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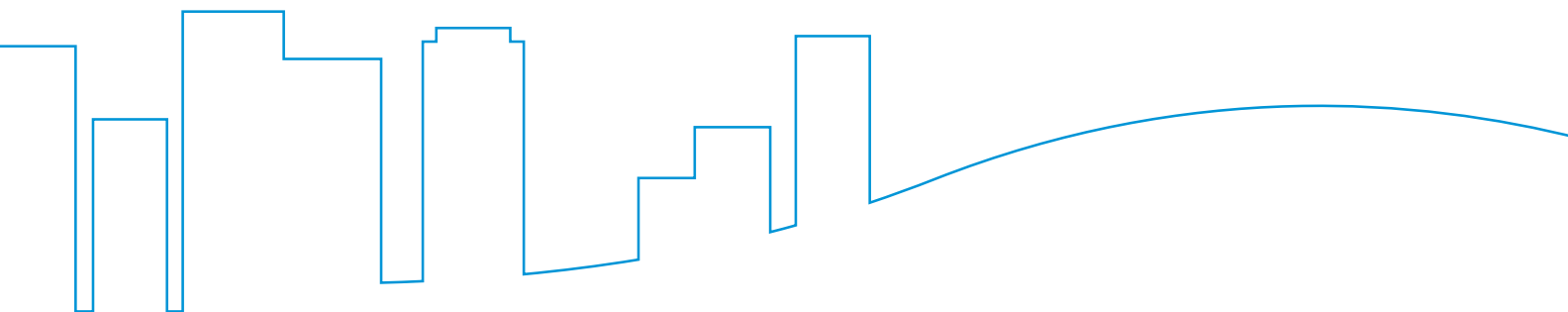
Mental Health:
New Municipal Concerns

PERSPECTIVES

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From the Editor's Desk

GORD HUME

Mental health is not something that most municipal councils in Canada spend a lot of time discussing.

It should be.

As the feature-length article by Nicole Regan of Nova Scotia outlines in our lead story, the statistics surrounding mental health challenges in Canada will stagger you. I strongly urge you to read the article and to then consider what ways your community might take a fresh look at your municipality's policies and practices.

Nicole's article offers 14 specific actions that you can consider implementing or at least pondering. It is a thought-provoking article that you need to contemplate. The implications for towns and cities across Canada are significant—and urgent.

We've also curated four really interesting examples of community and economic development ideas from other cities in North America. PERSPECTIVES always tries to bring you a broad overview of fresh ideas and innovative concepts from other municipalities. These will often spark your own thoughts and generate new ideas and practices that could benefit your own community.

And, Nolan Crouse has written an article on better ways that elected officials can be trained, exchange ideas and information, and improve their orientation on city council after elections. His article is another different take on an important issue.

Enjoy your April PERSPECTIVES!

As always, we welcome your ideas, feedback and comments... and of course, your original articles on what major issues your community is confronting. By sharing ideas and information, we can improve the policies and practices of all Canadian municipalities. That's what we are doing with PERSPECTIVES.

Just email us at: **perspectives@municipalinfonet.com**

GORD HUME

The Mental Health Crisis — a Global Problem with Local Solutions

NICOLE REGAN

When it comes to the mental health of Canadians, it might seem that local governments are out of their jurisdictional waters. This is far from true. The impact is felt every day on the streets and in our communities across Canada.

The statistics are stunning for local government officials. According to the Mental Health Commission of Canada (MHCC):

➤ By the time Canadians reach the age of 40, half of all people will have had or have a mental illness.

➤ 53% of Canadians believe depression and anxiety have reached epidemic levels.

➤ Suicide accounts for 24% of deaths among 15 to 24-year-olds.

➤ Depression will be the leading cause of disease in Canada by 2020.

In recent years, our understanding of mental health has evolved and this is reflected in the very first mental health strategy for Canadians, *Changing Directions, Changing Lives*, created by the MHCC.

The MHCC explains that to tackle the crisis we must change the way we think of mental health. We must move away from the view that mental health is only important to those living with mental illness, and that treating mental health issues as they arise is the only way forward.

If you have not struggled with mental health issues, you likely know someone who has. This is a problem which is expected to worsen.

Canada's towns and cities must understand that mental health and mental illness are not mutually exclusive concepts. The absence of mental illness does not necessarily mean the presence of mental health. While mental *illness* is largely the domain of qualified health professionals, mental *health* is a concern for all and becomes the domain of local governments.

