

***Where everyone  
is sort of,***



***“me and mine”***

**Relocating environmental health inequity in the city through the photos of inner city residents in Vancouver, Winnipeg, and Toronto**

*Final Report of the Strengthening Urban Community Capacity to promote Environmental health Equity through Dialogue-centred research (SUCCEED) Project*

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## CONTENTS

Summary.....	3
Introduction.....	7
Research Settings.....	8
Methods.....	9
Site Results	
Quantitative .....	12
Qualitative	
Vancouver .....	14
Toronto .....	21
Winnipeg .....	27
Cross-site Analysis.....	37
Moving to Action .....	39
Illustrative Case Studies .....	44
Discussion.....	49
Appendix A	
Timelines and activities.....	51
Appendix B	
Demographic information.....	53
Appendix C	
Social determinants of health.....	54

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## SUMMARY

In this project, we sought to examine health inequities in the *total* urban environment from the perspective of people who live in the “inner city.” Our project began in 2007 with the aim of developing a road map for creating more equitable neighbourhood environments in Canadian cities. Working in Vancouver, Winnipeg and, Toronto, our research teams set out to explore differences across several neighbourhoods throughout each city. In each city, community researchers (total N=49) of residents based in the Downtown Eastside (Vancouver), Parkdale (Toronto), and the North end, West Broadway, and Main Street/Centennial (Winnipeg) set out to use photography to compare socioeconomically diverse neighbourhoods in each city.

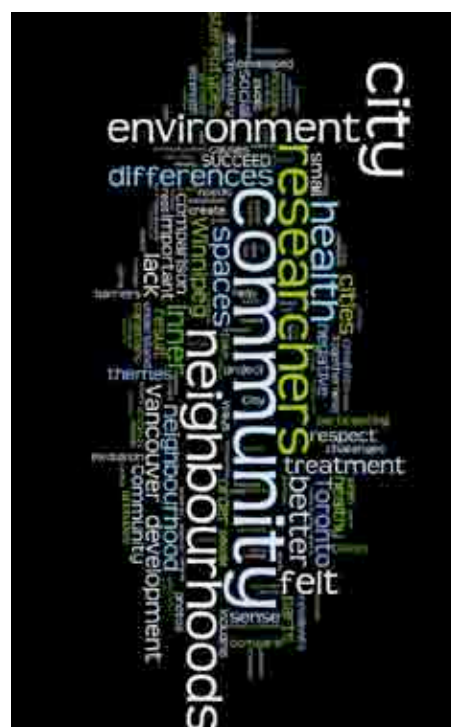
### Key Cross-site Themes (see page 37)

Five overlapping key themes helped to identify the characteristics, experiences, outcomes, and mechanisms of urban health inequities that were considered important to community researchers, as well as opportunities for the community to overcome them. These themes provide a starting point for further exploration to better understand the reasons that inequities exist and how to resolve them.

**1) We found that inequity is not just something that “happens”, but is a systemic condition that is driven by an ongoing cycle of stigmatization.** Community researchers felt that negative stereotypes, discriminatory attitudes, and negative images perpetuated in the media result in systemic mistreatment of inner city neighbourhoods, leading to a vicious cycle that reinforces stereotypes and deepens stigmatization. As a result, residents feel great barriers to achieving community aspirations. Some described the experience as a form of ‘imprisonment’.

**2) We found that inequity has real effects on people’s lives – adverse environmental conditions legitimize attitudes that result in residents being excluded from their own backyards.** Many community researchers documented feelings of exclusion even in their own neighbourhoods that did not exist elsewhere. Boarded up or derelict storefronts; fences and barred windows; unfair treatment by service providers; cramped and densely populated buildings lacking in social meeting spaces; and a lack of open natural spaces were common features of their neighbourhoods. Community researchers felt these features undermined important foundations for maintaining mental, emotional and spiritual health.

**3) We found that inequities are not just ‘in institutions’ but can be observed in disrespectful behaviours of real people who are enabled and encouraged to treat low-income people and places as if they were of less value.** While community researchers in all three cities took pride in their neighbourhoods, they felt that outsiders showed little respect relative to other parts of the



city. They observed this lack of respect in neglected and dirty streets and sidewalks, a lack of friendly public spaces to sit and gather, and overflowing garbage bins which they did not find in wealthier neighbourhoods. Many researchers saw creative art projects and the development of community gathering places as ways to counter the negative attitudes of outsiders.

**4) *We found that inequities are driven by discrimination and fueled by systems that under-prioritize needed public investments in community life.*** Community researchers easily recognized that the differences they observed were caused by a systemic self-interest of private over public investment and profit-driven development that leaves those communities that need public resources most under-resourced and excluded. Researchers expressed a desire for action to ensure that the needs of all citizens were adequately addressed in urban policy, including access to affordable food, housing, employment and the development of community-oriented businesses.

**5) *Inequities do not have to be a ‘fact of life’ but can be challenged and dismantled by cohesive communities acting in solidarity.*** In the face of social exclusion, community researchers felt strongly that inner city neighbourhoods embody greater community strength, togetherness and resourcefulness than other parts of the city where people tend to keep to themselves. To them, solidarity means acceptance of people facing financial hardship or social marginalization, and support for community-based services for individuals and families irrespective of their identities or social positions. Researchers felt that other urban residents needed to learn from them how a sense of togetherness is a strength that can lead to improved decision-making in public and urban health planning.

### **Moving to Action (see page 39)**

In three community workshops held in all three cities, over 130 representatives from a wide range of governmental and community interests helped us to translate research findings into nine concrete recommendations for collective action.

**1. Advance the concept of a “Just City”.** Establish a framework based on notions of the “just city” for all urban actors to seek common ground so that individual neighbourhood improvements are coordinated toward shared goals.

**2. Support local *and* systemic change.** While efforts to promote positive local change are important, it is crucial to avoid investing solely in ‘window dressing’ measures designed to ‘fix’ surface level problems. In order to build a more coherent social framework rather than to maintain ‘poverty pimping,’ such problem-solving measures have to be formulated to complement longer-term strategies that address systemic root causes.

**3. Consider institutional causes, not just outcomes, as “inequities”.** While it is often politically expedient to take on visible problems in relatively unorganized communities, it is crucial to also assess and modify the incentives, practices, and goals of the institutions reinforcing inequities or preventing more equitable outcomes. Promising rhetoric needs to be backed up by real resources to ensure that meaningful change takes place.

**4. Promote a collective sense of ‘ownership’ of the neighbourhood.** Rather than imposing solutions from the outside, investments should be funneled into the community so that residents can make decisions that instill a local sense of ownership and ‘pride in place’.

**5. Critically assess ‘empowerment’ initiatives, and avoid ‘downloading’ responsibility.** Inner-city communities are already overburdened by a litany of institutional measures that appear to ‘punish’ people for being poor. In the context of this uncooperative institutional framework, ‘empowerment’ initiatives can be seen by community members as a gilded way of dumping onto overburdened communities the work of those who are jurisdictionally responsible for and endowed to maintain healthy neighbourhood conditions.

**6. Scale up to the city.** The more affluent classes need to be educated as to how they are implicated in and affected by *systemic inequities*. Comprehension of social relations beyond the disaffecting lens of “inner city problems” may convince a broader coalition of interests to consider the possibility of common goals.

**7. Broaden the terrain of political discourse and promote democratic participation.** Inner city residents are often marginalized in electoral politics. More effective efforts need to be made to ensure inner-city issues are better recognized and adequately prioritized. To accomplish this is to incorporate into political decision-making these residents’ perspectives. Supporting ‘Get out the vote’ mobilizations is an essential component of such representative democracy.

