

## Multi-Agency Partnership (MAP)

**Thursday, May 24, 2018**

Location: ISSofBC Welcome House

*The meeting was held on the unceded territories of the Coast Salish peoples including the Tsleil-Waututh, Squamish and Musqueam nations.*

**Attendees:** Saleem Spindari (MOSAIC); Darae Lee (MOSAIC); Miriam Jurigova (MOSAIC) Loren Balisky (Kinbrace); Fran Gallo (Kinbrace); Raul Gatica (Kinbrace); Mariana Martinez (VAST); Frank Cohn (VAST); Zarei Hamid (VAST); Shirin Abtahie (VAST); Peter Prediger (inasmuch); Tammy Johnson (inasmuch); Julia Wu (bc211); Nathan Wright (bc211); James Grunau (Journey Home); Khim Tan(Options); Ana Machado (PIRS); Brygick Cross (IRB); Mona Hassania (SOS-ISS); Yola Vargas (FBC); Mark Konrad (IRCC); Rachel Tuttle (Vancity); Maria Cervino (Kiwassa N.H.); Patricia Mahecha (Inland Refugee Society); Cecilia Tagle (VSB-SWIS); Tassillie Dent (City Uni of Seattle); Laura Mannix (DIVERSEcity); Thanh Lam (MPNH); Motoi Matsukura (Purpose); Firat Guney (John Howard Society); Katie Osborne (John Howard Society); Vicki Chiu (MJTT); Soraya Canales G (MCC -FUSMC); Celine Mauboules (HSABC); Jenny Moss (MAP)

**Apologies:** Iris (Options), Mia (Vancity), Tina (Fraser Health), Rainbow Refugee staff, Arran Smith (Red Cross)

### 9:30 am

- Co-Chair: Saleem Spindari, MOSAIC
- Acknowledgement that our meeting was held on the unceded territory of the Musqueam, Squamish and Tsleil-Waututh First Nations
- Thanks to Vancity for the funding in support of MAP and its work
- Introduction of all participants
- The Agenda was approved
- Saleem read the corrected April Minutes and they were approved

### 9:45 Vancouver's Poverty Reduction Framework

**Presentation by:** Wes Regan, Community Economic Development Planner  
Jose Fernandez Garcia, Social Planner

Wes: has been a Community Economic Development planner for 10 years - notably during 2004 and 2010 economic strategies in DTES. He has worked on innovative solutions between business sector and community needs.

Wes has worked for Vancouver city for last 2 yrs. His vision is to work towards an equitable city.

Jose: His work includes capital grants to facilitate building, managing community development projects and strategies – PAA framework. His special interest is informal vending and the informal economy.

## **TIMELINE:**

Wes provided an overview of the Healthy City Strategy 2014 and the work since then on public engagement about poverty reduction. The report will go to council in July.  
(For details please see attached presentation)

In 2017 they leveraged the opportunity to frame this nationally – used Vancouver as a model for talking at Fed level and learn from Feds e.g. their regulations and programs. Recommendations were submitted to Fed govt.

2 specific recommendations concerning refugees were included:

- GARS - waive travel loans for all
- claimants in BC should be able to access settlement services on arrival

## **PROCESS**

The framework is not just about income, but about equity: if the process is accessible to all it should guarantee equality in outcomes – but we must go further with some populations and change how services are delivered.

Strategy to reduce poverty by 75% - Not just income but affordability

Need to close the gap

Access, destigmatization, discrimination, gender, disability, are all factors.

Learned a lot from community groups – research and forums to draw from.

What's being done in other cities?

Hired a grad student to study elsewhere – e.g. United Way in eastern and central Canada

Common themes in the information gathered include: helpful partnerships, mobility & access challenges, stigmatization, reconciliation and anti-racism.

After all this they were asked to form a cttee to finalize work and put together a strategy – so PAAC was est. in March 2018 with 40 + organizations. Its process features:

1. Deep listening – lived experience: to strengthen, align and innovate approach
2. Depth in implementation – design for future to produce equity based on well-thought through planning, budgeting etc.

