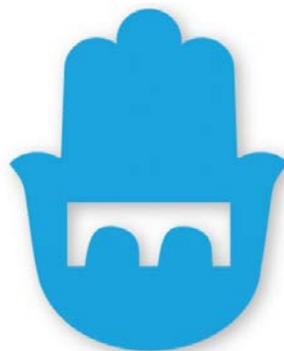


Jewish Federation of Greater St. Paul Community Planning Process

**Priority 5: Enhance Cooperation Between St. Paul and
Minneapolis Jewish Communities**



INTRODUCTION

In the spring of 2012, the Jewish Federation of Greater St. Paul began to facilitate listening sessions to learn more about what the St. Paul Jewish community was thinking, and what people wanted to share. This process engaged over 350 people and multiple demographics of the community. Community volunteers acted as moderators and note-takers for the listening sessions, asked a set of 12 questions at the meetings, and had participants fill out an exit survey at the conclusion of the listening session. This process led to the development of a guiding principle and five priorities:

Guiding Principle

To engage all St. Paul Jewish agencies, institutions and synagogues to build a vibrant, cohesive and inclusive Jewish community in Greater St. Paul. To be successful, lay and professional leaders will intentionally work together in ever-increasing collaboration and with common purpose.

The Five Priorities

- Priority 1. Build the foundation of community: Warm, welcoming connections
- Priority 2. Engage the next generation: Reach out – *l'dor vador*
- Priority 3. Inspire giving: Create the commitment to sustain a vibrant and caring Jewish St. Paul
- Priority 4. Strengthen Jewish education: Find and implement effective models for today's world
- Priority 5. Enhance cooperation between St. Paul and Minneapolis Jewish communities

Following the development of these priorities, research and recommendation panels were convened to conduct a structured approach to identify the current state of affairs, learn from others locally and nationally who have engaged in similar work, and identify realistic goals for the greater St. Paul Jewish community with recommendations for a path forward.

This is the report of phase one of the panel which was convened to address Priority 5: Enhance cooperation between the St. Paul and the Minneapolis Jewish communities.

The goal of this phase of Panel 5's work has been to research the current situation without making specific conclusions. Based on the findings of this report, the Panel will now enter "phase two," during which it will focus on developing specific recommendations.

Priority 5

Enhance Cooperation Between the St. Paul and Minneapolis Jewish Communities

Guiding Principles

The charge of Panel 5 is to research and develop recommendations that will enhance cooperation between the St. Paul and Minneapolis Jewish communities. The scope of the Panel is about improving collaboration and cooperation between the communities, not only between the Federations.

The principal purposes of enhancing cooperation are threefold, in no particular order:

- a) Enhancing the “community” aspect of Jewish life in the Twin Cities.
- b) Enhancing the quality of community programming.
- c) Achieving greater economic efficiency.

The work of the panel is guided by the following principles:

- a) **Positive tone.** The goal of the Panel is to face issues head-on and come up with solutions which will inspire the community toward greater collaboration and cooperation. The focus of the work should be positive and outcome-based.
- b) **Honesty.** The Panel seeks to elicit honest assessments of both the benefits and challenges of cooperative community endeavors, both what has worked and what has not worked.
- c) **Changing the narrative.** The Panel hopes to change what for some has been a negative narrative which dwells too often on perceived differences and past grievances. The panel wants to shine a light on the many collaborative communal activities that are working well, as well as offer solutions for how the communities can work better together in the future.
- d) **Mutual Respect.** Success will require building greater trust between the communities and a growing respect for the essential integrity and worth of each community. The panel recognizes that change is likely to be incremental not sudden and radical. The Panel hopes to see ambitious efforts to move the communities forward toward an achievable vision of greater cooperation, a vision which will be shared and measured, and corrected where it falls short and celebrated where it succeeds.

Formation and Composition of the Panel

The Panel is chaired by Jon Parritz, who also serves on the Steering Committee of the St. Paul Community Planning Process.