Municipalities can significantly affect the crisis or the lives of their citizens by promoting well-being across all areas of life. For example, municipalities can make a difference through their built environment:

Whether we're talking parks, traffic flow, or housing and neighbourhoods, man-made environment design can have a significant impact on the mental health of communities.

As Cassidy Paxton, researcher at BC Healthy Communities puts it,

"Mental health is a state of well being in which individuals realize their potential, are able to cope with the normal stresses of life, work productively, and contribute to their community. The built environment can promote positive mental health by increasing social connectedness among community members, and by fostering place attachment, which is an emotional bond between a person and place."

Designing local environments that support the connectedness of community members and demonstrate the inherent value of all people will help promote mental health in your community.

Here are fourteen specific community actions that municipalities can consider:

1. **Increase community access to green spaces.** This might mean the creation of more green spaces throughout your city, the improvement or expansion of existing parks, or increased access for under-served populations.

   ▸ Consider novel approaches to increasing green space access. The gardening support service in Hampshire in the UK provides support for seniors through assistive gardening services. This low-cost intervention by the local government supports the well-being of seniors by aiding in the creation and maintenance of community seniors' own gardens, helping them maintain their independence.

2. **Create more bike lanes/sidewalks, and provide adequate lighting for pedestrian pathways.** Creating more bike lanes and safe pedestrian pathways will help support mental health by encouraging physical activity, aiding the flow of traffic, and increasing a community member's belief that they live in a safe community.

3. **Design new bus routes.** The creation of specific and dedicated bus routes to help make hospital and community-based services easier to access encourages the use of public transit, promotes inclusivity, and demonstrates that those with mental health issues are valued community members.

4. **Create recreational and social programs for groups at high risk of developing mental health issues.** Having a disability can be isolating, and it can be difficult to find suitable activities. People with disabilities are at risk for mental health issues for many reasons, so they could benefit from local government initiatives that address the factors that contribute to mental illness, including isolation and exclusion.

   ▶ The city of Brampton is moving in the right direction with their Inclusion and Integration programs, recreation and social programs for persons with disabilities. Their programs help persons with disabilities connect with their community and get some physical exercise. Provincial health authority and city council partnerships can make these happen.

5. **Training for front-line workers.** Recommend local police and fire departments undergo specialized mental health training for all officers. Often those who are specially trained in this area are not first on scene. Recommend education for both departments on the particular difficulties facing vulnerable minorities, including aboriginal, African-Canadian, newly-arrived immigrant, and homeless populations.

6. **Training for civic employees.** Require local government employees to attend mental health literacy training, a course that helps participants understand the basic concepts of mental health. This will help sensitize government employees to the issues faced by those with mental illness, and provide them with an understanding of the basic language of mental health.

7. **Adopt the Psychological Health and Safety in the Workplace Standard.** The MHCC has created a framework for the advancement of mental health in the workplace. By adopting these standards, local governments can promote mental health in their workforce while leading by example.

8. **Housing First approach to homelessness.** Up to 50% of all homeless people in Canada live with serious mental health issues. Approaching the problem of chronic homelessness by providing healthy housing options (affordable, accessible, safe) can reduce homelessness for those living with mental illness, and according to the MHCC, can save three dollars for every two spent.

9. **Implement stigma-reduction campaigns.** Partner with organizations aiming to reduce stigma, like the Mood Disorders Society of Canada and its national campaign "Elephant in the Room." Municipalities can help change the way our communities view mental illness through easily adoptable measures such as the displaying of an elephant in an office. This visual declares 'this is a safe space to discuss mental health'.

10. **Hold a Well-Being Fair.** Support local efforts to educate the public on mental health issues and the specific mental health service pathways available in your community.

    ▶ 'Mindfest' in Toronto is the collaborative effort of several universities and community organizations. It is a full-day of mental health and well-being fair with informative booths, guest speakers, workshops, and even yoga and tai chi.

Saint Petersburg, Russia - July 30, 2017: yoga festival on lawn in Park in center of metropolis. Summer holiday of sport and health — Photo © max5128

11. Hold a Mental Health Forum. Support the move toward preventing mental illness by holding a forum on mental health in your municipality. Invite health care providers, practitioners, and mental health consumers to attend. Offer awareness presentations, and mental health first-aid workshops, training that helps people learn how to identify mental health issues, provide basic assistance to people in crisis, and find appropriate treatment from qualified professionals.

12. Call for early mental health education. Recognize the importance of early mental health education by encouraging your province or territory to implement mental health education through schools and/or partnerships.

