

# **The Halifax Planning and Design Centre:** *Charting a Strategic Path*

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## **1.0 Executive Summary**

The Cities and Environment Unit (CEU), a research and action group of the Faculty of Architecture and Planning at Dalhousie University, currently incubates a concept for a planning and design centre (PDC). Advancing this concept into reality has proven challenging. After six years supporting the idea the CEU should consider next steps for the PDC. To better inform the CEU discussions on the PDC this report aims to:

### **Objective 1:**

Further understand how Planning and Design Centres can function

### **Objective 2:**

Determine important operational areas from comparable centres that can be used to inform future organizational decisions of the PDC

### **Objective 3:**

Better understand how community planning has evolved to engage citizens through the planning and design centre concept

A review of three planning and design centres was conducted to help inform discussions around the future of the PDC. These centres, which all have been operating for over 20 years, are the Planning and Design Centre of Pittsburgh, East Tennessee Community Design Centre, and the Cleveland Urban Design Collaborative. The three centres and the PDC were all asked about their mandate, organizational structure, projects, membership, partnerships, and future plans. Gathering this information provides the CEU with a base of knowledge regarding what may be required for the operation of the PDC. The study of three centres led to an understanding of the operational areas that are important for a planning and design centre. These operational areas are a strong governance structure and collaborative partnerships within the community they serve.

Through interviews with other planning and design centres, this report is designed to expand the CEU's understanding of the variety of tools and activities that other planning organizations use to bring important issues to the community. This will potentially improve the quality of debate, discussion, and ideas around the future of the PDC. This report discovered that there is a long legacy of public involvement in the planning and design process of Halifax. This is made apparent through the Community Planning Association of Canada (CPAC). This legacy is important for the CEU to understand when considering what is next for the PDC.



## **2.0 Introduction:**

### **Planning for Participation**

The Cities and Environment Unit (CEU) is a planning action and applied research group in the Faculty of Architecture and Planning at Dalhousie University in Halifax Nova Scotia. The CEU is interested in gaining a broader perspective on how planning and design centres operate. This report will help to inform decisions on the future of the Planning and Design Centre (PDC), a concept being incubated by the CEU. Through current information and reflections on how centres that have experienced prolonged success operate, insight into the areas of operation that are important to the successful advancement of a planning and design centre is learned. These areas, as discovered in this report, are a governance structure and collaborative partnerships.

The PDC was created in 2003 as a special project of the Cities and Environment Unit. The project was initially explored by Heather Ternoway in her thesis, *Informed Participation: A Method for Engaging the Community in Planning for the Halifax Regional Municipality*. Out of this work the idea for a planning and design centre emerged as a planning information centre that would “recognize the potential to improve current participation mechanisms, and extend the[planning] services and resources that the HRM already provides” (Ternoway 2003: 104). Ternoway articulated the intent of this centre as a vehicle to enhance public access to information, engaging citizens and educating them about planning decisions in Halifax.

Planning and design centres aim to enhance the public dialogue and improve the quality of planning and design in the cities or regions in which it operates. The organizational mandate for the Halifax PDC highlights four major goals: raising awareness on planning and design issues, generating dialogue, advancing innovative ideas in planning and design, and improving the quality of life in the Halifax Region. The PDC has attempted to achieve these goals through educating citizens and creatively engaging them in the planning and design debates of the region through numerous public events and a planning and design newsletter.

Ternoway’s thesis provides examples of Planning Information Centres that have been successful, citing De Zuiderkerk in Amsterdam, the Pavillion de l’Arsenal in Paris, and the Nagoya Urban Institute in Japan. A review of her thesis illustrates the need to evaluate centres that have a closer operational structure and mandate to that of the PDC in Halifax. By engaging in a review, an understanding of how community planning efforts have evolved to engage citizens through the planning and the design centre concept can be better understood. This review may aid the CEU in making future decisions on how they can advance the PDC beyond their support and management.



## 2.1 Understanding Planning and Design Centres

For this study 36 planning and design centres were contacted (Appendix 1) ten were interviewed and three have been selected as case studies. These studies are the East Tennessee Community Design Centre, Community Design Centre of Pittsburgh, and the Cleveland Urban Design Collaborative. The centres provide a glimpse into the not-for-profit and academic operations of centres. These two operation types are similar to what the PDC indicated in their business plan as the type of organization they would like to be. The centres profiled are good case examples for the PDC because they have a lengthy history, clear mandate, and a functioning organizational structure. Specifically these three cases were selected based on the following criteria:

- The centre has been operating for a period of no less than 20 years.
- Identifies a point person (CEO, President, Director)
- Each has an established budget
- Clear process for maintaining and building partnerships
- Established board structures.
- Defined organizational structure

The centres selected as case studies all operate as project based planning and design centres. This is a departure from the original idea of the PDC, but is valuable in that it provides the CEU with an alternative perspective from which to view the activities and future direction of the PDC.

Other interviews and consultations for this project were sought from Fusion Halifax, American Institute of Architects (AIA), American Planning Association, Canadian Institute of Planners, CEU staff, a past Chair of the Community Planning Association of Canada (CPAC) Nova Scotia Chapter, and a private management consultant in Halifax. All of these interviews informed the perspective of the report. Guiding the study were three main objectives:

### **Objective 1:**

To understand how Planning and Design Centres can function.

### **Objective 2:**

To determine important operational areas from comparable centres that can be used to inform future organizational decisions of the PDC.

### **Objective 3:**

To better understand how community planning has evolved to engage citizens through the planning and design centre concept.



## 2.2 Understanding the Halifax Planning and Design Centre

“Planning agencies – or any other social institutions that cannot adapt to changing conditions – are doomed to extinction or, even worse, irrelevance” (Rees 1981: 141).

In the six years the PDC has been trying to operate it has carried out many activities including public forums, educational programs, newsletters, and presentations. It aspires to secure a permanent physical space and sustained funding with the ultimate goal of becoming a fully operational creative institution (PDCBP 2008: 8).

The centre is defined by the organizational mandate as a

Collaborative, non-profit organization dedicated to making planning and design more accessible, inclusive, and ongoing. The Centre increases awareness about current projects and studies, provides forums for the exchange of ideas, both locally and globally, and advances propositions which celebrate who we are and define our collective aspirations.

(PDC Online 2009)

The mandate calls for making the activities of the PDC “accessible, inclusive, and ongoing,” in hopes of impacting development in Halifax. To achieve its mandate the PDC’s business plan sets out three main objectives:

**Raise Awareness:** Raise awareness on new themes and direction in planning and design and find creative ways of presenting both global and local initiatives.

(PDCBP 2008: 7)

**Generate Dialogue:** Foster dialogue among citizens to develop the links between planning and design, seeing these as interconnected social, education, and economic and cultural issues of universal concern.

(PDCBP 2008: 7)

**Foster Innovation:** Be a leading centre for creative and innovative research and learning in the fields of planning and design.

(PDCBP 2008: 7)



While the mandate and objectives of the PDC are well intentioned, the reality is that the organization is not operating. Ultimately not operating in any official capacity has made achieving the mandate of the Centre difficult. While many events have been conducted and considered a success by the PDC, the centre is still chasing permanence and legitimacy amongst those operating the centre and the broader Halifax community.

To aid the CEU in understanding where their PDC concept is in-terms of the larger practice they were asked to complete the same interview as the other three centres. This provides a way to compare the current situation to that of centres actually operating, providing a better understanding of what may need to be done to bring this concept to reality.

## Halifax Planning and Design Centre



**Type of Organization:** Non-Profit

**Location:** Halifax, Nova Scotia

**Organization Start Date:** Conceptualized 2003

**Regional Population:** 372,855

**Members:** 100

**Budget Size:** No established budget

### Organizational Profile

The Halifax Planning and Design Centre (PDC) was created in 2003 as a special project of Cities and Environment Unit (CEU), a planning action and applied research group in the Faculty of Architecture and Planning at Dalhousie University in Halifax Nova Scotia, Canada.

