

Potentials and Weaknesses of Strategic Community Development Planning: A Sudbury Case Study*

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Introduction

This article describes an approach to community level economic development that combines elements of community development and of strategic planning. Strategic community development planning (SCDP) is best adapted to the needs of localities for which conventional forms of development planning hold few promises. The article first examines SCDP as a pure model, then turns to the Sudbury Corporate Plan as an example of a partial application of this form of planning. Both the theoretical discussion and the Sudbury case study serve to point out SCDP's potentials and limitations.

Economic Restructuring

Current circumstances force many cities to explore new avenues of economic development. This is particularly the case for those cities that now suffer from job losses associated with unfavourable industrial relocation trends, overall deindustrialization, and accentuated automation (Bergman and Goldstein 1986). Such cities are often ill-equipped to replace these losses by well-paid employment generated by growing sectors of the economy. Obsolete labour skills, dearth of amenities and cultural life, and the nature of the firms currently estab-

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lished within their boundaries contribute to keeping high-order tertiary and quaternary firms away.

As these economic shifts occur, the value of governments' efforts to foster economic development can be questioned. The state's capacity to significantly and lastingly influence private firms' locational decisions has always raised doubts, but the present context, characterized by, at best, a stationary number of firms in search of new locations and an ever greater number of governments chasing them, is deemed particularly unfavorable to conventional public sector programs. The outcome is that nations, provinces and states, regions and municipalities all attempt to outshine each other, with the overall effect of raising the stakes and making economic development efforts increasingly expensive (Blair and Wechsler 1984).

What is more, it has become obvious that firms most often pursued by governments—large footloose branch plants—are not the ones that generate the greatest number of jobs. The Bureau of Municipal Research (1982) figures indicate that 80 percent of local economic growth is generated by the formation and expansion of local firms. Recent data also suggest that small businesses grow at a faster rate than larger ones. Evidence from the U.S. reveals that 60 percent of all jobs are created by firms of twenty employees or less (Garn and Ledebur 1980).

Not only is there disillusion with traditional measures, but in Canada overall federal regional development expenditure has declined sharply since its peak in the mid-1970s under the Department of Regional Economic Expansion. Moreover, federal and provincial governments now direct a substantial share of their support for industrial development at prosperous regions, with the hope of attracting "desired" types of plants to the country or the province in a climate of fierce international competition for this type of investment; for example, the generous government packages offered to Southern Ontario car assembly plants in the 1980s.

Economic restructuring, doubt about the efficacy of public sector programs and senior governments' waning regional commitment force declining communities to seek new solutions. Traditional means of fostering economic development are either no longer available or insufficient. In these types of communities, development measures must conform to a number of criteria for them to be viable and effective.

1. They must be tailored to changing economic circumstances and emerging knowledge about job creation. In this respect, they should embrace the growing service sector rather than declining industries. Likewise, programs should foster the emergence and development of both local and small firms.

2. Measures should be aimed at assuring economic stability. It follows that, rather than placing all eggs in the footloose manufacturing plant basket, efforts should favour economic diversification. Diversification requires both promoting the development of a variety of economic sectors and assuring the presence of firms at various stages of their existence (Conroy 1975). Another way of assuring stability is to aid the development of endogenous firms that will maintain all stages of their activity (administration, research and development, production, marketing) within the community (Coffey and Polèse 1984). Finally, particular attention should be given to economic sectors characterized by locational stability. This is the case of non-routine activities such as research and development and administration (Friedmann and Wolff 1982; Malecki 1986).

3. Local initiatives must assume a growing importance. This entails an enhanced role on the part of municipal governments and diverse local organizations, and a stronger focus on indigenous entrepreneurship and local firm expansion.

4. The depleted fiscal capacity of municipal administrations in economically distressed cities seriously impairs their possibilities for intervention. For strategies to be effective, actors such as senior governments and a host of community organizations must be brought into play and their resources pooled (Lurcott and Downing 1987; Weaver and Dennert 1987). In such circumstances, coordination can be achieved through ad hoc institutional arrangements.

