



:CIVIC CORE



CARDUS

CIVIC CORE

BUILDING A STRONGER CIVIC CORE IN CANADA

Vital communities depend on a strong base of people who vote, volunteer and donate. The aim of our **Civic Core** research and consulting is to deepen administrators' and counselors' understanding of what is happening in the non-profit sector generally and charitable institutions in particular. Growing demand for non-profit services via increasing demographic pressures is combining with a decline in giving. This will increase demand on the front lines of social service. A significant amount of this pressure will be experienced in urban settings but rural and semi-rural regions will have their own unique challenges in addressing this gap.

In 2009, Cardus published an extensive analysis of Statistics Canada data entitled *A Canadian Culture of Generosity: Renewing Canada's Social Architecture by Investing in the Civic Core and the Third Sector*. We are also conducting research on how "Big Society" concepts such as are being explored in Australia and Great Britain may have practical application in a Canadian context. Our Canadian civic core will require a significant amount of social ingenuity from municipal administrations and political leaders.

We have made a number of Federal Budget presentations over the past few years and had strong positive response to our policy ideas for a more effective civic core. Examples of our impact include:

- "Canada's charities need a stimulus package, too", *Telegraph Journal*
- "Most of the giving done by few Canadians", *Calgary Herald*
- "Exploring the Civic Core" *Cardus Policy in Public*, Vol. 2 N. 4. 2009,
- "Charity stands at Canada's core", *Telegraph Journal*
- "Save our culture of giving", *National Post*
- "Canadian society needs silent partners", *National Post*

KEY SERVICE OFFERINGS

Cardus offers consulting and research support for administrators and teams, elected officials, and partner agencies. We have the ideas, experience, and networks to support growth strategies for civic engagement, non-profit sector support, and volunteering in Canadian cities. We understand the processes of change at all levels of government and the role that sound research and compelling ideas can play in that process.



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.

CONTACT

Ray Pennings
rpennings@cardus.ca
403.532.1801

Milton Friesen
mfriesen@cardus.ca
905.528.8866 ext 24