▸ Nova Scotia's provincial government is adding mental health to the curriculum for a number of grades. This will encourage discussion of mental health, and de-stigmatize mental illness for future generations.

▸ 'Partners for Life' was a program offered by the Mental Illness Foundation in Quebec in the 1990s that raised depression awareness in high schools. Informative sessions taught students about the warning signs of depression, suicidal behaviour, and substance abuse, and what to do if they encountered them. The program raised awareness that depression is a risk factor for suicide, and helped many students get treatment.

13. Appoint an elected member as mental health champion. The mental health champion for your municipality could be responsible for raising mental health awareness and ensuring that all decisions made are in the best interest of the mental health of the community, while also creating links between city councils, health authorities, and self-help agencies.

14. Call for more funding. Pressure provincial, territorial and federal governments for more mental health funding and to partner with Self-Help Agencies. Self-Help Agencies (SHAs) are consumer-run, non-profit organizations based in the community that serve people with psychiatric disabilities. SHAs have become a viable option instead of, or in addition to, traditional mental health care. Mental health services can be delivered by SHAs in a cost-efficient manner.

For many years, we've been dealing with the mental health crisis by playing catch up—and losing. We now have a chance to deal with this global, societal epidemic differently. The statistics suggest this change cannot come fast enough.

Municipalities can make a difference by moving to a prevention-based approach and by promoting the well-being of all community members.

This article is a call to action for people, communities, and local governments to make some serious changes. We are at a tipping point, and as such, we must call upon all our resources, especially local governments, to actively implement solutions.

Nicole, 28, graduated from St. Francis Xavier University in 2012 with a Bachelor of Arts with focuses in psychology, political science, and international development.

She serves on the Board of Directors of the Nova Scotia − Gambia Association, a non-profit international development organization that uses existing cultural networks to disseminate life-saving health information to communities across the Gambia.

Nicole has written several profiles of hope for the Mental Health Foundation of Nova Scotia, and she advocates for mental health consumers and persons with disabilities through social media.

In 2013, Nicole was diagnosed with Fibromyalgia and Ehlers-Danlos Syndrome: Hypermobility Type, a connective tissue disorder largely characterized by widespread chronic pain and joint dislocations. Specialist treatments, community support, and a daily dedication to her health have enabled her to continue her life-long love of humanitarianism.

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Bridging the 2 Worlds of Performance Improvement

The private sector has long blended measurement and workforce management. Too often in government, that's not the way it works.

HOWARD RISHER

Government's administrative silos have spawned two parallel worlds centered on performance that exist independent of each other. One world focuses on strategy, priority goals, metrics and evidence-based decision-making. The other focuses on working with managers and employees to improve their performance. Both are valid and essential, and both look to the same end results. Each has its own experts, literature, jargon and conferences. But surprisingly, they rarely interact.

That does not benefit good government. Neither group can realize its potential value without the other.

In the business world, the two bodies of knowledge are blended, viewed simply as elements of management. Measurement is basic; new metrics are produced daily at all levels. Goal-setting is the basis for planning and for progress discussions throughout the year. That process cascades to each level of management. At year-end, performance relative to goals is the basis, along with company financial results, for determining incentive awards. The awards reinforce individual accountability. This has been standard practice in the private sector for decades.

That's not the way it usually works in the public sector. In an article published in 2015 that focused on performance management in local government, David Ammons of the University of North Carolina School of Government described performance measurement as a tool that, by itself, is rarely used to improve workforce performance. Performance management, on the other hand, "is not a tool, it is an act -- an act of management," Ammons wrote.

Ammons' article should be read by everyone relying on metrics to plan and monitor performance in government. He goes on to list some of the "key rules" governing performance management: "Goals must be clear; performance measures must be relevant, actionable, and used for management purposes, not just for reporting; and executives must engage in responsible oversight while granting decision making authority to program managers and supervisors."

My experience in the private sector, along with my loyalty to the "people world" of human resources, give me a somewhat different understanding of what's needed for effective performance management.

First, the goal should be to delegate decision-making authority not just to managers and supervisors but all the way down to the level where the work is actually done. In a healthy work environment, employees at all levels can be trusted to make job-related decisions; for the most part, they want to make their employer successful. That is a message from all of the rankings of "best places to work" and discussions of employee engagement.

Second, accountability has to have consequences. That is central to why companies link year-end incentive awards to goal achievement. Outstanding performance should be rewarded (although cash is not the only option); poor performers need to be warned that their shortcomings will at some point affect their job security.