5. There is also the need for a solid planning framework that promotes the coordination and targeting of a development process. The community has to make maximum use of the limited resources at its disposal to reverse a downward economic spiral. This calls for a planning model that is effective in assuring a concerted effort on the part of the different actors involved in the process (Coffey and Polèse 1984). Further, such a planning model should favour the convergence of efforts on areas where the community holds comparative advantages (James 1984).

Community Development and Strategic Planning

The circumstances described above require a new development framework. It is suggested that this can be provided by a combination of community development and strategic planning coalescing into strategic community development planning. There are two major aspects of community development that need to be stressed here. First, as a process relying on resources originating from a multiplicity of community-based organizations, community development involves extensive participation in both decision-making and implementation.

Second, unlike conventional economic development strategies at the local level, which consist for the most part in marketing efforts and in the provision of industrial land, community development seeks to transform many facets of a locality. Education, health care, recreation, public services, all become relevant areas of intervention (Malecki 1986). From an economic development point of view, this form of community transformation can serve both to spawn local entrepreneurship and to enhance a city's attractiveness for growing sectors of the economy — generally high-order services and high-technology (Coffey and Polèse 1986; Lund 1984).

Strategic planning, when merged with community development, allows the pursuit of long-range objectives based on the assessment of a community's economic and social environment, as well as of its own resources (Federation of Canadian Municipalities 1987; Mier *et al.* 1986). There are seven vital steps to a strategic planning exercise, with the sequence of steps repeated on an ongoing basis. These steps are:

1. Environmental scan;
2. The selection of key issues;
3. The setting of a mission statement;
4. The undertaking of external and internal analyses, which can take the form of a SWOT (strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats) analysis;
5. The development of goals, objectives and strategies with respect to each issue;
6. The preparation of an implementation plan to carry out strategic actions; and
7. Monitoring and updating. Step seven then connects back to step one (Bryson and Roering 1987; Sorkin *et al.* n.d.).

By providing a means of ranking priorities according to a central mission and a limited number of key issues, the strategic planning sequence of steps is particularly conducive to the mobilization of efforts around dominant objectives, as is needed in communities experiencing economic difficulties (Bendavid-Val 1980). The ongoing, iterative nature of strategic planning is another advantage in the context of community economic development. It fosters a durable mobilization of local energies and enables adjustments to happen as changing circumstances emerge. In this respect, the planning document is but a snapshot of a strategic planning process at a particular point in time and is subject to modifications as the sequence of steps is repeated.

In short, the SCDP approach draws its substance from community development and its framework from strategic planning (see Figure 1). Community development defines the scope of participation in development planning and implementation, the areas of community life

