# Planning Collaboratives: Learnings to Support Integrated Planning and Considerations for Municipalities

Ontario

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# EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Integrated planning (IP) is characterised by a coordinated and linked system of planning that encourages partnerships and builds on what works to allow for strategic decision-making and goal setting around community needs.

This “community-driven” aspect of IP allows services to be planned, designed and delivered around unique local needs, meaning that there is rarely a “one-size-fits-all” approach to IP. Ontario is a vast province with diverse urban, rural and northern communities which may face different challenges related to diversity in population, economic activity, transportation options and physical and natural conditions. Therefore, a service delivery model in one community may not work in another community due to different local needs, socio-economic indicators, delivery capacity, and the availability of resources and partners. This diversity is considered throughout the paper.

IP is considered a supportive mechanism for the delivery of services in an environment where there are finite resources. Government and non-profit organizations are seeking efficiencies and collaborative solutions to service delivery while providing client-focussed outcomes. This is why “local planning” is included as a key theme in Community Hubs in Ontario: A Strategic Framework and Action Plan.

IP unto itself can have wide-ranging implications and is an important mechanism for reducing duplication, streamlining services and using resources effectively. While IP may lead to community hubs, these place-based service models are just one possible outcome of successful service planning; there are other service delivery models that may be better suited to the needs of a given community.

Following the government’s acceptance of the 27 recommendations outlined in the *Hubs Action Plan,* the Ministry of Municipal Affairs (the ministry) was tasked with addressing the recommendation that calls on the Province to support local IP efforts to ensure client-focussed service delivery, regardless of jurisdictional boundaries.

To support this work, the ministry partnered with its regional staff to conduct “deep dive” (DD) research of various planning structures and collaboratives (“collaborative” is used as an umbrella term to capture the various types of groups or collectives of organizations, agencies and service providers – e.g., tables, committees, networks, etc. – that come together to plan services and/or address community problems.

The purpose of this research was to:

- Gather information about the different approaches to IP taken by these collaboratives, and the planning tools and mechanisms used by these groups;
- Identify approaches and promising practices that could be replicated in other communities; and
- Determine the municipal role in this process.

Five planning collaboratives across North, West, Central and Eastern Ontario were examined as part of the DD research project (see Participant Overview in Appendix A). With input from regional staff at various ministries, the DD collaboratives were selected based on several criteria including:

- A strong IP and client-focussed service delivery approach;
- A mix of local and regional based activities and initiatives;
- Formal governance structure with regular meetings;
- Clear role or involvement from municipalities; and
- Diverse and multi-sector membership.

Data was collected using a number of methods including a review of online documents, focus groups, one-on-one interviews and observations of collaborative meetings involving members, leaders and partners (e.g., steering committee meetings). The knowledge gained from this research will help the ministry to:

- Inform its policy work and identify planning tools and mechanisms that can be replicated;
- Identify promising practices which could help other communities establish similar planning collaboratives adaptable to their local circumstances; and
- Isolate potential roles for municipalities and the development of tools and resources to assist them with the IP process.*

* The ministry recognizes that the ability of a municipality to respond to or accommodate any of the “municipal implications” identified in this paper may depend on its size and overall capacity.

Common learnings around the success factors and barriers to various planning tools, mechanisms, synergies, and innovations have been grouped into **five main themes**. As illustrated by the ‘matrix’ diagram, it is important to note that all of these themes are equally important and mutually dependent on each another – changes to one theme may impact the other themes and therefore each theme requires maintenance as appropriate. A comprehensive list of all the planning tools and mechanisms can be found in Appendix B.

# INTRODUCTION

In 2015, the Premier's Community Hubs Framework Advisory Group released Community Hubs in Ontario: A Strategic Framework and Action Plan to identify how the province can support the development of community hubs and improve client-focused services.

One of the barriers identified in this action plan points to the abundance of service siloes and the overall lack of integration* across service providers targeting the same client groups.

* One definition of integration is that it is characterized by the systematic and planned delivery of programs and services based on community or client needs rather than on the mandate of a particular agency or organization. Integration may include resource consolidation or re-purposing or the co-location of various service functions.

The Ministry of Municipal Affairs (the ministry) was asked to address this barrier by identifying approaches to support local integrated planning (IP) efforts that will improve client-focused service delivery regardless of jurisdictional boundaries, (e.g., provincial, municipal, school board, health and agency). It is important to note that:

- While IP can apply to all forms of planning, the focus of the ministry's policy work (and this paper) is on service planning and should not be confused with capital or land-use planning.
- IP can help to address service siloes as an "upstream" pre-cursor that may/may not lead to a community hub (there are other service delivery models that may meet local needs better).
- The focus of the problem on the client (and not on jurisdictional boundaries) is consistent with the principles of the community hubs action plan and aligns with its direction to avoid 're-writing' the boundaries.

The ministry hosted a series of Minister's Forums across Ontario in fall 2015 to get feedback from subject matter experts on identifying systematic changes to overcome barriers or support best practice solutions to IP for service delivery. At the same time, the ministry engaged other colleague ministries to identify IP linkages and opportunities for alignment and collaboration. From this research, it was identified that planning "collaboratives" (groups of multi-sector partners coming together to address a community issue or need, often in the form of tables, networks, committees, etc.) could be an effective mechanism to support IP.

## Methodology

To build on findings from the Minister's Forums and inter-ministerial engagement, the ministry conducted "deep dive" (DD) research in 2017. This research focused on various planning structures and collaboratives operating in five locations across Ontario (see Participant Overview in Appendix A):

1. A children's planning table in Western Ontario (Planning Table)
2. A leadership collaborative in Central Ontario (Leadership Collaborative)
3. A youth services network in Eastern Ontario (Youth Network)
4. A mental health task force in Northern Ontario (Task Force)
5. A poverty reduction network in Eastern Ontario (Poverty Network)

The purpose of this research was to gather facts and opinions about the different approaches communities take to IP and the delivery of client-focused services. Over the course of four months, the ministry collected data through:

- A review of online documents associated with the five collaboratives;
- Focus groups with collaborative members or partners;
- One-on-one interviews with key informants; and
- Passive observations of collaborative meetings involving members, leaders and partners (e.g., steering committee meetings).

Key contacts at each of the collaboratives were asked to identify focus group and interview participants on the basis of their knowledge or experience around community or client-based service needs, and the collaborative's planning efforts to address those needs. Where possible, multi-sector representation – particularly from the municipal sector – was also recommended as a selection criterion for collaboratives to consider.

To obtain a holistic perspective around IP practices and challenges, focus group and interview participants were presented with a set of research questions. Informed by the ministry's previous policy work on IP, these questions were categorized around the following topics (not in order):

- Governance: the structure, system of rules, practices and processes by which work is guided.
- Operations:  coordination, location and frequency of meetings, scope or boundaries of work.
- Resourcing: details around funding, staffing, access to planning data, or other resource allocations and associated decisions.
- Strategy: how service planning priorities, direction and decision-making around core business, projects, etc. are identified.
- Partnerships: details around key planning or service delivery partners, how they were formed, the mechanisms to encourage participation, and the municipal role, if applicable.
- Evaluation and improvement: use of evidence or data, methods to critically evaluate and report on the success or performance of key planning or service delivery activities.

## Important context

The data collected and analyzed through this DD process provided learnings about the specific barriers, success factors, tools and resources that have facilitated or hindered

the progress of local planning efforts and service delivery across the collaboratives examined. Gaining a better understanding of the municipal role and the role of other ministries or government agencies in IP was also an outcome from this process. It is important to note, however, that the DD method was only applied to five planning collaboratives so the findings presented in this paper are representative of this sample.

While all communities are unique with respect to local needs, delivery capacity, and the availability of resources, partners, etc., the data collected across the DD sites will help to inform the ministry's policy work to identify IP tools and mechanisms that can be replicated by other municipalities, and the systematic conditions that will best support this transfer.*

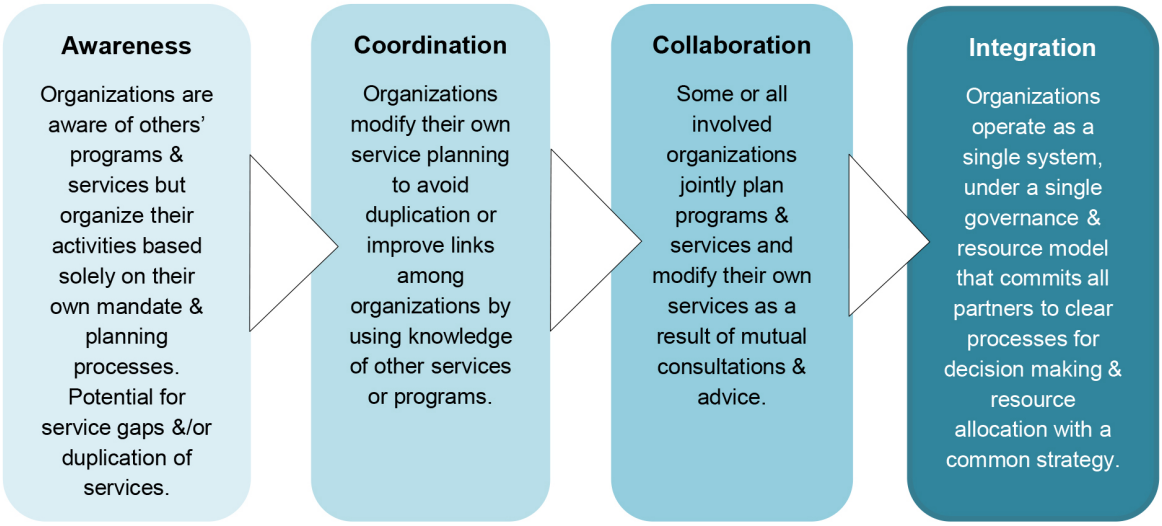
* Many of the planning tools and mechanisms identified in this paper were adopted to address or leverage the unique circumstances (e.g., geography, demographics, local needs or assets) of a given DD community. In other words, planning tactics that work for one community may not work for another community; ultimately, it is up to the collective voice of collaborative partners and members to determine the most appropriate approach for their community.

The following paper is intended to:

- Outline preliminary observations around some of the service planning mechanisms, synergies, innovations, etc., that characterize each DD site, as well as the gaps, challenges, success factors, and key examples where applicable.
- Form the basis of collective learnings and analysis to help shape directions for further IP policy development and next steps. These learnings can be applied to municipalities but are likely to be of benefit to the province as well; especially ministries that oversee or fund the operations of local or regional service providers (e.g., school boards, Local Health Integration Networks, Elderly Person Centres, Developmental Service Organizations, Early Years Child and Family Centres, etc.).

Before presenting "learnings" and the associated themes of the next section, it is important to acknowledge that there are numerous best practice models of integration. One such model recognizes that there are commonly accepted "stages" of integration. These stages are often depicted as a continuum of inter-organizational relationships, with "integration" being the end stage.

## Image 1: Integration continuum




"Defining Integration: A Best Start Working Paper," the Ontario Ministry of Children and Youth Services, July 2011 http://hamiltonbeststart.ca/wp-content/uploads/2014/02/Defining-Integration.pdf
(Adapted from Building on the Foundation –Moving Forward: Addendum to the Implementation Planning Guidelines for Best Start Networks – System Integration. Ministry of Children and Youth Services, November 2006)

As a general guideline, collaboratives may find it helpful to define what level of relationship they have currently, and where they want to be in the future. There is no "right" or "wrong" place to be on the continuum and this is one of many tools that collaboratives can use to determine their own level or stage of integration.

While the continuum can serve as a useful gauge of current or future integration status, the ministry did not adopt this model as part of its research or subsequent analysis because:

- The purpose of the DD research was to collect and analyse qualitative facts and opinions about promising, transferable IP practices.
- The linear nature of the continuum was deemed incompatible with the themes that began to surface during the ministry's analysis of findings.
- Adopting a specific model like the continuum may have influenced impartiality and objectivity, thereby increasing the risk of bias. This "blank slate" approach lent itself to the identification of common themes and the "matrix" concept depicted below, all of which surfaced organically upon the ministry's analysis of DD findings.