And third, the use of metrics and goals works best when employees are involved in defining goals. It's the commitment and the autonomy to work at achieving goals that explains high performance. As the research shows, delegation, trust and agility are important at every level. Increasingly companies operate with teams that meet with a manager only occasionally. For most day-to-day actions, the workers are self-managed. Metrics are used to monitor their progress.

The problems with government's use of metrics are illustrated by the experience of a major federal agency, one with operations across the country. A headquarters office has the responsibility for developing the metrics, and it has developed a long list relevant to national and local performance. At year-end, the results are linked to salary increases. On paper it appears to be consistent with good practice.

However, it's gone off the rails. The list of metrics applicable to each job is long: The combination of national and local measures exceeds 20. (Keep in mind that the rule for goal-setting is never more than five or six; as the number grows, each receives reduced attention.) The goals are better understood as standards dictated by the head office; employees are not involved. Headquarters insists on centralized, top-down control, ignoring local operational differences. Employees are too far removed from national performance to believe they have any impact. There is also a shared belief that year-end results are manipulated to limit the incentive payouts.

Employee morale could not be lower. As with far too many government agencies, employees retire as soon as they are eligible. And while It cannot be measured, there are employees who "retire on the job."

Government can do better, and some jurisdictions are. Tennessee's transformation of its civil-service system, as explored in a Governing article, included an overhaul of its performance evaluation system that goes a long way toward bridging the divide between metrics and management. The state now has performance outcomes for every job that follow the acronym "S.M.A.R.T." -- specific, measurable, achievable, relevant and time-sensitive.

Here is how the state's human resources commissioner, Rebecca R. Hunter, describes its progress: "Each Executive Branch employee has a performance plan with S.M.A.R.T. work outcomes that are cascaded from and aligned with the Governor's key priorities and the department's strategic and operational goals." The commissioner is a member of the governor's cabinet, and her experience as a CPA gives her credibility in performance discussions.

Keep in mind that this is led not by the budget office or outside consultants, but from HR. Investing in getting performance management right pays off.

Howard Risher, the co-author with William Wilder of the 2016 book "Its Time for High-Performance Government: Winning Strategies to Engage and Energize the Public Sector Workforce," is a consultant focusing on public-sector pay and performance.

As the practice leader for two global consulting firms, Risher has worked with a variety of federal and state agencies, the United Nations and the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development. In 1990, he managed the project that led to the passage of the Federal Employees Pay Comparability Act and the federal transition to locality pay.

Risher earned his bachelor's degree from Pennsylvania State University and an MBA and Ph.D. in business from the Wharton School at the University of Pennsylvania.

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Want to Attract Talented Workers? Find a Better Way to Tell Your City's Story

If your community really has a lot to offer, you need to think beyond the press release.

DUSTIN MCKISSEN

Officials who work in local economic and workforce development will often say that they have two things that make their city a desirable place to live: a low cost of living and employers with good jobs that need to be filled. But once those local officials share the good news, they ask the question many communities desperately need an answer to: Why do we still struggle to attract and retain the workforce talent we need?

Answering that question requires making a couple of major assumptions:

Assumption 1: The city actually has a low cost of living -- and it's the good kind. Cities trying to use cost of living as a message to attract talent can put too much emphasis on "cost" and not enough emphasis on "living." Dilapidated apartments and abandoned homes do not constitute the kind of low cost of living that will attract workers looking for opportunities. Free or cheap access to museums, parks and other civic amenities does. A low-cost-of-living message that actually attracts people to a city is borne from strategic decisions to make the community an affordable and attractive place to live, not a lack of demand driven by decades of despair.

Assumption 2: The job openings that need to be filled pay a living wage. Unfortunately, many economic and workforce developers define a "good" job as an "available" job -- even when the job pays poverty-level wages.

For the sake of this discussion, let's assume your city does afford residents a high quality of life at a low cost along with living-wage jobs. If that's the case, why isn't your community attracting talented workers by the droves? Why is the workforce that grew up in your community leaving the first chance they get?

The answer can at least partially be attributed to a failure of marketing. In other words, how is your city reaching the workforce you want to attract and retain? How is your city telling its story? If you're like the vast majority of cities, your story is being told:

➤ In press releases buried on your website that rarely (if ever) get picked up by a dwindling traditional press that itself is often ignored by young people.

➤ On formalized, boring social media feeds.

➤ In the occasional paid advertorial spread in your local business journal.