**8. Be loud in exposing injustices.** While democratic participation is important, overt resistance against unjust systems should not be discounted as an appropriate form of community advocacy for environmental health equity. Key to succeeding at the level of resistance may be to form alliances with groups who have made significant gains in addressing past human rights and social justice issues in Canada.

**9. Go directly to the people (not just the bureaucrats).** Public campaigns are often required in order to build the public pressure pushing oppositional politicians or enabling sympathetic politicians to act, especially in innovative ways promoting equity. It is not effective to rely exclusively on deliberative processes undertaken by bureaucrats, because in our political tradition, their process tends to be highly constrained (even co-opted) by systemically-empowered, institutionally-ensconced sources of authority and pressure.

### **Case Studies (see page 44)**

To help readers of this report to cast a vision for how these recommendations can be incorporated into real action, our report provides three case studies (one per city) where priority environmental health issues can serve as the basis for collective action on systemic inequities.

1. (Re)building public benches in Parkdale, Toronto as a means to improve neighbourhood conditions while also bringing attention to the importance of healthy public spaces for all urban citizens.

2. Establishing a community artist collective in the Downtown Eastside to promote a sense of local ownership of the neighbourhood, improve relations with property owners, and raise the profile of local social justice advocates across the city.
3. Implementing a comprehensive community-driven waste management and sanitation program in the core neighbourhoods of Winnipeg to raise attention to the discriminatory attitudes and behaviours of Winnipeggers who use the North End as a “dump”.

## **Conclusion**

In all three cities, our neighbourhood assessments revealed important environmental inequities that undermine experiences of health and quality of life for all urban residents, not just those in the “inner city”. We are optimistic that the recommendations and case studies offered in this report will be of help to advance a shared political will to act together toward a vision for a more equitable and “just city”.

## **Next Steps**

In the next steps in our ongoing research efforts we will:

- 1) Continue to work with community researchers and policymakers to share our findings, insights, and ideas;
- 2) Continue to find opportunities to bring community leaders together to discuss ways to work together to resolve commonly experienced inequities; and
- 3) Build on the findings of this study with future funding and research in order to identify ways to incorporate community expertise into policies and practices that lead to more a more equitable city.

## 1. INTRODUCTION

SUCCEED is a community-based participatory research project whose purpose was to shed light on community experiences of environmental health inequities in Canadian cities. The project began in 2007 in Vancouver, in 2008 in Toronto, and in 2009 in Winnipeg, with funding from the Canadian Institutes of Health Research, the Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council, the BC Environmental and Occupational Health Research Network, and the Centre for Urban Health Initiatives. The purpose of SUCCEED has been to show how patterns of urban socioenvironmental inequity are manifested in local environments and experienced by people living within socioeconomically marginalized communities.

The research took place over three years (see **Appendix A** for project timelines in each site) and involved residents from low-income neighbourhoods, including the Downtown Eastside (Vancouver), Parkdale (Toronto), and the North end, West Broadway, and Main Street/Centennial (Winnipeg). Forty-nine residents of these neighbourhoods were trained as community researchers and used a photography-mediated qualitative methodology to carry out assessments of several neighbourhoods across the city selected on the basis of relative socioeconomic deprivation calculated using 2006 Census data. The objectives of neighbourhood assessments included:

- (1) To explore how the social determinants of health manifest within neighbourhood environments;
- (2) To compare and contrast, from an experiential and observational perspective differences between neighbourhoods across the social determinants of health; and
- (3) To ask questions about why such differences exist, who or what might be responsible for them, and what we can do to overcome them.

The success of SUCCEED has relied on the support of several invaluable partners. In Vancouver, the **Downtown Eastside Neighbourhood House** has provided a wealth of local knowledge, generous access to space, as well as community mentorship to project investigators, students, and staff. Other Vancouver-based partners who have supported the project include the Gallery Gachet, MAKa, Pivot Legal Society, Strathcona BIA, and the Vancouver Japanese Language School and Japanese Hall. In Parkdale, a strong partnership has been established with **Ecuhome**, a non-profit supportive housing agency that has championed the project through: recruitment, liaison support and mentorship of community researchers; provision of meeting space, office supplies and audio visual equipment; the use of their Engagement Room in Parkdale to host catered Community Voices events, and networking opportunities to help share project findings with broader networks including access to a community asset map. Other key community partners who have provided resources and support to the project include Greenest City, St. Christopher House, the Parkdale Activity and Recreation Centre (PARC), Ground Level Youth Ventures and the Parkdale Community Public Library. Finally, in Winnipeg, the **Circle of Life Thunderbird House** has provided us with space, community access, and numerous connections to Winnipeg's diverse Aboriginal communities. Several Winnipeg based organizations have also provided invaluable assistance with recruitment and space, including Building Urban Industries for Local Development (BUILD), New Directions, Wolseley Family Place, Broadway Neighbourhood Centre, Art City, Spence Neighbourhood Association, Aboriginal Centre of Winnipeg Inc., Ma Mawi Whi Chi Itata Centre, and



the Immigrant and Refugee Community Organization of Manitoba (IRCOM). We are indebted to these organizations for their ongoing support.

## 2. RESEARCH SETTINGS

### ***Vancouver***

As its name suggests, the Downtown Eastside (DTES) is located just east of Vancouver's downtown core. The neighbourhood has a varied history that has seen local communities face officially sanctioned persecution and dispossession forced upon them by colonialist, racist, and other discriminatory attitudes and patterns of development, including the indigenous Coast Salish people, the early 20<sup>th</sup> century Japanese-Canadians, and its present-day vibrant, but socially marginalized low-income community. For decades, economic disinvestment, poorly maintained and inadequate housing, and an infamous "open drug market" have contributed to the environmental degradation of the DTES. Residents of the neighbourhood have come to live, and in many cases thrive, in the neighbourhood because of services focusing on physical and mental health, addictions, shelter, sex work, and food, as well as the solidarity they find with many progressive community organizations. While these service organizations provide support to residents and visitors, the focus of their support work also attaches a stigma to the DTES embedded in the worst preconceptions of naïve and ignorant outsiders, and distorting the well-meaning sentiments of others who wish to intervene in the neighbourhood through research and planning. This stigmatized image is further perpetuated through predatory media reportage that creates a public spectacle of people's personal lives and everyday challenges. At the same time, residents are being placed at even higher risk as a result of unrestrained gentrification and developmentalist planning advances in the neighbourhood.

### ***Toronto***

Parkdale is a west-end Toronto neighbourhood located on the north shore of Lake Ontario that has undergone considerable transitions over the past 150 years<sup>1</sup>. Its contemporary beginnings as an exclusive lakefront village at the turn of the 20<sup>th</sup> century evolved with economic circumstances and a rapidly suburbanizing city after World War II, resulting in a series of transitions that would see once stately Victorian houses subdivided into rooming houses and a demographic shift from middle class homeowners to a refuge for de-institutionalized psychiatric patients and a staging ground for new immigrant settlement. More recently, gentrification has been bifurcating Parkdale by introducing tensions between wealthier (predominantly north of Queen St.) and poorer (south of Queen St.) halves, and also within Parkdale (i.e. NIMBYism, as well as displacing lower income residents). Today, Parkdale residents are socioeconomically diverse, but the neighbourhood is still stigmatized by "mainstream" Torontonians. Yet many of its most marginalized groups are also among the most committed to bringing about positive change for their community.

