:CITIES

CARDUS

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SUPPORT FOR MUNICIPAL GROWTH

Fostering sustainable cities includes paying attention to the human and social dimensions. Cardus has worked on developing an approach to municipal and faith community interactions that strengthens the long-term planning objectives of municipalities and the significant social capital function of faith institutions. Insightful planning combined with the aesthetic, social service, volunteer, and spiritual dimensions of faith institutions can be a powerful catalyst for long-term success.

Our most recent project has focused on the City of Calgary. We have provided research and strategic development to enhance significant engagement between municipal leaders and leaders of the faith communities. The concrete results of this work have been two reports on the Calgary City Centre Plan including an audit of downtown faith institution capacity. Municipal leaders have been very supportive of this work. We will continue to provide guidance on this project as formal amendments to the Plan are considered in 2012.

Previous projects include working with the City of Hamilton (*Living on the Streets*) and the City of Toronto (*Toronto the Good*). In addition, we have been able to establish successful partnerships with organizations such as the *Canadian Urban Institute*, the convening and facilitation of diverse and representative multi-faith meetings with municipal leaders, and the thoughtful engagement of leaders at an academic, policy, and grassroots level.

The following publications represent the impact of this work:

- *Think Different: Urban Religious Communities: Problem Solvers or Trouble Makers?* A book-length compilation of some of the most creative ground level thinkers and doers on public religion and urban policy
- "City Hall Shows Willingness to Nurture Faith" – *Calgary Herald*, December 10, 2011

KEY SERVICE OFFERINGS

- Facilitation of municipal and faith community interactions at institutional levels
- Review of municipal plans including recommendations on amendments and process
- Reviews and recommendations on bylaws and related legislation

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ABOUT CARDUS

The *cardus* was a kind of marketplace or public square that took the form of a street. Typically, it was the north-south road that connected people in Roman cities to their major public spaces. On the *cardus* (or *Cardo Maximus*), government, markets, temples, and other social groups met to establish a common life for the good of society. Many interests were represented in this square making it necessary to balance individual needs with common needs. This is never easy and is always a work in progress.

Civic, social, cultural, and economic flourishing requires ongoing reconsideration of how our numerous social institutions relate to each other. This in turn requires a realistic understanding of how culture changes and openness to public exchange about our most deeply held convictions.

The complex network of relationships between people, institutions, and culture represents what we at Cardus call *social architecture*. We research the existing social architecture and propose ways in which it might change to better serve the common good. The design of an individual institution and the wider networks of institutions that make up our society can be improved. Taking stock of the best ideas and practices in design thinking can help get us there.

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