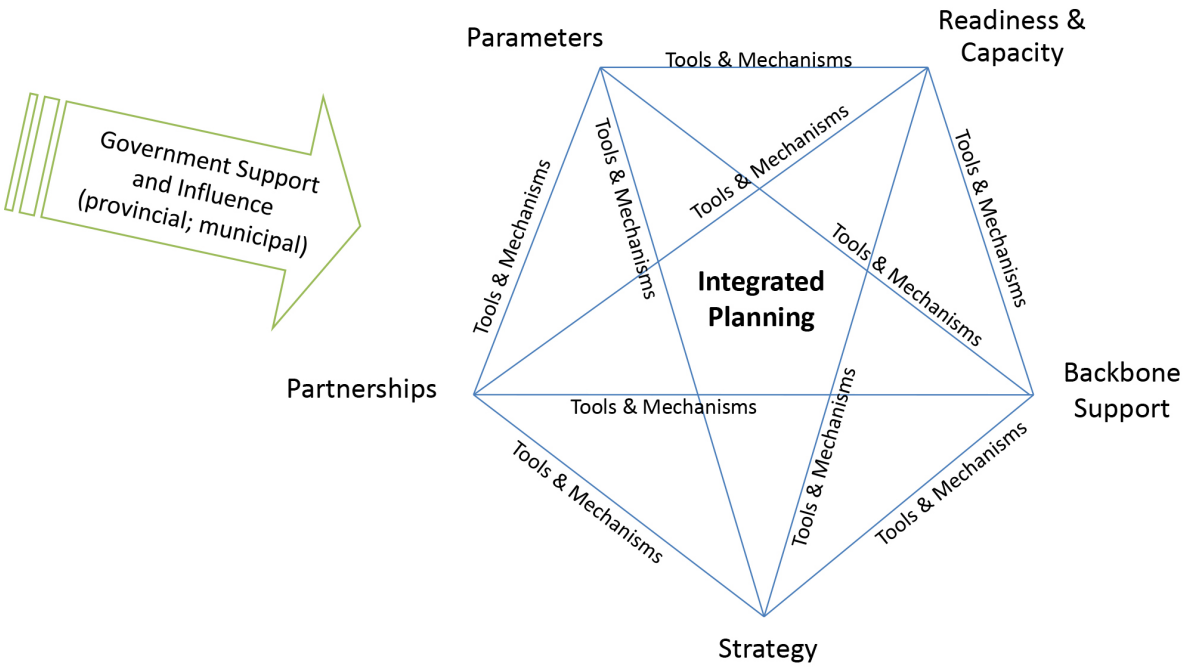
# OVERVIEW

The following 'themes' section will highlight some of the preliminary findings from the DD research across the five planning collaboratives. Common learnings and observations around the success factors and barriers to various planning tools, mechanisms, synergies, and innovations have been grouped into **five main themes**. Many of these themes and their associated planning tools and mechanisms (e.g. visioning, assessing, etc.) are reinforced by the Stages of Community Hub Development Framework.

The presentation of the themes in a linear fashion and with numbers assigned to them should not be associated with order of importance or significance. As depicted in the diagram below, the themes comprise a web or matrix of dynamic, sometimes concurrent, planning activities with multiple interconnections, linkages and influences within, or external to, a collaborative.

**Note**: The aforementioned "continuum" model – or other models designed to identify an organization's stage or level of integration – can be applied to any of the five themes (e.g., collaboratives can determine their stage of integration with respect to partnerships, strategy, etc.)

## Image 2: Deep dive theme matrix




Based on the learnings, there is no "right" or "wrong" place to be in the matrix – each theme is dynamic and ever-changing with interconnections across all five, and some having simultaneous implications and adoption. Planning collaboratives are constantly

adapting and responding to community needs and transitioning between/across one or more themes. Similarly, many of the IP tools and mechanisms can be applied across the themes in a targeted (one theme) or concurrent (more than one theme) fashion.

Collaboratives should have all of these themes present to some degree. While service planning can still materialize if a theme is weak or missing, DD observations demonstrated that overall planning efforts tend to be less integrated, and in turn, less impactful or effective.

As depicted in the diagram, external forces are always at play. External forces can include, for example, critical community issues, municipal council priorities, local economic viability, or provincial priorities. The Youth Network and Planning Table, for example, are heavily influenced by provincial priorities around child care, parenting, family literacy, etc. Provincial strategies like the Ministry of Education's Renewed Early Years and Child Care Policy Framework and the Ministry of Children and Youth Services' Special Needs Strategy are largely influential in shaping the priorities and planning activities of these collaboratives.

**Note**: Many of the planning tools and mechanisms identified were used by more than one DD site and are not mutually exclusive. In reviewing and analysing the data collected through this research, the ministry has highlighted the collaboratives that best illustrate the application of specific tools or mechanisms for the purpose of simplicity and clarity.

# DEEP DIVE RESEARCH: THEMES

## Theme 1 – Backbone support

DD sites benefit from and value "backbone support"* commonly used to provide administration or coordination (e.g., dedicated staff) for core operations. Specifically, collaboratives having access to a full-time – and funded – coordinator are able to focus more on activities tied directly to their mandates such as strategic IP, partnership building, and evaluation. Those not having access to this type of support appeared to struggle with overall coordination and administrative efforts.

* Generally speaking, backbone support can include dedicated resources (e.g., staff, data) to coordinate participating organizations/agencies, establishing shared measurement practices, securing community buy-in, mobilizing funding and supporting and aligning planning activities.

As Broader Public Sector organizations, municipalities (like the upper-tier municipal support of the Planning Table) could have the capacity and expertise to support this coordination role given the benefits of this collaborative work to local residents. These community-wide benefits can apply to all municipal tiers or municipalities designated as service managers or District Social Services Administration Boards (DSSABs) – as well as other key partners such as Local Health Integration Networks or LHINs, school boards, etc.

### Learnings: Funding

#### 1.1 Backbone support is essential to planning success

Many DD participants were of the view that permanent backbone support (via in-kind or base funding) is essential to the success and sustainability of IP efforts. Backbone investments were commonly used to support administrative functions or a dedicated coordinator function within the collaboratives. Three of the five collaboratives reviewed have tenuous funding arrangements, which impact the stability of backbone support.

Unfortunately, funding opportunities for permanent backbone support are often difficult to locate/obtain because many grant programs are not designed to support this type of function or are limited by project-based stipulations. Consequently, many of the DD sites have opted for alternative funding mechanisms such as membership fees, fundraising, incorporation and soliciting cash and in-kind contributions/funding from municipalities*, philanthropic agencies, public foundations and local businesses to support and sustain their collaborative work:

*It is worth noting that a few DD sites have unique municipal funding arrangements in place. A Roundtable for Poverty Reduction (a member of the Leadership Collaborative) receives direct funding from a single-tier municipality as a budget line item in its Community and Social Services Department. As a result of this funding, the Roundtable

is a stronger arms-length collaborative that provides a critical poverty lens on matters addressed by the Leadership Collaborative and the municipal city council.

In the East, the Poverty Network's housing working group receives indirect funding and administrative support as the sub-committee to the city-county "Affordable Housing Action Committee." This support is administered through a Service Manager Agreement – a formal agreement between two or more parties that articulates the terms and conditions of a particular service relationship.

### Integrated planning tools and mechanisms (related to 1.1)

#### Leadership Collaborative

Membership fees: To sustain backbone support, the Collaborative is funded through membership fees* that are paid by each of its member institutions. These membership fees are dependent on the size of the institution, and are comprised of three levels: $9,000, $5,000 and $2,000. The Collaborative has also been successful in securing in-kind staff support from a local Community Foundation.

* Membership fees may not be feasible for other planning collaboratives relying more on community volunteers, or perhaps those with fewer partners or partners having finite resources. There may be opportunities or limitations on program funding for membership fees that would be used for backbone/administrative support.

#### Planning Table

Public foundation funding: The Planning Table was successful at acquiring funding from a local public foundation for three years of backbone support. The Foundation's mandate aligned with the Table's work, making the grant a good fit for both parties. While the upper-tier municipality provides in-kind support to the Planning Table, the Foundation's funding removed the need for any further direct financial support to the Table.

#### Poverty Network

Incorporation: Unlike the other DD sites examined, the Poverty Network is an incorporated non-profit organization with a volunteer board of directors. The Network made this decision for several reasons, namely to receive direct government funding (e.g., Trillium grants) without having to rely on another agency to act as the "lead recipient."* Incorporation also allowed the Poverty Network to purchase and finance a property which became a community hub.

* The Poverty Network has mixed success with securing grants; its limited experience as an incorporated entity and/or with grant-writing as a non-profit organization may contribute to this varied success. Issues related to the narrow funding criteria of provincial grants, particularly for backbone support, may have played a role as well.

## Learnings: Dedicated coordination

### 1.2 Dedicated coordination is critical to planning success

The coordinator function varied across the DD sites. Some coordinators served more of a strategic function (e.g., change/project management or research) whereas others performed an administrative purpose. Despite these differences, there was general consensus that the role was critical to planning success. The rationale behind this thinking is that:

- A coordinator position is vital to the success of collaborative operations (e.g., scheduling meetings, overseeing steering committee and working group functions, accounting and reporting, etc.), but also to its overall governance, strategy, partnership building, and service planning efforts. Without dedicated coordination, the development and implementation of strategic planning tools and mechanisms – e.g., project charters, conceptual frameworks, terms of reference, action plans, etc. – become challenging and planning efforts unguided.

- As learned from the Minister's Forums on Integrated Planning for Community Hubs, these coordinators also have the potential to serve more of a strategic purpose as local leaders or community champions to support collective impact and transformative action to tackle complex community issues. (Backbone support through dedicated coordination is a broadly accepted 'condition' for successful collective impact).

- Effective and sustainable coordination is difficult to achieve on a part-time or temporary basis where the individual fulfilling the role is expected to work "off the side of their desk" while performing other duties or jobs. This is especially true for regional collaboratives serving a large number of partners and navigating multiple jurisdictions and relationships to address cross-cutting issues. Where backbone support exists, as with the Leadership Collaborative and the Planning Table, planning efforts have greater success and the collaborative is more sustainable and able to work in a more integrative manner. Where this support is limited or threatened (Youth and Poverty Networks), planning becomes disconnected, coordination dwindles and relationship-building suffers.

- Relying solely on time-limited and project-based government grants has become an inefficient and unreliable business practice in light of today's fiscal climate and competitiveness across the voluntary sector. The amount of time and effort required to meet eligibility, application and reporting requirements and standards, as well as the human resource demands (recruiting, hiring and training the right coordinator for every new grant is onerous and yields little knowledge transfer or capacity for sustainable impact) has become a deterrent and is viewed as a barrier to IP. Sustained backbone support is seen as a preferable alternative to seeking time-limited funding.

## Integrated planning tools and mechanisms (related to 1.2)

### Task Force

Grant management: The Task Force, care of a local indigenous organization as the lead funding recipient, made use of a full-time coordinator that was funded through a multi-year grant from the Ontario Trillium Foundation. While this grant made it possible for the Task Force to move beyond the limitations of an organization run completely by volunteers, the coordinator position and its overall function comprised a significant portion of the grant. All grant application, monitoring and reporting requirements were entrusted to the coordinator so as not to detract from other areas of business.

**Note:** Grant reporting requirements can help to keep recipients focussed and provide data that they might not have otherwise collected. However, grant management demands have proven to be more burdensome for the coordinators of other collaboratives such as the Poverty Network. In this case, the coordinator works part-time and unlike other DD sites, the Poverty Network is incorporated. While this incorporation status has advantages for the Network (e.g., funding, tax savings, property acquisition, etc.), the increased paperwork associated with bookkeeping, grant reporting, etc. remains a challenge. As such, coordinator and backbone support needs will differ across collaboratives depending on numerous factors.