Understanding 'a day in Vancouver' for people – how the City can enhance the experience of citizens.

Next steps:

Analyse the content for final 'What we have Heard' doc to Council

Tamarack Cities Summit June 12/13

Report to council in July

## **QUESTIONS:**

1. Peter P: What happened to the request to the Feds to open all settlement services to claimants:  
A: Feds did not reply to the request specifically but sent out a general statement (see:  
<https://www.canada.ca/en/institutes-health->

[research/news/2017/05/government\\_of\\_canadainvestsinhealthiercitiesandcommunities.html](https://research/news/2017/05/government_of_canadainvestsinhealthiercitiesandcommunities.html)

2. Tassilie: Is this a unique study – what other cities have done this?  
A: Not unique – but the healthy living strategy is new though based on old themes of tackling racism, inequality, etc. Use of PEERS in the process is new and innovative.
3. Fran: Did the study look at Parks and Recreation programs for families?  
Paul Jazinski responsible for inclusion/equity issues for parks  
e.g. inclusion in parks board access passes
4. Thanh: What is the relationship between PAAC and the Access without fear policy?  
A: PAAC is looking for ways to better collaborate with groups pushing access without fear and help them get better access to city services e.g. Sanctuary City group  
PAAC wants to find out how policies and services are experienced by other people
5. Loren: there is a growing gap between income and affordability – especially for claimants  
e.g. \$18/hr pay provides less income than welfare (for a family of 6)  
How do we create a large integrative approach to this?  
How are cities working together? We create a lot of friction points – places where people can fail if they try to change for the better: e.g. get off welfare.  
A: the Eastside Works (Hastings) – project was developed to think differently about work and opportunities, as well as the transitioning between welfare and work.  
People are set up for failure because of govt. policy.

Loren: There are innovative ideas like Surge Funding – which pumps more resources in to create stability for specific groups especially claimants because their needs are so great after their traumatic arrival experience.

A: We need to look at actual outcomes rather than just the numbers. We need to look at the 'poverty traps' that make poverty more difficult for all.

Saleem thanked Jose and Wes for the interesting presentation and noted that MAP is attending PAAC consultations and will continue to be involved.

## **BREAK**

### **10:45 MAP Membership update**

Jenny is updating our records which includes our membership.

Free membership for both organizations and individuals exists at 2 levels:

**PARTNERS** are agencies or individuals who:

- a. participate and work collaboratively within MAP
- b. show a high degree of commitment by providing advice and/or support
- c. attend a minimum of 6 meetings annually
- d. may be nominated for positions on the Executive
- e. must sign the MAP Agreement to Collaborate
- f. may choose to be listed on the MAP website and in publications
- g. may choose to receive MAP updates

**PARTICIPANTS** are agencies or individuals who:

- i) join in MAP meetings and discussions at their convenience
- ii) cannot be nominated for Executive positions
- iii) must sign the MAP Agreement to Collaborate
- iv) may choose to receive MAP updates

Saleem circulated the new Terms of Reference and the Agreement to Collaborate (attached) for signing. Organizations can take this back to their offices to obtain signatures and return them to the next MAP meeting.

Also circulated were existing mailout lists for organizations that must be checked and updated.

Jenny will contact those organizations and individuals not present and the membership update should be completed by the Fall.

**11:00 Report and Discussion: Refugee Claimant Housing - 10 May 2018 Forum Focused on Solutions**  
**Led by: James Grunau (Journey Home Community) with Forum Planning Agencies**

Brief overview of forum & discussion – housing a big concern

Exclusively about claimants

60 – 65 people from govt., non-profits, refugee serving agencies attended

Claimant numbers have increased since last fall – the focus was on solutions

Saleem, Sherman, Scott Small, Loren, James and others led 3 facilitated roundtable discussions.