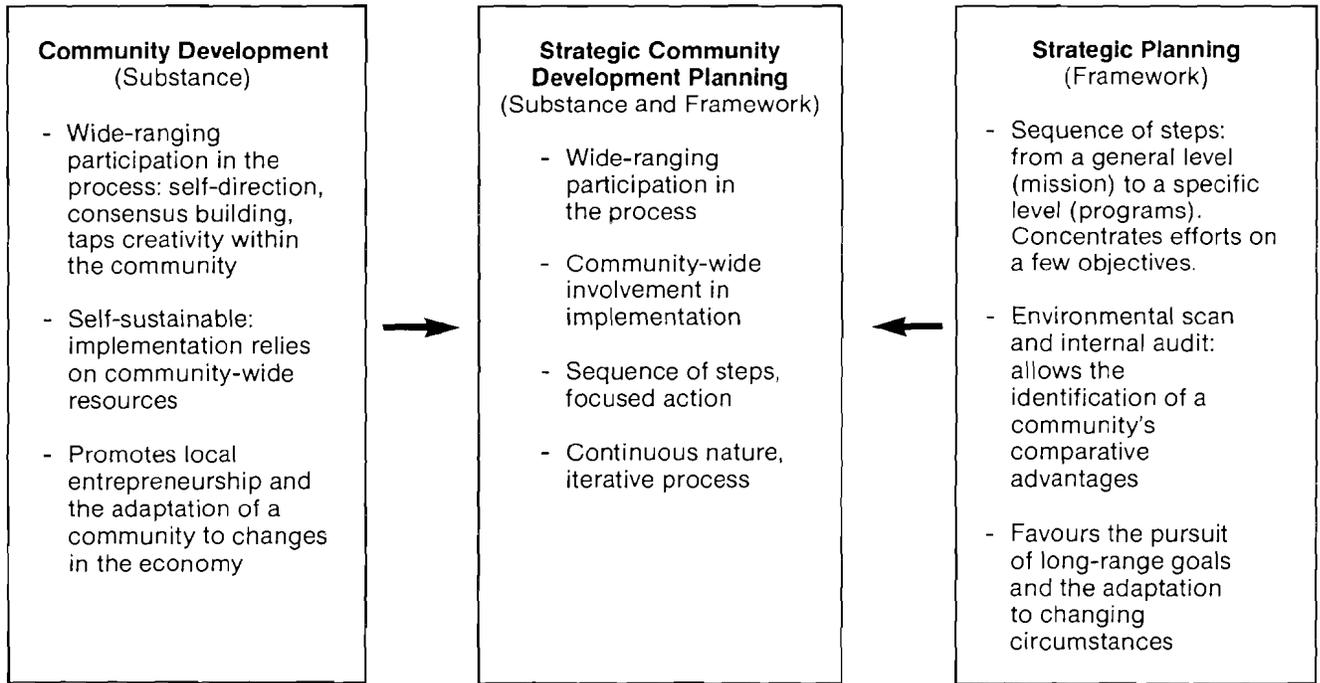


Figure 1

THE STRATEGIC COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT PLANNING MODEL

that are affected, and the extent of the resources involved in the process. Concomitantly, strategic planning offers a sequence of steps that fits the circumstances faced by economically disadvantaged communities. SCDP comes out as a process that combines extensive participation and the broad mobilization of community resources with a planning framework that serves to focus efforts on a limited number of objectives and to adjust development strategies to changing economic and social conditions on an ongoing basis (Eadie 1983). Blended together, community development and strategic planning provide economically troubled communities with a process that is adapted to their circumstances. It combines broad mobilization and scope of intervention with focused and adaptive targets.

Limitations of Strategic Community Development Planning

It must be acknowledged that this type of strategy is far from a miracle cure for declining industrial cities. Whatever the energy it expends towards development, such a city will face hardship in attracting firms from expanding economic sectors and in nurturing local entrepreneurship. In the former case it will compete with amenity-rich cities that offer a skilled labour force and numerous linkages with high-technology and high-order service firms. With respect to the promotion of local entrepreneurship, it must be kept in mind that fledgling firms are singularly vulnerable in an economic environment that is dominated by large national and multinational corporations. Such corporations can raise obstacles against smaller firms' access to capital and market penetration (Howland 1986).

Problems in attracting investments and the vulnerability of new firms preclude consistency in development planning and implementation. Because of SCDP's uncertainty of outcome and the intense community-wide efforts it requires, a switch to more traditional forms of economic development planning is likely to occur whenever a change in the economic context enhances the potential of conventional firm recruitment. For instance, workers' interest in a strategy focusing on local entrepreneurship will often wane when the possibility of attracting branch plants paying higher wages and offering better working conditions looms on the horizon.

Another difficulty concerns the maintenance of long-lasting coalitions combining different interest groups across the community. Broad coalitions are achievable by virtue of a shared self-interest in community survival and growth. In fact this is one of the few issues that can cut across class and interest group divisions to rally virtually everyone in the community: home and property owners who keep an eye on real estate values, workers with a vested interest in an expanded

employment pool, retailers who are eager to see their market expand, city officials and politicians who try to balance municipal finances, and so forth (Harvey 1985; Logan and Molotch 1987). As the process unfolds, however, the form of local neo-corporatism that coalesces around the principle of SCDP can be seriously shaken (Hermes and Selvik 1979; Weaver and Dennert 1987). The uneven distribution of resources within the community, implied by the ranking of objectives and by implementation steps, is inherently divisive. While it is clear that not all businesses benefit, it remains that entrepreneurs as a group are given priority over the most needy among residents.

This distribution bias proceeds from the very nature of economic development in capitalist societies, which is firmly rooted in the "trickle down" paradigm. According to this view, a community needs to focus its support on new and existing firms with the hope that this approach will eventually bear fruit for the entire population in the shape of jobs, higher wages and a broader tax base that permits enhanced public services. When the time comes to earmark resources intended to prompt development, many are loathe to make this leap of faith, looking for immediate rewards rather than hypothetical future benefit. Alternatively, community development can be aimed directly at the disadvantaged, as was largely the case in the U.S. Model Cities experience. But this type of strategy involves a channeling of resources towards social expenditure and is less suited to the generation of economic activity and the creation of employment.

