



Investing for **Resilience** Community Investment Strategy Review

Why a review?

United Way of Peel Region and the Region of Peel invest millions of dollars in planning, supporting, and delivering human services in our community. As part of their commitment to achieving strong results, the two organizations have in the past conducted independent reviews of their community investment strategies. In 2007 however, United Way and the Region of Peel undertook a joint review. This joint approach enabled us to share the planning and costs, collaborate on the strategy development, and expand the community consultation process.

As the Peel population continues its rapid growth, so does the need for careful investment in the human services our community requires to remain strong and healthy. Funding for human services is shrinking while the need is expanding, compelling us to find innovative ways of doing more with less. Both United Way and the Region of Peel recognize that investment goes beyond just dollars. It also includes leadership and support for collaborative strategies. Collaboration is the key to developing lasting solutions to Peel's complex and inter-related human service issues.

We encouraged extensive community dialogue during the course of the review, implementing a variety of strategies to include as many people as possible. These strategies included six community consultations in Brampton, Caledon and Mississauga, 21 focus groups involving many different language, cultural and age groups, service providers and funders, and 22 key informant interviews. Additionally, we conducted an online survey in five different languages. The review concluded in March 2008 with a Thought Leaders Forum involving more than 100 participants.



Resilience { The ability to thrive in the face of tough times and constant change.

– Sherri Torjman
Shared Space: The Communities Agenda

The “Communities Agenda”

The community investment strategy review was conducted in the context of a broader strategy to strengthen neighbourhoods and communities in Peel. To guide them, United Way and the Region of Peel drew upon the work of Sherri Torjman, outlined in *Shared Space: the Communities Agenda*. Torjman defines “shared space” as not only the physical place in which we all live, but also as a place where we connect emotionally to each other and work collectively toward our common vision and goals. It is in this shared space that the “communities agenda” takes shape.

The communities agenda promotes resilience so that communities become strong and vibrant. Torjman defines resilience as, “the ability to thrive in the face of tough times and constant change.” The communities agenda relates to both what communities can do to foster resilience and how to go about the work.

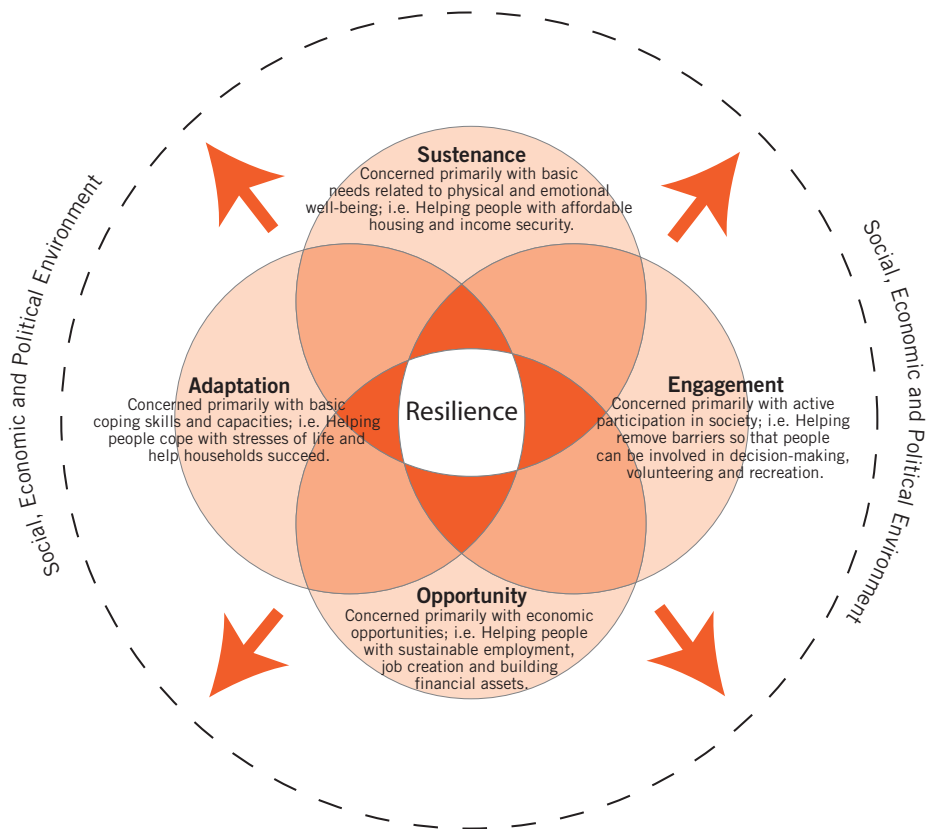
A community’s resilience is determined by its capacity to provide services in four independent but related areas, or clusters:

1. **Sustenance:** meeting basic physical and emotional needs
2. **Adaptation:** helping to develop coping skills and abilities
3. **Opportunity:** providing economic opportunities
4. **Engagement:** aiding active participation in society

By increasing our capacity in each of these areas, we improve our ability to effectively support and strengthen individuals and families in our community.