### ***Winnipeg***

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<sup>1</sup> See Whitzman, Carolyn (2009) *Suburb, Slum, Urban Village: Transformations in Toronto's Parkdale Neighbourhood, 1875-2002*: Vancouver, UBC Press.)

The neighbourhoods constituting Winnipeg's highly dispersed and diverse "inner-city" include West Broadway and Spence to the south, West Alexander and Centennial adjacent to the city's core, and the so-called "North End" neighbourhoods north of the CN rail yard. During the early 20<sup>th</sup> century, Eastern European and British immigrants made up much of Winnipeg's industrial working class and originally settled in these neighbourhoods. After World War II and the evolution of Winnipeg toward automobile-dependent suburban sprawl, many families began to leave these neighbourhoods for the rapidly expanding suburbs. Between 1996 and 2001, the inner city population declined by 3.9%<sup>2</sup>. In parallel with this "emptying outward", since the 1960s, Aboriginal families began to move in larger numbers into the city in search of employment opportunities and to escape from deplorable living conditions on reserves brought about by persistent government abandonment. These families settled throughout the inner city neighbourhoods because of the availability of low-cost housing combined with the accepting attitudes of the receiving communities (in contrast to the entrenched racism prevalent elsewhere). In recent years, the increasing Aboriginal population has been joined by a large newcomer immigrant and refugee community who benefit from the inner city's concentrated health, family, and social services and supports, as well as affordable housing. Winnipeg's poverty is most highly concentrated in these core neighbourhoods. Despite the obstacles that these highly racialized communities face as a result of ongoing prejudice, socioeconomic marginalization, and institutional oversight, most residents express a remarkable sense of pride in place and solidarity with neighbours and family.

### 3. METHODS

We conducted our project using a GIS/photography-mediated qualitative and arts-aligned research method that combined mapping of neighbourhood inequality with neighbourhood photographic assessments and group discussion as a way for participants to identify and articulate their perspectives on urban environmental health inequalities. First, we selected 17 variables from the 2006 Census that provided some degree of insight into the relative level of deprivation that might be experienced as a result of ethnoracial discrimination (e.g. Aboriginal status, visible minority, language), socioeconomic marginalization (e.g. income, social assistance, housing), and demographic vulnerability (e.g. age, marital status). Variables were aggregated to the Census Tract level (boundaries defined based on approximately 10,000 person increments). A cluster analysis technique was used to organize Census Tracts into groups in such a way that variables within each group had a high degree of similarity (i.e. level of deprivation) while groups were relatively distinct from each other (i.e. level of inequality)<sup>3</sup>. Using GIS, we overlaid neighbourhood boundaries onto the categorized Census Tract maps in order to present the findings of the statistical analysis in a visually meaningful way, as a basis for the research team to select neighbourhoods for follow-up assessment.

We chose to use photography as it has been proven to be an invaluable research tool in community-based research. Photography provides an opportunity for community members who

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<sup>2</sup> See Silver, Jim. (2010). Winnipeg's North End: Yesterday and Today. Canadian Dimension. Article retrieved 07 September 2010. <http://canadiandimension.com/articles/2674/>

<sup>3</sup> See Odoi, A., Wray, R., Emo, M., Birch, S., Hutchinson, B., Eyles, J., and Abernathy, T. (2005). Inequalities in neighbourhood socioeconomic characteristics: Potential evidence-base for neighbourhood health planning. *International Journal of Health Geographics*, 4, 20.

do not normally get to participate in decision-making processes to articulate their expertise, experiences, and opinions and receive an appropriate level of respect and legitimacy. Photography is accessible and provides concrete images that community members can refer to in discussions about their ideas and insights. In each city, about 15 community researchers (participating in three teams of five members) were recruited based on recommendations of community partners who were asked to help us achieve a representative cross-section of the community (see **Appendix B** for pooled community researcher demographics). All participants received initial orientation to the project and participated in discussions about the social determinants of health as experienced in their own neighbourhoods (see **Appendix C** for social determinants of health named as important to each team). Following training, participants took part in a series of neighbourhood assessments and dialogues facilitated by research team members. While a basic procedural template was created for all sites, each team was given the freedom to develop their assessment protocols, neighbourhood selections, and discussion topics independently.

### **(a) Site-specific procedures**

#### ***Vancouver***

In total, 16 DTES residents were recruited from local agencies in the DTES based on a combination of their interest in the project and an effort to have variation in age, gender, and experiences (e.g. mental health issues, drug use, homelessness). The project was undertaken in three groups. In the training session, the groups discussed key social determinants of health that were important to them and identified specific places where they felt these determinants impacted their lives. Each group used the maps of the deprivation analysis to select two neighbourhoods outside of the DTES that represented 'moderate and 'lowest' level of deprivation in the city. They then toured the DTES and these neighbourhoods, assessing and taking photographs of environmental conditions. Prior to neighbourhood visits, the groups reviewed the determinants of health, discussed what they knew about the destination neighbourhood, what they wanted to take photos of, and the reasons they expected the neighbourhood to have certain environmental characteristics. After all three neighbourhood assessments, the community researchers each chose a small selection of their photographs to bring to the group discussion. In the group discussion, community researchers brainstormed some main topics that emerged from their visits. The groups then chose a few of these topics to discuss in depth focusing on difference and why differences exist among Vancouver's neighbourhoods.

#### ***Toronto***

A total of 16 community researchers, living or working in Parkdale were recruited through local community organizations and service agencies. Efforts were made to recruit participants who were representative of a very diverse neighbourhood (including: newcomers to Canada; those who have experienced homelessness, addiction and/or mental health challenges; and, front line local service providers). Community researchers were divided into three research teams where each engaged in several half-day group dialogues over the course of three months. Teams explored the social determinants of health, and toured Parkdale and two comparison neighbourhoods (Longbranch and Swansea/Bloor West Village) to identify and photograph factors that positively or negatively impact health. Over the duration of fieldwork, an open group dialogue was maintained to collectively explore how the social determinants of health manifest differently across neighbourhoods and to discuss possible causes for these differences. Upon completion of the

neighbourhood tours, each team member selected 10-12 photographs that best represented their main ideas about how the different neighbourhoods compared in terms of their environmental health setting. Each team member expressed her or his ideas and experiences through an individual interview and then shared their photographs in focus group discussion order to develop common themes around city-level differences regarding neighborhood environmental health inequalities.

### **Winnipeg**

A total of 17 community researchers representing a cross-section of Winnipeg's sociodemographic diversity were recruited in three neighbourhood areas selected to represent the geographic breadth of Winnipeg's 'multi-nodal' inner city. Recruitment in Winnipeg began after community entry was secured through presentations to the Main Street Community Caring Circle and an open house held by the research team at the Circle of Life Thunderbird House. Several Key Informant interviews were conducted to parallel those previously completed in pilot projects in Vancouver and Toronto. Research staff interviewed executive directors of Wolseley Family Place, Art City, Graffiti Art Programming, Ka Ni Kanichichk, Ma Mawi Wi Chi Itata Centre, Spence Neighbourhood Association, Immigrant and Refugee Community Organization of Manitoba (IRCOM), Downtown Winnipeg Biz, Winnipeg Regional Health Authority (WRHA) and Community Services Department to gain a better understanding of the environmental inequities faced by residents of Winnipeg's inner city neighbourhoods. Each organization then had the opportunity to recommend one person as a candidate community researcher. The project was undertaken in three groups: Group 1 included residents of Spence, and West Broadway; Group 2 included residents of Main Street and Centennial; and Group 3 included residents of the "North End" neighbourhoods of Lord Selkirk Park, Dufferin, William Whyte, and Point Douglas (North and South). Each group selected neighbourhoods outside the core inner city of Winnipeg to visit and photograph representing 'medium' and 'high' socioeconomic characteristics. Except for Group 3, we began the process with a workshop led by a professional photographer, where community researchers practiced using their cameras and discussed personal safety and ethics prior to the neighbourhood assessment field trips. The second session was a discussion about the social determinants of health and how they link to the neighbourhood. We encouraged community researchers to situate the social determinants of health within specific places in their neighbourhoods as well as to think about how past, present, and future conditions have changed for the worse or better. Community researchers completed neighbourhood assessments then participated in individual interviews to select photos that best conveyed the social determinants of health most relevant to them. In group interviews, community researchers selected 3-4 photos that best portrayed key themes about the inequity that exists between the different neighbourhoods in Winnipeg. The group then discussed how they could direct their efforts to make changes to promote a better environment for their community.