The Sudbury Case

Economic Decline

The Sudbury case study provides an illustration of the application, albeit incomplete, of a SCDP process. Enough elements of the SCDP are present in Sudbury to warrant a discussion of the potential and limitations of this form of planning. The fragmentary nature of the Sudbury process can itself be seen as a reflection of difficulties inherent in SCDP. The case study emphasizes both the circumstances that prompted such a planning model and how the process has unfolded. The gravity of the economic predicament and the scope of the development planning exercise make Sudbury an interesting case. Like Northern Ontario as a whole, Sudbury's economy is highly specialized in the resource industry, where employment levels are subject to the effects of cycles, international competition and mechanization (Government of Ontario 1986; Katary 1986).

Sudbury's existence and development is tied to nickel mining and attendant smelting and refining operations. Over the last three

decades, however, Sudbury has had to face intensifying international competition. Whereas in 1950 only four countries produced nickel and Sudbury accounted for 76 percent of the world total, today nickel originates from twenty-six countries. Only 20 percent of the world production now comes from Sudbury (Globe and Mail 1986). The compound effect of international competition and mechanization has been to considerably reduce employment in Sudbury's two nickel giants: Inco and Falconbridge. Their combined employment of 25,119 in 1971 has dropped to 10,600 in 1987 (Globe and Mail 1986). This figure is expected to fall further to between 7,000 and 5,000 over the next decade (City of Sudbury 1986).

The major blow to the Sudbury regional economy was dealt in 1978, when Inco proceeded for the first time with permanent employment cutbacks. The unemployment rate, which was previously within one point of provincial averages, climbed to 10.1 percent in December 1978, 3.6 points over the Ontario 6.5 value for that month. Structural unemployment has since remained endemic. The 1982 average revealed the largest discrepancy between the Sudbury census metropolitan area and provincial figures, with Sudbury unemployment reaching 19.1 percent in comparison to the 9.8 percent Ontario average. In 1987, on average, the divergence between the two figures was still 5.3 points (Sudbury's annual average was 11.4 percent against 6.1 percent for Ontario). This economic hardship translates into outmigration. Between 1976 and 1987, the Sudbury CMA population fell from 157,030 to 147,400 (Financial Post Information Service 1988). Economic conditions are also responsible for reductions in municipal revenues, which led to contracting staff levels and the curtailment of services.

Sudbury's development planning exercise reflects a conscious effort to reverse this situation by drawing on community resources within what approximates a SCDP framework. It serves as an example of how a community can react to severe economic circumstances by combining elements of community development and of strategic planning.

The Process

The decision to proceed with a broad development planning exercise can be traced back to three circumstances. The first was the city's economic situation. Another was the presence of a mayor and a director of long-range planning sharing a strong commitment to the strategic approach to economic development planning. The third was the need to update the City of Sudbury's 1962 Official Plan in order to adapt it to current conditions and assure its compatibility as a secondary plan with the Regional Municipality of Sudbury's Official Plan, adopted in 1978. Sudbury's Corporate Plan—the name given to the development plan—grew out of this planning exercise. It soon appeared

that a secondary plan on its own was inadequate as a means of dealing with Sudbury's woes. Dissatisfaction with the statutory secondary plan framework emerged from the secondary plan process itself, which involved much community input, revealing a desire to extend the plan's terms of reference. Such plans, as defined by the Ontario Planning Act, are essentially land use instruments. They are therefore geared more to the control than to the promotion of development. These limitations of the Ontario Planning Act had been directly experienced in Sudbury when, in the 1970s, the provincial government disallowed attempts on the part of the Regional Municipality of Sudbury to address human development issues in the Regional Official Plan.

The first step of the Sudbury planning exercise consisted in asking groups comprising a broad cross section of community-based organizations and individuals to provide background information and to identify policy issues in their respective areas of interest. Sixty-one individuals and organizations made their position known. These included, among others, representatives from public agencies, social organizations and local businesses. This was followed in May 1984 by a brainstorming session involving forty-nine participants.

