

Implementation Readiness

Our smart community project is the HEART of a larger integrated community health improvement initiative. Readiness and ability to implement is tied directly to that larger initiative.

EXPERIENCE WITH COMPLEX PROJECTS

Our community health improvement initiative is a complex project. That effort has been ongoing for 2 plus years. It has not been easy and we have gained significant experience. Community residents, municipalities, health care providers, employers, businesses, not-for-profits, faith-based communities, provincial government departments and agencies, ... have all been engaged and are participating. As far we know, this is the first initiative of its kind in Canada. This initiative is facilitated and supported by the Airdrie & Area Health Coop.

We have learned that it takes a community to implement an initiative such as this. It will take the community to implement our smart community project as part of that initiative. There are certainly challenges with an all-in community approach but there are also benefits. One key benefit is access to needed expertise and experience. The municipalities in our community have significant experience with large multi-stakeholder and multi-dimensional projects as do some of the large employers in the community. There are individuals in the community who have significant experience with developing, leading and managing complex projects who have offered to support this effort. All of these contributions can and will be facilitated through the Coop. Where needed expertise and experience does not exist, it will be secured collectively through the Coop.

STRUCTURES, PROCESSES & PRACTICES IN PLACE

The City of Airdrie and others in the community sponsored the incorporation of the Airdrie and Area Health Benefits Cooperative under the Alberta Cooperatives Act. That structure was selected because we know that one party, e.g. a municipality, cannot do it to the community. A cooperative structure is an association of persons and organization who are united voluntarily to meet needs and aspirations through a jointly owned and democratically controlled enterprise. All members are equal and all have a voice – one member one vote. Cooperatives are based on the values of self-help, self-responsibility, democracy, equality, equity and solidarity. We believe this structure is the best all-in structure for a community approach to health and health care that is enabled through open data and connected technologies.



The other important attribute of a cooperative is that all members are owners. Membership is FREE for all. They do not need to give up or subsume their autonomy, purpose and expertise. They contribute their purpose and expertise to a cause that is greater than they could aspire to on their own and by doing so leverage up their own purpose and expertise.

They also retain ownership of their data and connected technologies and share ownership in jointly owned data and connected technologies. We see that as a significant advantage.

Through the Coop, resources dedicated to the smart community project are in place. The Coop has created an Information Governance Committee and has in place a Chief Digital Officer and a Director of Digital Operations. Through this committee and these individual's expertise, resources will be secured from the City of Airdrie and other members and partners. This is in addition to other expertise related to innovation, change management, project management, community engagement, communications, ... that reside with the Coop. Finally, efforts are underway to create a Municipal Innovation Sandbox in partnership with the City of Airdrie and the provincial government.

It is through the Coop that collaborative efforts will be facilitated and managed. The Coop acts as the "glue" to bring the community together. The Coop, over the past two years, has proven it is capable of taking on this role and supporting the community in realize collective gains.

ORGANIZATIONAL STRENGTHS & WEAKNESSES

Our strength is that we have an all-in community structure through which to action our smart community project and that structure has expertise and resources associated with it. Our weakness is that this structure is relatively young and therefore the community as a whole has little experience participating in and working through a cooperative organization. That weakness will be overcome a number of ways:

- Hundreds of individuals and dozens of organizations have already been engaged. We will leverage off that experience and that input to involve them further.
- We will broaden engagement efforts to continually involve others in the community who have not been fully engaged to date.
- As part of broadening engagement efforts, we will begin enrolling members and developing formal partnerships thereby involving individuals and organizations more directly.
- We will use the input we have from the community to begin to deliver on identified needs to prove that what could not be accomplished by one party can be accomplished by the community coming together.



- We will continue to leverage and secure expertise to prove that we have the capacity to deliver.
- We will measure engagement and benefits the accrue through collaborative efforts.