### **(b) Data analysis**

All formal discussions that took place over the course of the fieldwork were digitally recorded and transcribed. Field notes of site coordinators and logbooks of community researchers were catalogued and included in the analysis where appropriate. Transcripts were imported into a qualitative data management software package and analyzed by site coordinators to interpret themes that emerged within them. The analytical steps included: (1) induction of preliminary

coding framework based on research questions and anecdotal observations of team members; (2) free coding of all transcripts and other materials into numerous ‘data bytes’ of preliminary ideas, concepts, and observations that emerged from the raw data; (3) sorting of free codes into related categories; and (4) interpretive thematic coding of categories to identify overarching key themes, patterns, and theoretical insights.

## 4. SITE RESULTS

### (a) Quantitative analysis

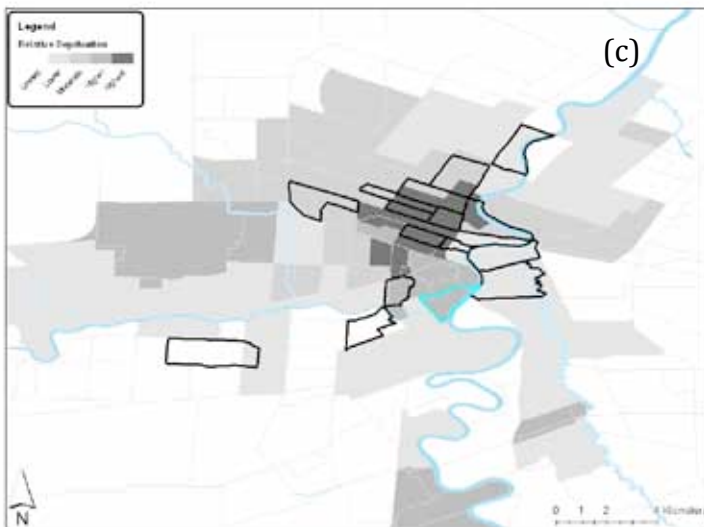
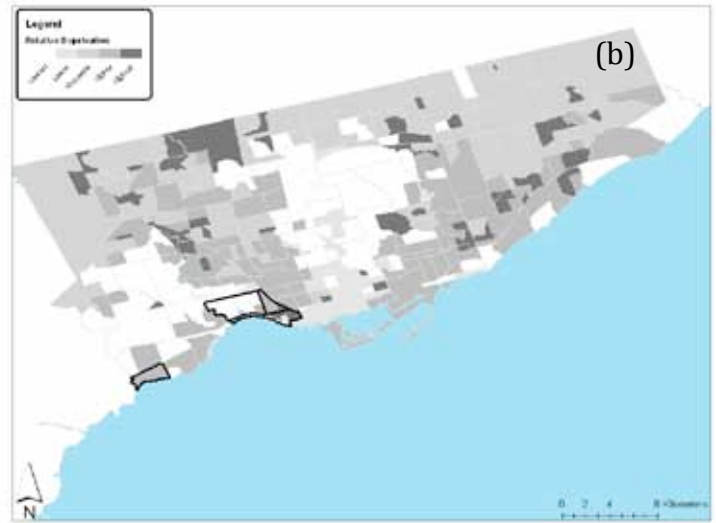
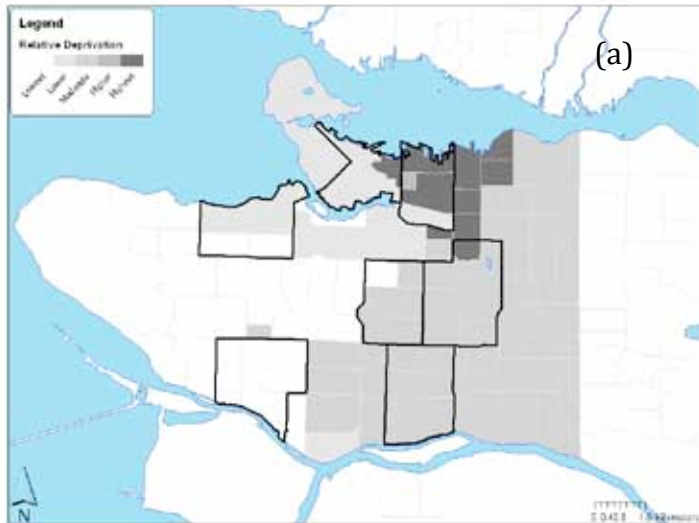
As Table 1 shows, the neighbourhood-level assessment revealed similar patterns of inequity (defined here as relative deprivation) across the three study cities (see Figure 1). Not surprisingly, the study neighbourhoods in all three cities fell into the cluster categorized as having the “highest” level of relative deprivation. Between cities, the main noticeable difference was the magnitude of inequity. Perhaps not surprisingly, inequity in Vancouver was the most extreme (difference of 97.5) and was driven largely by neighbourhoods with the highest level of relative deprivation – the so-called “inner city” neighbourhoods constituting the Downtown Eastside. Similarly, but to a far lesser extent, neighbourhood inequity in Winnipeg is driven largely by the cluster with the highest level of relative deprivation (23.0), whereas in Toronto, inequity results from an approximately equal contribution from the cluster with the lowest (-9.4) and highest (9.9) relative deprivation.

**Table 1. Comparison of inequity indices for study cities.** Cluster based analysis of 17 sociodemographic variables from the 2006 Census (Statistics Canada, 2006) results in the following 5 neighbourhood types (see Odoi et al. 2005<sup>4</sup> for details on the cluster analysis methodology in neighbourhood inequality characterization).

City	Total Inequity (Highest - Lowest)	Relative Deprivation <sup>a</sup>				
		Lowest	Lower	Moderate	Higher	Highest
Vancouver	97.5	-7.0	-3.9	2.5	22.8	90.5
Winnipeg	29.0	-6.0	-0.8	6.8	7.4	23.0
Toronto	19.3	-9.4	-3.1	0.9	1.1	9.9

<sup>a</sup> Averages of the 17 standardized variables were summed to yield these inequality scores (variables standardized to mean zero with -1 = lowest deprivation and +1 = highest deprivation for each variable. Values were reversed for ‘Average dwelling value’, ‘Median income’, ‘% Legally married’)

<sup>4</sup> Odoi, A., Emo, M., Birch, S., Hutchison, B., Eyles, J., & Abernathy, T. (2005). Inequalities in neighbourhood socioeconomic characteristics: potential evidence-base for neighbourhood health planning. *International Journal of Health Geographics*, 10, 4-20.