Imagine that Nabisco realized that not enough young people were purchasing Oreos. In response to this existential threat, Nabisco wrote a press release about how awesome Oreos are. Next, it paid the local business journal five thousand dollars to run a splashy roundtable piece where Nabisco employees talk about how awesome Oreos are.

If that sounds ridiculous, it's because it is ridiculous. No company would ever respond to a disappearing customer base by writing press releases and posting them to its own website. No company would ever try to reach a target market by advertising in a publication the target market doesn't read.

Yet press releases and business journal articles often comprise a city's entire approach to marketing. That isn't a strategy. At best it's a lack of imagination, and at worst it reinforces the negative stereotype that the public sector simply can't grasp basic business concepts -- like marketing.

Some cities can rely on an existing brand. The same reason Apple does comparatively little marketing is the same reason Palo Alto doesn't need to worry about retaining and attracting a talented workforce. However, most companies aren't Apple, and most cities aren't Palo Alto.

Your community needs to implement a marketing strategy focused on reaching your target audience on the platforms they use. Want to make a low-cost-of-living campaign? Step away from the press release about the recent Bureau of Labor Statistics Report. Get creative. Here's just one idea: Buy a GoPro camera, attach it to the intern in your communications department, and give the intern a $100 bill. Have the intern record everything he or she can do in a day with $100, then edit that down to a two-minute video. (Don't be scared. You shouldn't hire interns who don't know their way around modern technology.)

Of course, a particular city's failure to attract and retain talent may have nothing to do with marketing. Too often, "low cost of living" is a sunny rebranding of abandonment and despair, and "good jobs" are really low-paid, low-skill opportunities that do not require an educated workforce. But if your city actually does have good jobs and the right kind of low cost of living, maybe the failure to attract and retain talent is a failure to tell your story in a modern, engaging way.

Dustin McKissen is the CEO and founder of McKissen + Company, a marketing and communications firm that works with communities and economic development organizations across the country. Before starting his own company he managed several trade associations and served as the director of operations for the Northern Arizona Council of Governments.

McKissen has been twice named a "Top Voice" on management and culture by LinkedIn and serves as a columnist for Inc., CNBC, VentureBeat and Silicon Prairie News. He received his master's degree in public administration from Northern Arizona University and his bachelor's degree in public policy from Prescott College.

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So You Think You Know All the Best Approaches to Governing?

NOLAN CROUSE

I thought I knew a lot about hockey, until I started coaching it.

I felt I had a solid grasp on hockey player trades after observing the National Hockey League process for years until I became a general manager in junior hockey and had to make deals myself.

I considered myself well versed in regional municipal governance after several years as the Capital Region Board Chair in Alberta, until I taught regional government at the University of Alberta.

Mayors, reeves and councillors across Canada think they know a lot about municipal governance, when actually many know very little.

It is, of course, natural for any newly elected official in Canada to feel comfortable quickly adapting to their role as a mayor, reeve or councillor once elected. Many politicians come from a life of community service or leadership roles. Once elected, officials settle in quickly to a new role on their Councils. Newly elected officials who are thrust into the demands of office learn the ropes from their colleagues or administrative staff, and move quickly into decision making based on the narrow orientation that each council member receives. This is where the shortcomings begin.

What's missing with this fast-tracked elected official immersive learning process is diversity. Those providing the orientation can't match the diversity of ideas, perspectives and lessons learned from years of practice in communities across Canada.

A significant aspect missing in this currently narrow approach for elected officials' orientation is that most of us believe that our orientation, procedures, processes, systems and culture that we are indoctrinated in give us the best approaches to governance in our province or perhaps even in Canada. Elected officials generally discount the other ideas and ways of doing things from other jurisdictions.

There is of course a lot to be gained from the knowledge shared at municipal conventions or gained by attending numerous intermunicipal meetings or conventions. Equally as valuable, governance learning for a newly elected official would be to become immersed in the processes used by another community of similar size (or type), even for a short period of time.

Imagine the learning that would occur if a newly elected councillor from Mississauga received some governance orientation in the City of Toronto. Imagine what would occur if the mayor of Halifax were to be able to spend a week at Vancouver City Hall, or if a county councillor in southern Manitoba spent time learning in a county in northern Manitoba. Many councillors actually choose not to, or simply can't, attend municipal conventions or meetings where other elected officials are present, further short-changing their access to diversity of knowledge.

