Organizational Readiness Checklist

Project Concept

1. What is the basic project concept?
2. Will this project further the organization's mission and does it respond to community needs & interests? How?
3. Is this project being developed in response to expressed community need, desire, or ongoing community engagement processes?
4. Has your organization identified the key stakeholders for this project? Who will be using the new project most? Who will be running programs & stewarding the new space(s)?
5. Does your organization have representation from your key stakeholders on the leadership team? (I.e Board member(s), Executive Director, Committee Leads) If not, how can work be done to make these positions more accessible for community stakeholders?
6. Does your organization have existing engagement, evaluation and outreach processes in place that can be implemented to consult with key stakeholders on the new project?
7. How & when will community input be considered in the design of the project (of both the physical space & how it is accessed)?

Project Site

8. Has your organization identified a site or neighbourhood that would be strategic in delivering this project and furthering the organization's mission?
9. Do you have existing access (ownership, lease, or other agreement) to the site of interest?
10. Is the site located in an area that is easily accessible to the population your organization intends to serve?

External Community Engagement

11. Does your organization have good relationships with its neighbours at its site(s) of operation?
12. How is your organization and its services viewed within the wider community?
13. Is the external community aware of your organization's goals and efforts? Are they supportive?
14. Does your organization have strong relationships with the business community, the non-profit community, or the political community in the neighbourhood that may also be open to collaboration?

15. What channels does the organization use to communicate with external partners?

16. Are there any groups currently under-represented in your community conversations and outreach?

Internal Capacity

17. Do you have a sense of which option will work best for your team and this project? (*Use the questions below to reflect on these options.*)
    a. **Option 1:** Do we enhance our existing in-house capacity and capability?
    b. **Option 2:** Do we hire new staff to develop our own in-house capacity and capability?
    c. **Option 3:** Do we hire a development manager to provide the capacity and capability needed on a project basis?
    d. **Option 4:** Do we enter into a formal partnership with an external development company?

18. Will the project be managed by staff, the board, a board committee or a combination?

19. Do you already have a sense of who will be on the committee/team leading this project?

20. How frequently will the project committee meet? (weekly, monthly, bi-monthly, etc...)

21. Is there enough continuity within your existing Board / leadership to see a project through?

22. Will the project require staff / leadership to take on extra activities, to help with project efforts?

23. Are these responsibilities that can be assigned to existing staff or board members? Do you have a sense of how this might this impact their workloads?

24. In the case of a large project, is there a strong and effective leader who can articulate and rally the necessary support – internally and externally?

25. Is there anyone on your team (Board or staff) with real estate experience?

26. Do those leading this project have strong project management skills?

27. Do you have skilled facilitators on your staff?

28. What expertise is already present on your board/staff teams?
    i. Legal
    ii. Real estate
    iii. Development and/or construction
    iv. Planning
    v. Architecture
    vi. Capital fundraising
    vii. Community consultation & engagement
    viii. Financial modelling
    ix. Business development

29. What expertise is needed on your board/staff teams?

        i.   Legal
       ii.   Real estate
     iii.   Development and/or construction
     iv.   Planning
      v.   Architecture
     vi.   Capital fundraising
    vii.   Community consultation & engagement
   viii.   Financial modelling

b. Business development

30. Do you or one of your potential partners have technical expertise to evaluate the costs and benefits (both financial and social) of this project?

31. What are the specific capabilities / expertise of your partners?

32. Do you have sufficient resources to hire additional staff that are needed to manage the project?

33. Is the organization (Board and staff) willing to put in time and energy into a capital-intensive project?

Project Structure

34. Is this a one-time project or is your organization hoping to expand its development portfolio?

35. Has your organization considered partnering on the development of this project? (i.e. with a private, public or nonprofit partner)

36. Are there elements of this project that a partner could deliver (I.e. housing, community space, child care)? Do partnerships / collaboration play a role in the development and implementation of the project?

37. Would a creative mixed-use approach be beneficial for this project? If so, who might the partners be, and do you have existing relationships?

38. If no discussions have been had yet, are there potential partners you anticipate would be interested?

39. Do you and your potential partner share a similar vision? Are your work cultures / values similar?

40. Has your organization completed a similar project in the past? If so, what were the key lessons learned?

41. Will owning real estate bring about new responsibilities that will negatively impact the quality of current operations? How might this be addressed?

42. Can your operations afford to take a temporary pause or operate at reduced capacity?

43. Do you have interim plans for existing operations as the development is pursued?

44. What will happen to the project if one partner pulls out? Is there a plan B in the event the partnership falls through?

45. Is your organization already connected to another organization that has completed a similar project? Could this organization play a mentorship role in the early stages of the new project?

46. What governance structures can the organization put in place to continuously evaluate the merits of the project and assess the 'go/no-go' decision?

