

Final Report

Human Services Planning Coalition

**Review and Evaluation of the
Coalition**

Presented by

Western Management Consultants of Ontario

And

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Executive Summary

The Human Services Planning Coalition (HSPC) was established in February 2001 in recognition of the need for long-term, sustainable, integrated planning and funding of human services in the rapidly growing Region of York. The HSPC partners include representatives (elected and staff) of all levels of government, service provider agencies and corporations, the non-profit sector and consumers of human services. The Coalition advocates for adequate and timely investment in human services so that the quality of life in York Region is maintained and enhanced.

When the Coalition was established, there was a commitment to review its effectiveness after a few years. In January 2004, a motion was passed to conduct the review of its purpose and organizational structure this year. An Advisory Committee was struck to guide the review and evaluation. This summary reflects the findings of that review.

The review is based on documents, face-to-face and telephone interviews with stakeholders and an on-line survey of stakeholders. The evaluation was conducted during the months of August and September 2004.

Evaluation Results

There is broad support for the Coalition, its purpose, its structure and its activities. As familiarity with the organization increases, the support becomes stronger. People see it as a young, unique organization that is only just hitting its stride and those who are familiar with it support it continuing to move forward and build on the foundation. There is little support or pressure for changing the structure or accountability of the Coalition.

Those who have a working knowledge of the organization see the Coalition as delivering value for money for the people of York Region. Even those who have a low level of familiarity are prepared to hold off on judging it – they remain neutral and could likely become supporters if they had more knowledge.

There is relatively broad agreement that there is a need for better communication and more focus. With respect to communication, those who attend Coalition meetings need to communicate more effectively and more completely back to their organizations and to the organizations in the sector they represent. General communications need to be more targeted and to communicate the achievements and benefits of the Coalition in terms the target can identify with.

Finally, the Coalition needs to move to a new phase of work to signal its development and “maturation” to all stakeholders. Its strategic vision should be refined to articulate particular priorities and to identify specific, concrete targets to be achieved within those priorities in the short and medium term. Respondents recognized that the Coalition needed to be broadly based in its activities initially, in order to demonstrate its usefulness to the wide variety of stakeholders it encompasses. While they did not suggest what the priorities should be, they clearly

recommend that the Coalition now focus its energy more narrowly and deliver measurable results. If the Coalition pursues this path, they believe its demonstrated role, as a catalyst of change and success for York Region's human services, will become more well established and thus provide the requisite influence and leadership to truly achieve the vision of a sustainable, long-term, integrated planning framework for human services in York Region.

Recommendations for moving forward

The respondents had many good suggestions for moving the organization forward to the next level of effectiveness and action. The consultants reviewed and synthesized the suggestions, added insights from their experience and created recommendations for action in three major areas:

Concept and Purpose

Here the recommendations centre on protecting the current model, clarifying the statements of purpose and reviewing the principles.

Operational Matters

There were a number of recommendations regarding Structure and Governance, including the need to develop a succession plan. The Efficiency and Effectiveness of the Coalition can be enhanced by developing concrete measures of success and by setting milestones and targets that meet specific priorities that result in real results in the near and medium term. Communications needs to be enhanced in several areas and there are recommendations for this. As well Meetings can be enhanced and Coalition Sector Representatives need a clearer understanding of their accountabilities.

Future Direction

Basically, the Coalition needs to define the scope of the Coalition via a new round of priority setting. Once the boundaries of the efforts are defined, it should articulate the priorities clearly and unambiguously and work toward achievable results within that scope.

1.0 Introduction and Mandate of the Evaluation

The Human Services Planning Coalition (HSPC) was established in February 2001 in recognition of the need for long-term, sustainable, integrated planning and funding of human services in the rapidly growing Region of York. HSPC's Charter, formally adopted in May 2001 and revised in January 2004, defines the organization's purpose, principles, organizational structure, accountability, membership, roles and responsibilities and channels of communication. A copy of the Charter can be found in Appendix 1 of this document.

The HSPC partners include representatives (elected and staff) of all levels of government, service provider agencies and corporations, the non-profit sector and consumers of human services. The HSPC proactively responds to rapid growth and diversity in York Region by sharing resources, knowledge and best practices. The Coalition advocates for adequate and timely investment in human services so that the quality of life in York Region is maintained and enhanced.¹ At the present time, York Region funds the main activities of the HSPC. Further funding for specific initiatives comes from partners or from grants. Partners have provided in-kind services to support the Coalition.