Over the past year, I had the opportunity to lead the development of 6 different collaboration agreements in Alberta. Called Intermunicipal Collaboration Frameworks (ICF's), these agreements are a new requirement by the province and must include an accord for shared services between adjacent municipalities. Similarly in 2018, I completed more than 20 performance appraisals for various municipal and not for profit executives across Alberta. As one can imagine, what I've learned about different corporate approaches has been significant.

Even though I served on council for 13 years in my own community of St. Albert, I now realize just how little cross training existed for me and my fellow council members. Many ideas and practices being employed in other communities are far superior to the approaches that I became accustomed to on the councils I served on. In fact, most elected officials that I have interacted with over the years brag about how well they do their budgets, run their council meetings, or are overly proud of how they conduct public hearings. Indeed, there may be better approaches, but little time is set aside to learn new practices that occur elsewhere. On some local councils and administrations there can also be resistance to make changes to familiar protocols that officials become accustomed to or get locked into.

How and what we learn from other organizations and other locally elected officials in Canada is woefully inadequate. The transfer of knowledge, diversity of approaches, training, personal development and best practices could be enhanced through the immersion of an elected official in another municipality, if only for a day. The stakes are too high to ignore it.

Nolan Crouse is the former Mayor of St. Albert, Alberta and former Edmonton Regional Board Chair who speaks and writes about Governance, Cannabis, Smart Cities and the many related considerations for communities, associations, boards, agencies and companies.

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Montgomery, Ala., Begins the Smart City Metamorphosis

One of the capital city's most active corridors will soon be home to a nine-block living laboratory, complete with Wi-Fi, smart streetlights and a host of other tech-laden features.

SKIP DESCANT

Alabama's capital is perking up with new intelligent streetlights, free Wi-Fi, app-based parking management and more.

Montgomery is trying on these new technologies in its Smart City Living Lab downtown. The project — a public-private agreement known as the Montgomery Smart Community Alliance — is a partnership among the city, Montgomery Area Chamber of Commerce, Alabama Power and other university and county partners. It is taking a page from numerous other communities nationwide that have looked to connect Internet of Things technology for improved efficiencies and enhanced services.

The so-called lab will consist of a nine-block area connecting the Montgomery Biscuits Stadium — home to the city's Minor League Baseball team — to downtown's entertainment and conference district, and ultimately, to the Alabama State House several blocks away.

"This is a major artery in downtown Montgomery that consists of our main entertainment district, tourism hub, conference center, state offices, and business and retail," said Willie Durham, chairman of the Montgomery Area Chamber of Commerce. "The idea is to start with this corridor and expand."

The area will be anchored by fiber-optic infrastructure to support free Wi-Fi access, expansion of the city's open data portal, smart parking and more. Alabama Power will take the lead on upgrading existing streetlights to LEDs, ultimately bringing the technology to some 22,000 streetlights citywide and saving an estimated $650,000 over five years, according to utility officials.

"The benefit of reliable connectivity can be used to support a multitude of applications and ultimately deliver more for those who live in and visit Montgomery," said Leslie Sanders, Alabama Power's vice president of the Southern Division, in a statement.

The first phase of the free Wi-Fi access was released earlier this month, with plans for expansion to be complete in March or April.

The Open Data Montgomery portal — an interactive site full of information culled from the police and fire departments, permitting, finances and even recreation and tourism — is set to be put to further use once features like smart streetlights and parking come online, said Mayor Todd Strange.

"Information on LED lighting, energy use, traffic and downtown could be integrated into the city's already robust Open Data Montgomery portal," the mayor added in an email. "The city wants to explore potential ways we can apply technology to public safety, as well."

Skip Descant writes about smart cities, the Internet of Things, transportation and other areas. He spent more than 12 years reporting for daily newspapers in Mississippi, Arkansas, Louisiana and California. He lives in downtown Sacramento.