47. Does the organization have access to an independent, third party or separate group within the organization that can provide a neutral peer review of the project proposal and plans? (with key contacts for legal, planning, real estate, insurance, financial architecture expertise)

48. Will owning or operating the new space constrain the organization (i.e. resources, staff allocation)?

49. Is there a consensus among your Board? Is there understanding and agreement on the need for the SPRE project?

50. What is the CURRENT review & approvals process for this decision? Who are the key decision- makers? Approximately how long will this process take? Are there accountability & liability measures in place?

51. What are the weaknesses in this process? How can this be streamlined and improved?

52. Do you have a sense of what the "dealbreaker" scenarios might be? When would you say "no" to an opportunity or turn back in light of new developments with the project?

53. Based on the content covered in the session & your responses above, do you have a sense of your organization's next steps in the recruitment of collaborators for the pre-development phase of the project?

Approaching a lender: Financial capacity and opportunities

54. Do you have a good relationship with your account manager at the organization's financial institution? Are they aware of the work that you are trying to do? Do they have a strong understanding of your mission?

55. Have you considered inviting someone from your financial institution to events or to join your board?

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57. Can your organization's treasurer, finance committee chair, or project lead speak the lender's language?

58. Does your organization have and are you able to share a strong:
    a. Strategic plan
    b. Financial plan
        i. 3 years of financial statements
        ii. Net Operating Income (revenue less cash expenses)

59. How does the project fit within your existing portfolio? Are you able to communicate this to the account manager?

60. Has your organization pursued a capital project in the past? If so, who led this project and can they provide insight into lessons learned regarding financing?

61. Does your team know how financing for this project will be managed, along with the organization's ongoing operating budget?

62. What's the organization's current track record? If the organization has received financing in the past, has it been able to keep up with payments?

63. How stable are the organization's revenues from year to year? If revenues have not been stable, what is the organization doing to address this?

64. Can you see this project naturally evolve as part of your current business model?

65. Is your organization in a healthy financial position to take on a potentially capital-heavy project?

66. How much money does the organization have in its existing cash reserves?

67. Is your organization well set up to manage contributions for the development?

68. Are you willing to enter into financial relationships with other organizations?

69. Are there collaborative outcomes that may increase revenue or reduce expenses?

70. If unable to take on a loan of this magnitude, is your organization able to partner with another organization (or entity) that can? What might that agreement look like?

71. Are you familiar with the competitive trends and the current industry risk for the type of project that you are considering?

72. Do you already have a revenue source that can pay back the loan?

Funding

73. Can your organization leverage existing funding or reserves for the pre-development phase? Can you anticipate whether existing or future funders will support the project? Do they understand the benefits?

74. Is your organization eligible for seed funding through any of the programs covered in this program or found elsewhere?

75. If your organization is not eligible for funding programs that provide funding for pre-development costs at this time, is there work that you can do to meet the eligibility criteria?

76. Are there planning or fiscal incentives available in the neighbourhood, ward, municipality or province in which the project is located? (i.e. a conducive planning framework)

77. What are the main sources of revenue for the organization: government grants, user fees, large institutional donations, individual donations?

78. Has your organization conducted fundraising for a capital project in the past? If so, what worked well? If not, is there another organization that you can reach out to for support?

79. Do you have significant fundraising capabilities? Does your organization have staff or other infrastructure dedicated to ongoing & long-term fundraising? (revisiting questions from sessions 2,3,4)

80. Does your organization have other strategic relationships that can allow for potential in-kind contributions (i.e. pro-bono services, donated supplies, free marketing).

81. Does your organization have a relationship with potential benefactors (i.e. land or building donations in exchange for charitable receipts) that would be interested in collaboration?

82. If you are partnering with another organization on the development of this project, are they able to access funds that your organization is unable to?

83. Do you know what strategic direction your organization is heading in? Does the project reflect this?

Measuring Success

84. What are the outcomes from the project that are critical for it to be deemed a success?

85. In the best-case scenario, when the project is completed, how does it enable the organization to do what it cannot currently?

86. Is it worth the amount of work and capacity needed to develop the project?

87. Can the project demonstrate the support and involvement of the wider community it intends to serve?

88. Does the project support local community development goals?

89. Does the project demonstrate knowledge of and relevance to the community's/communities' identity, values, and needs?

90. Will the project enable or create new ways of connection/social impacts for the community?

91. Does the project have the potential to deliver positive economic benefits for the community?

92. Can the project act as a precedent for future collaborations that seek to achieve the same goals?

93. Will the project support professional development and internal capacity building within your team and/or community members?

94. If the purpose of the project is to expand programs, has the need for expansion been objectively evaluated through community consultation and/or design processes?

95. Will the community be better served by your organization after the proposed project is completed?

96. Will a real estate project help alleviate the current leasing or renting situation?