Recognizing value in the concept of a planning and design centre for Halifax, the CEU initiated planning for such a centre. The organization began incubating the concept through investing staff time and money. An advisory committee was established consisting of community members, developers, municipal staff, and academics. One year later the Halifax Community Planning and Design Association was incorporated as a non-profit society and tasked with making the PDC a reality.

The idea for the centre, however, has never truly come to fruition; since being incorporated the organization has struggled to operate (PC CEU 2009). Briefly in 2008 two interns with the aspirations of making the centre operational as a storefront location worked on fundraising. This effort was not successful and the PDC returned to being managed by the CEU. After six years the centre has not been able to realize its mandate, and is currently managed by the collective CEU.



## **Organizational Structure**

The organization aspires to operate as a collaborative enterprise. In order to function it will depend on the collective knowledge of a broad base of professionals. This could include but is not exclusive to, planning professionals, architects, lawyers, and community members. The specific organizational structure of the PDC is outlined in the Halifax Community Planning and Design Association<sup>1</sup> By-laws, which state:

The property and business of the Society shall be managed by a Board of Directors, comprised of at least ten (10) and not more than eighteen (18) Directors. Notwithstanding the foregoing, the Board of Directors shall be comprised of only the subscribers to the Memorandum of Association or their designates until the first annual or other meeting of the Members. The number of directors shall be determined from time to time by the Board of Directors, approved by an affirmative vote of at least two-thirds (2/3) of the Members at a meeting duly called for the purpose of determining the number of Directors to be elected to the Board of Directors. Directors must be individuals, at least 19 years of age, with the power under law to contract. Directors need not be Members.  
(HCPDA By-Laws 2008: 17)

This structure has never been put in place.

The organization relies heavily on volunteer time, normally garnered from students in the Dalhousie Architecture and Planning program. The volunteers are used for event logistics, but are not involved in the discussion regarding event and activity selection.

The organization sells memberships that can be obtained through contacting the CEU. Currently the PDC has approximately 100 members. The members are mainly from a public art contest the PDC was involved in organizing in conjunction with W.M. Fares and Associates. The cost of becoming a member is \$20.00 per year. Each member is entitled to one vote at the Annual General Meeting (AGM), although an AGM has never been held. Members are recruited through personal connections and the website (PDCBP 2008: 16).

## **Projects**

Since incorporation in 2005 the centre has carried out the following projects:

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<sup>1</sup> Halifax Community Planning and Design Association was the organizational title the PDC was registered under.



**High School Education Program (2007 – 2008)**

Working collaboratively with a partner teacher at Dartmouth High School, the Centre provided a project-based curriculum that integrated planning and design with other subjects while expanding the classroom into local communities (PDC Online 2009).

**Share Space: Transparency (2008)**

Share Space was a discussion session that centered on the boundaries and connections between art, architecture, and planning (PDC Online 2009).

**Cardboard City at Nocturne: Art at Night (2008)**

Nocturne attendees used found cardboard and other recycled materials to construct a large physical model of downtown Halifax (PDC Online 2009).

**SEEK: Planning and Design Newsletter (three produced from 2007-2008)**

A free newsletter, SEEK featured current planning and design projects, developments, and upcoming events across the Halifax Region (PDC Online 2009).

**Street Signs: Halifax Streets and the Communities they Define (2009)**

Street Signs was a series of panel discussions, roundtables, and debates that explored Greater Halifax's key streets and the communities that surround them while highlighting the importance of good design and sustainability to a great city (PDC Online 2009).

**Trillium Public Art Competition (2009)**

The Planning and Design Centre, in association with a development project, launched a two-stage international public art competition. The goal of the competition was to contribute an original piece of public art to Halifax. The winner of this competition was a local artist from Dartmouth. The community was invited to view all submissions through an exhibit in the School of Architecture and Planning (PDC Online 2009).

**Funding Structure**

No secure source of funding for the organization exists on an ongoing basis. However, minimal amounts have been secured through a small number of memberships and through private donations. The organization has attempted to seek funding from the following sources:

- Private donations
- Sponsorships



- Small contracts
- Membership fees
- Federal, Provincial, and Municipal Governments (PC CEU 2009).

## **Membership**

The business plan calls for memberships and provides benefits to those who are members. These include one vote at the Annual General Meeting, invitations to all events, and a copy of the SEEK newsletter. However, the organization cannot meet its commitment to members due to time and financial restraints.

## **Partnership**

The PDC has not been involved in pursuing or retaining financial partners. All of the events organized, however, do include partnerships at some level. Again, the finances and staff resources to aggressively pursue this area of the organization do not exist. In the six years of running events the organization has partnered with:

- Halifax Regional Municipality
- Greater Halifax Partnership
- Halifax Chamber of Commerce
- MT&L Public Relations
- Cities and Environment Unit
- W.M. Fares Developer
- Fares Real Estate
- East Port Developments



## **Obstacles of the PDC**

Important discoveries emerged regarding deficiencies in the operation of the PDC by having the CEU complete the same interview questions as centres that have experienced success. Noticeable obstacles emerged in the areas of governance, membership approach, and ability to follow through on goals. Ultimately all of these areas contribute to the struggle of making the PDC a reality.

### **Governance**

Currently the PDC does not have a concrete process for making decisions and charting a course for the future. This contributes to confusion amongst the staff of the CEU, and raises the question, “who owns the PDC?” Not having a board in place causes the PDC to struggle. Issues of future direction, goal setting, and fundraising are left to CEU staff.

The organization has been operating without a clear management structure. This has contributed to the challenge of gaining and maintaining legitimacy. The lack of clear leadership contributes to confusion among CEU staff who are left questioning, who is the point person? How are decisions made? Who hires or fires?

The by-laws established by the PDC through its business plan define a board structure; however, this structure has never been implemented. The importance of a strong board structure was supported through an independent review of the organizations business plan. This review was conducted by an independent Chartered Accountant who works as a management consultant in Halifax. The major recommendation from this review was to establish a board structure, and then follow through on its implementation (PC, Kennedy 2009). This reaffirms that if the CEU is considering advancing the PDC it should implement a governance structure.

### **Memberships**

A further issue of not implementing a governance structure is realized through the PDCs approach to memberships. As the case studies will show, membership is something that is avoided by other centres. The oddity of this approach is in the organization’s aim to enhance the Region for all residents. The current approach may be limiting in terms of gaining broad based community support.

The area of memberships raises another concern around fiduciary responsibility. The



PDC has an established list of benefits to members outlined in its business plan, yet the organization does not have the resources to follow through on these promises. This opens the CEU up to potential legal liabilities. The issue of not being able to provide for what is promised to the membership damages the reputation of the PDC in the broader community. This was expressed in the external interviews conducted. In one interview it was mentioned that the organization was excited and on board with the idea of the PDC, after seeing one of their presentations, but never saw any follow through. This organization still believes in the idea, but is skeptical as to the reality of it (PC 2009).

### **Follow Through**

The PDC is no longer registered under the Societies Act of Nova Scotia; this was confirmed through a search for both organizational titles in the Registry of Joint Stocks (PDC and Halifax Community Planning and Design Association). The PDC may no longer be registered because of Section 25, Dissolution of the Societies Act, which states:

The provisions of Section 136 of the Companies Act, relating to the removal from the register of companies that are not carrying on business, apply *mutatis mutandis* to a society that has failed for two consecutive years to send or file any return, notice or document required to be made or filed with the Registrar pursuant to this Act, that is more than two years in arrears in the payment of fees required pursuant to this Act or where the Registrar has reasonable cause to believe that a society is not in operation. (Societies Act 1989: 25).

In order for the PDC to “officially” operate it must first be in good standing and registered with the government of Nova Scotia. This will require resubmitting the appropriate documents and paying any fines that may be outstanding. Prior to engaging in this process the CEU must ask the big question, “is the PDC a concept that they would like to continue to support?”

Governance, memberships, and general follow through are three organizational topics that have been identified as areas where the PDC requires improvements. With attention to these areas the organization could begin to function, but currently not having a clear direction and process for managing the organization, a clear understanding of memberships, and the resources to follow through the PDC is potentially headed into irrelevance, dooming a valuable idea.