**Fig. 1. Inequity in the city as measured by relative neighbourhood deprivation in Vancouver (a), Toronto (b), and Winnipeg (c).** Neighbourhoods assessed by community researchers are delineated by darker lines. Darker shaded areas indicate higher levels of relative deprivation (see Table 1 for explanation of Inequality Index).

## (b) Qualitative analysis

To assess the meaning and lived experience of these neighbourhood differences, community researchers visited a sample of neighbourhoods with differing levels of deprivation (see outlined areas in Figure 1). In the remainder of this section we report on the key themes that emerged from group discussions by community researchers after their neighbourhood visits.

### Vancouver

1. **Beautiful and artistic aspects of a neighbourhood (Figure V1).** Art and beauty are important all around Vancouver, yet such creativity is undervalued in the DTES relative to the investments put into other neighbourhoods. In the DTES, spontaneous or unofficial art is more accepted and thriving because there is less regulation of street activity as compared to other areas. One community researcher described how art helped him to escape the ordinary, mundane features of the neighbourhood:

*See when I think about art, I think about self-expression. I think about commitment. I think about making the everyday into something special...It just makes you feel like you're experiencing something that's a little better than the ordinary. I feel like there's people putting their spirit and commitment and love inside that art so it's an important element.*

While public art is ubiquitous in the DTES, artists themselves have fewer resources, time, and space than people who live in wealthier neighbourhoods. Therefore art in the DTES is ephemeral compared to art projects installed in more affluent communities. Some community researchers felt that people who own property have more motivation and space to create art, while others considered large spaces put to ornamental uses to be wasted when there are more pressing needs for land use such as food gardens or housing.



*Temporary art in the DTES*  
Photo credit: Sharon



*Lawn art in Sunset*  
Photo credit: Evan

**Fig. V1. Beautiful and artistic aspects of a neighbourhood.** These images show a contrast in the types of art found in the DTES and elsewhere in Vancouver. The image on the top shows ephemeral art captured in the DTES, while on the bottom is a stone sculpture in the front yard of a home in Sunset.

2. **Deservedness (Figure V3).** Community researchers insisted that people in the DTES are just as deserving as those in other neighbourhoods to have places to visit, live, eat, and shop where they are treated with respect and dignity. Community researchers spoke of universal human needs, like having a home, eating nutritious food, having healthcare, and necessities for self care. Yet services in the DTES often do not meet these needs; many DTES residents are homeless, there are few places to get healthy food, doctors' offices have excessive wait-times, and Single Room Occupancy (SRO) hotel rooms (a common accommodation in the DTES) don't have their own kitchens or bathrooms. Many services in the DTES are dark, dingy, or uninviting compared to those that residents observed in other areas. One community researcher pointed out the unfairness of the differences she observed between the pub pictured below and bars in the DTES:

*That's how they should be, like, out in the open, in the fresh air, because we're paying for-- the same price for alcohol here as they are in that place, you know. So why can't we have a place like that?*

Community researchers also noted that these poor-quality services are inappropriate to the community and keep people down instead of lifting them up.



Pub/restaurant in Kitsilano  
Photo credit: Evan



Bar in the DTES  
Photo credit: Moink

**Fig. V2. Deservedness.** These photos show the differences in two bars, one in Kitsilano and the other in the DTES. The pub in Kitsilano looks more inviting and family-friendly, while in the DTES the bars are dark with few windows.



3. **Visible effects of capitalism (Figure V3).**

Community researchers agreed that a focus on profits over people does not make sense for the DTES community, and results in increased inequality within Vancouver. As one community researcher described, in the DTES, motivation for money—money that is harvested from and exits the community—is displayed in properties sitting vacant, land being developed for condos instead of services, and landlords failing to maintain buildings:

*The landlord, maybe he was a cop or some guy who's a slum owner - he's making good money and not really fixing up the place. Some guy who's looking at it as an investment, which is what these places are. They're places where you make money. And if I'm not making money then somebody else is.*

New condos in the area are a way for developers to make money, but don't provide any benefits to existing residents. Not-for-profit agencies provide many services in the DTES, but overall, community researchers remarked on the little choice they have in services relative to the other neighbourhoods they assessed (e.g. restaurants, banks, grocery and clothing stores).



Real estate listing in Kerrisdale  
Photo credit: Sharon



SRO Hotel in the DTES  
Photo credit: Fred

**Fig. V3. The effects of capitalism.** Real estate in Vancouver is one manifestation of capitalist markets. On the top is a real estate listing for a \$500,000 apartment in Kerrisdale, and on the bottom is a SRO hotel in the DTES where tenants pay for tiny rooms in notoriously poor conditions.

4. **Conspicuous inequality (Figure V4).** Inequality in Vancouver is visible, from the differences in housing and services in different areas to contrasts within the DTES, where a homeless shelter is adjacent to high-end restaurants. Community researchers remarked on how much they could do with the amount of money people in wealthier areas spend on a single dinner or t-shirt, and they preferred to see money and space used in more moderate, egalitarian ways. One community researcher lamented on the obscenity of what constituted a 'bargain' for wealthier people:

*A dinner special of 19.95 is like, holy smokes, it's almost seven times more than you pay for dinner at the Carnegie...It made me feel like holy smokes, how am I ever going to have a normal life when that's a bargain? When am I going to have this amount of money unless I win the lottery and I haven't been buying any tickets?*

For the community researchers, having low incomes means that they don't have access to healthful resources such as pets for security, bicycles for transportation, or sports equipment for exercise like they saw in other areas. Money is so influential, that those without money are excluded from certain choices and opportunities and feel left out of mainstream society.



*Dinner in Kerrisdale*  
Photo credit: Sharon



*Donated shoes on the street in the DTES*  
Photo credit: Lazlo

**Fig. V4. Conspicuous inequality.** On the top is a menu for a dinner special in Kerrisdale. By contrast, on the bottom is a bag of donated shoes in the DTES, where many residents cannot afford to buy them.

5. **The importance of community (Figure V5).** Community researchers described community as the establishment of trust with others; it comes from both individual actions and larger structures. One community researcher reflected on a photo of a woman's garden as being indicative of a sense of community:

*Community is where, like, in [the] picture, her daughter can have plants growing on her doorstep without someone taking them, you know...and work together and try to keep [the area] clean, right. Like, if you see someone vandalizing, you're, like, 'Hey, stop, I live here.'*

Community researchers stated that connections are sometimes difficult to form in the DTES because of isolation due to individual struggles such as addiction and poverty, divisions between low-income residents and new condo owners, lack of unity among local organizations, and concerns for personal safety. In response, sometimes people act more individualistically, instead of thinking about the collective good.



Apartment Garden  
Photo credit: Reta



Sign in a DTES storefront  
Photo credit: Farrah

**Fig. V5. The importance of community.**

Community entails a sense of trust among residents. On the top are plants left unattended in a neighbourhood just to the east of the DTES. This is contrasted with the photo of a DTES storefront sign, where owners request that the window not be kicked.