When the Coalition was established, there was a commitment to review its effectiveness after a few years. In January 2004, a motion was passed to conduct the review of its purpose and organizational structure this year. An Advisory Committee was struck to guide the review and evaluation.

The terms of reference call for the review to “focus more on reaction (i.e., customer satisfaction), learning (i.e., changes in knowledge and attitude), and, to a lesser extent, on behavioural change (i.e., changes in practices) and results (i.e., quantitative and qualitative changes). At the same time, the review should look at governance, measures of success and funding (i.e., value for money.)”

¹ The first two paragraphs are adapted from the study's terms of reference and from “Fair is Fair: Health Care Investment in York Region”.

2.0 Evaluation Methodology

2.1 Documents and Meetings

The consulting team reviewed all relevant documents – plans, strategies, website, and the various products produced by the Coalition over the past years. We met with the Advisory Committee on two occasions – first to update them on our progress and then to review the initial findings and draft recommendations. In addition, we held meetings as required with the Director, Human Services Planning Branch once the data had been collected and analyzed by the consultants.

2.2 Surveys

Two surveys were developed (for external and internal stakeholders), based on questions identified in the terms of reference, with additional questions created by the consultants based on their program evaluation experience. The surveys were essentially identical except that external stakeholders were asked one additional question – to assess familiarity with HSPC. The surveys were available on line (through SurveyMonkey.com) from mid-August to mid-September. Also, copies of the survey were distributed to two group meetings and the consultants entered the answers on line for those participants.

Internal Stakeholders included all the partners of the Coalition itself, alternates and those who have sat on Task Groups and Action Groups. Several of these individuals who were interviewed said that they chose not to fill out the questionnaire, as they knew they were being interviewed. As a result, the response rate is less than 100%.

Internal Surveys sent: 46

Internal Surveys received: 27

Response Rate: 59%

External Stakeholders were defined as representing the communities of interest, but not active on the Coalition itself. This included human service providers, York Region staff and Regional and Area Municipal Councillors. Some have been involved in an Action or Task Group. The distribution and response rate for the external stakeholders was:

External Surveys sent or distributed: 121

External Surveys received: 46

Response Rate: 38%

Overall, the consultants judged the response rate as quite good. It is to be expected that those more actively involved with the Coalition would have a higher response rate

2.3 Interviews

We held 18 personal interviews with representatives of the Coalition and external stakeholders. Most were face-to-face and lasted on average 30 – 40 minutes. We found that the individuals were very generous with their time and came to the interviews prepared with thoughtful comments. Those who had filled out the survey in advance were able to provide additional information that was very helpful.

We also held two focus groups – one with community members and one with the Advisory Forum on Children, Youth and Families.

In the appendices we have included the survey and interview templates, lists of those who were involved and the survey results in detail.

3.0 Findings Related to the Specific Evaluation Mandate

3.1 *Format of the Findings*

In this section we outline the findings as they relate to each of the purposes of the Coalition and as they relate to the other areas to be considered (as laid out in the terms of reference.)

The four stated purposes of the Coalition are to:

- Identify on-going needs and long-term solutions,
- Coordinate funding and planning efforts,
- Act as a conduit of information, and
- Marshal resources.

3.2 *Findings regarding Each Purpose*

Each of the four purpose statements was evaluated by internal and external stakeholders through the survey and through responses in the interviews. Each is analyzed in turn.

3.2.1 Purpose One – Identify On-going Needs and Long-Term Solutions

Satisfaction with delivery on this purpose was very highly rated with over 75% of all (internal and external) survey respondents indicating that the Coalition was effective or very effective. This varied by experience with the Coalition – 100% of internal respondents rated the Coalition’s performance as a “3” or a “4”, that is, at the effective end of the scale.

Interviews confirmed this finding with participants citing the dialogue process generated by the Coalition as contributing heavily to progress in this area. In particular, the Task Groups’ and Action Groups’ work on special interest topics generated outcomes that allowed the Coalition to agree on particular needs, learn about each others’ requirements and develop recommendations for long-term solutions. For example, the position papers are a specific outcome in this regard and were frequently cited as proof positive of the Coalition’s success with this part of its mandate.

3.2.2 Purpose Two – Co-ordinate Funding and Planning Efforts

While not as highly rated as Purpose One, this purpose received a positive evaluation, with over 60% of all respondents rating it as effective (scale value of 3) or very effective (value 4). However, for those without direct experience, over one-quarter of them were unable to give a rating.