Data collection and analysis: Despite grant reporting demands, the coordinator's work in collecting data and other statistical evidence to demonstrate progress was leveraged by the Task Force in presenting to their municipal city council on the need to integrate their Community Safety and Well-Being Plan with other service plans (e.g., the city's Age-Friendly Plan). This function is also present in the Planning Table and the Youth Network whereby the coordinators have worked with Service Managers' "Data Analysis Coordinators" to access and analyse data related to family support services and Early Years transformation.

Community development and mobilization: In addition to having an administrative role, the Task Force coordinator has been instrumental in prioritising local action, empowering the community, and strengthening: a) the capacity of people as active citizens through their community groups, organizations and networks; and b) the capacity of institutions and agencies (public, private and non-governmental) to work in dialogue with citizens to shape and determine change in their communities. Since a municipality's activities cross numerous sectors, it is seen as an obvious and pragmatic leader and coordinator for community development and mobilization.

Advocacy: The Task Force coordinator has also led or contributed to political advocacy work, including addressing city council on issues related to mental health and addictions, and promoting ways in which the Task Force can assist or align with municipal priorities. Similar advocacy work has been observed with the Poverty Network and with one of the Leadership Collaborative's members (a Roundtable for Poverty Reduction). The Poverty Network uses the Vital Signs Report from their

local Community Foundation as well as reports generated by the “Affordable Housing Action Committee” to provide an updated picture of poverty for the City and County they serve and partner with.

**Note:** The success of advocacy can be highly dependent on the presentation of statistics and evidence (obtained through research and data collection) to convince decision-makers of the return on investment from upstream planning. In the case of the Task Force, statistics related to reduced incidents of incarceration and police service calls were presented to city council as evidence for Task Force success and impact. This data is being considered by council and other community partners to identify options for implementing and overseeing the Task Force’s Community Safety and Well-Being Plan.

### Youth Network

Administration: The Youth Network, through its managing agency and lead funding recipient (a local Children’s Aid office), also made use of a full-time coordinator that was jointly and temporarily funded by the Ministry of Education and the Ministry of Children and Youth Services. Similar to the other DD sites, this coordinator served mostly an administrative function to schedule steering committee and working group meetings, take meeting minutes, monitor and update the Network website, etc. This work improved communications between members and facilitated cooperation and coordination of activities amongst partners and service providers.

Inter-agency representation: The Youth Network’s coordinator was also leveraged to represent them on various front-line networks and inter-service groups – e.g., collective impact pilot projects, poverty roundtables, suicide prevention coalitions, etc. Given that there is no formal mechanism in place for regional planning collaboratives to connect, this inter-collaborative representation role was viewed as being important insofar as communicating service gaps, integration opportunities and other relevant information back to the Network.

Transformational leadership: The coordinator also promoted the Youth Network’s “No Wrong Door” approach to existing or potential partners to facilitate transformational leadership among community leaders and decision-makers. The approach is meant to transform traditional thinking (bottom-line, empire building) towards more of a shared responsibility and collective impact approach as part of a cultural norm within and amongst Network members and partners.

### Poverty Network

In-kind support: While the municipalities in the area do not financially contribute to the backbone support of the Poverty Network, city staff contribute their expertise and staff time as either chair members or members of the various Network working groups. This scenario is similar to the Planning Table where an upper-tier municipality provides in-kind support such as communications, data analysis and back-office support such as grant management. Staff have recognized the value working with these collaboratives bring to their “9-5 jobs.”

### Planning Table

Strategic planning: In addition to its full-time manager (funded by a three-year grant from a local foundation), the Table has a dedicated Social Planning Associate who is funded through its upper-tier municipal partner. Both staff are employees of the municipality and these positions play a pivotal role in strategic coordination, analysis and the fostering of relationships and connections necessary to IP. Since the Table's staff attend all or most meetings of various initiatives across the region, they "can knit the pieces of the system together" and are instrumental in providing a broad systems-level perspective and ensuring the Table is strategically moving towards system level integration.

### Leadership Collaborative

Agenda development and management: Meeting agenda items for the Leadership Collaborative tend be complex matters and often on the periphery of organizational mandates that require solutions from multiple partners. Given the level of participation at these meetings by senior executives of the corporate members, agenda development has rigour applied to it by the Coordinator and Co-Executive Leads. These individuals ensure the agendas are strategic, and that topics seek decisions and actions from the Collaborative as opposed to just information-sharing.

For example, the Coordinator and Co-Executive Leads feel "they need to earn the next meeting" of the Collaborative by virtue of current meeting success so that the leaders return, an indication of the value they see in participating. To better understand local needs, the Coordinator and Co-Executive Leads develop agendas by scanning members for issues through one-on-one meetings, and from their own involvement in other community initiatives. This type of activity would likely prove difficult if undertaken off the side of someone's desk on a volunteer basis.

## Municipal considerations for theme 1: Provision of backbone support

Municipalities can learn from the funding and coordinator examples above to:

- Better understand the local benefit or impact of planning collaboratives that operate in their communities; and
- Acknowledge this impact by providing backbone support. This support can take various forms where municipalities can provide direct or indirect support to planning collaboratives through budget line items or Service Manager Agreements.

Backbone support can also take on more of a Human Resources or staffing function through the establishment of a new or existing coordinator position responsible for important duties like grant management, partnership building or the integration of community-based planning efforts with municipal plans (e.g., official plans, age-friendly plans, recreation master plans, etc.).

The municipal role in providing backbone support varies across the DD sites, but where it exists, it provides stability and project management. This support can be customized

to local circumstances but flexible enough to evolve over time. It is important to note that municipal leadership in providing backbone support to a collaborative has many advantages but the political climate they operate in could also be a factor – e.g., council approval, municipal elections, financial reporting, etc.

In the early stages of collaborative planning, backbone support may be critical to facilitate the process (e.g., seed funding, on-boarding organizations, up-front training and capacity-building, grant management, etc.). The municipal role can change and adapt as the collaborative evolves to better meet the needs of service providers, community members, and government priorities.

# Theme 2 – Strategy

Having clearly-defined priorities, direction, outcomes and decision-making processes are vital to successful IP but they take time to develop. While these processes are particularly important in the early, upstream stages of planning, strategy development tends to be an ongoing, dynamic process requiring frequent assessment and monitoring to ensure alignment with local needs (or perhaps provincial priorities).

The majority of DD sites examined felt that establishing a shared understanding of the collaborative vision, mandate, goals and outcomes were important for effective cooperation among and between their respective members and partners, and for sustained planning impact.

There appeared to be a collective appreciation for the concept of “rowing in the same direction” along with the establishment of mutual trust and respect among members and partners to undertake “strategic planning” (purposeful planning with a specific goal to accomplish it).

Collaboratives having a formalized strategy or planning framework, combined with strong governance, seemed better positioned to guide their partners and members around the service landscape of their catchment area (e.g., service assets and gaps). These mechanisms also allowed for the identification of client needs and the reduction of service duplication.

## Learnings: Common direction

### 2.1 Strategy through shared vision and mutual goals

Strategy development around the establishment of a vision, mission and common goals was a common theme across all DD participants. These statements helped prioritize work and define project ownership, roles, and communication channels throughout all planning stages. Various planning mechanisms and activities were adopted to enhance strategic planning and goal setting around community needs.

Visioning and direction-setting tools were used to set priorities, build unity and give direction to collaborative members. At times, these tools were used as ‘reminders’ to

members as to why the collaborative existed and why its goals and objectives were important.

### Integrated planning tools and mechanisms (related to 2.1)

**Youth Network**

Shared vision and mandate: Like many of the other DD sites, the Youth Network adopted a vision and mandate to set a common agenda across its members to ensure they all work towards the same goals and outcomes. These statements help to facilitate mutually reinforcing activities across the membership even though its members vary in terms of their geographic catchment areas, the services they administer, and the populations they serve.

**Planning Table**

Common goals: In addition to developing guiding principles or values and a shared philosophy, the Planning Table encouraged its members to ensure that they saw their organization in at least one of the Table's common goals. Some Table members took these goals back to their own organizations and tested them against internal goals to determine alignment.

Collective impact framework: Using this Framework, the Planning Table developed a "Theory of Change" model to provide clarity on the direction, role and mandate of the Table which helped its members clearly identify their purpose and the role they play in impacting the developmental health of children. Theory of Change is a planning methodology used to promote social change by defining long-term goals and then mapping backward (e.g., as an outcomes pathway) to identify necessary preconditions.

## Learnings: Common outcomes

### 2.2 Strategy through statements of performance

Closely related to having a shared vision, mission and goals are the presence of common outcomes. The popular quote: "If you can't measure it, you can't manage (or improve) it" applies to planning collaboratives as it would to other organizations operating in the public or private sectors.

The development and ongoing assessment of short, medium, and long-term outcomes was an indicator of success to quantify performance, to assess the success of the planning process, and to inspire positive change and advancement.

Collaboratives having well-defined outcomes (e.g., expressed quantitatively, showing how performance changes over time) were more strategic in their approach to planning, and arguably, better able to demonstrate to funders and other stakeholders how their group was achieving their mission.

Still, only a few of the DD sites demonstrated formal progress or steps towards the development of an agreed-upon evaluation framework and performance indicators to guide and measure the success of their work. The reasons for this seemed to vary:

- Overall, gauging the impact of planning efforts to improve system-wide integration or client experience is complex and multi-faceted given the range of factors at play including, but not limited to, different service providers, resources, and community needs.
- Additional barriers such as a general lack of research or evaluation expertise and the inability to keep up with changes in provincial direction (e.g., Early Years transformation) were cited by DD participants.

Yet another observation by the ministry is that some of the collaboratives may be devoting too much effort to measuring outputs (e.g., the number of: clients served, tools/resources developed, webinars offered, grants secured, etc.) without knowing much about outcomes (e.g., the value or impact of service planning on clients).

It is important for these collaboratives to avoid counting outputs or "widgets" and trying to use these data as proof of their effectiveness or impact. Aside from missing out on funding opportunities, too much of a focus on outputs could lead to decision-making that may not be directly related to the quality and impact of service planning or address the needs of the client.

### Integrated planning tools and mechanisms (related to 2.2)

**Youth Network**

Data repository: A relatively recent undertaking of the Youth Network and a major priority of its "Community Indicators and Measures Committee," the repository project will help to store and partition data in a formal attempt to identify indicators around the health and well-being of children, youth and families across two counties. Once developed, these indicators will comprise a "Results Based Accountability" approach to assist the Network in evaluating and monitoring its operations.

**Planning Table**

Performance indicators: The Table conducted surveys to determine their level of system integration and to have a comprehensive set of system integration indicators based on the four categories of integration continuum (awareness, coordination, collaboration and integration) that allows the Table to measure its success as a system-wide IP table.

**Note**: As mentioned earlier under the "backbone support" theme, performance indicators are closely related to a collaborative's access to data or research expertise, and in turn, evidence-based planning, decision-making, and advocacy efforts (e.g. presenting to city council). A dedicated coordinator with a professional background in research methodology and data analysis, or someone who can build

partnerships with agencies well-versed in these areas (post-secondary institutions, Public Health Units, etc.) is a key consideration for this theme.

## Learnings: Strong governance

### 2.3 Strategy through deliberate governance

The presence of a formal and deliberate governance model with regular meetings and reporting structures was one of the criteria used to select DD participants. All of the collaboratives made use of governance, with varying degrees of complexity, to "police" themselves through the formalization of decision-making processes and the development of internal policies.

Common to most of the DD sites were the presence of chairs or co-chairs, steering committees, working groups, organization charts, terms of reference, membership agreements and regular meeting schedules. Some of the collaboratives also hosted annual general meetings.

While governance was considered a key "ingredient" to add structure, accountability and transparency to IP activities, some of the larger collaboratives spent too much time, effort and resources on this at the expense of actual planning and implementation. Part of the problem (as referenced later under the "Parameters" theme) are the broad parameters set around partners, jurisdictional boundaries and target populations, which can be overwhelming for a voluntary collaborative in terms of meeting the needs of all members and stakeholders.