Chose long and short term priorities for housing

Forum looked for commitment from those engaged

**Patricia described the presentations:**

- Celine Mauboules – (Homelessness Assoc.) moderated the day.
- Loren – (Kinbrace) reviewed expected outcomes
- Azadeh for UNHCR – presented the worldwide situation re: housing model from Uganda – getting land and providing a place for refugees to live. Challenge to Canada
- Refugee speakers – from Peru and Nigeria – both struggled to find housing because of their status and income.
- Sheree White – inspirational speech and motivation re: how to create housing

**Celine described the roundtable sessions**

**FIRST SESSION: SWOT analysis – what works:**

- strong partnerships
- commitment of non-profit sector and connections
- resiliency of refugees
- acknowledgement of govt. interest
- strength of Multi Agency Partnership – unique in Canada

What doesn't work or GAPS THAT EXIST:

affordable housing, low rental rate, difficulty with language, lack of awareness of skills of refugees, stigma, transportation

**SECOND SESSION:** Short term and long term solutions

- Need an integrated and comprehensive plan that's consistently applied
- Clarity of who is doing what
- Recognition that this is an ongoing need – not just a crisis
- Need for financial assistance earlier in claimants process

*Short term Suggestions:*

- Banks can assist with better Credit checks
- Power of stories
- Landlord education
- Take advantage of current programs like Ready to Rent
- Create a special category for RC's to make them accessible to opportunities
- Engaging Landlord BC
- Identify opportunities with empty-nesters
- Repurposing unused space
- Tiny or modular homes
- Renovations to homes helped by Vancity program
- A 'Welcome House' for RC's
- Need to provide better info to claimants – salvage First Contact

*Longer term solutions:*

- Tax changes
- Funding for new construction
- Amend the National Housing Standard – e.g. how many bedrooms needed per family
- Identify Champions for RC's

Participants then committed to what they could GIVE and what they hoped to GET back

**HIGHLIGHTS OF 'GIVE':**

Opportunities to bridge build – housing and for-profit sector with settlement sector

Financial modelling, real estate knowledge

People offered some units – condos, rooms, land

Assistance with social media

Share with ministry colleagues

**HIGHLIGHTS OF 'GET':**

Personal satisfaction and learning

Building safer and more inclusive communities

Reducing stigma

## **BIG OFFER OF THE DAY!!**

Chief Housing Officer offered 40 units of housing in exchange for 10,000 sq feet of land

### **Loren covered What's next –**

1. report being written by Marcia and Amy – due out by next MAP meeting to be used as a first step in conversations around housing
2. Need to focus on Solutions (not problem) – need to look for creative solutions
3. Start of concrete steps and solutions: looking for other ideas, connections etc. that can be discussed within a HWG.
4. Proposal to MAP: to house the conversation in the MAP HWG

### **QUESTIONS & COMMENTS:**

**Khim** – looking forward to seeing the report disseminated widely and use HWG to spearhead the discussion.

**Peter** – invited city and Abbotsford SS to forum and sat them together with BC Housing, and United Way: The city then connected with the participants at a meeting

There is a LIPS in Abbotsford - *Building the Hub of the Fraser Valley* – Peter met with group who are planning developments, real estate board, chamber of commerce etc.

There are ideas such as:

- building on top of firehall
- early release of city land
- faster permitting

*Met with sub-cttee of City* and described work of Inasmuch.

Offered office space in one bldg. to provide all services to claimants

**James:** we all need to be at these kind of discussions!

Suggested that we could follow the example of the west end where churches, groups etc. work together on their neighborhood priorities

**Jenny** – we need to create tools (slideshows/stats etc.) for use in meetings and presentations

**Mariana** – it's important to create a visual report as a tool.

**Thanh** – education is key – aimed at changing people's minds about RC's – myth busting.

**James** – the discussion needs to focus on housing creation, not just consumption

**Saleem:** proposed the re-launch of MAP HOUSING WORKING GROUP

The proposal was approved by vote by a show of hands

The first Meeting: May 24<sup>th</sup> from 2 – 3:30 pm – open to all who want to participate.