Interviews give us some insight into the survey results. While most participants supported the Coalition's purpose and delivery on the co-ordination of planning in general, several commented on the fact that the Coalition has no authority to "co-ordinate funding." Therefore, it is an outcome that could not be readily achieved, and its rating cannot be high given the complexity of human services funding and the HSPC's place in that structure.

The planning efforts were reported to have had a substantive positive impact on behaviour. Informally, several interview participants commented on a new-found comfort level in contacting colleagues around the table to problem solve and trouble-shoot on an ad-hoc basis for specific issues that arise during the course of their work. Formally, the Task and Action Groups set outcome goals for themselves that were achieved on a cross-functional basis (e.g., the Work Force Summit, the position papers, etc.)

3.2.3 Purpose Three – Act as a Conduit of Information

The Coalition is seen as highly effective on this purpose. The survey shows nearly 90% of all respondents rating it as effective (value 3) or highly effective (value 4). Essentially, anyone with any experience (internal or external) with the HSPC rated this positively.

During the interviews, one of the most frequent responses to the question on achievements was enthusiastic commentary on the process and dynamics of this group coming together. Many commented on how, as the Coalition matured, more and more information was shared at the meetings, both formally and informally.

Further analysis indicated that the communication was assessed at many levels:

- Overall communication among HSPC partners is good and getting better. It is most effective at the Action and Task Group level.
- Communication back to the sector communities is spotty. Some HSPC sector representatives do not communicate back to their organizations or to other related organizations sufficiently.
- Communication out to the broader community is seen as weak. HSPC is not generally known or understood by the community at large.
- Formal communications on specific topics (position papers) have been well received by most; there were specific ideas for strengthening that can be seen in the "Survey – Written-in Comments" Appendix.
- More general formal communications (e.g., newsletters, website) are seen as less effective and some question the value of the investment in them.

3.2.4 Purpose Four – Marshal Resources

As with co-ordinating funding, the Coalition was seen as somewhat less effective in this area. In the survey, approximately two-thirds of respondents with an opinion rated the Coalition as effective (value 3) or highly effective (value 4). This is still positive, especially given the

Coalition's lack of authority to actually change how individual organizations commit their resources.

In their written-in comments, respondents recognized the inherent difficulty facing the Coalition in attempting to broker resources from among human service providers, agencies and the like who operate with no available surpluses. As well, they see that it is difficult to influence sources beyond the providers who are coping with a myriad of competing priorities.

In interviews, a distinction was often made between human resources and financial resources. The Coalition was given "higher marks" for their ability to marshal the human resources. On the other hand, there was optimism that the position papers would support lobbying efforts and an increased ability to marshal financial resources in the future.

3.3 Findings regarding Governance and Operational Matters

In addition to assessing the four purposes, we examined general issues around governance as well as specific elements such as structure, accountability, roles and responsibilities and measures of success.

3.3.1 Structure

When asked whether there were opportunities to improve the structure of HSPC, many survey respondents replied in the affirmative. However, there was no consensus on what to change. Suggestions ranged from making the HSPC a freestanding independent body to integration with other planning bodies that already exist to making it a permanent part of the Regional bureaucracy with a legislated mandate.

During the interviews, favourable comments were made about the variety of partners and the organizations they represent. This variety enhances their ability to achieve their purposes (information sharing, marshalling resources, understanding the issues, etc.). Some questions were raised concerning the size of the Coalition; for example, it was seen as too big to hold effective general meetings. Also participants thoughtfully considered the pros and cons of having senior level representatives as the core of the membership. They have the information, knowledge and authority to bring cogent arguments to the table, but sometimes they could not attend meetings and, when there, may have subsequently failed to communicate back to their staff or adequately represent issues of importance across all staff levels of the organization. A third issue was that of succession planning for the Coalition. Many have been sector representatives since its inception and interviewees expressed the need for "new blood" to revitalize the group and ensure the continuity of the HPSC.

3.3.2 Accountability and Roles and Responsibilities

When asked to whom the HSPC is accountable, the overwhelming majority of survey respondents selected the Regional Council as their first choice. The only exception was the staff of the Region. They selected human service providers first and Regional Council as their second selection.

In the interviews, concern was raised that having a Regional Councillor as a Co-chair of the Coalition could be seen as trying to influence the positions taken by the Coalition. Participants agreed that Regional Council is very supportive of HSPC's work and it has chosen to take an arm's length approach. However, while no one has reported any experience of Regional Council encroaching on the work of the Coalition, acknowledgement was made that this could happen. In this context, though, it should be noted that the HSPC Charter implicitly states that the Coalition can take stances that are contrary to those held by Regional Council².