#### Integrated planning tools and mechanisms (related to 2.3)

**Planning Table**

Governance model: The Table has a robust governance model to ensure that its common goals are carried out. The model depicts core elements around the Table's voting members, working groups, steering committee, backbone support, and affiliated groups.

**Youth Network**

Terms of reference: This tool is used by the Network to provide more detail to its members about guiding principles, membership criteria, voting, term of office, election procedures, and committee or working group functions.

### Municipal considerations for theme 2: Purposeful and incremental approach

The above tools can be used by any service provider wishing to identify strategic priorities in a meaningful and sustained way where community groups are formally committed and engaged throughout the entire process.

Municipalities are no stranger to the strategy development process not only because of their political authority but also because of the many community services they already plan for and deliver. As the owners and gatekeepers of Official Plans, Master Plans, and

Service Plans, municipalities are in a unique position to review, align and integrate their own planning efforts with those of non-government planning efforts (like the DD collaboratives discussed in this paper).

Municipal leadership in strategic planning efforts has many advantages but the political climate they operate in may also need to be considered (e.g., perceived or real inflexibility due to the council approval process).

Taking stock of existing service plans (e.g., through service mapping – see "Readiness and Capacity" Theme) can be a first step towards this alignment and integration process and to identify and reduce service inefficiencies and duplication.

In addition, municipal knowledge and experience around decision-making and approval processes such as rules of order, terms of reference, committees of council and associated secretariat support, service agreements, etc. could be offered (e.g., as backbone support) or leveraged by a collaborative when developing or revisiting its governance structure.

Local governments may wish to embrace these new and innovative IP approaches to ensure inclusivity, meaningful engagement, and sustained relations through common agendas, mutually reinforcing activities, and clear/frequent communications among partners.

## Theme 3 – Partnerships

The specific role or function of partners varied across the DD sites as did the involvement of certain individuals, leaders, or organizational departments (e.g., municipal partners differed across departments such as public health, social services, police services, parks and recreation, etc.). Regardless of these differences, developing and fostering meaningful, trust-worthy relationships amongst planning partners is essential to IP success.

Similar to the "Strategy" theme, DD participants framed partnership-building as a continuous effort to stay current with ever-changing community needs and to manage relations and expectations (e.g., competing interests and "turf protection" at the expense of cooperation and trust). This ongoing effort is critical for planning collaboratives to address complex and long-ranging problems in the context of varying client needs and planning intermediaries (e.g., local, regional, and provincial agencies).

As an ongoing endeavour, the partnership development process takes time. Early and meaningful outreach was deemed to be crucial for cultivating sustainable and trust-worthy relationships with community stakeholders and service providers. At the same time, taking a strategic approach to partnership development is equally important given the large number of planning tables, networks, committees, etc. in many areas of the province.

## Learnings: Outreach and agreement

### 3.1 Outreach to gauge mutual interest

Given their collaborative nature and function, as well as the necessity of teamwork for tackling complex community problems that cannot be solved by any one organization or individual, targeted outreach to attract new partners was common among DD sites. These outreach efforts were used by DD participants to describe the work of their collaborative at a high level, giving new organizations the opportunity to envision areas where they could offer value or see common alignment. The success of outreach and engagement is often reliant on strong coordination or backbone.

#### Integrated planning tools and mechanisms (related to 3.1)

**Poverty Network**

Conference participation: The presence of leaders and decision-makers representing collaboratives at important conferences or planning events was a common tactic to most of the DD sites. For example, the Poverty Network was represented at the Ontario Community Hubs Summit in early May 2017 along with representatives from other DD sites like the Planning Table, Leadership Collaborative and Task Force. This presence provides an opportunity for collaboratives to actively participate in planning discussions but also for knowledge exchange, networking and the formation of new partnerships that may not have occurred otherwise.

**Planning Table**

Outreach activities: The Table undertakes frequent outreach activities to engage new and existing partners given the breadth of their catchment area and the large number of service providers operating within the family support system. Some of these activities include online surveys, interviews, site visits and guest speakers at quarterly meetings. Ultimately, these initiatives help to determine who and how many partners should be at the planning table.

**Youth Network**

Population-based working groups: Similar to the Planning Table, the Youth Network has also employed outreach activities but in a more structured manner to strengthen and sustain partnerships with priority populations. Their “First Nations, Métis and Inuit Planning Working Group” was established to engage and strengthen relationships among service providers serving Indigenous children 0-6 and their families. Comprised of a large group of members both on and off-territory, this working group has been deemed very productive for its ability to build relationships and provide more seamless services to Indigenous communities across the two counties served by the Network.

### 3.2 Determining rules of engagement

Various tools were adopted by the DD sites to solidify and categorize partners secured through early and meaningful outreach. While some collaboratives partner informally and organically,* others established formal agreements using contract materials. Whether informal or formal, outlining the ownership of individual planning roles and the resources committed by each partner is a promising practice. A preliminary understanding of roles and responsibilities sets collective expectations and serves to mitigate potential conflict before and during IP.

* Collaboratives pointed out that not all partners wanted to play an active role, preferring instead to contribute monetary or in-kind support and letting other organizations complete the work.

#### Integrated planning tools and mechanisms (related to 3.2)

**Youth Network**

Membership agreement: The Network used this tool to define the priorities, obligations and shared responsibilities of its members including essential functions. This agreement also sets out a "statement of commitment" which holds Network members accountable to their membership roles and responsibilities.

Terms of reference or charter: This tool is used by the Network to provide more detail to its members re: guiding principles, membership criteria, voting, term of office, election procedures, and committee or working group functions.

## Learnings: Core partners

### 3.3 Core partners are common across the DD sites

There appeared to be a common set of key local and regional partners across the DD sites, give or take some variations unique to the community such as the existence of some specialized service providers (e.g., Canadian Mental Health Association, Community Health Centres, Indian Friendship Centres, etc.).

At the same time, there were some noticeable gaps across the DD sites in terms of partnerships with key sectors and intermediaries known to be well-versed in integrated service-delivery planning. These included the education sector (school boards), the health care sector (Local Health Integration Networks or LHINs*), and groups often classified as non-traditional or atypical such as private sector organizations and police departments. Most of the collaboratives examined did not have formal or strategic partnerships with these agencies.

* As part of their 3-year Integrated Health Service Plans, many LHINs have adapted their planning priorities to the demographic, cultural, linguistic, and social aspects of First Nation and Francophone communities.

Based on input from the DD sites and what was heard and observed, the reasons for these partnership gaps seemed to vary. In some cases, partnerships formed as the

result of informal relationships between a collaborative member and a representative of a particular sector (e.g., a school principal or a LHIN board member). In other cases, partnerships were not cultivated for various reasons including, but not limited to:

- Geography (e.g., the presence of, or access to, a LHIN office in rural or northern areas).
- Alignment with a collaborative's focus on a certain population or community problem.
- Systematic factors driven by the province (e.g., school boards and LHINs have autonomous decision-making authority around partnership formalities).

The following partner categories (not in order) may be important for new or existing planning collaboratives to consider, with the caveat that:

- Partnership recruitment and development should always be community-driven and revisited frequently to ensure equitable representation and engagement; and
- The right leadership and local champions can help convene the right partners by using their influence and their own networks.
- Voluntary sector or non-profit partners – e.g., YMCAs, Boys and Girls Clubs, United Way.
- Data or research partners such as Public Health Units, post-secondary institutions, policy research institutes.
- Grassroots or field agent partners – e.g., individuals with lived experience.
- Private sector partners such as local businesses or philanthropists.
- Media partners (local newspapers or media agencies with communications experience)
- Government and Broader Public Sector partners – e.g., municipalities or LHINs, provincial ministries, or federal government representatives.
- Population-specific partners such as local immigration or cultural centres, First Nations, schools or school boards, etc.

### Municipal considerations for theme 3: Municipal representation is important

Many municipalities are already immersed in various partnership building and consultation activities. For example, some municipal councils have approved plans to develop new policies to advance communications, consultations and relations with local First Nations groups. Local governments are in a unique position to facilitate community partnerships, and the aforementioned planning mechanisms are just a few methods that could be replicated.

At the same time, there may be circumstances where municipalities are better leveraged in non-leadership roles – e.g., serving more as equal partners or providing backbone support – due to community sensitivities, capacity issues, political climate, etc. Either way, formal or informal municipal representation as part of a planning collaborative is important.

In addition to securing municipal partners, collaboratives may want to consider partnership representation from entities in other important areas such as data,

communications and branding, provincial or federal government, public and private funders, and grassroots development.

Ultimately, the municipal role in partnership development is dependent on the collective vision or mandate of the planning collaborative and local needs.

# Theme 4 – Readiness and capacity

Planning collaboratives need to have a clear understanding of what projects and responsibilities they are ready to undertake, and where they stand (e.g., whether or not their planning efforts are truly "integrated"). Of equal importance to recognize is that IP takes time, which reflects the complexity of the overall process. Planning collaboratives need the opportunity to have difficult conversations, build trust and relationships amongst members, review practices, develop goals, collect data, establish priorities and evaluation mechanisms and then move towards an integrated approach.

Individually, each of the above tasks is significant; thus the overall process takes time to get it right. IP is not a panacea or a "quick-fix" for short-term issues management, but rather a system-wide transformation to improve client-focused service delivery over the long-term. DD participants acknowledged this process along with some common success factors that they felt were important for impacting their overall capacity to plan.

Municipalities can support readiness and capacity by facilitating initial meetings, providing training opportunities, and sharing expertise, tools and resources conducive to IP.

## Learnings: State of readiness

### 4.1 Readiness depends on a threshold of awareness

Some of the DD participants felt strongly that IP needs to occur organically whereas others recognized the need to educate and inform stakeholders of IP processes and benefits. In all cases, it was observed that communities needed to reach a level of awareness with respect to local issues and challenges, provincially-driven mandates, and the ability of the collaborative to collectively resolve them. In the latter instance, local service providers need to be ready and willing to accept the idea of moving towards more collaborative ways of addressing complex problems.

In practice, this collaboration could take the form of an integrated data portal, common client-intake forms, funding applications and reporting templates, and holistic plan development but as stated under the "Parameters" theme (Theme 5), unique planning scope and community dynamics may not facilitate the development of a collaborative-style initiative. It must be acknowledged that what works well in one community may not work well in another, and so part of a community's readiness for IP is  in understanding the current service delivery landscape.

Integrated planning tools and mechanisms (related to 4.1)

**Task Force and Planning Table**

Service mapping: Members from these DD sites have been involved in service mapping exercises. As a result of finite resources and workload pressures, mapping all of the multi-partner initiatives or collaboratives that a member organization is involved with is an important mechanism to ensure resources are being allocated effectively and that there is minimal duplication or overlap amongst the various initiatives.

- In the North, the District Social Services Administration Board (DSSAB) undertook a service mapping exercise to identify all the planning tables that intersected with the DSSAB's mandate. This helped the DSSAB to identify where they would allocate their staffing resources.
- In the West, Planning Table members and partners participated in a "Mapping Moving Trains" workshop to identify all of the coalitions and networks serving children, youth and families. In addition to increased awareness, this training resulted in the identification of real and potential service duplications and a more critical assessment on the need for further planning tables and collaboratives.

## Learnings: Planning capacity and expertise

### 4.2 Access to data, leaders and volunteers impacts planning capacity

Another key component to successful IP is the expertise or capacity of collaborative stakeholders, members and partners. There was a general consensus across the DD sites that organizations or individuals associated with planning efforts needed to have an understanding of IP, the various models, the benefits and challenges, the outcomes that could materialize, and the time commitment to actively participate in a process that leads to system-wide transformation.