Communities face complex issues. Social problems can have multiple causes and the relationship between cause and effect is constantly changing. Focusing on resiliency enables communities to respond more effectively to the complexity they face and the kind of positive results they desire. Building resiliency calls for approaches that encourage collaboration within and between the above four clusters, as well as policy interventions.

The following diagram illustrates the relationship between the four clusters needed for a resilient community:



What did our community tell us?

The review resulted not only in recommendations related to specific investment strategies, but also in suggestions as to how these strategies could be implemented. In addition, there are several recommendations related to specific leadership roles for United Way and the Region of Peel.

Funding Recommendations

The existing funding priorities were endorsed, but many people suggested different ways of addressing them. The focus was on the concept of **“building capacity”**. That is, enabling individuals, families and neighbourhoods to develop the ability to learn, and act in ways that help them to cope with and overcome challenges so they can thrive.

Desired outcomes in Peel:

All individuals and families are resilient and thrive within a vibrant community.

To achieve this desired outcome, investments are to be made in programs, services and initiatives that result in:

1. **Resilient people** by:
 - Supporting seniors to be healthy and live independently
 - Supporting individuals with disabilities
 - Supporting people who are vulnerable and susceptible to abuse, especially women and children
 - Supporting people affected by mental health issues
2. **Strong families** by:
 - Supporting newcomers and immigrants to fully integrate into community life
 - Assisting families and children to have a high quality of life
 - Empowering children and youth to reach their full potential
3. **Vibrant neighbourhoods and communities** by:
 - Reducing poverty, eliminating hunger, and ensuring people have access to affordable housing
 - Strengthening neighbourhood development efforts so that people can become involved and engaged in their community

Recommendations for implementing the investment strategy

Our community made the following recommendations related to the process of implementing the investment strategy:

1. Comprehensive and inclusive leadership is required to make their individual efforts count collectively.
2. There is a strong sense that the human services sector in Peel is ready to take the next step in planning and collaboration.
3. Explore the ways to guide a community investment strategy from a region-wide, high-level perspective.
4. Collaboration will be the key to achieving the desired community outcomes.

Leadership Roles

The leadership roles of United Way and the Region of Peel are many and varied. However, as Peel continues to grow and as we embrace more collaborative approaches to responding to complex social issues, the roles of United Way and the Region of Peel will require ongoing dialogue.

Community members made the following recommendations:

1. **United Way of Peel Region** should continue to focus on balancing its many roles, including that of advocate, connector, convenor, facilitator, fundraiser and champion of social change. Roles in neighbourhood development and social purpose enterprise need to be fostered and further explored.
2. The **Region of Peel** should continue to lead by example, as it has done in creating an integrated Human Services Department. It should continue to focus on advocacy, partnership and support of collaborative approaches and neighbourhood development to ensure service excellence.
3. The leadership roles for **United Way** and the **Region of Peel** should continue to be explored beyond the scope of this review, as initiatives and strategies to support the implementation of the community investment strategy are pursued.



Moving Forward

The Community Investment Strategy Review was the result of an extensive and inclusive community consultation process, complemented by strategic input from an advisory group, experts in social and public policy, and the corporate sector.

United Way of Peel Region and the Region of Peel are committed to building a resilient community in which individuals and families thrive within vibrant neighbourhoods. We recognize that with shared vision comes shared responsibility, so we will work collaboratively with community stakeholders to achieve this outcome.

The challenges in the next decade are to plan and invest around a common vision of a sustainable, vibrant Peel, where access and equity exists for all residents, especially those in greatest need.

The full *Investing for Resilience report* is available online at www.unitedwaypeel.org

For additional information, please contact:

Anita Stellinga
Director, Community Investment
United Way of Peel Region
5170 Dixie Road, Suite 300
Mississauga, ON L4W 1E3
905-602-3618
astellinga@unitedwaypeel.org

Sandra Solonik
Acting Manager, Community Services and Special Projects
Regional Municipality of Peel
10 Peel Centre Dr., Suite A
Brampton, ON L6T 4B9
905-791-7800 ext. 4935
sandra.solonik@peelregion.ca



Vision

United Way will champion and inspire sustainable change that strengthens community and improves lives.

Mission

To engage with our community, through partnerships, to ensure people are cared for, connected and included.

Values

- Inclusion
- Accountability
- Visionary
- Collaboration
- Integrity
- Voluntarism



Vision

Peel will be a healthy, vibrant and safe community that values its diversity and quality of life.

Mission

The Region of Peel will serve its changing community through leadership, partnership and service excellence.

Values:

- Supportive and respectful environment
- Teamwork
- Effective communication
- Integrity
- Quality service