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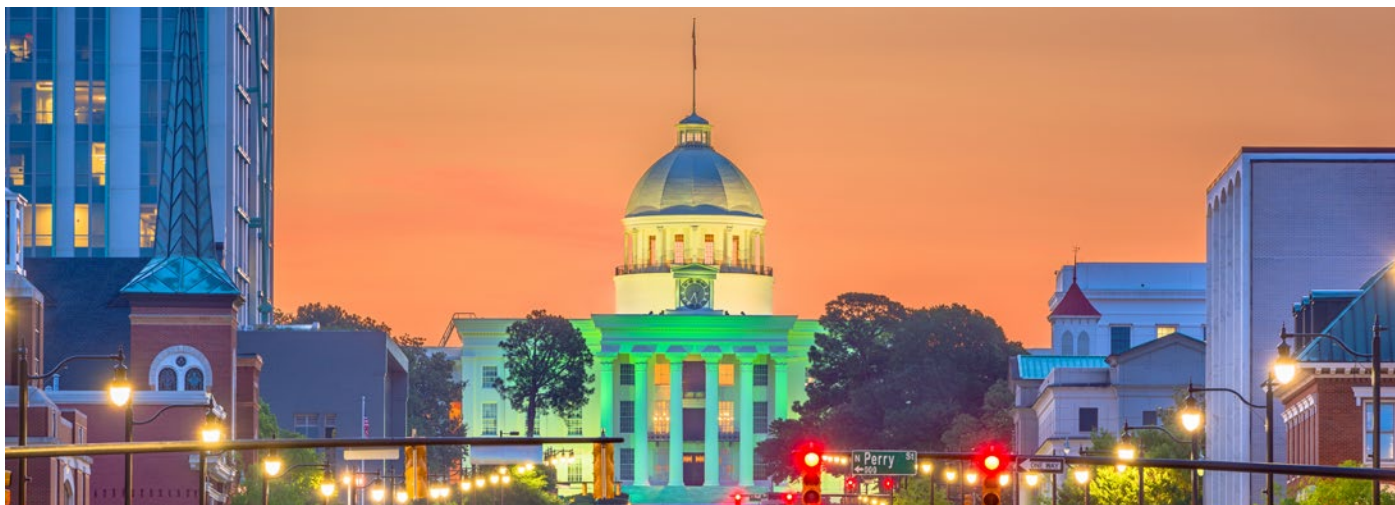
The Bus System of the Future

Indianapolis is rethinking its approach, seeking new efficiencies that will better serve those from disadvantaged communities.

STEPHEN GOLDSMITH

One of the foundational dilemmas of developing and managing an urban bus network is the tradeoff between service coverage and frequency. Holding the number of buses constant, prioritizing geographic coverage means those buses can make fewer trips. However, neighborhoods don't like to see their stops removed, so cities are often stuck with infrequent service and underutilized capacity.

Do transit officials consolidate their services to reach the largest number with the fastest possible rides, or do they maintain service delivery across as large an area as possible, even if that means uncertain wait periods for riders?

We recently spoke to Mike Terry, president and CEO of the Indianapolis Public Transportation Corp. (known familiarly as IndyGo), about this question. He outlined both the major overhauls and the small tweaks that he believes will drastically improve commutes for the city's residents.

In Indianapolis, as is the case for so many other cities, the connections between jobs, housing and other amenities have all changed drastically over the years as neighborhoods

and transportation options have evolved. "A developer might build a million-square-foot employment center with a good deal on rent, but oftentimes it will be located in a place that's inaccessible by transit," said Terry. "That puts a lot of pressure on the system."

As part of his agency's five-year plan, Terry and his colleagues at IndyGo envision a grid-based system that connects a series of frequent service lines. Working with transportation consultant Jarrett Walker, they sought to realign the system to prioritize dense, walkable areas, which is good news for economically disadvantaged communities.

The planning process turned out to be educational for community members. At one point Terry, Walker and others sat a group of them around a map with pipe cleaners that represented potential transit lines. Different colors stood for different levels of service. Financial constraints meant, of course, that not every line could be high-frequency. "People realized that they didn't have enough money to do everything they wanted," said Terry.

Ultimately, IndyGo decided to build a strong core system and utilize new transportation modes (rideshares and bikeshares, mainly) to serve residents beyond a comfortable walking distance from transit. It's a compromise, but one that has become much easier to make as residents become more accustomed to using new shared transportation services and local governments work more closely with those services' providers.

The spine of the improved Indianapolis transit system will consist of three bus rapid transit routes. Passengers traveling along these corridors will enjoy dedicated lanes as well as traffic-signal priority, meaning that buses should experience a "green wave" along their routes as they skim past intersections. If all goes according to plan, riders will no longer be caught in the lamentable position of catching a bus as soon as they step up to the curb, only to find themselves waiting for a half-hour at their next transfer point.

Consolidating the city's transit corridors also has given IndyGo room to expand the hours of service that the new bus lines will run. Shift workers commuting in the middle of the night won't be as reliant on car ownership, carpooling or the help of a loved one to drop them off and pick them up.

Small design changes, such as locating bike racks inside of buses, will allow multimodal commuters to quickly and comfortably get where they are going. Level boarding at station platforms will further reduce time intensive loading periods.