Lack of capacity – whether it is a lack of knowledge/research or data, leadership, time, or human/financial resources – will ultimately impact service planning success. In addition to the other themes (e.g., securing backbone support, developing partnerships, etc.), the following factors were identified by DD participants as having a direct influence on planning capacity:

- Access to data: As services become integrated, data sharing across services or programs becomes increasingly useful for planning and service improvement purposes. Access to planning data (e.g., service mapping inventories, community needs assessments, local or regional demographics including socio-economic data, etc.), including provincial data can therefore have an impact on a collaborative's capacity to make informed decisions and to undertake IP.
- Local leadership: If organizations or individuals associated with a collaborative do not understand the IP concept (or the benefits of such a concept), they will find it difficult to dedicate time, effort and resources to making it happen. Leadership style and the presence of local champions are important mechanisms to facilitate

readiness and build capacity. Leaders ensure the focus remains on the collective vision and encourage collaborative planning. Specifically, collaboratives need leaders who are able to:

- Collaborate with partners – e.g., work across sectors and not in silos;
- Work comfortably within the gray areas of their mandates;
- Balance the collaborative's vision and goals with that of their own organization;
- Make high level decisions to effect change;
- Model the behaviour to influence a culture shift; and
- Champion and promote the benefits and successes of the collaborative.

- Volunteers: As mentioned earlier, planning collaboratives rely on volunteers, whether they are external (community-based) or internal (additional responsibilities done at the "side of a member's desk") to the table or network. At the same time, municipalities and other service providers may rely on the collaboratives themselves as these collectives, with assistance from volunteers, undertake core work with minimal support, financial or otherwise, to benefit the same client groups.

### Integrated planning tools and mechanisms (related to 4.2)

**Note:** There are many tools and mechanisms available to build planning capacity and expertise; this paper identifies those specific to input from DD participants.

#### Planning Table

Transformational leadership: At the Planning Table quarterly meeting, the co-chairs (one being a director from the upper-tier municipality) and presenters acknowledged and reiterated the Table's common goals when reviewing and discussing agenda items or specific presentation topics. This reinforces priorities while linking and integrating specific topics to the broader work of the Table. Vocalizing this correlation drew members' attention to the goal of integration and reinvigorated the out-of-the-box thinking critical for IP to work.

This type of leadership was observed at the Leadership Collaborative as well, where key champions have collectively adopted a philosophy or style where "egos are left at the door" and "hats are removed" to prevent or avoid "empire-building."

Working sessions: The Table uses working sessions and purposeful attribution in meetings on how its planning initiatives link to other work underway, or how it relates back to Table goals. Like the Leadership Collaborative's approach to "earning" the next meeting, these working sessions are interactive, encourage networking and ensure the wider membership is involved in the critical work of moving goals and plans forward.

Training calendar: The upper-tier municipality has opened up its training calendar to Table members so that they can sign up for particular courses being offered through

the municipality. In addition to facilitating knowledge and data exchange, this tool helps to promote transparency and encourage trust across Table members.

Mixed seating: At its quarterly meetings, the Table employs a mixed seating approach so its members are placed at tables with a diverse group of participants rather than with their direct colleagues. This approach provides rich networking, knowledge exchange, and collaboration opportunities beyond a member's own sector or organization.

Building future leaders: The steering committee of the Table is composed of senior level decision-makers of non-profit organizations (e.g. Executive Directors). To empower and build leadership and other management competencies, the Table has its working groups staffed and chaired by individuals who are in middle-management positions within their own organizations. This mechanism can facilitate individual career development and professional networking while instilling leadership potential within the Table and ensuring a degree of succession planning.

**Poverty Network**

Volunteerism: Similar to other DD sites, the Poverty Network continues to recruit and rely on local volunteers who are integral to the activation, implementation and operation of planning efforts. In many cases, local champions are community volunteers who build trusting relationships and bring existing committees, tables and networks to work together. Volunteers have also been a key to the success of a local community hub,* a project initiated by the Network.

* Poverty Network members noted there has been a shift of community energy (volunteers) and generosity from the Network to the community hub. While the community has taken great pride in - and ownership of - the hub, there is a perception that the Network is financially stable because of the success of the hub, which is not the case. Volunteers, and the community at large, need to understand the concept of IP as a long-term, systematic process that may or may not result in something as tangible as a community hub. Hubs and other place-based service models require an 'upstream' investment in planning and volunteer effort. This awareness is an important consideration when recruiting dedicated volunteers.

**Note**: Smaller cities located in more rural areas of the province seem to have extraordinary levels of civic responsibility and volunteerism. The collaboratives operating in these communities were able to leverage this asset successfully, likely due to their unique social fabric or culture (e.g., "everyone knows everyone"), but also because of their local planning parameters (confined to city boundaries).

**Leadership Collaborative**

Effective communications: A Roundtable for Poverty Reduction (a member of the Leadership Collaborative) has been successful in using a measured communications approach when meeting with city council or the Leadership Collaborative. This success can be attributed to the public affairs and communications expertise of the Roundtable's chair, who holds a management position a with a local news organization.

In some cases, effective communication is necessary when addressing sensitive issues such as poverty and homelessness, or when collaboratives like the Roundtable (and the Poverty Network) have more of an advocacy function. If there are grassroots members who are passionate about their cause, frustrated by current conditions or members with limited presentation skills or experience, it becomes important to ensure a balanced, professional and positive communications strategy is in place when advocating for change with decision makers such as senior levels of government or funders. Building this capacity among collaborative members can help to ensure that militancy does not become an organizational tenet while creating positive relationships with decision-makers.

## Municipal considerations for theme 4: Training and capacity-building

Municipalities can mirror some of these capacity-building approaches when leading or supporting planning collaboratives in their community. These approaches can be beneficial when training, educating or promoting municipal service plans and associated linkages or implications to larger groups of service providers and partners targeting the same residents or client groups.

Mapping is a useful tool that municipalities can use to better understand the current service delivery landscape in their community. This tool is of value to both municipalities and local service providers as it helps to identify where resources are needed or where duplication exists. Service mapping can also serve as a key source of data to inform service planning efforts.

Access to specific areas of municipal expertise (e.g., public health, urban planning, recreation, by-laws and permitting, social services, housing, policing, etc.) can also serve as a lever for training and capacity-building activities. Service Managers' "Data Analysis Coordinators" are examples of this municipal expertise to access and analyse various data sets related to human services.

Municipalities are also well-positioned to provide IP leadership given their broad mandate and the linkages and connections they have with the broader public sector, senior levels of government, non-profit organizations and the community at large. Again, municipalities are subject to political environments and processes (e.g., council approvals, budgeting, etc.) that other sectors are not, which may be a factor when it comes to the degree of local government leadership.

Heads of council, council members, and senior municipal staff can serve as visible and credible champions to lead and promote the IP process (e.g., as chair or steering committee members), not only because of their decision-making authority but also because of their knowledge and expertise of multiple programs and local needs. Similarly, a head of council or other municipal representative can take a leadership role to develop a planning collaborative such as was the case with the Poverty Network and the Leadership Collaborative.

# Theme 5 – Parameters

Planning tables or collaboratives can be generally effective at any level, whether local or regional. In keeping with the 'community-driven' aspect of IP, however, the approaches taken to service planning – including the types of planning tools and mechanisms adopted – are different across the DD sites in part because of parameters around service boundaries or catchment areas. Essentially, there is no "one-size-fits-all" approach to IP, as collaboratives operate under urban, rural, northern and remote contexts.

Collaboratives designed or mandated to serve residents living within the limits of a city or a town boundary (e.g., a single jurisdiction) appear to operate under different planning approaches, lenses and mechanisms than collaboratives serving larger geographic areas like counties or regions.

These differences are likely due to variances in the number of jurisdictions and service providers at play (municipal, school board, First Nations, etc.) combined with other factors such as geography, diverse urban, rural and northern communities, population size, socio-economic status, political climate, culture, demographics, etc.

Given that all DD sites focused on cross-cutting, 'Big-Policy' issues (e.g., poverty, homelessness, crime, family support services, mental health and addictions), the participation of partners with mandates or catchment areas beyond municipal boundaries* was observed as being beneficial to avoiding planning silos and to gain more of a holistic perspective of the service planning and service delivery landscape, particularly for localized collaboratives.

* Service Managers, Local Health Integration Networks, school boards, and provincial ministries are examples of organizations with cross-jurisdictional mandates.

## Learnings: Local scope

Some of the DD sites (Leadership Collaborative, Task Force, and to a degree, the Poverty Network) confine their mandates to addressing issues primarily within their respective municipal boundaries.*

* When necessary, the Task Force and the Poverty Network have the ability to stretch their operational boundaries beyond their respective municipal jurisdictions. Regional partners assist in this respect.

These localized jurisdictional boundaries have a substantial influence on the type and scope of service planning efforts. Specifically, these collaboratives tend to adopt:

### 5.1 Planning driven by localized issues

These include issues stemming from specific social and economic problems unique to community residents (e.g., issues faced by marginalized, vulnerable or under-represented populations such as Indigenous communities, unemployed or homeless persons or people with mental illness residing in one or more neighbourhoods). DD site examples include:

In the North, the local OPP detachment has played a prominent role in Task Force planning. This is partly because the OPP delivers policing services for the single-tier municipality served by the Task Force, but also because of this municipality's urgent need for mental health and addictions services, and the need to prevent and reduce policing and incarceration demands related to this issue. The OPP was integral in recognizing and prioritizing this issue, and for communicating the need to address the matter collectively through multi-sector partnerships (see "Partnerships" theme). Therefore, Task Force planning is primarily targeted at addressing this specific issue within the municipal boundary they serve.

**Note**: The municipality served by the Task Force is a regional service hub (health and court services) to individuals from outlier communities. As a result, this municipality faces certain socio-economic challenges that require participation of its local District Social Services Administration Board or DSSAB.

In the East, the Poverty Network started as a "Mayor's Action Committee" (with some administrative support provided by the mayor's office) which was the result of a campaign pledge to address poverty issues within the municipality served by the Network. Through community engagement efforts, the Network developed several areas of focus (basic needs, food action, employment and training, housing and income security) which currently form the basis of its working groups.

### 5.2 User-centered planning

Locally-mandated collaboratives tend to adopt targeted approaches to planning with more of a direct relationship or focus on the user or client. In other words, planning is customized to the direct needs of client groups through personalized, citizen-based engagement and involvement to identify, and respond to, local needs. The smaller number of existing or potential community partners, local champions, overlapping service boundaries, and overall population – combined with the "small town" culture (e.g., "everyone knows everyone"), and community cohesiveness that seems to characterize smaller cities – likely contributes to the effectiveness of this approach.

- In Central Ontario, the size of the single-tier municipality and community is acknowledged as a factor to the Leadership Collaborative's effectiveness. The municipality is a mid-sized city and the Collaborative's membership consists of over a dozen core organizations, institutions and a private sector

employer. Members have acknowledged that if the size of the municipality was larger or the number of member institutions increased, the ability to collaborate effectively would become more complex. Collaborative representatives recognize that it takes more effort to foster a greater number of partnerships and to find synergies amongst those partnerships as membership size increases. In comparison to a two-tier municipal structure, this single-tier structure helps to simplify interactions and local government decision-making.

**Note:** DD sites having localized or city-based mandates still had regional representation as part of their membership. For example, the local DSSAB is an active and engaged member of the Task Force because the city is a service hub for many residents living outside of city-boundaries. It may therefore be important for collaboratives with local scope to secure regional partners (e.g., LHIN, DSSAB, school board, Indigenous community) so they have a holistic view of the systemic issues associated with their work or the population they are serving. These types of local-regional partnerships can also encourage IP across jurisdictions and sectors.

In summary, collaboratives having local or city-based mandates tend to adopt more client-focused approaches to planning (see below) with the intent to address community-based issues or problems.

### Integrated planning tools and mechanisms (related to 5.1 and 5.2)

#### Task Force

Five-Pillar Approach: Driven by a common understanding that the city served by the Task Force cannot "arrest its way out of" mental health and substance abuse issues, this integrated approach was adopted to treat policing and enforcement as one piece of a larger puzzle of community supports and preventative efforts offered by other local service providers (e.g., housing, public health campaigns, etc.). The approach assists the Task Force and its partners to organize planning efforts around key priority areas (housing, harm reduction, etc.) while connecting the different service providers and sectors that are working in the community to address these issues, either directly or indirectly.