Regional Council set up the Coalition as an arm's length organization and has been very supportive of it. There is some opinion that having strong representation from Regional Council on the Coalition provides a degree of comfort to Regional Council and minimizes any potential conflicts.

In addition, some participants spoke to the issue of conflict of interest (real or perceived.) They said that when particular issues arose on the Coalition's agenda, they could feel a certain amount of conflict separating their membership on the Coalition with their administrative responsibility at their home organization.

3.3.3 Governance

Some participants in the interviews reflected on how HSPC decisions are made, with what authority and accountability, and with whom (or what) overseeing the process.

The conclusion of many was that, while it is an advisory body of sorts, the HSPC possesses little if any decision-making authority. In fact, it is perceived as an enabler and influencer – a totally different model from what people are used to in Regional governance. This results in some difficulty for the Coalition, at both the operational and strategic levels, as individuals do not know how to measure its success or guide its priorities.

Further, depending on the accountability relationship perceived by a respondent, the relationship of HSPC to the Regional Council and stakeholders varied accordingly. If people saw it as accountable to the Regional Council, they foresaw the potential for the Coalition's autonomy being over-ridden by Regional Council (though they give it full marks for having a hands-off stance to date.) Thus, some even discussed the possible need to spin the Coalition off as a non-

² Section 3.8: Regional Council shall consider reports, deputations or recommendations from the Management Committee of the HSPC to be representative of the best interests of human service providers, stakeholders and residents in York Region.

government organization (NGO) to ensure on-going independence. Those respondents viewing the Coalition as accountable to the service providers and/or the community (and given that they most likely also commended the Regional Council for its non-interventionist approach) were less likely to consider the “spin off” option and were more comfortable with an ongoing administrative relationship with the Regional Council.

3.3.4 Evidence of Success

The opening interview question, when respondents were asked to cite perceived evidence of HSPC achievements, elicited quick responses. They typically fell into one of two categories: 1) the process and dynamics of a diverse group coming together or 2) the position papers that the Coalition and its action groups produced.

For the former, respondents’ comments reflected their enthusiasm and pride (if they were sector representatives) for the Coalition’s bold efforts to undertake an innovative approach to addressing a serious challenge for the region. Some sample statements from the interviews include:

- HSPC has brought the players together and created a forum where silos can be broken down.
- The HSPC has allowed York Region to be unique in the way it has brought together major stakeholders.
- We’ve become a “best practice” for long-term, integrated planning.
- A real synergy has emerged, I think.
- This is a model of collaboration that I think can really produce a culture shift within the region.
- Creating this kind of forum certainly sends a message to all levels of government.
- The HSPC has further reinforced the (appropriate) notion that you cannot separate regional planning from human services planning.
- There is now a growing recognition that individual (agency) achievement equals achievement for the region as a whole.
- HSPC has eliminated the “us” (human service providers) versus “them” (the Regional Council) mentality that has prevailed in the past.

Respondents whose first thoughts were of the position papers usually highlighted the documents’ value in articulating the relative position of the region-wide stakeholders on key human services matters, making a case for resolving the inequities therein and/or providing a source of potential influence with politicians and decision-makers. Some of them said, for example:

- We developed some amazing policy papers; they were pretty solid products.
- Those financial papers were backed by the whole Coalition. Everyone was prepared to support them. No one particular name appeared; they were not seen to be self-serving to a particular sector.
- We need to use the papers to push the message to MPPs, their staff and others.
- Media exposure is important for these papers to have the impact we want.
- Individual groups (i.e., Coalition partners) have their own mandates, accountabilities and need for their relationships with the government, so the position papers provide an alternative platform for building a more collective approach to government relations.

- The papers, in part due to their empirical evidence, can contribute to policy development.
- These documents have created a realization that wasn't there before.

Some qualified their statements in terms of the timeframe surrounding these achievements. Comments were made about both their speed and slowness; clearly, respondent's expectations varied given their "going in" position on the role and potential power of the Coalition. This range of commentary is revealed in the quotes below:

- This has taken us longer than I thought it would in that laying the groundwork has been our only principal win ... but that's a very important win, I guess.
- The level of achievement we're striving for takes time to be successful, and we have to be willing to go with that. I think what's happened is phenomenal.
- People probably mean more funding when they say they want "results", but that doesn't happen overnight.
- Things have moved a bit slower perhaps because everyone wasn't on the same page right from the beginning.
- It seems that enthusiasm has perhaps overtaken the energy and resources available to the Coalition.
- Progress seems slow because what they're talking about is at a high strategic level and the Coalition actually has no levers to make it happen on its own.
- The HSPC is a work-in-progress; its benefits will be accrued over time.
- This is a long-term change process and should be recognized as such.