### **3.0 Planning and Design Context**

## **The Legacy of Public Interest and Community Involvement in Planning**

Planning and design take into consideration the drama of life and transcribe it into the physical form of the city (Bacon 1974). The more emphasis placed on improving planning and design the better and more relevant a place will become. This is simply because people are always changing, as Rees suggests, “Planning agencies - or any other social institutions that cannot adapt to changing conditions - are doomed to extinction or, even worse, irrelevance” (Rees 1981: 141). As the CEU believes, “change is inevitable. Standing still is not a choice. The moment is always passing. A community can be pushed by the constant current of local pressures and global forces or it can take control over its own destiny” (CCBP 2003: 1). The interconnections of planning and design in our everyday lives as citizens’ impacts the quality of debate, discussion, and ideas on issues associated with living in a community. One method for enhancing the debate and discussion is through implementing of a centre devoted to planning and design issues.

Planning and design centres are one method to enhancing community-planning efforts. The relevance of planning and design centres is explained by Karen Hundt of the Chattanooga Planning and Design Studio in Tennessee:

Great projects require great planning ... We can’t have architects on one side, planners on another and engineers and public works in another corner. We have to work together, and I think that our design studio’s role is to be a convener, to bring those people together” (Hundt 2000: 77).

The activities and actions involved in making the PDC and others like it functional is broad collaboration between a range of parties: planners, architects, citizens, and engineers. The result of this collaboration is a planning profession that is more educated on the public interest.

Planning professionals have tendencies towards two different approaches to practice, one side obsessed with the theory of practice, and the other which has retreated to administrative offices and consultancies only to be concerned with the everyday business of planning (Hall 2004: 354). This has created a situation in some communities where public interest and opinion is debated on the merits or significance it contributes to the overall planning and design discourse (Grant 2005). This debate has left many practitioners questioning their professional role, reduced to describing the discipline as, “polltakers on behalf of elected politicians”



(Seelig and Seelig 1996: 68). These kinds of reflections on planning and design have exposed a gap in the planning field; this gap is the meaningful inclusion of citizens in the debate and discussion of issues pertaining to the planning and design of communities. The association of public inclusion with “poll taking” undermines the public and downplays the importance of their involvement in issues of planning and design. Dr. Jill Grant, professor of Planning at Dalhousie University, cautions that if planning does not include broad based citizen involvement, communities will be subjected to the normative positions of the players in the planning process (Grant 2005). Educating the public on these issues, and including the public in the planning and design issues and debates of a community will turn this trend.

Approaching citizen involvement merely as a step in the process dilutes not only the planning profession, but also the quality of planning and design decisions. Communities depend on good planning and design. Having citizens involved in the planning and design process ensures that the desires and dreams of those who work, live, and play in the city are met, or at the very least heard. As is articulated by Michael and Julie Seelig in *Can Planners be Leaders?* “It is time for us to renew our leadership and visionary skills and lead from the front by conceptualizing and presenting our version of plans. This essential step will educate citizens, giving them a focal point to which they can respond and move us forward” (Seelig and Seelig 1996: 68). Educating and engaging citizens is central to the success of any planning and design centre; as John Friedmann remarks, “knowledge is derived from experience and validated in practice, and therefore it is integrally a part of actions” (Friedmann 1981: 81).

Motivating the idea of planning and design centres is the practice of community planning. Community planning in Canada has been the vehicle for public education and engagement in planning since the 1950s. This is a direct result of increased attention to planning issues such as housing and re-development by governments during the post war period (Gunton 1985: 63). As investments were made in many urban areas, new planning legislation was introduced, and the formation of organizations such as the Central Mortgage and Housing Corporation many were optimistic about the future. This optimism, however, did not last. In the 1960s the situation changed. The postwar boom created “urban congestion, scattered sprawl, land speculation, loss of resource lands, inadequate housing, and dislocation of residents by freeways” (Gunton 1985: 64). These issues caused many to rethink how planning was conducted, and what the goals of planning ought to be. This demand for rethinking planning problems led to a position paper by Harvey Lithwick for the Federal government of Canada. This paper characterized urban regions as, “complex interdependent problems that could be mitigated only by comprehensive public planning” (Gunton 1985: 64). Not until the 1970s did the thoughts and ideas on changing the planning approach manifest into reality. This decade gave birth to many new planning centered organizations, such as the Ministry of State for Urban Affairs.



With these organization came the rise in importance of comprehensive community and neighborhood planning. Consequently, and as is the nature of the “planning cycle” (Gunton 1985) broad based funding to this area of planning was cut in the 1980s as Canada slipped into a recession.

The Community Planning Association of Canada (CPAC) was an organization formed to aid in community planning efforts and to involve citizens more in planning issues. The association was originally created in the 1950s by the Central Mortgage and Housing Corporation for the purpose of promoting citizen involvement in planning and designing communities across Canada. The organization once boasted a membership in the thousands, having participation of up to 3,000 delegates at conferences (Suelzle and Lewis 1990). In the late 1970s -1980s however, the Federal government instituted broad based funding cutbacks to associations across Canada with the reasoning that these organizations should be self-sufficient on private funding and membership dues (Suelzle and Lewis 1990). The resulting history has been turbulent.

The Nova Scotia branch of CPAC was established to engage in planning issues for the province. Below is a brief timeline of its activities which focused on Halifax from 1951- 1977. These events illustrate the important role that CPAC played in advocating for increased public involvement in the planning process. Moreover, the activities of CPAC show the legacy of community involvement in planning for Halifax.

### **Timeline of Public Engagement and Community Activities for the Community Planning Association of Canada, Halifax Chapter.**

(All information retrieved from Community Planning Association of Canada Archived Files: 1980)

**1951** - Presented a major brief to City Council on the poor housing conditions within the city. This brief was informed through a yearlong research project exploring what American cities were doing to solve this problem.

**1958** - CPAC and the Institute of Public Affairs launched the Citizen’s Conference to discuss the redevelopment study conducted by Professor Gordon Stephenson (The Stephenson Report).

**1959** - CPAC participated in a strategic partnership with the Institute of Public Affairs (IPA) and the Halifax Board of Trade. This partnership formed a Regional Study Committee to explore better facilitation of services such as indus-



trial development, traffic facilities, policing, fire control, housing, health and welfare, recreation and parks, and transit systems.

**1960** - CPAC and IPA organized a public conference. Out of this conference came the Citizen's Planning Committee of Halifax. This group was appointed to inform and advise city officials on the preparation of the City Master plan.

During the gap between 1960 and 1973 CPAC was engaged in a variety of issues through committees developed in previous years.

**1973** - CPAC presented a brief to City Council on the Municipal Development Process with aim of making the planning process more inclusive of the public. In the same year CPAC lobbied the Provincial Government of Nova Scotia to not demolish buildings on Prince St. and Hollis St. until further studies on the waterfront were completed. CPAC further lobbied municipal government on the importance of establishing a Planning Advisory Committee.

**1974** - CPAC lobbies municipal government on the Views By-law. This followed CPAC's previous involvement in creating the By-law.

**1975** - CPAC lobbies the Municipal Development Plan Committee - Residential Sub-Committee regarding the citizen participation policies.

**1976** - CPAC lobbies the Municipal Development Plan Committee on the issue of public participation in the planning process and on the importance of residential housing in the Central Business District (CBD) as a means to creating a safe and "vital" 24-hour environment.

**1977** - CPAC continues their lobbying efforts, targeting the Chairman of the Municipal Development Plan Committee, on public participation in the planning process. This same year CPAC sponsored Focus on the Waterfront. Several community meetings followed the conference on the issues of waterfront development in Halifax.

Besides the specific activities highlighted above, CPAC was also engaged in a variety of other municipal affairs. During the Municipal Development Plan process of the 1970s CPAC shared resources with the municipality and helped to organize and publicize public meetings and workshops on various planning topics. CPAC also provided various support services to



the Downtown Committee, and organized Weekend on the Waterfront. This event showcased the development proposals and plans for the waterfront, held a design-in, public discussions, walking and water tours, film viewings, and slide shows. Meetings and correspondence with the Waterfront Development Corporation followed these community activities.