Community Mobilization Officer: The Five-Pillar Approach has been operationalized by the OPP's designation of a "Community Mobilization Officer." The Mobilization Officer is intended to educate and rally support from various service providers to support Task Force initiatives, but also to share success stories and lessons learned from the Task Force model with other service providers and planning collaboratives operating within the region. Having recognized the benefits of this position over time, the Task Force and its members (including the OPP) has promoted this as a viable IP model to city council and other community partners.

Community Safety and Well-Being (CSWB) Plan: The Task Force developed a three-year CSWB Plan as part of a provincially-driven initiative that helped to inform the development of Community Safety and Well-Being Planning Framework: A

Shared Commitment in Ontario. The Task Force developed their plan with support and input from community consultations and a community online survey. These client-focused mechanisms helped to facilitate meaningful engagement and knowledge sharing throughout the planning process, which drew out community needs and helped to inform the plan.

This plan, and other CSWB plans across Ontario, will encourage a collaborative approach to community safety and well-being planning that moves away from a reactive, emergency response model to a holistic approach that is proactive with a focus on prevention and social development. The Task Force's plan is perceived to adapt over time and may lead to targeted campaigns designed to educate distinct groups (e.g., parents and care-givers, and youth-at-risk) about the plan and what it means for their community.

Although the development of the plan was led by the Task Force, representatives from its single-tier municipal partner have sat on various Task Force pillars (e.g., housing, harm reduction) and municipal council endorsed the plan in principle. While there has been no definitive commitment or action by the municipality beyond this endorsement, discussions are ongoing about options to implement and oversee the plan, one of which could be the establishment of a full-time staff position (funding and hosting to-be-determined).

**Leadership Collaborative**

Joint funding: In direct response to local needs, the Collaborative has worked to facilitate joint funding initiatives between its single-tier municipal partner and its local LHIN to provide affordable housing and associated wrap around services. The city provided capital funding for the project and LHIN secured programming funds for on-site mental health supports. This amalgamation of capital and programming investments may not have been possible without the convening efforts of the Collaborative.

Neighbourhood inclusion: Another priority for the Collaborative is a transit project and its potential impact on poverty reduction and improved societal outcomes for the municipality. The Collaborative sees this as an opportunity to work together with the municipality and the transit project lead to undertake upstream planning to improve outcomes for persons living in poverty. Considering items such as community benefit agreements, skills development and neighbourhood inclusion at such an early stage are essential to collaboration and IP. Community inclusion, including town halls and community consultations, has also been a part of the philosophy of the Poverty Network.

**Poverty Network**

Volunteerism: In its efforts to raise awareness about, and take action on, poverty issues, the Network focuses its efforts on volunteers to successfully leverage the desire of residents to make a difference in their community through civic participation. For the Network, volunteers are seen as an invaluable physical and

intellectual resource, while providing a “client perspective” and providing persons with lived poverty experience opportunities for skills development. The success of this planning mechanism* can likely be attributed to the fact that Network members and leaders are people with lived experience having local roots, combined with its city-focused mandate.

* The capacity of regionally-focused collaboratives to mimic this success (e.g., effectively tapping into the volunteer base of several communities) is likely more difficult and was not observed to the same degree as DD sites with local scope.

## Learnings: Regional scope

The work of the other DD sites (Planning Table, Youth Network, and to a degree, the Poverty Network) is scoped by larger, regionally-based mandates. Similar to the collaboratives driven by local mandates, these regional jurisdictions have a vital impact on the type and scope of planning activities:

### 5.3 Planning is systematic

Planning efforts appear to serve more of a systemic role/function across a much broader pool of service providers including constituent lower municipalities, non-profit organizations, regional agencies such as LHINs and school boards, and across vast geography (e.g., one or more counties). The Youth Network and Planning Table are examples of regionally-based collaboratives that undertake systematic planning in relation to childhood development and the overall family support services system.* In many cases, the issues being addressed by these regional planning efforts are often the same priorities of provincial interest such as poverty reduction, early years transformation, etc. DD examples include:

* A “system” is a group of interacting, interrelated or interdependent elements forming a complex whole. The mental health system, for example, is comprised of all the activities, organizations, and resources whose primary purpose is to promote, restore or maintain mental health.

- Due to its vast number of members and community partners across two counties, the Youth Network is a “service provider network” and not as a service provider itself. Unlike the Task Force and Leadership Collaborative, Youth Network planning efforts are less initiative-driven, designed to support system-wide impact around family support services and the numerous agencies that deliver those services on the ground.

- Planning Table meetings emphasize collective planning towards the creation of a system of more effective and coordinated services to support the developmental health of children in the region it serves. Since the Table offers an open membership, there are over 450 stakeholders of which 120-150 are actively engaged. Similar to the Youth Network in the East, the Planning Table oversees a large geographic area comprised of both rural and urban populations and

diverse community groups including, Francophone, Indigenous and faith-based (Mennonite or Muslim) communities.

### Integrated planning tools and mechanisms (related to 5.3)

**Planning Table**

Web portal: The Table is developing a new web portal which will offer service providers one-site access to information about multiple services related to children, youth and families in the region it serves. In addition to connecting service providers, the portal is also intended to reduce the client (e.g. parents) burden of having to navigate numerous web sites for one or more services. This service provider connectivity is imperative to IP and can lead to the systematic improvement of client-focused family services while addressing client needs.

**Youth Network**

Service pathways: The Network's development of "Service Pathways" has identified where families enter and exit 'the system'. These pathways were identified through facilitated retreats and community engagement blitzes among local service providers and their clients. Participants were provided with case scenarios of children, youth, and families across two counties in need of support, and asked to draw the ideal pathway on large sheets of paper. These pages were then analyzed for common traits and differences to determine what an "ideal" pathway looked like in the two counties, and a subsequent System Navigation Framework developed. Understanding the systematic "touch-points" from a service provider and user perspective is critical to IP and can lead to streamlined services and programming efficiencies.

## 5.4 Planning to coordinate and connect service providers

Regional collaboratives tend to focus their strategic planning efforts on supporting local service providers on the ground and do not consider themselves as programmers or service providers. The service providers or field agents comprising these regional collaboratives have more of a direct relationship with residents and clients. Therefore, the planning activities undertaken by these DD sites tend to be further removed from direct contact or interaction with clients and geared towards higher-level coordination and networking to lead and connect service providers, create collaborative solutions and reduce duplicative efforts.

### Integrated planning tools and mechanisms (related to 5.4)

**Youth Network**

No Wrong Door Approach: Research conducted by the Network indicated that children, youth, and families often face challenges navigating the service system, and that service is inconsistent between regions (e.g., counties), and sometimes even between service providers. Accessible on their website in video format, the Network's 'No Wrong Door approach' recognizes service providers need to work

seamlessly* with each other to address systems that can sometimes be challenging for clients to navigate: “No Wrong Door means that the First Door is the Right Door.”

**Note**: In other cases, the client groups were more actively involved with collaborative planning. In the East, the Poverty Network found value in having people with lived experience (e.g., poverty, social assistance, etc.) reporting directly on the needs and pressure points of services. This lived experience tenet may not work for larger, regionally-based collaboratives like the Network as factors such as longer travel time and distance could make it more challenging and costly for these individuals to participate.

* “Seamless” occurs when programs and services are so well connected that people may actually perceive services as being delivered by one agency, though they might actually be delivered by multiple agencies. In other words, services are connected in a way that transitions between different services dissolve (they are not noticeable).

### Municipal considerations for theme 5: Parameters

**Local scope:**

- The development of Community Safety and Well-Being (CSWB) plans may be an opportunity for municipalities to establish new, or leverage existing, planning collaboratives to initiate the parameter-setting and IP process. The CSWB plan, and the client-focused planning methods used to create it, is an example of how municipalities can support community-wide efforts requiring the shared commitment of local partners and residents at large. CSWB planning is also an example of provincial influence (see Reflections on the provincial role) and leadership around client-focused service integration.

- Innovative approaches to planning such as joint funding and neighbourhood inclusion – and the resulting staffing, funding and partnership commitments needed to implement them – are good examples of how municipalities can transcend jurisdictional boundaries and mandates to work more collaboratively together and with other local partners to address complex problems, reduce silos and to better meet client needs.

- Many smaller or rural municipalities have been successful building and leveraging “community cohesiveness” or community culture to recruit and retain volunteers for the planning and delivery of various community events (sport tournaments, community fairs, advisory committees, etc.). This municipal network can be a valuable resource for locally-mandated collaboratives in order to mobilize, empower and engage local residents to assist with planning efforts that have an impact in their own community.

  In areas where this cohesiveness may be lacking, municipalities can consider employing some of the planning tools and mechanisms identified under the other

themes to develop partnerships, seek out local champions, and facilitate volunteerism.

**Regional scope:**

- "Service pathway" work is an example of a mapping-type of planning that an upper-tier or single-tier municipality or Service Manager could implement to 'take stock' of the service-delivery landscape of its regional catchment area. The resulting inventory is a vital first step to IP efforts for regional and local governments, but also for non-government service providers as it provides a basis for connecting with the appropriate people or departments to identify integration opportunities or gaps and to build new partnerships.

  Like volunteerism, the service mapping process is also an opportunity for upper-tier or single-tier municipalities or Service Manager to leverage or establish "community cohesiveness" as a way of empowering local residents. These agencies can foster or build on this type of community culture indirectly by working closely with local service providers that have immediate contact with clients.

- The "No Wrong Door Approach" has been successfully implemented by other regional planning collaboratives in Ontario. The intent is to build a supportive "referral culture" across and within a service system so that clients will not have to negotiate access to multiple services on their own. The Approach serves as an example of research that an upper-tier municipality could undertake to connect local services providers, reduce duplication and improve the client experience.

# REFLECTIONS ON THE PROVINCIAL ROLE

In addition to the 'municipal role' question, DD participants were also asked what they thought about the role of the province – e.g., what can ministries and government agencies do to support local IP? Are there specific barriers created by the province that hinder IP at the local or regional level? The following section outlines learnings from these discussions.

## Balancing top-down and bottom-up planning

DD participants were quick to point out that IP takes time with respect to capacity-building, developing meaningful and sustainable partner relations, strategic planning and goal setting, and adapting to community needs that are ever-changing. Planning collaboratives require greater flexibility from government than traditional stakeholders where the funding, reporting, or consulting relationship is between the province and one other organization in the context of a single project. For example, planning collaboratives interested in integrating services may rely on funding from two different programs or ministries where traditionally, the funding is managed in silos and "double-dipping" (e.g. a single organization receiving funding from two or more ministries) is not be permitted.

One DD participant stressed the importance of government taking a "Tight, Loose, Tight" approach to leadership on community hubs and local IP to ensure results while empowering communities. This approach fosters autonomy (which planning collaboratives value) and accountability (which the province depends on), and can apply broadly to other government-led programs or policies:

- The first "Tight" has to do with clearly defining the problem or project. This could take the shape of a government-led (perhaps co-developed) strategic policy framework.
- The "Loose" in the middle is key to tapping into local needs and community creativity in coming up with the best possible solutions. This could be represented by flexible parameters that allow local or regional service providers and stakeholders to embed core principles of the aforementioned framework into their own policies or programs.
- The last "Tight" drives success by ensuring accountability – setting clear expectations about what is to be done and what the results should be from making those changes. An example of this could be a ministry establishing performance measures for the purpose of continuous improvement and project monitoring.

A few of the collaboratives highlighted ministries that are already adopting innovative planning mechanisms that exemplify the bottom-up/top-down concept. Three such examples are:

- **Ministry of Community and Social Services (MCSS).** MCSS established a Human Services Integration Office to develop recommendations for better

integration of human service programs provided in partnership with municipalities: municipally delivered social assistance (e.g. Ontario Works), and affordable housing, homelessness prevention, early years and childcare programs. The goal of this work is to simplify access to programs and services for clients, streamline service delivery and improve service system management. In coordination with other ministries that work closely with municipal partners, MCSS is exploring strategies that will:

  - Enhance accessibility and success for clients;
  - Reduce barriers between programs;
  - Shift focus to program outcomes; and
  - Increase flexibility for municipal service managers to innovate and deliver in ways that best meet local needs.