In the next step, planners assembled a background information package for interest groups and individuals. Meetings with these groups were arranged to discuss matters further. In October 1984, a special Sudbury City Council meeting was called to receive written statements from both groups and individuals. Subsequent to this meeting, more briefs were submitted. Planners then used this information to formulate concepts for the Secondary Plan. These concepts were reviewed in March 1985 at an informal session held by City Council, which marked a turning point in the evolution of Sudbury's development planning exercise. A consensus arose among Council members not to limit the exercise to land-use matters but rather to prepare a plan that would also address the city's social and economic problems.

In June 1985, the themes raised during the consultation process were echoed by internationally renowned planners and scholars at the Canadian Institute of Planning annual conference, organized by the Planning Department under the theme of sustainable development (Jackson 1986). Later that year, the planning staff prepared the Corporate Plan, which included the Secondary Plan and also sections dealing with economic, social, human and organizational development. The Plan was made public in 1986 (City of Sudbury 1986).

It is noteworthy that the Corporate Plan's process emerges from a recent history of community mobilization to combat Sudbury's economic decline. In 1978, after extensive layoffs in the nickel industry,

Sudbury 2001 was set up. The purpose of this organization, which grouped different local representatives, was to diversify Sudbury's economy by providing financial support and advice to help the establishment of new industries. Its efforts came to an end in the mid-1980s as a consequence of the phasing out of the provincial financial contribution and of mismanagement. Sudbury 2001 did not meet its objective of creating seventy-five new jobs annually. Still, Sudbury 2001 marked the first concrete attempt to evolve locally-controlled development programs.

In 1982, when a second massive wave of layoffs shook the nickel industry, the Regional Municipality of Sudbury Council organized a number of task forces. Their purpose was to investigate the development potential of different sectors of the economy: mining, government administration, business, industry, finance, health services, agriculture and education. These task forces were composed of elected representatives and officials from the Regional Municipality as well as resource persons from the community. Disbanded in early 1984, the task forces proved to be particularly effective in lobbying senior levels of government. Their success was most visible in the health sector, where a number of the Health Service Task Force's proposals were heeded by the provincial government. Such was the case of the request for a cancer treatment centre.¹

The Plan and its Proposals

The first part of the Corporate Plan consists of theoretical discussions on worldwide trends. Particular attention is given to the passage from a quantitative, growth-oriented economy to a qualitative economy promoting the quality of life. The Plan also calls for a changing public sector role in a slow growth period. It sees the emerging role of the public sector as one of stimulation rather than regulation. In this view, as their regulatory role shrinks in importance in periods of stagnation or decline, governments must turn to the promotion of economic development by going so far as entering into partnership agreements with private firms and community-based non-profit organizations.

The Sudbury Corporate Plan is characterized by its comprehensiveness, in that it seeks to tackle every aspect of community development. Many of its proposals, particularly those concerning economic development and diversification, had been aired in earlier documents, such as the 1977 Regional Municipality of Sudbury Official Plan and a 1980 consultant report prepared for the Regional Municipality's Department of Planning and Development (Abt Associates 1980). None of these, however, had the Corporate Plan's breadth. As expected, the

Plan is largely devoted to physical planning, since the overall exercise originated as a land use planning process. In this respect, acknowledging that the city is entering a period of stability or possible decline, the Plan stresses the need for a consolidation of the urbanized area. It favours infill development, overall upgrading of the built environment, and strict limitations on infrastructure extensions. Another aspect of the Plan is labeled human development. Under this general rubric are found proposals concerning educational, social and health services. Among the plan's recommendations is a greater reliance on family resources in caring for the needy, in order to reduce demands on the shrinking public purse. There is also the encouragement of life-long education, involving the retraining of middle-aged workers, and the promotion of "wellness," which involves a healthier lifestyle, a saner environment, and an emphasis on preventive medicine.