The interviews typically then moved into a consideration of what else the HSPC should try to achieve in the future. The answers here varied somewhat based on the participants' top-of-mind recognition of current results (i.e., those initially commenting on "process" spoke more of producing tangible products; respondents who identified "product" achievements in the first question now spoke more of political and policy influence).

- We need to reap the benefits of the groundwork that has been laid by getting the funding formula changed.
- HSPC is a key influencer in that it should serve as a guide for service providers' decision-making throughout the region.
- HSPC needs to create an even broader forum to further build up the base of support for the issues it champions.
- We need to decide what we are prepared to actually do, to create an actual strategy map, and then provide evidence to make our case.
- The Coalition should try to capture and measure the spin-offs of its work, for example, the general improvement and help for the service providers in York Region that has come from the information exchange around the table.
- We need to be ever mindful of the political culture, the "this can't happen to us in York Region" mindset that I sometimes hear bandied about (referring to the idea that the problems of "big cities" – such as homelessness, etc. could ever become problems in York Region)
- Even more can be done to promote collaboration and eliminate duplication and unnecessary effort (e.g., take a look at CIVC 211).
- Define and quantify the need in a way that makes a truly compelling case.

- The group needs to justify its existence more from a political standpoint and less from a philosophical one.
- A cautionary note ... be careful of becoming a “one trick pony” (i.e., dealing only with the issue of equitable health services funding).

The consultants asked for additional evidence of success and the following was reported to us: The HSPC is about partnerships and relationships. When people choose to use their valuable time to be active in these partnerships and express satisfaction in the relationships therein built, then these indicate success.

Quantitative indicators of success include the following:

- An average attendance of 23 (out of 32) sector representatives attending the meetings from Jan. 2004 to Sept. 2004 (thus indicating that representatives find it a good use of their time or they would not attend).
- 1,869 copies of the *Towards a New Model for Social Services Funding Report* mailed and 1,121 reports downloaded from the web-site in 2003/04
- 9,453 promotional items sold from the *It's All Here* employment project in 2003/04
- 756 workshop participants with an overall satisfaction of 87-90% during the *It's All Here* employment project in 2003/04
- An average grade of 76.9% for HSPC events/meetings “providing an opportunity to meet new people and hear new ideas” between Nov. 2001 and Oct. 2002

More compelling evidence of success is in the achievements and the stories of the people who, together, make up the HSPC. For example:

- The Executive Director of the Children’s Aid Society has observed a trend in Provincial funding towards the front-end of program delivery, reflecting the HSPC’s vision that human services are interdependent and the best investment is in prevention programs.
- The Director of Education for the YRDSB has observed that there are “at risk” communities in York Region but there are no communities “in crisis”. He attributes this, in part, to the foresight of community leaders who took a preventative approach in the establishment of the HSPC. The HSPC addresses issues that might not be addressed otherwise. It does this because it is uniquely positioned and structured to be able to put a story or a face around information – turning data into intelligence.
- The CEO of the CCAC says that HSPC’s achievements in documenting historical under-funding for healthcare in York Region in 2002 contributed to increases in funding received in the past two years.

- A hospital President said the greatest value of the HSPC for his organization is the fact that other service providers say the under-funding of health care puts the whole system of human services at risk.
- The Vice-President of Research and Innovation at York University says the HSPC improves services by using research to promote careful planning and wise use of resources.

Finally, though it is difficult to ascertain the degree of influence that the HSPC has had, there has been a definite increase in funding in York Region since the founding of the Coalition. One example is the increase in health care dollars in York Region between 2001 (the year the HSPC was established) and 2004. Total population in York Region grew approximately 12%, while:

- CCAC funding increased \$9.4 million (19%)
- Hospital funding increased \$119.6 m (52%)
- LTC agency funding increased \$1.4 m (8%)
- LTC facility funding increased \$54.9 m (120%)
- Community mental health funding increased \$2.2 m (31%)

Everyone recognizes that York Region is still under-funded relative to the rest of the province, but the above-cited increases have happened on the HSPC's "watch."

4.0 General Findings

4.1 Introduction

In this section we outline the responses to two “summative” questions that were asked. Then we present the findings in a more consolidated form, by theme.

4.2 Summative Questions

The survey contained two summative questions aimed at getting the overall feelings about the effectiveness of the Coalition.