In the late 1970s and through the 1980s Federal funding for many community organizations was cut, and CPAC was no exception. However, given the positive force of the organization the Province of Nova Scotia continued supporting CPAC through Planning Aid, providing \$10,000-15,000 a year for neighborhood planning projects (PC Grant 2009). Community groups consulted with CPAC for assistance on a wide range of local issues. Given the reputation of the organization it was not difficult to find community projects. CPAC's role in Planning Aid was to make the appropriate collaborative connection with professionals in the community to facilitate the projects, such as engaging faculty at the Nova Scotia College of Art and Design (NSCAD) and the Technical University of Nova (TUNS). Urban Renewal projects were beginning to take shape in the city, concerned with how this was occurring the Central Mortgage and Housing Corporation (CMHC) expanded their Neighborhood Improvement Program (NIP) program to help deal with backlash from urban renewal. CMHC provided the funds and the municipality provided a professional planner(s) to work with neighborhood groups to develop local improvement plans. If the plans were approved additional funding would be provided to complete the project. CPAC served an important role in supporting planners, designers and the communities engaging in the planning process. However, by the end of the 1970s the Province ended their funding to CPAC. This forced the organization to rely solely on their membership and community volunteers; by the late 1980s the organization became unstable leaving a void only partially filled by groups such as the Heritage Trust and Ecology Action Centre. Currently no group in the Halifax Region makes the important connection between neighborhood and the planning discipline for the completion of projects designed, developed, and inspired by the community. While Dalhousie University, through their Faculty of Architecture and Planning, incorporates community projects into the curriculum, the University is not able to respond to the volume of community requests brought forward (PC Grant 2009).

Given the legacy of community planning in Halifax it is not surprising to see community groups such as the PDC, Fusion Halifax, Northend Community Gardening Association, Nova Scotia Public Interest and Research Group, HUB Halifax, and even Poodle Club emerge. Broadly, all aim to increase public education and involvement on the issues related to quality of life in the Halifax Region. This tradition of community interest in planning, and the desire of other groups to mobilize, makes the city an opportune location for a planning and design centre that can build bridges and advance a larger community agenda.



Urban design and planning issues are receiving increased public attention in all cities (Rahaim 2002). In the case of Halifax, issues of transportation, housing, and heritage preservation, are becoming more prevalent as the municipality aims to grow. In response to these issues organization like the PDC emerge to help groups advance their ideas on issues of planning and design. This task is not easy as public concern about projects tends to manifest in opposition (Rahaim 2002: 77); making the conditions challenging for any organization working to enhance the public dialogue over issues of planning and design. This often results in common struggles such as lasting funding streams, and maintaining public legitimacy. To combat this planning groups must “accept the uncertainty, the complexity, and the freedom of turbulence, while emphasizing the responsibly to understand, to engage in dialogue, and to be creative” (Paget 1981: 140).

All cities face tough challenges, as Doug Aberley comments, “it is now well chronicled that there are too few approaches, promulgated by too few theorists, to the problems that planners are asked to conceptualize and solve” (Aberley 2000: 153). This makes solving challenges in our modern world difficult. However, if we change our professional discourse in a way that enhances community ownership over problems and encourages a collective and creative dialogue we may find that the solutions to our problems are on the tip of our tongue - planners just need to provide the avenue for such exchange. As Grant comments, “planners have a role to play in helping people understand the implications of the choices they make today for achieving their aspirations tomorrow” (Grant 1994: 152). This is a difficult task and requires help from organization such as CPAC. The role that CPAC played in enhancing the public interest and involvement in planning is an important legacy to consider when organizations such as the PDC are thinking of mobilizing.



## 4.0 Case Studies

### 4.1 Community Design Centre of Pittsburgh



**Type of Organization:** Non-Profit

**Location:** Pittsburgh, PA

**Organization Start Date:** 1968

**Population:** 312, 819

**Members:** N/A

**Budget Size:** 1.2 Million

#### Organizational Profile

Originally established as the Pittsburgh Architects Workshop (PAW), the Community Design Center of Pittsburgh (CDCP) was created in 1968 and incorporated in 1975 by local architects who provided pro-bono design services to community organizations, individuals and businesses who could not afford to hire an architect (CDCP Online 2009). PAW engaged in a variety of projects, producing an award-winning booklet on accessible play spaces for children, conducted a study on shared living arrangements, and hosted an annual Palladian Ball.

In 1987 the name Community Design Center of Pittsburgh was adopted. With the name change the centre embraced a new approach to service delivery: “acting as a broker by providing grants, technical assistance and education to help individuals and organizations purchase and use professional design and planning services” (CDCP Online 2009). Currently, the CDCP offers a diversity of programs and services that aim to connect people and neighborhoods with resources that will enhance the built environment. These programs have the ultimate goal of promoting economic development and improving the quality of life in the Pittsburgh region.

In 2009 the organization underwent a strategic planning process. The CDCP staff and board have realized the critical connection between the CDCP’s mission and vision, and the system that supports planning and design in Pittsburgh (PC CDCP 2009). This resulted in the CDCP evaluating its current operations and exploring what is needed to address community needs, adjusting the organizations strategies accordingly. The organization believes that there is, “an unprecedented opportunity with the city’s comprehensive planning project. [They] intend to seize this opportunity and mobilize the community to participate in this important process that is so critical to [the] region’s future”(CDCP Strategic Plan 2009). CDCP’s goal by 2015 is, “for Pittsburgh to have a comprehensive vision and plan that reflects best practices and broad community input” (CDCP Strategic Plan 2009).



According to the organization’s strategic plan, “the CDCP will continue to focus on Education, Technical Assistance/Capacity Building, Civic Engagement, with increased attention to System Investment and Monitoring” (CDCP Strategic Plan 2009). To achieve this the organization is strongly committed to “developing a comprehensive civic engagement campaign that leverages [the] existing programs and events to educate the citizenry about what makes an effective planning process” (CDCP Strategic Plan 2009) The CDCP believes that they play an important role in bringing the community together to take ownership over their future, and to build a city that is a model of national best practices in urban planning and civic design (CDCP Strategic Plan 2009).

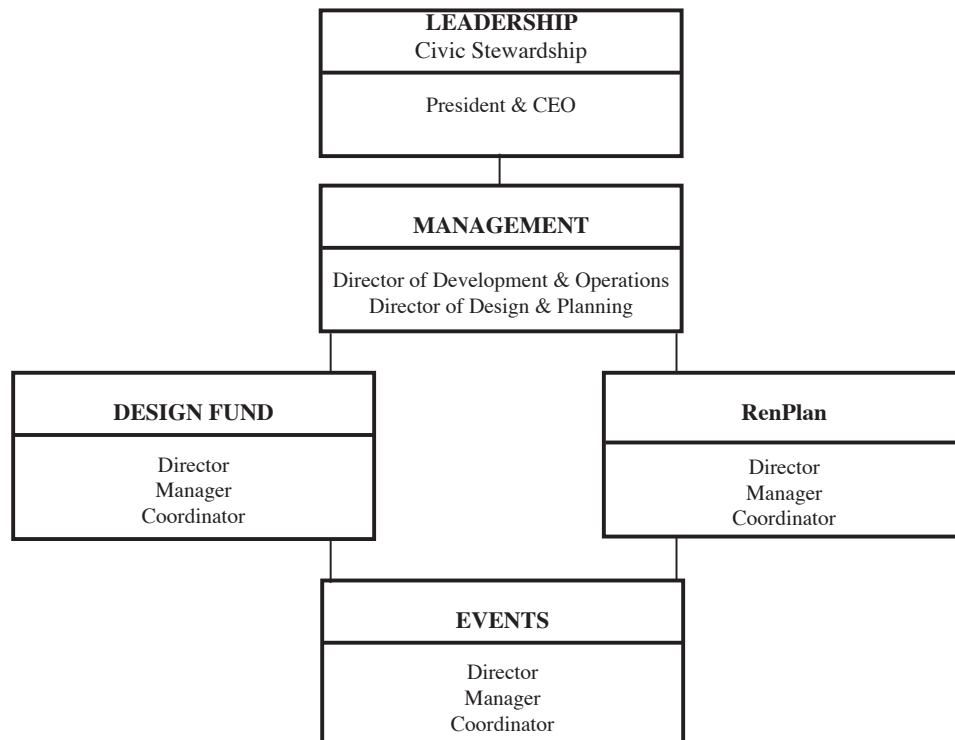
## Mandate

The Community Design Center of Pittsburgh (CDCP) is a non-profit organization that improves quality of life through good design of the built environment.