6. **Intruding outsiders (Figure V6).** Service providers, decision makers, researchers, and visitors are seen as outsiders to, not of, the community. This mistrust stems from harassment by police, gawking by patrons in expensive restaurants, people coming to the area to buy or sell drugs, or service providers looking down on service users. In one exchange, community researchers discussed the implications of having a high-end restaurant in an alley right across from a homeless shelter in the DTES:

*And on the other side of that umbrella there's a little pub where people come and party till two o'clock in the morning, which is the real kick in the head. There's people sleeping next to the pub and there's people partying all night long with tons of money in their pocket.*

*Yeah. How can you party when there's homeless party outside your window? But apparently that's not a problem.*

*Advertise that and then you can look at the wildlife out the window.*

*Yeah, that's what they do. They come down there to look at the wildlife, to be cool.*

According to community researchers, this outsider relationship results in actions that are inappropriate to the DTES community. Yet, the outside/inside separation is somewhat false, since issues in the DTES are not isolated, but are implicated in broader systems such as the legal and education systems, the media, drug trade, land use planning, and actions of other city residents (e.g. NIMBYism).



*Blood Alley in the DTES*  
Photo credit: Shaun



*Eyelash salon in Yaletown*  
Photo credit: Kerenza

**Fig. V6. The discriminatory gaze of outsiders.** The photo on the top is the 'home' of a woman living in Blood Alley in the DTES, directly across from a high-end restaurant (not shown). On the bottom is an eyelash salon in Yaletown. These photos emphasize the estrangement DTES residents feel from outsiders.

7. **Exclusionary and inaccessible spaces (Figure V7).** Compared to other neighbourhoods, places in the DTES are gated and fenced off. Public spaces are less accessible because of street drug use and a lack of safety. One community researcher described how fences in the neighbourhood had the effect of undermining the community by criminalizing public spaces and their occupants:

*Well, it makes me kind of feel like a criminal, even though I'm not a criminal, right. Like, it-- all these things are there to keep people out. Why do they want to keep us out? What have we done so wrong that we deserve this kind of attention, right? And why don't they have this in other neighbourhoods, like I say, over in Yaletown or Riley Park area, right?*

At the same time, people sometimes avoid their own rooms because of pests and filthy conditions. People in the DTES are excluded from certain services because of discrimination and stigma against poor people (e.g. by police or café staff) and because of the excessive barriers they must overcome (e.g. high costs, long wait times, lineups, and rules). This same discrimination keeps services out of other areas of the city and forces people to the DTES, where other aspects of the environment (e.g. drugs, lack of green space and healthy food) may have compound ill effects on health and well-being.



Grocery storefront in Riley Park  
Photo credit: Amber



Welfare office in the DTES  
Photo credit: Gary

**Fig. V7. Exclusionary and inaccessible spaces.** On the top is a grocery storefront in Riley Park where fruits and vegetables are on the sidewalk and accessible. This is in contrast to the gated storefronts that line streets in the DTES.

**Toronto**

1. **Public congregation space (Figure T1).** Community researchers perceived differences in the layout and management of sidewalks and other congregation space as indicators of entrenched attitudes about each neighbourhood and its residents. While the sidewalks and public areas of other neighbourhoods were inviting places to sit and congregate (clean and adorned with public benches, flowers and garbage bins), the public benches on Queen Street in Parkdale had been systematically removed, with the exception of one that was installed by a community activist near the community library. One community researcher described the philosophy of public benches:

*It's a safety mechanism for us to pull the benches out of the neighbourhood, but that's not going to solve anything, right? That's just going to push it deeper into hiding and then when it gets to that point it makes it really difficult to address, because there's a lot of stigma and a lot of other things that start to compound on top of it... So I mean it's not about the benches, the benches are just symbolic of some values that these different neighbourhoods have...the bench only serves as a way to highlight it, so I would say yes, we should put benches everywhere and see what our problems are and work at the solution, because getting rid of a bench just forces people into alleys right? It doesn't solve anything except for saying not in my space.*

Other photographs documented planter boxes in Parkdale filled with garbage, broken newspaper boxes, dirty sidewalks and few poorly maintained and overflowing garbage bins. Community researchers ultimately attributed these differences to discrimination against Parkdale residents, particularly those coping with stresses of poverty, homelessness, mental health and addiction issues who are generally discouraged from gathering in public places. The groups felt that the neglect of these spaces only contributes to a sense of community demoralization and stigma that deepens discrimination against individuals and the neighbourhood in general.



Park Bench on Bloor West Village  
Photo credit: John



A well known congregation spot in a Parkdale alleyway  
Photo credit: Natsai

**Fig. T1. Public congregation space.** The image on the top depicts a row of public benches and flower boxes on the main street of Bloor West Village. By contrast the public benches on Queen Street in Parkdale were removed and the image on the right is of a well-known congregation spot in an alley of Parkdale.

2. **Delivery of public environmental services (Figure T2).** Differences in the quality of public environmental services were documented between neighbourhoods with an emphasis on inferior quality waste management and park services (e.g. grass maintenance, tree plantings, and washroom facilities) in Parkdale. The causes of these differences were attributed to a complex dynamic between patterns of residential use and city services. Higher population density and pedestrian traffic in Parkdale is thought to result in larger volumes of garbage and more intensive use and wear and tear of relatively smaller park areas. Community researchers felt the lack of attention by the City of Toronto to buttress services in order to compensate for more intensive use results in the appearance of neglect which: a) contributes to demoralization of residents which reinforces local disrespect and mistreatment of public spaces, (as one community researcher described it “garbage begets garbage”); and, b) contributes to a stigma about the neighbourhood which results in a form of discrimination against Parkdale by the City manifested through inferior delivery of services. One community researcher commented:

*We see the discrimination of treatment in Parkdale from the waste management people. We see how they are treating us and how they are treating other neighbourhoods ... the garbage truck comes and turns and after he is done his job he leaves everything nice and organized. Even with simple things, like putting the green bins inside the big bins ... They come here and we see what they are like here. Come on! Just put this in the bin and take it with you. Why do they have to leave that garbage?*

Solutions to the problem included creating local part-time employment opportunities to support Parkdale’s sanitation needs and to improve local park services.



*Residential street of Bloor West Village*  
Photo credit: Khaled Karamali



*Alleyway of Parkdale*  
Photo credit: Khaled Karamali

**Fig. T2. Delivery of public environmental services.** The images above depict differences in the quality of waste management service between Bloor West Village and Parkdale Village. The photo on the top is an image taken in Bloor West Village after the weekly garbage truck has come through for garbage collection. Bins are left upright with no garbage left behind. This is contrasted to the photo on the bottom taken in Parkdale after the weekly the garbage truck has come through with bins left tossed on their side and bags of garbage are left behind.

3. **Social status and access to therapeutic landscapes (Figure T3).** Nature and access to open natural spaces were related to social status and wealth. Nature and God were related when one team joked that the more money you had, the more ‘God you get’. Images of nature in Parkdale (represented by community gardens or single trees) were contrasted against vast public natural spaces (beaches and parks) of the other neighbourhoods. The need for open space was identified as essential to mental, emotional and spiritual health and the relative lack of these spaces in Parkdale was seen as a contradiction when considering that the neighbourhood is home to many people facing challenging life circumstances. High-density urban environments that are lacking in natural open space were considered to be “demoralizing”, as one community researcher suggested:

*[W]hen I look at the pictures of Parkdale and these ones here I see the space that we have to live in seems to be getting smaller and smaller all the time. We seem to be expected to live in denser and denser areas in the urban landscape. Space to me equates to the idea of freedom ... There is the idea that when you live in an urban environment your problems get the better of you ...*

Solutions included improving access to the lake near Parkdale by naturalizing the pathway routes, making adjustments to the Lakeshore Expressway and hosting community events at the lake to improve integration with Parkdale.