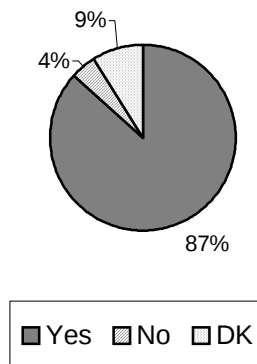
The first question dealt with perceived “value for money”:

The HSPC Charter states that administrative and financial support for the core activities will be provided by the Regional Municipality of York. In your opinion, are York Region’s taxpayers getting value for their money from the HSPC?

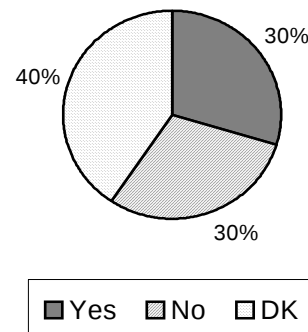
For those who have had experience with the Coalition (as representatives on the Coalition or having worked with one of the Action or Task Groups), there was overwhelming support for HSPC. Only two respondents out of 45 stated that York Region’s taxpayers were not getting value for their money from the HSPC. 39 stated that value for money was being received. Four respondents did not know.

However, for those who had not been directly involved (35 respondents), only 11 thought York Region was getting value for money, 11 believed it was not and 13 had no opinion or didn’t know. This question indicates the importance of experience with HSPC as a precursor to knowledge and support of its work.

Overall Question:
Are Region's taxpayers getting value
for their money?
*Respondents with direct experience
with HSPC*



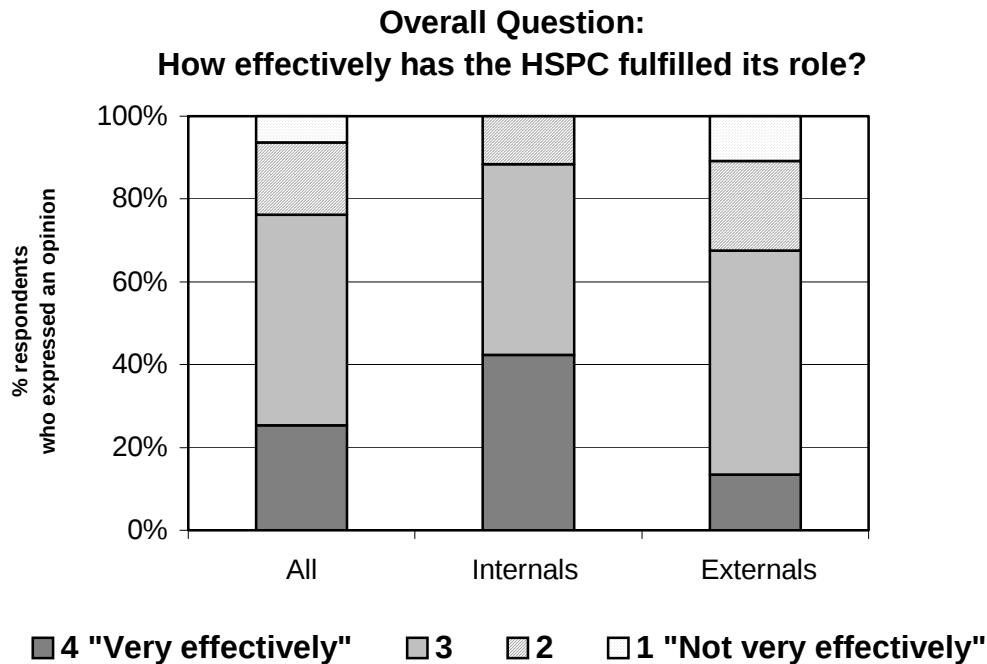
Overall Question:
Are Region's taxpayers getting value
for their money?
*Respondents without experience
with HSPC*



The other summative question is equally instructive. The question was:

Overall, in your opinion, how effectively has the HSPC fulfilled its role, as stated in the Region's Human Services Strategy, "to serve as a permanent advisory, resource and planning forum for human resource providers in York Region?"

In total, over three quarters of respondents with an opinion rated the HSPC as effectively fulfilling its role. For those internal to the organization, the rating was even higher – more than 4 out of five with an opinion rated it as effective or very effective. In our experience, this is a very high rating for an organization with such a diverse membership.



