

Governments and Neighbourhoods: Finding New Ways to Work Together

Thursday, June 23, 2005, 8:30 a.m. to 1:00 p.m.
Council Chamber, Scarborough Civic Centre

Summary of Evaluation Responses

SPEAKER SESSIONS: (1=Strongly Disagree ---5=Strongly Agree)

	Response Average	Total Number of Response
Neil Bradford – <i>Public Policy in the Neighbourhoods: Challenging Governments and Communities</i>	4.0	41
The speakers provided us with new or important information.		
Caryl Arundel - <i>Ground Level Strategies for Neighbourhood Investment: Lessons from Three Toronto Neighbourhoods</i>	4.0	41
The speakers provided us with new or important information.		

Selected comments on the speakers:

- Liked mix of big and small (local) picture—making the link was easy.
- Both speakers were well informed on the topic.
- Both speakers offered different types of macro presentations that can inform any “community plan” development in the City of Toronto. The predominant issue will be funding of which there is a “lack” of and which regrettably does not look likely to improve unless the feds and the province pay their share.
- The variety of different views (macro and micro) was excellent.
- Well informed and well prepared. Very positive and encouraging.
- CPRN papers are available – require participants to pre-read so briefing can focus on key points followed by greater dialogue/question interaction with participants.

- It would be helpful to the dialogue and questions if the presentations could be available prior to the meeting.
- Enjoyed hearing about research and the opportunity to now read the reports.

FACILITATED PANEL DISCUSSION: (1=Strongly Disagree ---5=Strongly Agree)

Neighbourhood Investment Plans	Response Average	Total Number of Response
<p>Facilitator: Sue Hunter, Executive Director of SNTF Presenter: Chris Brillinger, Community Resources Unit , City of Toronto Panelists: Amanuel Melles, United Way of Greater Toronto Marilyn Renwick, Ministry of Community and Social Services Robbin Tourangeau, Imagine Canada</p>		
<p>The panelists provided us with new or important information.</p>	3.6	38

Selected comments on the panel discussion:

- Diverse panelists were very helpful; the messages did not overlap.
- This was not really a panel discussion.
- Good exploration of pros and cons of idea.
- I would have like to hear more specifics about the findings of the Strong Neighbourhoods Task Force and specifically about the component pieces of the Neighbourhood Investment Plan.
- Good range of comments.
- Time would have been better spent eliminating the panel discussion and allowing the other speakers more time in their presentations which were much more beneficial.
- Diversity—if we continue to highlight how different we are, we are undermining collective interests to improve services to communities. Let’s start talking about what we all have in common.
- A lot of valuable information. Not much new from the City, but if implemented would contribute positively to “the cause.”
- This was a great panel. Lots of new information.

- Global discussion reflective of an embryonic development stage. Information oriented but weak on concrete (viable) next steps and tangible linkages.
- Nicely done, good control on time.
- The purpose of the panel's role was uncertain—not too much opportunity for give and take debate.

GENERAL: (1=Strongly Disagree ---5=Strongly Agree)

	Response Average	Total Number of Response
Overall, the forum was useful to the work that I do.	3.9	42
The forum stimulated my interest in finding new ways for governments and neighbourhoods to work together.	3.9	41
The forum provided a good networking opportunity.	3.6	41
The forum was well organized overall.	4.1	41
The meeting facilities were comfortable and conducive to learning.	3.6	42

General comments and suggestions:

Location:

- Thank you for taking the risk of having this in Scarborough.

Venue:

- The venue was rather large and not very intimate. Otherwise, excellent forum.
- Room layout good; seats uncomfortable.
- Venue was difficult for a person using a cane.
- Good open learning venue but somewhat uncomfortable.

Format:

- Would have been nice to have working-group session over lunch or shortly after lunch.
- It was hard to sit with no opportunities for discussion or interaction.

- Time allotment was not good, as a result small opportunity for networking. Could benefit from more interactive design and speakers from all levels of government.
- May have been a little too long; it was difficult to stay focused and engaged. Changing format and presentation styles may help.
- Speakers should try to keep more to the time frames; maybe shorter presentations and handouts would help.
- Time allotment per topic was an issue.
- Both speakers could have used more time.
- The speakers were allowed to exceed their time limits. This was difficult in that the interest of the audience waned. Also I did not have the ability to stay beyond the scheduled time. Final panel was at a disadvantage because of time constraints.

A/V Equipment:

A technical malfunction of the projector resulted in the distortion of Caryl Arundel's PowerPoint slides. Many respondents commented that it was difficult to read her slides as a result.

Content:

- Thank you to all speakers for the time and effort they have spent. They are extremely knowledgeable about their subject area and we appreciate their efforts today. Ice wine is a nice touch.
- Found the forum did not provide a great deal of information specific to service agencies although a lot of good points for government staff. Look forward to reading the actual report. Found it more useful in my role as a Board member for a community centre.
- Please provide copies of slides when they contain maps or charts (hard to see legends). It was unfortunate that writing space was unavailable as the majority of participants were taking notes.
- Need more work getting other populations involved.
- Overall, worthwhile session. A lot of work and research. Need to see the fallout (action taken).
- Thank you for organizing this. The message of positive action and reaction was good. Looking forward to next steps.

- Community (voluntary sector) neighbourhoods are having a hard time engaging business people in the process. There should be a component to include this sector and strategies on how to engage them in community initiatives and how they can contribute to it.
- I enjoyed the chance to think broadly about community and reflect on the role of agencies in capacity building.

SUGGESTIONS OF TOPICS AND/OR SPEAKERS FOR FUTURE FORUMS AND ROUNDTABLES:

Suggested Topics:

- The revenue/expenditure gap and its impact on neighbourhoods.
- 905 drain and the retention of post-settlement immigrants in 416: one really destabilizing factor for neighbourhoods is that once people “make it” they move to 905—in fact, it’s the definition of “making it”.
- Building a supportive policy framework for neighbourhood-based initiative (i.e., fed/prov/city policy).
- Issue of how to create new employment opportunities in the City of Toronto— involves taxation, infrastructure, better transportation networks—need a lot of different people at the table.
- International/national examples of successful community development.
- A concrete mechanism to fund multi-use space—this is a key stumbling block across all levels of government.

Suggested Speakers:

- Neil Thomlinson, urban politics specialist at Ryerson.
- Mayor Miller, Belinda Stronach, Dalton McGuinty.