Developing a ‘place-based’ sensibility:
Notes for a discussion with the Ministry of Municipal Affairs and Housing

Caroline Andrew
Centre on Governance
University of Ottawa

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Question for Discussion:

- Moving from treating all municipalities as equal to a more ‘place-based’ sensibility
  - Why?
  - How?
1. For municipalities
   - To allow real capacity-building for effective decentralization
   - Municipalities need to build capacity to develop appropriate policy
   - The particular policy mix needs to be related to context
     - Ex. poverty reduction, economic development, immigrant integration, cultural development, at-risk youth
   - Requires appropriate mix of:
     - Provincial policies, Municipal policy as catalyst and actor, community networks
     - Ex. local governance system
   - Obviously possible only if province is sensitive to local context
Why?

2. For community groups, local civil society, local stakeholders

- To allow more effective action through greater municipal capacity.
- If municipality understands role as catalyst, local governance system will enhance role of community and effective outcomes.
- Local governance systems can establish mandates and objectives in different policy areas (poverty reduction, immigrant integration, etc.) thus establishing clear local goals. This in turn can clarify objectives for inter-local coordination at the provincial level.
3. For the Ministry

- More effective ‘pick-up’ of Ministry policies.
- Building long-term capacity of municipalities.
- Developing policy that is central to government objectives.
  - Poverty reduction, at-risk youth, immigrant integration, economic development, mobilizing local capacity by local governance systems
  - Based on municipal capacity to act as catalyst around development of local policy objectives, instruments and plans.
Why?

4. For the Government

- As with the Ministry, getting the municipal-community interface to work effectively on mobilizing local capacity in regard to the ‘wicked problems’ that are priorities for the Government.
  - Economic development
  - Poverty reduction
  - Immigrant integration

- Enhanced municipal capacity is essential for effective local governance systems.
How?

- Different possibilities
  
  1. Cities secretariat
  2. Policy papers on directions for ‘place-based’ policy
  3. Integration of a triple (quadruple?) bottom line
  4. Community forums for municipal dialogue around best practices and how provincial policy could enhance best practices

All have advantages and disadvantages
1. Cities Secretariat

- Cities are priority areas for many of the ‘wicked’ problems
  - Economic development
  - Immigrant integration
  - Poverty reduction

- More potential for municipal policy capacity building – with larger municipalities

- Could focus on process – generic municipal policy capacity

- Perhaps easier to start municipal-based ‘place-based’ policy in cities as rural development already has different policies in place

- More limited number of partners to work with
2. Policy papers on directions for ‘place-based’ policy

- Broad discussion around the policy papers could bring concerns for a shift to ‘place-based’ sensibility
  - Discussions with AMO, AFMO
  - Discussions with specific municipalities
  - Discussions with networks of community-based actors

- Policy papers could specify organizational forms for local governance

- Ministry could judge from discussions which directions obtain greatest consensus – influence decisions about priorities

- Establishes Ministry desire for discussions with municipalities, community-based actors
3. Integration of a triple (quadruple?) bottom line

- Idea of Ministry encouraging (enforcing) municipal consideration of bottom line
- Calgary – triple bottom line (economic, social, environmental sustainability)
- Possibility of a quadruple bottom line – add cultural sustainability
- Supported by OECD material which argues for the importance of linking economic and social goals – social sustainability promotes economic sustainability
4. Convening forums for municipal dialogue around best practices

- Encourages municipalities to share best practices
- Encourages municipalities to think about how provincial policies could enhance municipal best practices
- Establishes Ministry openness to listening ‘down’
- Encourages social innovation and enhanced municipal capacity

Potential areas
- Around LIPs (Local Immigration Partnerships) – municipalities are involved and wide coalition of community stakeholders
- Around inclusion of diversity – comparing best practices across municipalities
5. Others?

- You know the Ontario policy environment better than I do.
- You know the Ministry better than I do.
- Should you move to more ‘place-based’ sensibility?
- How should you move?