Since the objective of this panel is to enhance cooperation between St. Paul and Minneapolis Jewish communities, it was obviously of great importance to have meaningful input from both communities. Jon reached out to the Presidents of each Federation and asked each President to name to the panel two individuals who were active members of each of their respective communities and who were highly respected and had extensive involvement in a variety of Jewish community events over a long period of time.

Jewish Federation of Greater St. Paul President Susan Minsberg appointed Holly Brod Farber and Mark Adelman to the Panel from St. Paul. Minneapolis Jewish Federation President Linda Ketover appointed Kris MacDonald and Todd Lifson from Minneapolis. All Panel members have many years of volunteer and leadership experience in the community with a number of different agencies.

The Panel is supported by David Milavetz and Nora Murphy, consultants retained by the Jewish Federation of Greater St. Paul to support the community planning process.

Community Connections

As noted above, the importance of collaboration was identified as one of five top communal priorities as part of St. Paul's Community Planning Process. In Minneapolis, the desire to find new ways of collaborating with St. Paul emerged from a valuable "grass roots" initiative spearheaded by Steve Lear, a long-time active community member from Minneapolis, together with Yoav Segal from St. Paul.

In addition, the Harry Kay Foundation, whose mission is to enhance Jewish life in the Twin Cities, expressed an interest in the project and support for the goal of enhancing collaboration and cooperation between the two communities.

Panel Meeting Dates and Locations

The first meeting of the Panel took place on October 20, 2014 at the St. Paul JCC. Subsequent meetings were held at various locations in both Minneapolis and St. Paul. Several meetings took place at the Minneapolis office of the Lurie Besikof accounting firm, of which Todd Lifson is a partner, and the Jewish Community Relations Council of Minnesota and the Dakotas. The Panel wishes to thank the St. Paul JCC, the St. Paul Jewish Federation, the Lurie Besikof firm and the JCRC for hosting these meetings.

In all, the Panel has met 8 times: on October 20, 2014, November 16, 2014, December 15, 2014, January 13, 2015, February 19, 2015, March 25, 2015, April 20, 2015, and May 12.

Jon also reported on the activities of the Panel to the boards of the Minneapolis Federation and the JCRC, both on May 19th, and periodically reported to the boards of the St. Paul Federation and the Harry Kay Foundation (both boards of which he is a member).

Community Interviews

In addition to drawing upon its own extensive knowledge of and experience with cross-river collaborative efforts, the Panel decided to gather information by conducting in-depth interviews of a cross-section of Jewish communal professionals from across the Twin Cities who have been directly involved in delivering collaborative programs to the community. In all, the Panel has interviewed 22 agency professionals and met with the Minnesota Rabbinical Association.

Each interview was guided by a script. *See Appendix A.* The purpose was to elicit in depth opinions and perspectives from the interview subjects, including detailed observations based upon the success or failures of specific events.

Each interview was summarized in writing and the summary was shared with the interview subject for input and approval.

The Panel conducted interviews of the following agencies and professionals.

Jewish Community Relations Council of Minnesota and the Dakotas

Steve Hunegs, Executive Director. Interviewers: Jon Parritz, Kris MacDonald.

Jewish Community Action

Vic Rosenthal, Executive Director. Interviewer: David Milavetz.

St. Paul JCC

1. Michael Waldman, current CEO. Interviewer: Holly Brod Farber.
2. Penny Schumacher, Chief Advancement Officer: Holly Brod Farber
3. Burt Garr, former CEO. Interviewer: Mark Adelman.

Sabes Jewish Community Center

Joshua Wert, Executive Director. Interviewer: Mark Adelman.

Sholom

Ben Laub, Former Executive Director. Interviewer: Jon Parritz.

Minnesota Hillel

Benjie Kaplan, Executive Director. Interviewer: Holly Brod Farber.