## Organizational Structure

A 12-15-member board governs the organization. The board of directors is constructed of community members, business members, political leadership and academics.

*Figure.1 : Organizational Structure of CDCP*





The Board maintains decision making power and provides direction to the President who delegates and leads 11 other staff members. The board establishes the strategic direction and secures funding.

The Board oversees the hiring process for both the President and the Board. This is achieved through a governance committee. Approximately a year ago the organization procured the help of a board consultant to help refine the process and ensure that they were making the appropriate decisions and operating in an efficient manner (PC CDCP 2009).

## **Projects**

The organization operates four distinct programs: The Design Fund, RenPlan, Pedal Pittsburgh, and the Civic Stewardship initiative. Collectively these programs define the organizations operations.

### **Design Fund**

The Design Fund is one of the core programs of the CDCP (PC CDCP 2009). The program offers grants and technical assistance to aid “organizations purchase and effectively use of professional architectural and planning services” (CDCP 2007 Brochure). These grants enable other non-profit community based organizations to access professional planning and design services that help to prepare preliminary designs for strategic revitalizations projects. The technical assistance through the fund may include, but is not limited to, project strategy, consultant selection and management, and design review.

Recent Design Fund technical assistance services to non-profit clients around the city of Pittsburgh have included educational presentations and workshops, research to help with project strategies, consultant selection and management and design review. Since 2000 the organization has secured approximately \$1 million in contracts, serving the entire Pittsburgh region. Examples of recent technical assistance include:

#### **A+ Schools – Vacant School Building Reuse Project (2009)**

Working with A+ ([www.aplusschools.org](http://www.aplusschools.org)) and Cool Space Locator ([www.coolspacelocator.com](http://www.coolspacelocator.com)), the CDCP is developing a process to assist the Pittsburgh Public School District with the sale and redevelopment of closed school buildings (CDCP Online 2009).

#### **Carnegie Mellon University – Department of Architecture: Urban Lab (2009)**

As an adjunct professor, a CDCP staff member taught a community based design studio with



projects located in Pittsburgh neighborhoods (CDCP Online 2009).

### **Pittsburgh Department of City Planning – Baum-Centre Planning Initiative (2008)**

The CDCP assisted the Pittsburgh's city planning staff with the facilitation of community input during the planning process, and development of the planning document for Baum-Centre; a proposal of a dual corridor along two streets (CDCP Online 2009).

Further to the technical assistance that is provided through the Design Fund the organization offers financial grants. Since 1987, the CDCP has committed more than \$1 million in Design Fund grants to more than 78 community-based organizations in the City of Pittsburgh to hire architecture and planning services for the earliest stages of planning. These grants and related technical assistance have led to approximately \$94 million in new community investments. Recent grants that have been awarded include:

### **Riverfront Trail Development (2003)**

Friends of the Riverfront were awarded a grant of \$7,500 to aid in the planning for a trail development in Pittsburgh's Southside. The goal of the plan was to make greater pedestrian connections to the waterfront and to define the waterfront as a distinct place in the city (CDCP Online 2009).

### **Federal Hill (2006)**

The Central Northside Neighborhood Council was awarded \$8,333 to create land use and design guidelines for a future residential housing development. The aim of this project is to infuse vitality and creativity through design in an area that struggling. The hope is to reverse the trend of disinvestment in the area and entice attention from new developers (CDCP Online 2009).

### **RenPlan**

The RenPlan program "provides educational materials, renovation resources and low-cost consultations to homeowners planning improvements" (CDCP 2007 Brochure). For a nominal fee the program connects the homeowner with design professionals who will visit and discuss improvement ideas and personalized renovation advice which will add value to the property, as well as educate the homeowner (CDCP 2007 Brochure).

The RenPlan program has coordinated more than 1,500 property owners with volunteer design professionals. It is estimated that this program has influenced \$11 million in home renovations since 1996 (CDCP Brochure 2008). Currently the program is looking to expand to serve the entire Pittsburgh region (PC CDCP, 2009).



## **Pedal Pittsburgh**

Pedal Pittsburgh is the region's premier cycling event celebrating design, health and fitness, and urban lifestyles. This event draws over 2,000 participants annually who have the opportunity to cycle Pittsburgh while taking in design landmarks and unique areas through offering participants a variety of course options. These options accommodate the most experienced cyclist to the new rider. Proceeds of the event help to fund the other programs of the CDCP (CDCP 2007 Brochure). Since the program began in 1994 it has raised more than \$725,000 to support CDCP programming.

## **Funding Structure**

The organization engages in a variety of activities that fund the year-to-year operations. These include: public contributions, private foundations, service fees, and grants.

## **Looking Forward**

The CDCP is currently undergoing a governance review. They are interested in how to better educate their board members and train new ones. The organization continues to plan for major events such as Pedal Pittsburgh. An emerging issue that the centre is researching and programming events around issues of a declining population.

*An advertisement for Pedal Pittsburgh*





## 4.2 East Tennessee Community Design Centre



**Type of Organization:** Non-Profit  
**Location:** Knoxville, Tennessee  
**Organization Start Date:** 1970  
**Population:** 430,000 (Knox, County)  
**Members:** N/A  
**Budget Size:** \$350,000

### Organizational Profile

Bruce McCarty, the then President of the local chapter of the American Institute of Architects (AIA), created the East Tennessee Community Design Center (ETCDC) in 1969. McCarty conceived of the centre after visiting a community design center in Philadelphia (ETCDC Online 2009). On July 1, 1970 the organization was incorporated for the purpose of bringing, “professional design and planning services to not-for-profit groups and agencies that lack the resources to pay for the service”(ETCDC Online 2009).

The organization is structured as 501(c)(3) corporation with an all-volunteer board of directors and a staff of approximately seven with a number of paid student interns from the University of Tennessee College of Architecture and Design (ETCDC Online 2009).

Funding to sustain the operation is derived solely from competitive grants and donations from clients, corporate, and private supporters. With their funding the centre connects “qualified nonprofit groups with pro-bono architectural and engineering services to fill their current need based on a mutually agreeable scope of services” (ETCDC Online: 2009).

### Mandate

The Community Design Center organizes people, ideas, and resources to facilitate positive change in economically distressed and isolated communities in the region (ETCDC Online: 2009).

### Organizational Structure

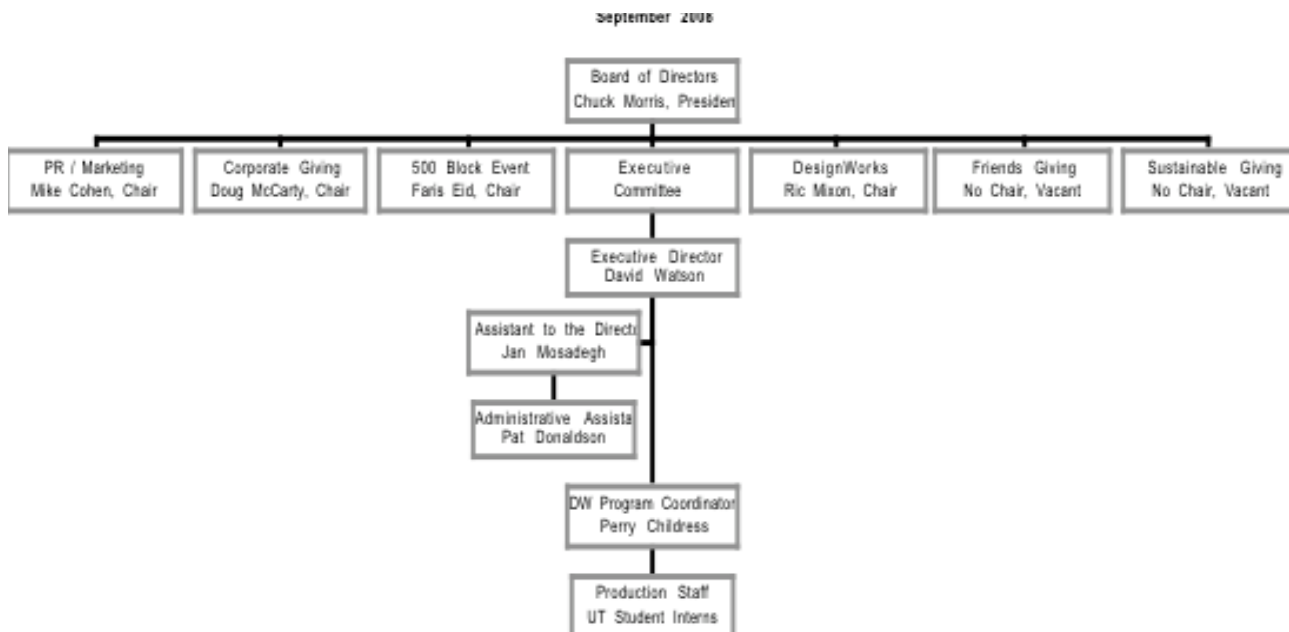
ETCDC operates under a Board of Directors. The board maintains all of the decision making power and provides direction to the Executive Director who delegates and leads staff members. Staff includes an Assistant Director, Administrative Assistant, and a Development Officer.