There is another area for efficiency gains in the boarding process. The rapid transit line will offer riders the ability to pay their fares prior to boarding so that they can get past the loading door and into seats as quickly as possible. Terry also noted that IndyGo wants to develop an account-based system "where a person has a card that can be loaded by an individual at a kiosk, or even by an outside funder such as a college or an employer." Such a system could also enable government benefits to more easily be applied to bus trips, opening up the possibility for increased subsidies to economically disadvantaged commuters.

Changing land uses and transportation options should be seen as an opportunity for cities, not a threat. Perhaps the most prescient component of Indianapolis's new system is its flexibility. A strong transit spine going through a dense downtown will be a necessary feature of urban transportation for a long time to come, but we're seeing a number of new ways evolving for remoter residents to get to those spines. More innovations are to come, and more changes are on their way for how residents get around their cities.

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Goldsmith served as the chief domestic policy advisor to the George W. Bush campaign in 2000, as chair of the Corporation for National and Community Service, and, from 1979 to 1990, as the district attorney for Marion County, Ind.. His new book, co-authored with Susan Crawford, is *The Responsive City: Engaging Communities Through Data-Smart Governance*. He also is the author or co-author of *The Power of Social Innovation*; *Governing by Network*: *the New Shape of the Public Sector*; *Putting Faith in Neighborhoods: Making Cities Work through Grassroots Citizenship*; and *The Twenty-First Century City: Resurrecting Urban America*.

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Civic Comment

GORD HUME

A long-time member of the Madeira Beach (Florida) City Commission (like a Canadian City Council) resigned recently.

She did so after being severely censured for licking the face and/or neck of the former City Manager.

Apparently (according to testimony) she had something of a habit of licking people after she had been, ah, perhaps enjoying an adult beverage or two. "The act of licking a person on the face and neck is too unusual to be contrived by multiple witnesses and multiple victims," administrative law judge Robert Cohen wrote in his final report.

Judge Cohen recommended that Commissioner Nancy Oakley be fined $5,000 and be publicly censured by the Governor of Florida for inappropriate behaviour.

The entangled story includes the now-former City Manager having an affair with a staff member, public confrontations, fierce splits amongst the elected members, and other eccentric behavior and conduct from elected and administrative officials.

This episode is, sadly, just one of many incidents of misconduct by elected officials (which usually eventually draws enthusiastic media reporting) and by administrative officials (which is often less public but more expensive to resolve).

I have not been tracking these incidents across Canada and the United States in sufficient detail over recent years to scientifically argue that these types of behaviours are increasing or not. My sense, however, is that there is a growing list of mayor and councilor misbehavior.

Perhaps our greater awareness is a reflection of the less tolerant attitudes about bad/naughty/offensive/unacceptable actions and words from one civic official to another, or to members of the staff or the public.

It does seem to me that these actions are being reported more, and there is substantially less tolerance for them. That's a good thing. Perhaps it is aided by the #METOO movement. Any elected official, and they have tended to be male, trying to use his position to force sexual or other conduct that is unacceptable on another person, should be outed.

It is still amazing that after the public exposure, humiliation and career-ending conduct of so many elected people in North America that it still hasn't sunk in to some Mayors, Councillors, or other elected officials that that kind of conduct is not acceptable.

Surely City Clerks across the nation when they do their Orientation sessions for newly-elected officials, and offer training on Harassment for the full Councils, are trying to help elected officials understand the climate today.

Elected officials still learn to their apparent surprise that there are these things called 'smart phones' out there. Somebody is recording something all the time. And not to mention the security surveillance cameras that are ubiquitous on city streets and throughout many neighbourhoods.

The Province of Ontario has recently introduced new rules for all town and city councils. They all are now required to follow a Code of Conduct. They must hire an Integrity Commissioner to enforce that Code.

Other provinces and territories have other rules and regulations. It is certainly a hot topic amongst municipal officials.

However, I hope we won't lose the ability to have open, candid and sometimes vigorous disagreements over policy issues during council debates. I have always believed those are healthy—providing that they don't get personal. To use the old cliché, you can disagree without being disagreeable.

Some argue that we are holding elected people to a higher standard over their personal conduct. Yup. And we should.

At the same time, we need to find a responsible way for people accused of something to defend themselves in an honorable way. Just because someone is accused of something does not mean she or he is guilty. Careers have ended in a blur of headlines and social media explosions that later turned out not to be true.

It has always been hard serving in public office. Perhaps it has never been harder than today.

Be careful. Be smart. Be aware.