4.3 Key Themes

We have summarized the findings into themes as follows:

4.3.1 Concept and Purpose

- There is strong support for the concept and reality of the Coalition. The support is especially strong from those who have had a close working relationship with the HSPC.
- There is positive recognition for both the processes (model, vision, etc.) and the outcomes the HSPC is pursuing. Individuals see the means being just as important as the ends.
- HSPC is seen as a young organization, with no legislated mandate, trying a new approach to working. People are impressed with the gains made to date and they are supportive of the impact so far. They see the groundwork as having been laid.
- There is an increasing ability to "speak with one voice" when presenting a position to stakeholders and to other jurisdictions. This is very important to overall success.

- The HSPC is a unique model of collaboration. On the one hand, this presents challenges to people trying to understand how it functions and where it fits. On the other hand, the collaborative behaviours are critical to its success and respondents want the model protected and, possibly, expanded to other similar stakeholder groups.

4.3.2 Operational Matters

- The structure is seen as generally sound.
- Stakeholders perceive the HSPC as accountable to Regional Council as well as to providers and to citizens.
- There is some concern about the relationship of HSPC to the Regional Council. But, on the whole, respondents felt that, for the time being, the relationship should stay as it is as the Council's support is key.
- The Coalition needs to think about sustainability and succession – the founding partners have worked hard and now need to reach out to others in their groups to extend and sustain the energy.
- The definition of “results” is very difficult to pin down. When asked to articulate the concrete results expected to be delivered by HSPC, interviewees were generally hard pressed to do so. Respondents want to see more funding flow to the region, but stated that they would likely be reluctant to attribute those results to HSPC if more funds flowed, as it would be impossible to attribute the change to just one source.
- HSPC needs to expand the number and type of champions they have.
- The overall communication needs to be strengthened. In particular, the communication back to stakeholder communities requires more attention from the partners of the Coalition. They need to take their role in two-way communication more seriously.
- Communication of positions needs to be more persuasive.

4.3.3 Future Direction

- Respondents see the next few years as critical to consolidating the Coalition's new strength and to building on the efforts to date for positive outcomes.
- It will be especially important for the HSPC to become much more specific in its priorities – it needs to focus its efforts to create achievable targets and action plans and to monitor achievement of those targets.
- The Coalition has the opportunity to become the voice of the community on policy development in the human services field, to represent the stakeholders located in York Region in many different arenas.

In Conclusion

There is broad support for the Coalition, its purpose, its structure and its activities. As familiarity with the organization increases, the support becomes stronger. People see it as a young, unique organization that is only just hitting its stride and those who are familiar with it support it continuing to move forward and build on the foundation. There is little support or pressure for changing the structure or accountability of the Coalition.

Those who have a working knowledge of the organization see the Coalition as delivering value for money for the people of York Region. Even those who have a low level of familiarity are

prepared to hold off on judging it – they remain neutral and could likely become supporters if they had more knowledge.

There is relatively broad agreement that there is a need for better communication and more focus. With respect to communication, those who attend Coalition meetings need to communicate more effectively and more completely back to their organizations and to the organizations in the sector they represent. General communications need to be more targeted and to communicate the achievements and benefits of the Coalition in terms the target can identify with.

Finally, the Coalition needs to move to a new phase of work to signal its development and “maturation” to all stakeholders. Its strategic vision should be refined to articulate particular priorities and to identify specific, concrete targets to be achieved within those priorities in the short and medium term. Respondents recognized that the Coalition needed to be broadly based in its activities initially, in order to demonstrate its usefulness to the wide variety of stakeholders it encompasses. While they did not suggest what the priorities should be, they clearly recommend that the Coalition now focus its energy more narrowly and deliver measurable results. If the Coalition pursues this path, they believe its demonstrated role, as a catalyst of change and success for York Region’s human services, will become more well established and thus provide the requisite influence and leadership to truly achieve the vision of a sustainable, long-term, integrated planning framework for human services in York Region.

5.0 Recommendations for Action to Respond to the Findings

5.1 *Concept and Purpose*

- Based on the fact that the greatest enthusiasm was for the Coalition’s role as a catalyst, we recommend that you ensure the current model is protected and do not force-fit traditional approaches to it or compromise the governance and structure due to current lack of understanding. Seek out other opportunities for partnership with initiatives (e.g., LHIN, etc.) to build profile and to ensure there is no dilution of resources or impact.
- The Coalition needs to be clearer about its purpose. In all communications it should reinforce the fact that the stakeholders have come together, putting aside their individual agendas, to get the message to government that rapid growth and the shortfall in funding is jeopardizing York Region. The Coalition is designed to be one strong, effective voice for the stakeholders and it needs to make sure this happens.
- The Coalition should consider removing or rewording the two principles “Coordinate funding and planning efforts” and “Marshal resources” to reflect more accurately what the Coalition is capable of doing