- **Treasury Board Secretariat (TBS)**. TBS continues to make significant progress in making government more open, transparent and digitally connected. One initiative employed to achieve this was the development and pioneering of a Change Lab method to sustain and model "design thinking" and the goals of Open Government. Design thinking offers a unique way of understanding which teams, departments, experts and specialists are relevant to a problem and engaging them in collaboration.

  A Change Lab is a collaborative, multi-disciplinary problem solving experience used when the root of a problem is unclear, existing interventions are failing, and the problem exists within an overlapping system (e.g., public education and health care). The lab included specific areas of work that set the conditions for success and contributed to the lessons learned on organizational culture and collaboration as a form of open dialogue between government and non-government staff.

- **Ministry of Children and Youth Services (MCYS)**. MCYS has embraced a Collective Impact approach to support improving outcomes for youth not in employment, education or training (NEET). Collective Impact is an approach to tackling complex social problems in communities, with a central philosophy is that no single policy, program, government ministry, sector or organization alone can solve these problems.

  To reduce the number of NEET youth, MCYS is working with public, private, non-profit and philanthropic partners to lead the Collective Impact for Disconnected Youth or CIDY initiative. This approach brings together a range of leaders, resources and investments to improve youth outcomes in selected demonstration communities across Ontario. The CIDY cross-sector leadership table is working with communities and youth leaders to tailor their contributions to local needs and to support the co-development of solutions and better alignment of systems that are more responsive to youth issues.

Participants suggested that the above examples could be replicated by other ministries to support local IP and to help transform the government into a more integrated organization.

While guidance, tools and supportive resources are welcomed from the province, collaboratives cautioned against too much government prescription at the expense of community-driven planning. DD participants were clear that Ontario communities are all different, having unique needs, assets and challenges so a one-size-fits-all approach to IP will be ineffective. Essentially, ministry staff were told that IP will only flourish if there is more of a balance between provincial priorities and community needs.

## Horizontal planning

Many DD sites voiced their concern and frustration in dealing with multiple ministries that sometimes "don't talk." Scenarios were described to ministry staff whereby a collaborative would receive mixed messaging from two ministries on who was responsible for what file and conflicting direction on areas of jurisdiction, outcome measures and data collection. Scenarios of duplication and overlap were also described where representatives from two or more ministries working on closely-related (sometimes similar) initiatives did not seem to know what the other was doing when engaging directly with the DD sites or their local partners. To complicate matters, some of the DD sites echoed what was heard during the Minister's Forums on Integrated Planning for Community Hubs, that different funding criteria, reporting requirements and timelines across ministries create huge administrative burdens at the expense of project implementation and evaluation.

Generally, the DD participants signaled the need for improved collaboration, planning and communication across government. One collaborative pointed out that ministries cannot expect IP to occur at the local or regional level if they do not have their own house in order, nor can they expect community stakeholders to treat them seriously under such circumstances. Another collaborative said it will be important for government to "walk the talk" by planning horizontally across ministries if the priority is community hub development and improved IP.

This feedback aligns with recommendations in Community Hubs in Ontario: A Strategic Framework and Action Plan around provincial leadership and the evaluation of provincial integrated service delivery projects.

## Capacity-building

Some of the collaboratives examined work closely with various ministries to plan and strategize their operations. In these instances, the collaboratives recognized that IP and integrated service delivery seem to be gaining popularity in government, with several ministries moving forward with strategies and policies to facilitate this shift among their stakeholders and local delivery agents. While this was acknowledged as a positive step in the right direction, participants said it tends to happen quickly as a result of how government is structured (e.g., term or fiscal year commitments), and with limited

concern for local or regional capacity and stage of readiness. The result is that many collaborative members and local service providers may not have the resources or capacity to accept and implement these changes.

Participants suggested the use of transition planning or change management processes could be considered to ensure community stakeholders are properly prepared and resourced for successful integration (e.g., staff training, transition or wind-down funding, performance indicators and data sets, etc.).

A few other tools and resources were flagged by DD participants to support the above processes on the ground such as:

- IP guidelines, perhaps targeted to municipalities and school boards.
- Developing an online resource to build local capacity.
- Enabling shared information systems and streamlined funding.

## Legislation

Some collaboratives explained that there are particular aspects of provincial legislation that impede integrated or collaborative solutions to service planning efforts. While these participants agreed that the original intent of the legislation is well-founded, it was felt that the rules and procedures under certain Acts and statutes have consequential impacts on IP.

One of the collaboratives made reference to Community Hubs in Ontario: A Strategic Framework and Action Plan, pointing out that the authors identified similar concerns around the barriers caused by privacy legislation such as the Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act (FIPPA). This participant noted that FIPPA can make it difficult for its member organizations to share personal information about clients amongst each other when multiple services are being accessed. Other DD participants echoed this concern, explaining how legislative authority can impede the creation of common intake forms and collaborative solutions like wrap-around services* for clients.

* Wrap-around is a term used to describe a process by which service providers agree to collaborate to improve the lives of clients by creating, enhancing, and accessing a coordinated system of support through a strengths-based, client-driven model. An emphasis is placed on identifying and enhancing the client's natural and informal supports. "Wrap-around" refers to the fact that services are intended to wrap around the client (an individual or family) in a way that supports them in all aspects of life.

In addition to FIPPA, the collaboratives mentioned a few other examples of potential legislative changes that could support IP:

- **Education and Safe Schools:** These pieces of legislation, and their respective school board policies and union provisions, can create challenges for collaboratives and their partners to access school space for community-based initiatives. Some DD participants expressed concern around the reliance of

school partnerships on informal, sometimes personal, relationships between principals and individual community members. In this case, participants were clear that schools are seen as community assets, and that the province needs to strike a balance between student education and safety mandates, governance or ownership models, and community access.

- **Local Health System Integration:** Through this legislation, it is the responsibility of LHINs to identify and pursue system integration opportunities. However, some of the collaboratives perceived the same legislation as limiting the scope of LHIN planning efforts to the healthcare sector and Health Service Providers. Given the limited involvement of LHINs as collaborative members or partners, participants hinted that greater flexibility could be built into this legislation to allow for a more holistic approach to addressing community needs.

Collectively, these learnings align with the recommendation in Community Hubs in Ontario: A Strategic Framework and Action Plan directing government to identify solutions to additional barriers that prevent the establishment of community hubs.

# CONCLUSION

There are a plethora of planning collaboratives operating in communities across Ontario at the local and regional level, and serving various community-specific needs. The five sites examined as part of the ministry's deep dive research reflected this diversity and the participants interviewed and observed provided rich, qualitative data through frank and honest discussions. The feedback gathered as part of this research pointed to some common learnings:

- While all of the collaboratives examined are undertaking impactful work to better the lives of their communities, many (and not just the five sites) operate in silos and have limited or no knowledge of what other planning groups, networks, tables, etc. are doing despite serving the same client groups or targeting overlapping community issues in their respective jurisdictions. Undertaking service mapping or inventorying local service providers may help identify synergies.

- Through proper planning and the adoption of promising practices (in the form of planning tools and mechanisms), this overlap and duplication can be addressed. In many cases, planning efforts can be customized and adopted to meet local geographic and community characteristics and needs and to support the following areas:
    - Backbone support – dedicated funding or resources for core operations and coordination.
    - Strategy – setting common direction to define priorities, outcomes and decision-making.
    - Partnerships – tactics to outreach for mutual interest and establish formal agreements.
    - Readiness and capacity – creating awareness and leveraging expertise (e.g., data, leadership).
    - Parameters – localized, client-centered versus systematic or regional planning.
- Integrated planning is a complex process that takes time to:
    - Develop meaningful and trustworthy multi-sector partnerships;
    - Prioritize work through strategic planning;
    - Develop common goals and shared outcomes;
    - Build readiness and capacity; and
    - Monitor and adapt to ever-changing needs and assets, whether locally or provincially-driven.
- A balance of 'top-down' (provincial support and direction) and 'bottom-up' (community-driven efforts) is necessary to support IP regardless of jurisdictional boundaries. In both cases, a "phased approach" may be beneficial to ensure internal planning efforts are integrated first before looking to integrate outside of one's own organization.

- In partnership with other publically-funded service providers such as school boards and LHINs, municipalities can have an important role to play in IP*. These agencies should be at the collaborative table as partners or leaders, contributing various levels of expertise and/or resources that best meet local needs. Based on the DD research, municipalities have the potential to contribute in the following ways, but are by no means limited to the items below:
    - Empowering and engaging local residents through outreach activities.
    - Undertaking internal or external service mapping.
    - Adopting "No Wrong Door" approaches to improve service seamlessness.
    - Assisting with strategic planning through the provision of change management or project management expertise.
    - Providing direct or arms-length backbone support, which can be in the form of staffing, data collection and analysis, funding, communication or branding, grant management, etc.
    - Drafting legal documents where applicable – e.g., Service Manager Agreements, terms of reference, project charters, joint funding or bilateral agreements.
    - Building on consultation expertise and existing relationships and networks to facilitate community partnerships and to ensure inclusivity across all populations.

* The ministry acknowledges that the size and overall capacity of a municipality may impact its ability to support or accommodate the "municipal considerations" identified in this paper.

- Collaboratives voiced that ministries could consider adopting innovative, "whole of government" approaches to address complex and pressing issues like poverty and mental health, and to make necessary changes to policies, programs and service delivery at both the provincial and local level. Collaboratives concurred that the province also has a role to play in facilitating engagement between community-based planning tables, municipalities, and other publicly-funded agencies such as school boards and LHINs.

  The deep dive research has helped to shape the ministry's policy work in responding to the IP recommendation of Community Hubs in Ontario: A Strategic Framework and Action Plan. The ministry will continue to work closely with partner ministries, the municipal sector, and other key service providers to apply IP learnings and improve client-focused services through municipal, community and school board planning.

# APPENDIX A: OVERVIEW OF DEEP DIVE PARTICIPANTS

**Children's Planning Table in Western Ontario** (Planning Table)

- The Planning Table is an unincorporated collaborative of over 400 service providers, planning bodies and funders who have come together to plan how services can be better coordinated for children in West Region.
- The Table was selected as DD site for its strong IP focus but also for its stable backbone support through its upper tier municipal partner, private sector funding, and diverse, multi-sector membership and participation.

**Leadership Collaborative in Central Ontario** (Leadership Collaborative)

- The unincorporated collaborative is comprised of senior executives from organizations within a single-tier municipality who have come together to more effectively address complex and challenging issues facing the city.
- The collaborative was selected for its multi-sector institution membership and participation, collaborative approach and its unique executive leader membership and engagement.

**Youth Services Network in Eastern Ontario** (Youth Network)

- The unincorporated Network is comprised of representatives from over 50 organizations that serve children, youth and their families across two counties in Eastern Ontario:
    - One county is an upper-tier municipality consisting of over a dozen local area municipalities. In addition to its member municipalities, this county acts as the Service Manager for two cities.
    - The other county served by the Youth Network is a rural single-tier municipality.
- The Youth Network was selected based on feedback received from ministry regional staff and to learn more about challenges and success factors.

**Mental Health Task Force in Northern Ontario** (the Task Force)

- A collaborative group of over 30 community members, local service providers, Indigenous groups, and business owners and approximately 130+ members, the unincorporated Task Force works with community organizations to improve overall health, aiming to more effectively protect those at risk of harm from concurrent issues, associated abuse and homelessness.
- In addition to representing a Northern community, the Task Force was chosen because of its targeted focus on mental health and addictions, combined with its leadership in developing a Community Safety and Well-Being Plan.

- The Task Force focuses its planning efforts on a single-tier municipality with over 20 First Nations in the surrounding area and is considered to be a busy regional service hub (e.g., health and court services) for outlier communities and First Nations.