The Plan further contains organizational proposals that concern the structure and operation of the municipal administration. These proposals rest on the acknowledgement that, in the future, the City will have to achieve more with less and that this will force it to become more creative in its use of both human and financial resources. To tackle the financial resource problem, the Plan recommends the introduction of user fees, neighbourhood and community self-help—which could include the upkeep of local parks—and the devolution of the responsibility for sidewalk snow removal to residents and landowners. Other measures likely to enhance the administration's flexibility and its role as a catalyst within the community are also mentioned. This is the case with regular re-examinations of resource commitments, public demonstration projects and partnership arrangements with local firms and community organizations. The Plan also advocates greater initiative on the part of civic servants. Means to achieve this include decentralized responsibilities, greater job autonomy, interdepartmental task forces, working groups that are set up to fulfil specific tasks, and quality circles.

Predictably, given the nature of the crisis that the Corporate Plan addresses, the economic strategy occupies the prominent position. This strategy proposes to enhance Sudbury's attractiveness to growing sectors of the economy and to achieve import and export substitution through the development of nine sectors of the city's community life and economy. These sectors are:

1. Tourism and hospitality. With improved natural amenities within the region, this sector has the potential for becoming the major source of employment.
2. Services. After acknowledging that Sudbury has emerged as the primary service centre for Northeastern Ontario, the Plan recom-

¹For a comprehensive and penetrating review of Sudbury's development efforts over the 1977-1984 period, see Nigel Richardson's (1985) OECD Report.

- mends capitalizing on this trend and identifies the personal and business service industry as holding the greatest potential.
3. Health. The Plan raises the possibility of furthering Sudbury's role as a specialized health-care centre for Northern Ontario.
 4. Education. A greater demand for education is anticipated in the emerging information society.
 5. Mining. The Plan searches for means of increasing the value added in this economic sector. It encourages the creation of new jobs in the mining machinery industry, resource upgrading, pollution abatement, mining technology and other ancillary industries.
 6. Energy. The Plan proposes an energy conservation and an energy substitution strategy so as to stem money outflows from the region and create local employment.
 7. Food and agriculture. Again, in order to reduce leakages and create employment, the Plan recommends the development of a regional agricultural sector.
 8. Culture, arts and entertainment. This sector is to be stimulated in order to create a cultural environment that heightens Sudbury's attractiveness to the highly-skilled labour force associated with high-order service industries.
 9. Sports and athletics. The hosting of sport events is seen as a form of export substitution.

Particular attention is given to the two sectors responsible for the largest share of leakages: energy, and agriculture. As regards energy, the Plan intends to alleviate the total dependency on external sources. This is to be achieved by reducing energy import by 40 percent by the year 2005 through a greater use of renewable and alternative resources as well as by energy conservation techniques. In this latter instance, the Plan proposes the retrofitting of 5 percent of the city's housing stock annually, which means that by 2005 every unit would enjoy energy cost-effective techniques. There are two advantages to this measure. It will generate local employment, and it will increase the amount of money circulated in the local economy by reducing the draining of funds allocated to the purchase of energy.

The same reasoning applies to the food and agriculture sector. Here again, the objective is to create regional employment and put a damper on food imports into the region. Developments in the health and education sectors are other means of achieving import substitution by reducing Sudbury residents' reliance on services offered elsewhere, a reliance that is responsible for an outflow of private and public funds from the region.

The Sudbury Development Planning Process as a Strategic Community Development Planning Exercise

The Sudbury development planning process in many ways resembles the SCDP framework, since it incorporates elements of both community development and strategic planning. In the first place, in line with community development axioms, the process relied on community participation, thus tapping a wide pool of ideas and knowledge. Participation can be credited for the all-embracing nature of the Plan, which tackles thirty-two problems related to every aspect of community life. Likewise, community involvement has been instrumental in forging a broad consensus around the visions of the future expressed in the Plan.

The influence of the community development approach is also present in the proposals made in the Corporate Plan. Many of the proposals espouse the central tenet of the community development approach, in that they rely largely on local resources to reverse the decline of the city. This involves a call for a coordination of local efforts to pursue, in Sudbury, the two economic objectives associated with community development; that is, to enhance the city's adaptation to the requirements of expanding economic sectors and to nurture local entrepreneurship.² In the first instance, the Plan proposes an improvement of the natural environment, the staging of local cultural events, and the training and retraining of the labour force to enhance the community's appeal for expanding tertiary and quaternary activities; in particular, tourism and high-order services. Educational establishments are to assume an active role in this regard; for example, by promoting computer literacy to prepare workers for an information-based economy. Foremost importance is given to the nurturing of local entrepreneurship, however. The plan sets out a number of measures designed to spawn new ventures. These include educational programs for new entrepreneurs, the provision of inexpensive "incubator space," the availability of venture capital, the use of senior government wage subsidy programs, the creation of a retired employee skill pool, and the direct involvement of the Sudbury Regional Development Corporation in setting up new firms.