The board is an essential piece to the operation of the ETCDC (PC ETCDC 2009). The board recruits members through a Board Member Recruitment Process. The recruitment process, chaired by a Nominating Committee, is charged with, “identification, research, cultivate, recruit, orient, involve, and acknowledge potential ETCDC board members” (ETCDC 2004: 3). The *Board Member Recruitment* process defines nine categories of individual who are important to the overall operation of the centre. These individuals possess skills and experience in the following areas, design, financial expertise, public relations, media, government, fundraising, legal, educators, and community at large (ETCDC 2004: 14).

To aid the committee in this process the organization developed a needs assessment matrix. This matrix assigns points to candidates based on the specific needs of the organization. Potential board members are evaluated and selected through this matrix. Once board members have been selected they are asked to sign a *Board Member Agreement*. This agreement binds the board members to various legal and ethical responsibilities. Board members are encouraged to financially support the organization through personal contributions either quarterly, semi-annually, or annually (ETCDC 2004: 7).

Figure 2: Organizational Structure of ETCDC





## **Projects**

ETCDC is the only organization in the region that works for the sole purpose of assisting non-profit groups and agencies with their design and planning assistance needs (ETCDC 2008: 2). In 2008-2009 the Center assisted 41 different organizations with 46 requests. In addition, 12 neighborhoods underwent traffic-calming planning, and 15 façade enhancement projects were conducted through a Community Development Block Grant (ETCDC 2008: 2).

The ETCDC engages in a variety of projects. Past work has included neighborhood consensus building on issues regarding traffic calming, programming and planning building renovations, historic structures restorations and preservations, parks and outdoor space plans, neighborhood and community planning projects, new building designs and interior renovations (ETCDC 2008: 2).

The ETCDC projects are located within the 16 counties of the East Tennessee Development District. The organization does not turn down projects based on geography and the board selects projects under the vision “better communities by design” (ETCDC 2008: 1).

The organization does not actively pursue community projects; rather one of the benefits of operating since the 1970s is the community is trained to approach ETCDC for planning help (PC ETCDC 2009). One of the major criteria for the selection of a project is the community partner cannot have the necessary funds to complete the project. The partner, however, must be willing to fundraise with ETCDC to get the funding.

Examples of projects completed from 2008-2009 include:

### **Façade Enhancement Program (Ongoing)**

An initiative of the City of Knoxville Department of Community Development to assist qualified property owners of the inner city business district in an endeavor to enhance the visual appearance of the building façade. The Design Center provided enhancement alternatives that meet design guidelines and certain financial restrictions of the program (ETCDC Online: 2009).

### **City of Knoxville Department of Community Development (2008)**

The city requested assistance in preparing boards for display at the Partnership for Neighborhood Improvement board meeting. The posters highlighted specific planning and design work happening in the region (ETCDC Online: 2009).



**CPTED Training (2008)**

The Center conducted training for local professionals on Crime Prevention Through Environmental Design (ETCDC Online: 2009).

**Neighborhood Traffic Calming (2009)**

Five neighborhoods were assisted in planning and implementing strategies aimed to reduce speed and volume of motor vehicle traffic (ETCDC Online: 2009)

**Funding**

The funding for the organization is secured through competitive grants and donations from clients, corporate, and private supporters. To support the funding effort the organization engages in door-knocking campaigns, recently developed an endowment fund, and open house fundraisers (PC ETCDC 2009). The majority of the operating budget is allocated to staff salary, programming, and miscellaneous expenditures (PC ETCDC 2009).

**Membership**

The organization does not maintain a membership base; rather anyone who engages the centre through a project, funding, or volunteer efforts is considered a member (PC ETCDC 2009).

Important to the organization are their volunteers. They look to recruit two types of volunteers, professionals and community members. The professionals are used to work on and complete the planning and design activities and the community volunteers are engaged to fill project labor needs. At the current time the organization reported having access to over 200 volunteers (PC ETCDC 2009).

**Partnerships**

The ETCDC would not be able to complete their projects if it was not for partnerships in the community and grants from both the state and federal government. The organization approaches activities as though all projects are collaborative (PC ETCDC 2009). It was noted by the organization that not all partnerships are event/program specific. For example, the ETCDC partners with the local historic preservation society on renting office space to help reduce overhead costs of the organization (PC ETCDC 2009).



## Looking Forward

The ETCDC is currently looking to invest time and energy into growing its endowment fund. Staff believe that this is a good way to secure the efforts and services of the organization in an economically troubling time. In the interviews it was indicated that general operating costs such as rent and utilities continue to be one of the highest costs. ETCDC has had a successful year delivering its services and is continuing to work on planning and design efforts in Knoxville County.

### *Volunteers of the ETCDC*



### *A community education session on Façade Enhancement Program*





## 4.3 Cleveland Urban Design Collaborative



**Type of Organization:** Academic

**Location:** Cleveland, Ohio

**Organization Start Date:** 1983

**Population:** 400,030

**Members:** N/A

**Budget Size:** \$800,020

### Organizational Profile

The Cleveland Urban Design Collaborative (CUDC) “is the combined home of Kent State’s graduate program in urban design and the public service activities of the Urban Design Center of Northeast Ohio (UDC)” (CUDC Online 2009). The UDC is a “community service organization with a professional staff of designers committed to improving the quality of urban places through technical design assistance, research and advocacy” (CUDC Online 2008). The UDC is funded through the Ohio Board of Regents’ Urban University Program and through the College of Architecture and Environmental Design. The UDC connects architecture, planning, and design expertise to urban communities. The staff of the UDC also provides teaching support to Kent State.

CUDC began in 1983 with the support of sponsorship dollars from the Urban University Program, an outreach and community service effort of universities in urban areas of Ohio. With this funding support the CUDC expanded out of Kent State’s Architecture School, and began to focus on issues of historic preservation and the problems of Northeast Ohio’s smaller towns and cities. The organization also began operating studio courses at Kent State focusing on larger urban issues in Cleveland and other urban cores (CUDC Online 2008).

In 1999 the CUDC opened a dedicated office and research location. This facility allowed Kent State to combine community outreach with academic studies. Over time this facility has, “allowed Kent State graduate students to pursue their studies in closer contact with real-world urban design challenges. At the same time, it has allowed the professional staff to have a much more sustained impact on efforts to re-develop the neighborhoods of the region’s largest city” (CUDC Online 2008). The outreach activities of the centre have made it possible to connect professionals and student professionals with important planning and design issues, benefiting all involved.



## **Mandate**

The CUDC provides real-world learning opportunities for Kent State students and allows the UDC staff to provide design services to the entire region served by Kent State's eight campuses, with a particular emphasis on sustained relationships with Cleveland's community development corporations and the network of non-profit organizations supporting them. (CUDC Online 2008).