**Poverty Reduction Network** (Poverty Network)

- Created from a municipal election campaign commitment, the incorporated Poverty Network is a group of community groups, agencies, and individuals who are concerned about the impacts of poverty in their community. The Poverty Network strives to break the cycle of poverty by working collaboratively to empower people, and create policy change.
- The Poverty Network was selected because many of its members have lived experience (e.g., with poverty, homelessness) and for its unique incorporated status and board member structure.
- The Poverty Network focuses its planning efforts around a single-tier municipality as well as a number of lower-tier municipalities within a county.

# APPENDIX B: DEEP DIVE TOOLS AND MECHANISMS SUMMARY

The following is a summary of the integrated planning tools and mechanisms pulled from the deep dive research in spring 2017.

## Theme 1 – Backbone support

### Learnings: Funding

#### 1.1: Backbone support is essential to planning success

- **Membership fees:** Fees paid by each member. Depending on the arrangement, fee amounts may be tiered based on partner size.
- **Public foundation funding:** All or part of funding that may come from a local public foundation to pay for administration, projects or initiatives.
- **Incorporation:** A corporation is an artificial person or a legal entity having an independent existence, separate and distinct from that of its members. The corporation owns property in its own name, acquires rights, obligations and liabilities, enters into contracts and agreements and has the capacity to sue and be sued as would a natural person. Incorporation imposes a heavier administrative burden along with its benefits. A dedicated coordinator is required to manage the administrative burden.
- **Budget Line Item:** Nominal funding from the municipality directed at a collaborative (which is a significant sum to the collaborative) through a budget line item attached to a specific municipal department (e.g. Community and Social Services). Could be augmented by funding from another source such as a community foundation.
- **Service Manager Agreements:** Inclusion of certain tables into Service Manager Agreements to act as advisory committee such as the Poverty Network's Affordable Housing Action Committee.

### Learnings: Dedicated coordination

#### 1.2: Dedicated coordination is critical to planning success

- **Grant management:** A dedicated coordinator may undertake grant management so as not to detract from other areas of business, but it takes considerable time and effort. Moreover, grants are not usually available to cover administrative considerations such backbone support.
- **Data collection and analysis:** A coordinator may be in the position to collect, consolidate and analyze data from available sources including collaborative partners.

- **Administration:** Dedicated staff person responsible for integrating plans and "connecting the dots" within the community**.** Administration can also manifest as backbone support, community mobilization or animation, and/or assistance with plan operationalization.
- **Inter-agency representation:** Coordinator acts as representative for the collaborative on other multi-agency networks or working groups that operate outside of the immediate collaborative.
- **Transformational leadership:** A coordinator may act as a transformational leader, working with local champions to identify needed change, create a common vision or strategy, and bring together the pieces of a collaborative to form a cohesive identity within a community.
- **In-kind support:** While the level of municipal leadership varies across collaboratives, municipal staff have taken part in collaborative activities in some cases, usually as members of working groups or subcommittees. The extent to which there is deliberate or tacit consent to this participation is not always clear, with some staff members "volunteering" their time because they see value in the work of the collaborative to their own day-to-day work.
- **Strategic planning:** A full-time staff person can play a pivotal role in strategic coordination, analysis and the fostering of relationships and connections which are integral to IP. This individual "can knit the pieces of the system together."
- **Agenda development or management:** Dedicated coordinators are able to ensure agendas are strategic and that discussion topics seek decisions and actions. This helps ensure that the collaborative "earns the next meeting" of members and decision-makers.
- **Community development or mobilization:** A dedicated coordinator can prioritize local action and empower the community through consultation (e.g., surveys, town halls, facilitated retreats, engagement blitzes) to ensure meaningful engagement and knowledge sharing is built into the plans and strategies developed by collaboratives.
- **Advocacy:** Collaboratives have used advocacy to present a common community voice on matters relating to poverty, substance abuse, children and youth, etc.

# Theme 2 – Strategy

## Learnings: common direction

### 2.1: Strategy through a shared vision and mutual goals

- **Shared vision and mandate:** Sets a common agenda across collaborative members or partners to ensure they are all working towards the same goals and outcomes.

- **Common goals:** Encourages member agencies and partners to see themselves and the work of their respective organizations or employers in at least one common goal of the collaborative.
- **Collective impact framework:** Used to tackle complex problems and premised on the belief that no single policy, government department, organization or program can tackle or solve the increasingly complex social problems faced as a society.

## Learnings: Common outcomes

### 2.2: Strategy through statements of performance

- **Data repository:** The "warehousing" and partitioning of data to help identify performance indicators and to improve results-based accountability so that planning collaboratives are in a better position to evaluate and monitor the impact of their work.
- **Performance indicators:** Indicators identified on the basis of an integration continuum (e.g., awareness, coordination, collaboration and integration) can allow a collaborative to measure its success from a system-wide IP perspective.

## Learnings: Strong governance

### 2.3: Strategy through deliberate governance

- **Governance model:** A mechanism used to translate the elements of a governance framework (e.g., working groups, steering committees) into practices, procedures, and job responsibilities (e.g., voting procedures) within a collaborative's corporate governance infrastructure.
- **Terms of reference:** Includes more detail on the guiding principles, membership criteria, voting, term of office, election procedures, and committee or working group functions.

# Theme 3 – Partnerships

## Learnings: Outreach and agreement

### 3.1: Outreach to gauge mutual interest

- **Conference participation:** The presence of leaders and decision-makers to represent collaboratives at conferences or events provide an opportunity for active participation in planning discussions, but also for knowledge exchange, networking and partnerships that may not occurred otherwise.
- **Outreach activities:** Actively engaging new or existing partners is important for a collaborative given the breadth of its catchment area and multi-sector membership. Activities can include online surveys, interviews, site visits and guest speakers at quarterly meetings.

- **Population-based working groups:** A more structured outreach activity to strengthen and sustain partnerships with priority populations such as First Nations communities.

### 3.2: Determining rules of engagement

- **Membership agreement:** Defines the general priorities, obligations and shared responsibilities of collaborative members including essential functions. This agreement can also set out a "statement of commitment" which holds members accountable to their membership roles and responsibilities.
- **Terms of reference of charter:** Provides greater detail to collaborative members about guiding principles, membership criteria, voting, term of office, election procedures, and committee or working group functions.

## Learnings: Core partners

### 3.3: Core partners are common across the deep dive sites

- The following partner categories (not in order) may be important for new or existing collaboratives to consider but non-traditional or atypical partners such as police services or mental health agencies may also be worthy of examination:
    - Voluntary sector or non-profit partners (e.g., YMCAs, Boys and Girls Clubs, United Way)
    - Data or research partners (e.g., Public Health Units, Post-secondary institutions)
    - Grassroots or field agent partners (e.g., individuals with lived experience)
    - Private sector partners (local businesses or philanthropists)
    - Media partners (local newspapers or media agencies with communications experience)
    - Government and Broader Public Sector partners (municipalities and LHINs, provincial ministries, federal government representatives)
    - Population-specific partners (local immigration or cultural centres, schools and school boards, First Nations, etc.)

# Theme 4– Readiness and capacity

## Learnings: State of readiness

### 4.1: Readiness depends on a threshold of awareness

- **Service mapping:** Mapping out local planning tables, networks or services providers in the jurisdiction of a collaborative can help to identify real and potential service duplication and a more critical assessment of the need for new tables or collaboratives.

## Learnings: Planning capacity and expertise

### 4.2: Access to data, leaders and volunteers impacts planning capacity

- **Transformational leadership:** Co-chairs and presenters work with common goals at quarterly meetings to ensure that participants see their organizations within the exercises undertaken throughout the day. This approach allows for the co-designing of collaborative activities.
- **Working sessions:** Purposeful attribution in collaborative meetings on how planning initiatives link to other work underway, or how these initiatives relate back to the collaborative's common goals.
- **Training calendar:** Sharing training opportunities available in the collaborative's service area.
- **Mixed seating:** At quarterly meetings, this approach can be used so collaborative members are placed at tables with diverse groups of participants rather than with their direct colleagues to provide opportunities for richer networking, knowledge exchange and collaboration.
- **Building future leaders:** Building capacity and encouraging a mindset shift in organizational employees can be a tool for leaders to instill leadership potential within the collaborative while ensuring a degree of succession planning for the collaborative and its members.
- **Volunteerism:** Volunteers are integral to the activation, implementation and operation of planning efforts. Community volunteers are often the local champions who build trusting relationships and bring existing committees, tables and networks together.
- **Effective communications:** A balanced, professional and positive communications strategy may be necessary when addressing sensitive issues such as poverty and homelessness, or when collaboratives have more of an advocacy function. This helps to ensure militancy does not become an organizational tenet while creating positive relationships with decision-makers.

# Theme 5: Parameters

## Learnings: Local scope

### 5.1: Planning driven by localized issues; and

### 5.2: User-centred planning

- **Five Pillar approach:** Based on the premise that a city cannot arrest its way out of crime-related issues, Prevention, Enforcement, Treatment, Harm Reduction and Housing are planning priorities.
- **[OPP] Community Mobilization Officer:** Designed to operationalize the Five Pillar approach, the position engages community members and organizations to

establish key contacts, understand service-related mandates, and promote the importance of community mobilization.

- **Community Safety and Well-Being Planning:** Developed through community consultations and led by a collaborative, this plan is envisioned to facilitate knowledge exchange while offering a client-focused roadmap adaptable to changing circumstances and local needs.
- **Joint funding**: Jointly planned and funded projects can allow for strategic partnerships and investments around multiple funding components or priorities to address a broader set of community needs (e.g., combined capital and operations).
- **Neighbourhood inclusion:** The inclusion of persons from the community in collaborative board, steering committee or working group operations and decision-making can help to provide opportunities for early and meaningful engagement while enhancing the potential for local support or 'buy-in' of a collaborative's programs and services.
- **Volunteerism:** Use of community volunteers to capitalize on manpower, knowledge and expertise while also providing opportunities for persons with lived experience to develop skills and allow for a "client perspective" on issues.

### Learnings: Regional scope

#### 5.3: Planning is systematic; and

#### 5.4: Planning to coordinate and connect service providers

- **Web portal:** Offers clients one site access to information about multiple services.
- **Service pathways:** Identifies where clients or families enter and exit a particular service system, which can lead to the development of a System Navigation Framework.
- **"No Wrong Door" approach:** Recognizes that service providers need to work seamlessly with each other to address service systems that can be challenging for clients or families to navigate: "No Wrong Door means that the First Door is the Right Door."

## Reflections on the provincial role (as voiced by planning collaboratives)

### Balancing top-down and bottom-up service delivery planning

- Planning collaboratives require greater flexibility from government than traditional stakeholders where the funding, reporting, or consulting relationship is between the province and one other organization in the context of a single project.

- The “Tight-Loose-Tight” approach can serve as a model for government to adopt in this respect (tight definition of problem or project; community-driven solution; tight accountability via clear expectations around results).
- Collective Impact approaches, change labs and cross-sector leadership tables are examples of innovative and ‘balanced’ planning mechanisms that could be replicated by other ministries.

## Horizontal planning

- Improved horizontal planning across ministries will be critical to the success of community hub development and local IP.
- In addition to planning across ministries, the province can engage the efforts of its own regional planning bodies (e.g., LHINs and school boards) with other community partners and planning collaboratives to improve collaboration and ensure service pathways are clear and understood.

## Capacity-building

- Adopting transition planning or change management processes can help ensure that community stakeholders are properly prepared and resourced for new integrated models of service planning and delivery (e.g., staff training, transition or wind-down funding, performance indicators and data sets, etc.).
- Enabling shared information systems (e.g., Ontario’s Open Data Directive) and streamlined funding (e.g., Transfer Payment Administrative Modernization) can also help to build the planning capacity of the service sector.

## Legislation

- Changes to existing legislation may be necessary. There are many pieces of provincial legislation that continue to impede collaborative solutions like common intake forms and wrap-around services for improved client experience.
- Amending privacy legislation to make it easier for ministries and stakeholders to share client information is one example of how government can be more responsive to local IP needs.