Equally ingrained in the Sudbury planning process is a distinct strategic planning framework. The Plan's proposals proceed from a sequence of reflective stages linking guiding principles to specific programs and projects. These stages include an analysis of economic trends, which ties in with a survey of problems and opportunities per-

²Note, however, that the Plan, far from ruling out support from senior levels of government, relies on the municipality to actively lobby the federal and provincial governments for development funds.

taining to each area of intervention. Further stages consist of the statement of objectives, the proposal of policies and, finally, of action programs and projects. This marks a well-defined progression from a general, abstract level of discussion to concrete proposals assuring overall consistency within the Plan. By virtue of this structure, all proposals reflect the conclusions reached in the environmental scan stage. Most proposals aim to adapt Sudbury to a changing economy by making better use of existing land and municipal government resources, by retraining segments of the labour force and nurturing entrepreneurship. Also, job creation figures predominantly within most proposals. For example, energy conservation, agricultural development, and land reclamation programs all have the generation of employment as a primary objective.

Difficulties with the Sudbury Development Planning Exercise

Beyond its comprehensiveness and consistency, there are a number of difficulties with the Sudbury Corporate Plan, some of which seem to derive from the Planning Department's tight grip on the process despite the room made for community participation. The Plan's economic analysis most manifestly bears the Department's mark. In this case, senior Sudbury planners involved in the exercise appear to have been preoccupied above all else with the global economic environment, and have emphasized the international at the expense of the regional level. In the economic analysis, more references are made to economic trends affecting the "Industrial West" than to the Sudbury reality. The drafters of the Plan justify this bias by picturing Sudbury as a "micro-cosm" of the capitalist industrial world and of Canada as a whole. In this perspective, the survey of global economic changes appears as immediately applicable to Sudbury. The problem with this form of analysis is that it fails to demonstrate how Sudbury's position, which is that of a resource centre at a distance from Canada's industrial regions and major markets, is affected by these world-wide trends. The planners' philosophy was "think globally, act locally." But before acting locally it was important to understand Sudbury's particular position in the global economic environment.

Planners' predispositions have also influenced the nature of the process. In a manner that is consistent with planners' familiarity with statutory end-result plans that serve to guide urban development, the Sudbury planning process culminates with the planning document. Implementation and monitoring take a distant second place. In this sense, the Sudbury corporate planning process is a truncated application of strategic planning, lacking its ongoing nature and a solid implementation phase. It shares in this respect operationalization weaknesses common among conventional rational-comprehensive plans.

Neglect of implementation is echoed in the absence of concern for the feasibility of many of the Plan's proposals. This is the case, for example, with the recommendation that regional agriculture be developed. Little attention is given to locally-grown products' potential in competing with imports from Southern Ontario and the U.S. But even more problematic is the fact that implementation responsibilities are not formally spread among relevant community-based organizations. The Plan lays the full brunt of operationalization at the door of the Sudbury municipal and regional governments. These two administrations are to intervene both directly, by setting up economic development programs and using public funds as leverage money, and indirectly, by lobbying senior governments and prompting and coordinating actions from community-based organizations. There is a distinct discrepancy between the order of the task and the capacities of the agencies at the centre of the implementation process. Crippled by depressed revenues in the current economic context, the municipal and regional governments cannot easily take on additional responsibilities. More conducive to the implementation of the Plan would have been the creation of a task force pulling together the various community-based organizations whose participation is essential to the execution of the Plan's proposals. This task force could have been given the mandate to assign specific functions among member organizations and to monitor action plans.