## **Organizational Structure**

The organization consists of 11 employees. The employees split their time between teaching duties and working for the organization (PC CUDC 2009). All of the human resources practices of the CUDC are carried out through Kent State University. The centre is under the supervision of a Director who has substantial budgetary authority with the direct focus of carrying out the mission. The Dean of the College of Architecture and Environmental Design has the overall responsibility of ensuring that the centre functions year-to-year.

The board of the organization is comprised of staff members and a director, who reports directly to the dean of the college.

*(CUDC did not have an organizational chart for their operations. Those interest in the organizational features of the University should consult: <http://www.kent.edu/about/administration/president/organizational-chart>)*

## **Projects**

The CUDC engages primarily in outreach and research-focused activities. The organization is concerned with events and projects that explore the general quality of life in the city (PC CUDC 2009). The CUDC is also responsible to those who fund and support the organization. This impacts the types of activities and projects that the centre conducts.

Guiding the organization is the goal to “develop awareness of excellence in urban design through lectures, symposia and design charrettes on important design challenges facing the region, through publications on best practices and through direct advocacy” (CUDC Online 2009).

Other functions of the organization include a Collaborators Network; a group of meet-



ings co-sponsored with organizations to discuss issues of importance. This network extends beyond the academic and outreach activities to “embrace a wide range of interactions with communities and institutions in the region” (CUDC Online 2008). The organization seeks participation from the region’s other academic institutions and universities, and non-profit organizations with an environmental and design focus (CUDC Online 2009).

Examples of recent projects include:

**Bolivar Village Master Plan – Bolivar (2008)**

Bolivar is a historic village located along the southernmost stretch of the CanalWay Ohio Heritage Corridor. The UDC is developing a plan for these key open spaces, as well as the main streets that connect them (CUDC Online 2009).

**Brimfield Town Center Plan – Brimfield (Ongoing)**

Brimfield’s Town Center is a former rural crossroads that is now subject to commercial development pressure. The UDC has been asked to look at existing development patterns and zoning and tasked with creating a town center vision for the future (CUDC Online 2009).

**City of Hubbard Downtown Revitalization Concept – Hubbard (Ongoing)**

The UDC was asked to develop a vision for Downtown Hubbard that would build on the historic main street character. (CUDC Online 2009).

**Cleveland State University College of Science (2009)**

The College of Science at CSU is partnering with Cuyahoga County on a new crime lab facility, and CSU has asked the UDC to study a number of possible sites around the CSU Campus to locate the facility in conformity with the UDC’s CSU Campus Master Plan (CUDC Online 2009).

**Funding Structure**

The CUDC operates with the support of three major benefactors, The George Gund Foundation, The Cleveland Foundation, and the First Energy Foundation. Over the years these benefactors, Kent State University and various other patrons support this “unique alliance of educational and community interests” (CUDC Online 2008).

The responsibility of maintaining the funding for the organization is shared between the Dean, Director, and development office of the college.



## **Membership**

The organization does not recruit memberships. The organization relies heavily on the support of community partners, staff, and students to support the organization, but also to work as volunteers.

## **Partnerships**

Partnerships are essential to the success of the organization. The CUDC is a partnership between UDC and Kent State University, making collaboration an inherent feature of the organization.

The major benefit of partnering with CUDC is access to the region's only architecture school. This is useful for academics, students, and government. For academics and students it provides access to real life situations allowing them to test theories and ideas in a safe environment. It benefits government because they can "investigate things that may be too risky for public consumption" (PC CUDC 2009).

## **Looking Forward**

The CUDC is embarking on a multi-year effort to "develop and test design techniques appropriate to urban centers that have lost population" (CUDC Online 2008). This initiative is part of an "ongoing national and international dialogue about quality of life in regions that anticipate little or no growth in coming decades" (CUDC Online 2008).



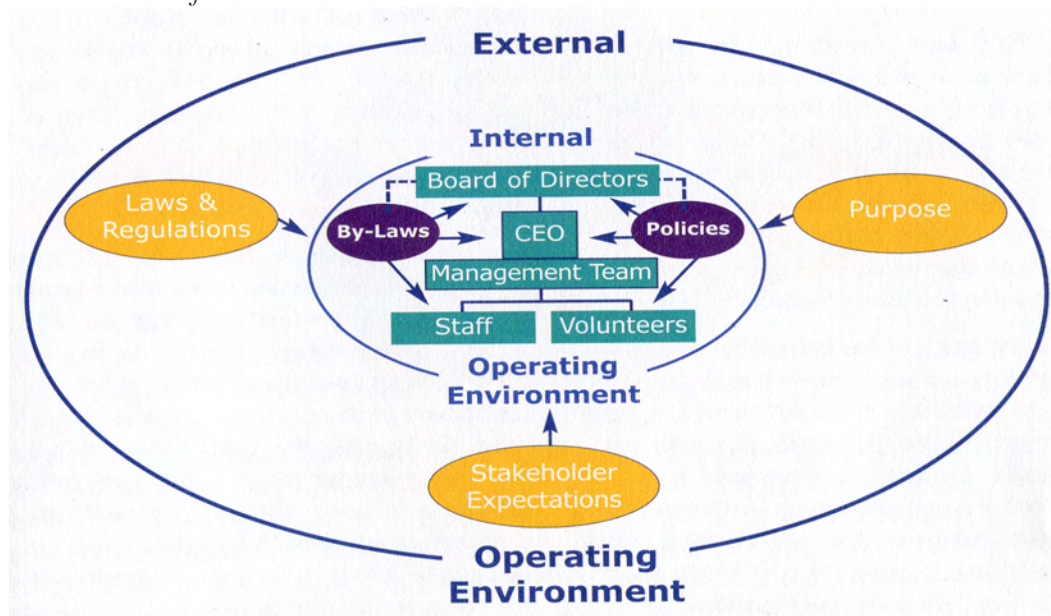
## 5.0 Findings

Interviewing staff in planning and design centres provided insight into how organizations, which have experienced success operate. The three centres interviewed exposed valuable discoveries about operating processes for planning and design centres. These lessons emerged in the areas of governance and collaborative partnerships. If appropriate attention and diligence is applied to these two areas of operation the PDC could have the potential to begin operating as envisioned by its mandate and business plan.

### 5.1 Governance

Governance is how an organization facilitates decision-making. Specifically, “governance refers to the process and structure used to direct and manage an organization’s operations and activities” (Deloitte LLP, 2004:3). This area of operation looks to understand and guide organizational efforts from conception to completion. Without a clear way of making decisions, setting future direction, and dealing with the day-to-day business of operating can lead to confusion within the organization, and potentially create disinterest amongst staff and the membership. All organizations are faced with challenges in today’s economy. Under these conditions, however, organizations that are well-governed have proven to be more effective in achieving their goals and will be more likely to succeed than poorly governed ones (Deloitte and LLP, 2004: 3).

*Figure 3: Elements of Governance*



*This diagram illustrates how organization are impacted by both external and internal operating environments*



Establishing a clear governance structure requires time; this is the major reason for interviewing centres that have been operating for an established length of time. A common trend emerged amongst all three centres, this was having an established Board of Directors. This report suggests that the major lesson learned regarding the governance of planning and design centres is in having a strong board that will take the reigns and lead the organization by charting future direction and fundraising which allows for the continued operation of the centre.

## 5.2 Collaborative Partnerships

Collaborative partnerships require reaching out to community partners. This organizational area comes down to the old adage; many heads are better than one. The problems of Halifax will not be solved by planning and design alone. Solving complicated problems, whatever the planning and design issue, requires many different groups to work together (Hietkamp 1996). As Grant describes, “communities are shaped in part by natural processes but also by countless human choices, large and small” (Grant 2008: 3). These “countless human choices” are better informed when community groups can work together.

The practice of working with other groups was articulated by the three centres as being essential to their operations, whether these partnerships were in the form of projects, such as Pedal Pittsburg, the overall operations of CUDC, or in-kind relationships, such as the ETCDC and the local heritage preservation society. The bottom line for the centres interviewed is that they would not have experienced much of their operating success without engaging in collaborative partnerships. However, relationship building happens over time and requires, respect and trust. This is something that cannot be gained over night, as CPAC illustrated, it comes with demonstrated involvement and follow-through.