Marie Curtis Park, Longbranch  
Photo credit: John



Apartment Complex on Jameson Avenue, Parkdale  
Photo credit: Natsai

**Fig. T3. Social status and access to therapeutic landscapes.** The image on the top is a photograph of a vast park in Longbranch identified as a serene place that is very accessible by the community. This image is contrasted against the image on the bottom, which is a set of apartment building complexes in Parkdale with a single tree.



4. **Exclusionary Housing (Figure T4).** Many aspects related to housing were identified as examples of environmental inequity; not only a lack of quality affordable housing but also the exclusionary processes that ensue as a result of poor housing concentrated in certain parts of the city. Physically cramped and dilapidated living conditions were associated with negative impacts on self-esteem and social interaction thus deepening social exclusion. This concentration of poor housing in combination with earlier referenced themes of restricted public congregation space was seen to undermine organic social support networks at the neighbourhood level. Non-profit housing models such as Ecuhome and Edmond Place were seen as exemplary since they combined quality affordable housing with social support services and amenities that support community interaction and cohesion. Barriers to improved housing included: discrimination at the city level that led to the concentration of poor/more affordable housing in some neighbourhoods over others; a lack of enforcement of housing standards/penalization of negligent landlords, jurisdictional and bureaucratic conflicts over social housing developments. One community researcher reflected positively on a neighbourhood housing facility, which he felt there were not enough of:

*[A]nd then there's Edmond Place, which is housing provided for people who don't have a lot of choices, but provided by people who actually care about what happens to them and their wellbeing. That to me is what we need a lot more of in Parkdale, because where you live and the conditions that you live in have a lot to do with how you feel about yourself and whether you're going to participate in some of these programmes that are occurring here and whether you have enough self confidence and all those other things that you need to participate in, in society in general.*

Creative community-level solutions included community organization to create social pressure on notorious landlords, conversion of abandoned buildings into non-profit social housing, and creative development and financing opportunities for low-income families to own their apartment or home.



*Private condominium development, outskirts of Parkdale*  
Photo credit: Terence



*Edmond Place, Parkdale*  
Photo credit: Steve

**Fig. T4. Exclusionary Housing.** The image on the bottom is of Edmond Place, a progressive public housing development in Parkdale. Edmond Place was denied its request to add two additional floors to the building in order to house more people, meanwhile intensive private condo development has been permitted at the southeastern edge of Parkdale on the same street as Edmond place. On the top, the fence in front of the private condo development depicts the exclusion associated with this differential treatment of private versus public housing development.

5. **Social support networks (Figure T5).** In comparison to other neighbourhoods, Parkdale is recognized for having more vibrant, diverse and creative social networks. Parkdale was seen as a unique ‘melting pot’ where a greater diversity of people have an opportunity to belong, as opposed to other neighbourhoods that were viewed as more homogenous and exclusionary. One community researcher felt this sense of belonging contrasted to the culture of other neighbourhoods:

*“...in these other neighbourhoods, where everyone is sort of “me and mine”, they decide on what terms they’ll co-exist, where I think, in Parkdale, we’re forced to come up with these creative solutions and that makes us more vibrant ...things that are so different in Parkdale because people have had to cobble together solutions for themselves”*

However, community researchers felt that these creative social systems are often born out of deprivation (lack of adequate income, employment, housing, etc). Many agreed that Parkdale’s community strength developed through of a coming together around shared needs – that when there are a lack of supports, the community is often forced to ‘cobble’ together creative solutions which in turn create an environment of sharing and community. The recognition of this creativity and resourcefulness was used to underline the critical importance of accessing local knowledge when planning and investing in community development programs.



*Home in Brule Gardens, Swansea*  
Photo credit: Robert



*Community Gardeners in Parkdale*  
Photo credit: Tish

**Fig. T5. Social Support Networks.** The image on the top is a home in Swansea that was taken to represent the exclusionary nature of this community. This image is contrasted against a photo of HOPE community garden members in Parkdale to represent the comparatively diverse and more inclusive social support networks that exist in Parkdale.

6. **Free-market vs. community-driven development (Figure T6).** Images of abandoned, boarded up and burned out storefronts were the backdrop for discussion around the precarious sense of transition and gentrification happening in Parkdale and the need to ensure that development occurs in an inclusive way that recognizes the unique interests of the neighbourhood. In comparison to other neighbourhoods, Parkdale was recognized for having unique needs (a relatively larger population of people relying on social assistance, in need of rental housing, coping with addiction and/or mental health issues and in need of employment) as well as unique assets (rich artistic and cultural endowments). Some recent developments in Parkdale were criticized for either ‘preying on the poor’ (i.e. cheque cashing and payday loan stores) or being exclusionary (e.g. expensive restaurants). Researchers felt that concerted efforts are needed to protect vulnerable groups from being pushed out of the community, as for instance in the case of neighbourhood grocery stores:

*[T]he development has come all the way to the bridge and now with the new restaurants and galleries it is coming. They are going to push all the poor people out again... You forget about the other poor people that need to go other places. The No Frills, before it closed down and they put in a Sobeys because more rich people were there. Then the poor might have to commute to another neighbourhood to get food ...*

Affordable grocery stores within walking distance were seen as particularly important. Ideas for community relevant development included: development of local part-time and flexible employment opportunities (graffiti art projects, social service ambassador programs, newcomer to newcomer information programs); microcredit loans for locals who wish to start small businesses; and a subsidized local farmers market. Images of Parkdale’s bike racks were used to exemplify community relevant development - a local artist employs local residents to create artistic ironwork for various uses such as public bike racks.



Queen Street, Parkdale  
Photo credit: Bruce



Artistic vision of Queen Street, Parkdale  
Photo credit: Tish

**Fig. T6. Free-market vs. community-driven development.** The photo above is an image of boarded up storefronts along Queen Street in Parkdale, emphasizing a state of pending transition. This image is contrasted against a community artist’s rendition of the same street in Parkdale. The comparative photos are meant to contrast the options for Parkdale’s future--community relevant versus market driven development.

## Winnipeg

1. **Local services support the community (Figure W1).** All three research teams identified a strong sense of community in their neighbourhoods where a wealth of community-based organizations include family and youth centres, women's centres, community-based housing organizations, alternative education initiatives, community economic development initiatives, community-based employment development organizations, and neighbourhood renewal corporations. One community researcher was prompted to discuss how community services helped to define community for her:

*When you talk about community what comes to mind for me is that people actually gathering together and sharing resources with each other and just being part of the community and not hiding. These spaces and these facilities are places to come together and are essential.*

Important services provided by these organizations include education, childcare, family support networks, food and cooking skills, employment training, counseling, immigrant and refugee services, community art, community gardening, and youth programming and recreation that are essential for living well when you are poor.



Art City in West Broadway  
Photo credit: Elisia



Indian & Métis Friendship Centre in North End  
Photo credit: Erica

**Fig. W1. Services-enabled community.** On the top is a photo of a community-based art organization, Art City, located in West Broadway. On the bottom is the Indian & Métis Friendship Centre in the North End. The photos represent organizations that play a significant role in the lives of youth, adults and families in the North End and West Broadway and provide essential programs and services to those who live in poverty.

2. **Connections and supports (Figure W2).** All three groups observed that other neighbourhoods in the city appeared to be structured for individualized, self-interested lives that rarely extended beyond individual residential property lines. These observations contrasted to their experiences within their own neighbourhoods where they felt that people, partly as a consequence of higher-density living in an often-criminalized environment, developed supportive and caring relationships with neighbours, friends, and family. For example, Centennial/Main Street community researchers pointed out the positive benefits of community gardening as an activity that both promotes physical health and is also an opportunity to establish supportive relationships with other neighbourhood residents, which ultimately influences one's mental well-being. It was connections and supports like these, rather than the ornamental environments that seemed to be desirable in other locales, that compelled community researchers to appreciate these neighbourhoods.