5.2 *Operational Matters*

5.2.1 Structure and Governance

- There is no real reason to change general structure. However, the Coalition needs to develop succession plan.
- The Coalition should maintain the Task and Action Groups as the prime focus to generate tangible outcomes. It should use the larger Coalition forum to set priorities and monitor progress.
- The Coalition should extend communication efforts to business and grass roots, but not expend a lot of energy getting them as full partners right now. You should engage those groups on an as-needed basis until the Coalition matures and there is more obvious benefit for business and the general community. Too much energy will be taken trying to bring them on as full partners at the present time.
- The Coalition should maintain the reporting relationship with Regional Council for at least a few more years (i.e., until the next scheduled evaluation) while the Coalition matures. During that time, alternative sources of resource support (human, information, technical, financial, etc.) should be identified, agreed to by the partners and used.

5.2.2 Efficiency and Effectiveness of the Coalition

These recommendations cover four areas: Measures of Success, Communications, Meetings, and Accountabilities of the Sector Representatives.

5.2.2a Measures of Success

- The Coalition needs to develop concrete measures of success. You can use the indicators of success in this report as a starting point.
- Measures should be tied to both process and product, i.e., the enhancement of information sharing is a legitimate end result.
- One important goal is to be “the consultative vehicle for government in Human Services in York Region.” It should be possible to measure movement on this aspect of the Coalition (e.g., the number of times the provincial government initiates contact with the Coalition; number of times other organizations/groups seek the Coalition’s support prior to going to government, etc.).
- The Coalition cannot be held accountable for the delivery of cost savings or more funding, as it has no authority to make this happen. However, the Coalition can influence opinion of the decision makers, and it is legitimate to measure its ability to do this.
- The delivery of specific products, tied to priorities that have been set and agreed to, is an important measure (for example, the initiation of collaborative processes to help support the closing of an identified gap).
- At the beginning of initiatives, the Coalition should set out milestones against which progress is measured, conduct those measures and report on them as part of the overall initiative.
- Public awareness is an important measure. The Coalition should continue to measure the support it has, especially from “external stakeholders” (those not directly involved in Coalition activities).

5.2.2b Communications

- There is a need for better processes for ensuring communication to stakeholder groups. The Coalition should provide support for sector representatives to report back, including physical product, and develop and implement methods to hold individual sector representatives accountable for communications.
- The Coalition should enhance web site, newsletters, etc. for more practical communication that is targeted to the group and the topic; test for comprehension, with the purpose of action oriented communication.
- The Coalition should assess whether media training for Coalition representatives is needed in order for them to be more effective at getting the message across.

5.2.2c Meetings

- The Coalition should enhance the meeting process to ensure good use of sector representatives’ time and energy when they are at the table. You should consider the use of other ways of interacting – not always focused on “Roberts Rules of Order.” To do this, the length of the meetings may need to be extended. Given the importance of the issues, sector representatives should be willing to do this, provided they find the time well used.

5.2.2d Accountabilities of Coalition Sector Representatives

- The Coalition should ensure appropriate orientation and expectation setting with partners (new and old) and for Task and Action groups as well.

5.2.3 Future Direction

- The Coalition should define the scope of the Coalition via a new round of priority setting. Once the boundaries of the efforts are defined, articulate the priorities clearly and unambiguously and work toward achievable results within that scope.
- The Coalition should engage the broader community in the priority setting/action planning process so that everyone understands the trade-offs that must be made and the benefit for all of the outcomes being sought.
- Within the priorities, the Coalition should leave some room to take advantage of serendipity – be nimble in response to opportunities that suddenly arise which, if handled creatively, will enhance the stature of the Coalition and allow it to make progress. That having been said, it is important to be ruthless in assessing such opportunities to ensure they are not just distractions.

Appendices

<i>Appendix I</i>	Charter of the Human Services Planning Coalition
<i>Appendix II</i>	Survey of Internal Stakeholders
<i>Appendix III</i>	Survey of External Stakeholders
<i>Appendix IV</i>	Interview Guide
<i>Appendix V</i>	List of Those Interviewed
<i>Appendix VI</i>	Survey Responses – Charts
<i>Appendix VII</i>	Survey Responses – Written-In Comments from Internal Respondents
<i>Appendix VIII</i>	Survey Responses – Written-In Comments from External Respondents