The case studies illustrated that planning and design centres can function, and that they are functioning in places like Pittsburgh, Tennessee, and Cleveland. While this may appear to be a minor point, it reinforces the idea of the PDC as a concept that can have an impact on the debates and discussions of the city.

The interviews confirm the importance of having a strong board that will take ownership and guide the organization. The three cases further indicate that collective partnerships are essential. All three of the centres have an established board structure that set the direction for the organization and that can troubleshoot organizational issues and challenges as well as a support network of community groups.



A minor exception is the Cleveland Urban Design Collaborative. This is due to the association of the centre with Kent State University, an important connection for consideration given the linkage of the PDC to Dalhousie University, a connection that is fostered through the CEU. The difference takes form in two ways; first the staff makes up the board and is led by the Dean of the College of Architecture and Environmental Design. The second difference is in the fiduciary realm. Being directly connected with an academic institution places the organization under the financial care of the University; all fundraising efforts, and the majority of funding for staff and projects comes through the administrative channels of the institution. This process of governance should be strongly considered by the PDC given the struggles they have had over the past six years implementing the centres mandate.

The interviews highlighted the importance of centres' ability to plan for the future. This process is greatly enhanced through an established board of directors and support from the community. Of the two centres that have an external board in place a great deal of importance is placed on the selection of these members and their roles as directors. Both boards of the CDCP and the ETCDC consist of community members and various professionals (lawyers, planners, architects, entrepreneurs etc). This extends the role of the centre in the community and helps legitimize its work amongst professionals.

Governance structure and collaborative partnerships are important operational areas that the CEU must consider in discussions regarding the future of the PDC. As the case studies highlight, attention to these areas will only enhance the ability of the PDC to achieve its mandate. Developing these operational areas take time. This is another consideration for the CEU as it is not likely that the PDC will begin operating in the near future. In determining what is next for the PDC many discussions and debates must occur, these findings will help to better inform this process.



## **6.0 Conclusion:**

### **Looking Forward**

Exploring the planning and design concept through looking at the PDC in Halifax, and reviewing other centres provides better insights into how the CEU may want to move the PDC forward. More broadly, this report exposes major issues that must be considered by the CEU if they are to continue incubating the concept. The CEU must seriously consider the potential damage they could do to what was commonly referred to as “a good idea” if they continue to allow the centre to function loosely.

Looking to organizations locally and in the United States that have successfully engaged in project based community planning and design illustrates that the idea is possible, but only with the appropriate attention.

Advancing the idea of a PDC will take time, all of the interviews and CPAC illustrate that engaging the community and working to enhance the planning and design of a region takes time and patience. In today’s real time world we often expect things to be immediate. This is not the case with planning and design centres. The PDC concept must serve the community, it must build community trust and respect. If this does not happen the PDC in Halifax will become irrelevant, as opposed to being a uniting and collaborative idea, it may divide professionals and the public.

The CEU faces many discussions and decisions related to the PDC. The future of the idea rests with them. If they choose to dissolve the idea and move on the CEU in some ways is protecting the PDC, defending it from being diluted by assumptions and wild aspirations. On the other hand if the CEU decides to continue with the PDC it must realize that investment must be made in developing a strong governance structure and gaining the support of community partners. This will take time, but if done correctly the PDC may be as successful as those interviewed. Whatever the choice this report suggests that the CEU considers the future of the PDC carefully.



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# **Appendix I: Centres Contacted:**

**Assist Inc.**

<http://www.assistutah.org/index.html>

**Charlottesville Community Design Center**

<http://www.cvilledesign.org/index>

**Charlottesville Community Design Centre**

[cvilledesign.org](http://cvilledesign.org)

**Cleveland Urban Design Collaborative**

<http://www.cudc.kent.edu/>

**Community by Design Inc.**

<http://www.cbdinc.us>

**Community Design Centre**

<http://www.uc.edu/cdc/>

**Community Design Centre of Atlanta**

<http://www.cdcatl.org/>

**Community Design Centre of Minnesota**

<http://www.comdesignctrmn.org/index.php>

**Community Design Centre of Pittsburgh**

<http://www.cdcp.org/home.htm>

**Community Design Collaborative Phully**

<http://cdesignc.org>

**Community Outreach Partnership Centre**

<http://www.copcaz.org/index.php>

**Community Planning.net**

<http://www.communityplanning.net/index.php>

**Design Exchange**

<http://www.dx.org/>

**Doors of Perception**

<http://www.doorsofperception.com/>



**East Tennessee Community Design Center**

<http://www.etcdc.org>

**Environmental Works Community Design Center**

<http://www.eworks.org/contact.htm>

**Florida Community Design Centre**

<http://www.flcdc.org/>

**Live Green**

<http://www.livagreen.com/>

**Metropolitan Design Center**

<http://stage4.design.umn.edu/>

**Neighborhood Design and Resource Center**

[http://www.norfolk.gov/planning/comehome/Design\\_Center.asp](http://www.norfolk.gov/planning/comehome/Design_Center.asp)

**Orton Family Foundation**

<http://www.orton.org>

**Our North Side**

<http://www.ournorthside.org/home.html>

**Pathstone Community Centre**

<http://www.pathstone.org/about/>

**Plan Philly**

<http://planphilly.com/>

**Planetizen**

<http://www.planetizen.com/>

**Rochester Regional Community Design Center**

<http://www.rrcdc.org/index.html>

**San Francisco Planning and Urban Research Association**

<http://www.spur.org/>

**Seattle Design Commission**

<http://www.seattle.gov/>

**Tap Inc.**

<http://www.tapinc.org/>



**The Design Centre for Sustainability**

<http://www.dcs.sala.ubc.ca/index.html>

**The Glass House Community Design Association**

[http://www.theglasshouse.org.uk/index.php?pg\\_id=70](http://www.theglasshouse.org.uk/index.php?pg_id=70)

**University of Arizona Community Outreach Centre**

<http://copcaz.org/>

**University of Arkansas Community Design Centre**

<http://uacdc.uark.edu/>

**University of Illinois City Design Centre**

<http://www.uic.edu/aa/cdc/files/home1.html>

**Urban Design Centre of Raleigh**

<http://www.raleigh-nc.org>

**Van Alen Institute**

<http://www.vanalen.org/>



## **Appendix 2: Independent Project Interview Questions:**

Date:

Name of Interviewee:

Organization:

Location:

City Size:

Membership Size:

### **Mandate**

What is the organizational mandate of your operation?

What was the process for arriving at your mandate?

When did you begin to operate?

Can your promotional material be accessed online? Can you provide me with a PDF version for review? (A share space will need to be established online)

### **Funding (Grants v. Private)**

How does your organization fund its activities?

How much funding is provided through grants?

Less than 5, 000      5,000 to less than 10,000      10,000 +

What types of grants do you apply for?

How much funding is provided through private means?

Less than 5, 000      5,000 to less than 10,000      10,000 +

Do you have an alternate form of fundraising?

How do you organize your fundraising efforts?

(Staff person / private firm / etc)

### **Budget**

What is the size of your annual operating budget?

Can your provide a list of the top 3 areas the organization spends their budget?

### **Public Engagement**

What types of activities does your operation engage in?

How do you determine what activities to run?



How do you engage members of the public?

### **Volunteer base**

How do you involve volunteers in your activities?

Do you involve volunteers in the operation of your organization?

How many volunteers do you have?

What means do you use to recruit volunteers?

### **Membership**

Do you have a membership system or program?

How many members do you have?

What means do you use to recruit members?

Are there benefits to being a member?

Do you target specific groups as potential members?

Students

Professionals

Government

Community members

Is your membership predominantly one interest group? Or a mixture?

What are the benefits of being a member?

### **Partnerships**

What types of collaborative projects do you engage in?

Do you have partners?

What are the benefits of being a partner?

### **Organizational structure**

Can you provide an organization chart for your organization?

How is your leadership determined?

Who participates on the board of your organization?

How are they selected?

What is their decision making power?