Jewish Federation of Greater St. Paul

1. Eli Skora, Executive Director. Interviewers: All Panel members.
2. Dan Mogelson, Young Leadership and Israel Programs Director. Interviewer: Holly Brod Farber.
3. Dan Lepow, Campaign Director. Interviewer: Holly Brod Farber.
4. Sharon Pesses, Women's Philanthropy Director. Interviewer: Holly Brod Farber.

Minneapolis Jewish Federation

1. Gil Mann, Interim CEO. Interviewers: all Panel members.
2. Steve Silberfarb, former Executive Director (and former JCRC Executive Director.) Interviewers: Jon Parritz and Kris MacDonald.
3. Debbie Stillman, Director of Community Partnerships and Engagement. Interviewers: Kris MacDonald, David Milavetz.
4. Evan Stern, Development Associate. Interviewers: Kris MacDonald, David Milavetz.

Jewish Family Service of St. Paul (JFS)

1. Ted Flaum, Executive Director. Interviewer: Holly Brod Farber
2. Mitch Wittenberg, Supervising Counselor. Interviewer: Holly Brod Farber
3. Chris Rosenthal, Director of Senior Services. Interviewer: Holly Brod Farber
4. Tim Gotmann, Assistant Director. Interviewer: Holly Brod Farber.

Jewish Family and Children Service of Minneapolis (JFCS)

1. Judy Halper, Executive Director. Interviewers: Todd Lifson and David Milavetz.
2. Jerry Waldman, former Executive Director. Interviewers: Mark Adelman and Todd Lifson.

Minnesota Rabbinical Association (MRA)

The Panel interviewed the MRA as a group at a scheduled meeting of the MRA, which was attended by many rabbis from across the Twin Cities and from all denominations.

In addition, retired Rabbi Barry Cytron was interviewed by Mark Adelman and Todd Lifson.

Process for Creating this Report

At its meeting on May 12, 2015, each Panel member shared with the group his or her view of the essential lessons learned from the interviews. Prior to this meeting, each Panel member studied a book containing all of the interviews, including those interviews which the panel member did not personally attend. Following the meeting, a memo summarizing the key observations from this meeting was prepared, and is attached at Appendix B.

In addition, David Milavetz was asked to study the interview summaries and to identify repeating trends and themes. David's analysis of the interviews is attached at Appendix C.

This report is a synthesis of the key observations memo, the repeating trends analysis, and other input from panel members and consultants.

Key Findings

The Panel agrees that the following represent its Key Findings from Phase One of its work:

Areas of Cooperation/Non-Cooperation

During the course of the wide-ranging interviews, it became evident that there were many programs which are ongoing and which involve varying degrees of collaboration. We found a lot of "successes" that aren't widely known. Many agencies aren't getting credit in the community for what they are doing, just criticism for what they aren't doing. A complete catalogue of these programs is beyond the scope of this project. Nevertheless, we did want to highlight certain prominent programs which appear to be marked either by a high degree of success, or by persistent difficulty.

Many agencies/organizations are cooperative by definition and design—that is, their mission extends explicitly to both communities and they are structured accordingly. These agencies include, for example, the JCRC, Hillel, Sholom, Minnesota Jewish Theatre, the Harry Kay Foundation, JCA, AIPAC, and the Minnesota Jewish Historical Society. These groups are generally perceived to perform well in the area of collaboration.

- **Other organizations, such as NCJW and Hadassah, have separate dues, boards and agendas and operate independently in each community.** Even so, the two branches collaborate frequently across the river with varying degrees of success.
- **The JCRC in particular serves as a sort of linchpin of community collaboration,** particularly in areas involving governmental affairs, interfaith dialogue, Holocaust education and survivor outreach, Israel advocacy and public education, and security coordination.