### **Agency Updates**

- **Saleem – MOSAIC**

Selected in Stream B funding with a focus on Fraser Valley

- **Mariana – VAST**

Attended PAAC meetings for MAP

VAST offers weekly Wednesday group – team expanded to cover more languages

- **Miriam – MOSAIC**  
The additional Legal advocate hours were increased to twice a week. The additional legal advocate provides support re: public benefits and housing
- **Patricia – Inland Refugee Society**  
Many more refugee applications, some coming from new countries
- **James – Journey Home**
  - 1) NW Refugee Roundtable Event – Christian-faith based – July 21<sup>st</sup>.  
Calvary Chapel South, Kent, WA.  
All interested are invited
  - 2) Ride for Refugees – has staff position available – talk to James
  - 3) A JH volunteer has written a children's book: 'One too Many' it's a fundraiser
- **Peter - Inasmuch** – see notes about Housing meetings in Abbotsford
- **Laura - Diversecity**  
Peaceable Group on Sundays for LGBTQ – will send info to MAP
- **Khim – Options**
  - 1) There was a Surrey meeting re: new detention center in Surrey – it was quite divisive – perhaps MAP could consider a stronger Education voice?  
(can bring this up at MAP Strategic Meeting in July)
  - 2) "I Belong" – settlement workshop in Surrey
- **Fran – READY tours**  
There will be a Ready tour Friday (May 25) at 12:45  
RAD session next Wednesday 30<sup>th</sup> for appellants
- **Raul - Kinbrace**  
June 16 2-5 pm 20<sup>th</sup> anniversary party at Kinbrace  
Eventbrite invitation – please register
- **Frank – VAST**  
In July VAST will open in Surrey and happy to partner with everyone – will see individual clients and in groups. Arabic, Spanish and Farsi speaking capacity  
VAST continues to meet with 5 other groups at national level to pressure Feds about refugee mental health
- **Ana - PIRS**  
PIRS to host a summer program for families including people who were claimants: activities and lunch at Moberly School
- **Thanh - MPNH**
  - 1) Shared Lives Project to look at empty nesters bridging youth with elders – Thanh working with claimant youth.
  - 2) Still have groups for claimants
  - 3) TIP: MSP – can get reimbursements if you contact MSP to work on individual cases
- **Katie - John Howard Society**  
Embarking on a new project with CBSA – re: housing for those who might be detained  
200 clients of low and medium risk  
Starts mid- June

- **Mark - IRCC**  
 Project re: Inland refugee claims to reduce time clients have to spend in the office.  
 Have eliminated the 2-step approach which took all day for the interviews – now there is just one step of approximately 2-3 hours.  
 BUT Still tell claimants to block off the day in case of complications
- **Brygick – IRB - RAD**
  - 1) Increased numbers of appeals – IRB has received more funding for 2 years to reduce or eliminate the backlog. With this funding they are hiring more staff so they will be back to a full complement in June, and then getting extra staff in the fall for 2 years.  
 The program will be re-evaluated at the end to see how well it addressed the backlog.
  - 2) Trying Innovative ways to be more efficient e.g. at RAD – across the country there are specific hubs that focus on different countries of origin.
  - 3) RAD Info sessions – for unrepresented claimants – but all are welcome – Wednesday 30<sup>th</sup> - schedule with Fran.
- **Jenny - WRD**  
 Update on event June 20
  - 1) there are more tables for organizations – contact Jenny before June 10
  - 2) space available for artists in the Alice McKay Room to display/sell their art/books – contact Mona at SOS
  - 3) Thanh to provide promotional information – please share broadly.

**12:00 pm Evaluation and Adjournment**

**Followed by READY Tour's 10<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Celebration Lunch**

***NEXT MEETING: June 28, 2018 at MOSAIC (5575 Boundary Road, Vancouver) from 9:30am – 12:00pm***