The sporadic use currently made of the Plan reflects the weakness of the implementation phase. The municipal government is currently taking a few planning initiatives that conform to the Plan's strategy, such as downtown revitalization. But it is noteworthy that these measures were the object of proposals made in earlier documents and that their early implementation phase predates the Corporate Plan. Also, city departments and interest groups occasionally refer to the Plan selectively to justify requests addressed to Council. Still more disturbing is the lack of attention the Sudbury Development Corporation—the foremost instrument of economic development within the region—pays to the Plan. The Plan has neither been widely distributed or read within the Corporation. One year before the Plan's publication, the Corporation adopted a service-oriented development strategy centering on tourism, government offices and health services, in addition to a diversification strategy focusing on mining-related manufacturing. This strategy was consistent with the Corporation's own development objectives as formulated in a 1984 report (Sudbury Regional Development Corporation 1984). Means of achieving these objectives are, however, more conventional than those advocated in the Plan.

At first glance, these implementation difficulties may appear to be related to Sudbury's imperfect application of the SCDP model, but a more careful examination reveals that these problems also result from gaps that are intrinsic to the model. First, the scant attention given to the implementation can be seen as an attempt to escape difficulties inherent in transposing the consensus achieved at the planning phase to the implementation phase where, as seen, the uneven distribution of scarce resources can be divisive. Currently, the very partial implementation of the Plan is in the hands of the municipal government. The mobilization of community organizations does not seem to have survived beyond the early mapping out of the Plan. Secondly, while SCDP is adapted to periods of crisis when other alternatives are scarce, it is vulnerable to rebounds in the economy. This stems from the intense community efforts such a planning exercise requires and the uncertainty of its outcome. More specifically, low wages and employment insecurity associated with most newly-sprung endogenous ventures are serious impediments to SCDP's appeal. When less demanding avenues of development emerge, communities are likely to revert to more traditional forms of economic development.

Four factors associated with improving economic circumstances since the drafting of the Plan have made its implementation less pressing. First, the Plan's statement that a major community development effort is essential because there is little alternative for Sudbury's unemployed population in times of endemic country-wide unemployment is now much less pertinent; employment is plentiful in Southern Ontario. Second, the Sudbury employment base is about to be bolstered by the relocation of some provincial government employment, which will bring 427 new positions by May 1990 (Government of Ontario, n.d.). Third, present high nickel prices are propelling a cyclical rebound in mining, smelting and refining operations, which has led to Inco's first hiring of new personnel since 1979. And lastly, the present need to handle development occupies much of planners' time, making it difficult for them to pilot the Plan through implementation stages.

Conclusion

SCDP is innovative in that it combines elements of community development and strategic planning. Community development provides a means of achieving community-wide participation, consensus, and self-direction and of mobilizing local efforts. Community development also implies a reliance on community-based resources. Superimposed on the community development approach, strategic planning permits the focus of such efforts on a few crucial objectives and their ongoing adjustment to a changing environment.

This form of development planning appears to be particularly well adapted to periods of crisis, when there is a clear need to harness local energies. It is equally suited to times of economic change. Further, the case study suggests that, because of the efforts it requires from the community and because of the usual absence of spectacular results, SCDP is likely to remain a strategy that is best adapted to circumstances where conventional firm recruitment policies hold few promises.

The theoretical discussion and the Sudbury case study highlight a number of problems with SCDP. Some of these proceed from Sudbury's particular operational environment, as in the case of the excessive weight given to the planning document in the process, which can be attributed to planners' dominant role. Most often, however, the problems identified here are inherent in SCDP: the implementation difficulties, and a tendency to revert back to conventional strategies whenever economic conditions improve. These lessons must be kept in mind when the choice of an economic development option is made. The economic situation must be so precarious that a wide spectrum of local organizations and individuals will agree to invest considerable amounts of time and resources on a long-term basis. These lessons also indicate that the implementation phase warrants particular attention. In this regard, specially tailored institutional arrangements are apt to ease implementation by assuring the participation of relevant community-based organizations and the coordination of their efforts.

In closing, it is important to point out that, for the sake of clarity, SCDP has here been considered on its own. This is not to suggest that this form of planning cannot coexist to various degree with other, more traditional approaches to economic development. For example, the Sudbury Corporate Plan, while placing the emphasis on community-based sources of development, also recommends the use of conventional methods relying on senior government programs and on the attraction of branch plants.

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