- **Among agencies which are localized in nature, many appear to be currently making great efforts to work more collaboratively in a number of areas.** For example, the two JCC's cooperate in producing a range of film, book and humor festivals, and specific sporting events, such as the Maccabi games, and in acting as lead agencies in organizing annual Israel Independence Day celebrations. The growth in collaboration and cooperation between the JCC's is exciting and we support it enthusiastically. Similarly, JFS and JFCS are working collaboratively in delivering career and employment counseling, in supporting the Jewish Domestic Abuse Collaborative (JDAC) and the Mental Health Education Project. While these collaborative JFS/JFCS programs are doing great work, and it makes sense to do them across the river, some in St. Paul expressed a desire for greater partnership.
- **Synagogues are increasingly engaging in cross-river programming,** (e.g., Kosher Fest, Cirque de Purim.) Some synagogue youth programs and events are increasingly open to all Twin City teens. This is a very positive development.
- **But, one area in which there is very little cross-community collaboration is formal youth education.** Each community operates its own Talmud Torah and community day school, and many synagogues operate their own religious schools. While more localization is natural and to be expected in this area, this also appears to be an area which would benefit from greater collaboration, particularly at the high-school level.
- **Many Federation activities are conducted on a collaborative basis, with varying degrees of success.** For example, Cardozo Society, an affinity group for Jewish lawyers, is operated collaboratively by the two Federations and is widely seen as highly effective and successful. On the other hand, Maimonides Society, which is an affinity group for Jewish medical professionals, is currently not entirely collaborative. It is unclear whether this is by intention, or whether the program is suffering from some correctible dysfunctionality.
- **Each Federation has a partnership relationship with a different Israeli community.** While having different partnership communities is not necessarily a problem, the communities could collaborate more in their programming—by, for example, opening some events to the other community, conducting joint missions, etc.

- **Each community brings interesting speakers or other personalities from outside the area from time to time.** There could be greater effort to share these speakers, including sharing of costs.
- **Lion of Judah is an affinity group for Jewish women run by both Federations.** While successful and popular, many in St. Paul wish that more of its programs would take place in St. Paul.
- **Bi-City agencies succeed in large part *because* their reach is bi-city in nature.** The JCRC in particular succeeds well as a collaborative agency by making sure that board meetings rotate between the two communities, and important events are held in locations convenient to both communities. Sholom similarly works hard to operate in a manner which makes it convenient for members of each community to participate.
- **Unfortunately, despite their critical importance to both communities, bi-city agencies are currently supported by both Federations in an inconsistent and largely non-collaborative fashion.** Each Federation currently contributes varying degrees of financial support for these agencies which serve Jews from across the Twin Cities (and beyond). The two Federations no longer follow any sort of “formula” for sharing the burden of support of these agencies. The St. Paul Federation has long included the Minnesota Jewish Theatre among its regular beneficiary agencies, while the Minneapolis Federation has not (although it did recently make a grant of \$7500.) Rimon (the Minnesota Jewish Arts Council) also serves the entire community, but is operated as a division of the Minneapolis Federation (though the St. Paul Federation does help promote events.) Other agencies, such as JCRC and Hillel, get regular support from both Federations as beneficiary agencies, but with no coordination or relationship to the relative size of the Federation. Professionals from these agencies expressed frustration at the lack of coordination and the resulting increased effort required for funding and documentation.
- **In sum, Federation collaboration regarding the bi-city agencies is an area of considerable opportunity for improvement.**
- **Duplication in Young Leadership Programs?** Each Federation, and many other agencies and Synagogues, have their own “Young Leadership” programs. Many have observed what appears to be a high degree of “over-programming” to this group. It

is good and desirable for all Jewish organizations to pro-actively reach out to the younger generations. But it also appears that these groups would benefit from increased cooperation and collaboration.

- **Collaboration appears to be working well in the camping sphere.** Overnight summer camps are a place where all Twin City Jewish kids meet and which the communities support jointly through both individual donations and federation and other institutional scholarship support—e.g., Herzl, Ramah, OSRUI, and others.
- **TC Jewfolk is a new bright spot on the Twin Cities Jewish cultural landscape.** It is an independent online media organization which explicitly seeks to cater to the entire community. It can be a real engine for collaboration, particularly in the area of publicity and outreach.

