the invitation list included diverse representation from the designated population group, it is possible that some views from within the target population were left out through this process.
    - An important consideration in the design of the consultation process was to make special efforts to solicit the participation of groups which have historically faced barriers to participating in municipal consultation. Specific meetings, with appropriate accommodations, were organized for low income residents, residents with disabilities, residents from diverse cultures, families, seniors and the Aboriginal community. Special efforts were made to enable the equitable participation of Francophone residents at most of the consultations. However, time and resources did not permit special consultation processes for all groups which have historically faced disadvantage.
  - b) Most participants did not see the draft Human Services Plan prior to attending the consultation. Their comments, in many cases, were based on the information they received at the start of the meeting.
  - c) The Plan proposes a vast number of options and directions, with almost 100 possible actions presented for consideration. Within the two hours available for each consultation, it was not realistic to expect a meaningful discussion on all the options presented in the Plan. Therefore, the discussion in the consultations were focussed on the three priority directions identified for the first five years of the Plan. Participants selected one workshop focussing on one of these three themes. This allowed for more in-depth discussion of the directions proposed under the particular priority. However, it required participants to select only one theme, did not leave much space for discussion of the many specific actions under the given priority area, and did not allow for an exploration of the long term (20 year) themes.
  - d) Many residents who were contacted declined to participate because of a general fatigue with Ottawa 20/20 related consultations.
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