Conclusions

The Panel agrees that the following represent its Conclusions from Phase One of its work:

- The St. Paul and Minneapolis Jewish communities are currently involved in a wide range of collaborative efforts, many of which are extremely successful. More needs to be done to publicize and celebrate these successes. Doing so will promote and encourage further collaboration, and enhance our sense of being one community.
- Successful collaboration requires agreement and trust in a lead agency with clearly defined roles for participating agencies.
- Collaboration needs to be a strategic objective adopted by community agencies, including each of the two Federations, and made part of ongoing accountability and performance reviews.
- Attention must be paid to developing future leaders in the Federations and agencies who are skilled at and committed to both preserving communal culture and fostering creative and open collaboration.
- Geography is, and will remain, an issue, and will require conscious efforts to balance competing community interests in having events at convenient locations.
- Inter-Federation collaboration is extensive but is hampered by lack of clear guidelines and procedures, particularly for sharing registration information.

- Oversight and funding of bi-city agencies is hampered by lack of coordination and cooperation between Federations.
- Collaboration generally is hampered by obsolete and counterproductive attitudes about the “other” community: this needs to be addressed head-on and diffused at every opportunity.
- We should strive to develop a cohesive sense of a single “Minnesota Jewish community.” This can occur without interfering with either community’s autonomous organization or unique “sense of self.”
- Collaboration can and should take different forms: No one model is appropriate for all circumstances.
- Collaboration does not mean elimination of separate communal organizations. Having separate organizations operating in each community helps outreach efforts and serves to broaden communal involvement and fundraising. While the benefits of collaboration and cooperation can be achieved without eliminating existing organizations, community organizations can, and should, look for opportunities to avoid unnecessarily duplicating functions and services, and to achieve operating efficiency by combining programs where appropriate.
- Key opportunities for achieving efficiency goals through collaboration include joint contracting for vendor services, such as property maintenance, security, information technology, accounting, and marketing.
- There is wide community buy-in and interest in enhancing collaboration and cooperation. Not every area is a fruitful one for collaboration. For example, certain activities are likely to remain localized in nature, such as early childhood and elementary education.
- While it is true that the cultures of the St. Paul and Minneapolis Jewish communities differ in certain important respects, differences can be overstated and become a barrier to collaboration. Positive distinctive differences between the communities should be celebrated, not used as an excuse for avoiding collaboration.
- It is important to develop concrete communal structures for the purpose of fostering collaboration. Improving collaboration requires intentionality.

Going Forward

Specific Suggestions for Future Consideration

As noted above, the panels are charged with conducting Research and making Recommendations. The goal of this phase of Panel 5's work has been to perform the "Research" part of this charge, by gathering data and analyzing the current situation. The Panel will now enter "phase two," during which it will focus on developing specific Recommendations based on its Research.

The following represent the Panel's initial thoughts about future steps which should be considered in phase two of its efforts:

- The community should consider establishing a joint committee of the two Federations which will be charged by each Federation with the authority and responsibility to make recommendations for funding of bi-city agencies and to otherwise promote collaboration within and among the communities.
- The community should consider establishing periodic meetings of agency professionals and rabbis from across the Twin Cities, convened by the two Federations, for the purpose of discussing ongoing collaboration and new ideas for collaborative ventures. Such meetings currently occur with varying regularity within each community. These intra-city meetings should continue, but bi-city meetings should be added.
- Each Jewish agency should designate a liaison for collaboration.
- The two Federations should convene a task force to study the feasibility of consolidating "back office" functions, such as information technology, as well as spearheading investigation of wider communal collaborative efforts for such functions as facilities management, security, etc. This task force should be staffed by Federation professionals accountable to each Federation Executive Director and President.