*I just want to add something how the gardening helps people to reduce stress. Some of the major problems people find when they are here and they are new: They are locked they are inside they can't move out. But when you meet and you are working together it reduces stress. You are helping each other and as you work you are exercising physically.*



Community garden next to Freight House  
Photo credit: photographer X



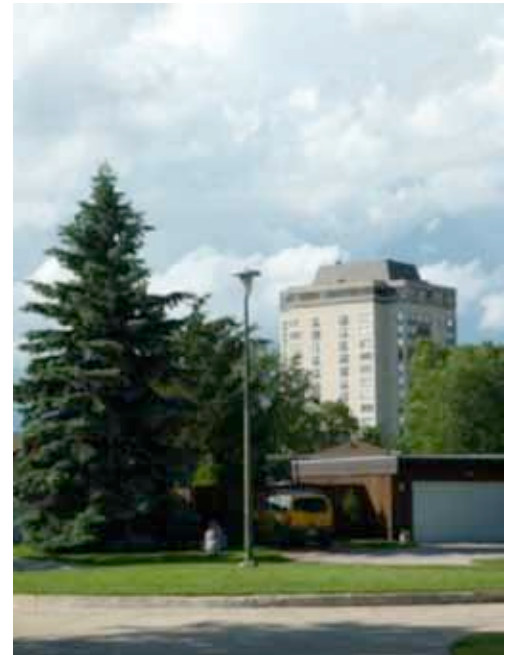
Drive-thru dry cleaning service in Tuxedo  
Photo credit: Elisia

**Fig. W2. Connections and supports.** The photo on the top depicts a community garden operated by Neighbourhoods Alive just across from Freight House in the Centennial/West Alexander neighbourhood. This photo represents how essential these spaces are for promoting positive community interaction as a strategy to deter negative activity as depicted in the photo on the right. The photo is contrasted against a photo of a vehicle pulled up to a drive-thru window to collect dry cleaning. The comparative photos contrast the difference between individualistic pride and the communal pride whereby those in West Broadway are more involved with and connected to people and places in their neighbourhood.

3. **Use of space (Figure W3).** Both the West Broadway and North End teams contrasted the vast amount of open public and privately-owned property they observed in wealthier neighbourhoods with the lack of available public spaces in their neighbourhoods. Researchers suggested that in wealthier neighbourhoods the purpose of space appeared to be to conspicuously display affluence. Many discussed how these spaces could be put to better use for recreation, leisure, relaxation, social interaction, family activities, children’s play structures and community gardens. For example, one West Broadway community researcher contrasted the wasted space she saw in Tuxedo with how she thought it might be used in her neighbourhood:

*That [photo] is showing the green space in Tuxedo but it is kind of for private use. Well, they prefer that nobody uses it, just to look at it private. [For example], I found in Tuxedo, in the middle of a cul-de-sac, there was just a bunch of grass and just a lamp post and we were thinking that if this would have been in West Broadway, there would have been a community garden or something else.*

Researchers saw these under-utilized, often prohibited spaces as examples of ‘invisible fences’ that they thought were intended to deny people access and make people who desired to use public spaces feel unwelcome. At the same time, Centennial/Main Street community researchers envied the amount and quality of space in other neighbourhoods, suggesting even that the cleanliness they observed provided a sense of ‘freedom’.



*Cul-de-sac in Tuxedo*  
Photo credit: Angela



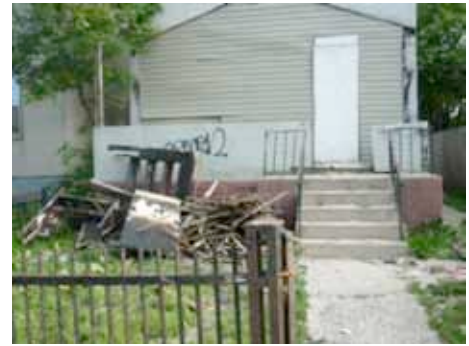
*Community Garden in the North End*  
Photo credit: Chris

**Fig. W3. Use of Space.** The photo on the top is a photo of a plot of grass in the middle of a cul-de-sac in Tuxedo. This image is contrasted to a community garden in the North End. These photos are meant to show how public space in the North End is utilized as much as possible to benefit the community and to welcome everyone. Whereas in more affluent areas like Tuxedo, space is constructed as ‘invisible fences,’ and put on display as a sign of prosperity. In affluent communities, there is little apparent investment of time and resources in inviting “common” outdoor spaces where people may socialize and work together.

4. **Housing insecurity (Figure W4).** While there are many low-cost housing options in the North End, researchers from there reported considerable concerns related to their safety and health. The North End group expressed concerns about structural issues, pest infestations and security. Many of the houses and apartment units are privately owned by 'slum landlords' who have little motivation to make improvements if they cannot make a profit. Similarly, researchers from the Centennial/Main Street group pointed to the severity of the lack of housing available for the recent increase in immigrants and refugees to Winnipeg. Researchers from all three groups expressed a desire to move to higher-quality housing in other parts of the city, but because they were discriminated against based on their appearance, skin colour, and place of residence, they were denied the opportunity to move. One community researcher discussed how racism plays a significant role in perpetuating housing insecurity for residents in the North End:

*My Dad was trying to get a place in this really nice high rise and my dad can read people really well and he just knew as soon as he walked in there he could tell he wouldn't get the place. The woman just looked down upon him because he is Native. My Dad has the salary to afford that and everything but he said the first look the caretaker gave him, he knew right away that she didn't want him there and he knew that because he looks Native.*

In contrast to the North End, low-income residents of West Broadway reported experiencing a very different form of insecurity resulting from rapid gentrification. For these residents, the greatest "environmental risk" in West Broadway is its enviable location as a result of its riverfront property, large character homes, main public transit routes, proximity to the Legislature and downtown, and walking distance to the University of Winnipeg. There, the availability of low-cost housing is decreasing as private developers move in to convert the apartments and rooming houses into condos for more affluent urban residents and students at a nearby university. For example, during one discussion, one researcher realized that the flexibility her landlord was offering her on her lease may have just been a cover for his desire to keep the option of selling his property at a future time.



*Abandoned after house fire in the North End*  
Photo credit: Sandie



*Large house in Crescentwood*  
Photo credit: Ginel

**Fig. W4. Housing insecurity.** The photo on the top is a derelict home that was abandoned and boarded up after a house fire started possibly as a result of negligence of 'slum landlords' to provide adequate electrical maintenance and to install fire alarm systems. This image is contrasted with a photo depicting the size and quality of housing available to those living in areas like Crescentwood.

5. **Living in fear (Figure W5).** Both the Centennial/Main Street and North End groups expressed concerns about crime rates and gang-related violence that has concentrated in their midst. Researchers were particularly concerned about the rampant exploitation of young people in their community who are being lured into gang related drug activity and sex work. After a visit to a wealthier suburban neighbourhood, one community researcher lamented about the relative calm he observed in wealthier parts of the city in contrast to the state of siege that characterized his experience of his own neighbourhood:

*You can't get peace and quiet in the North End. There are too many sirens and people running around.*

Researchers questioned how it was possible that such differences could be permitted to exist within the same city and felt that it was not right that they were not able to enjoy the quiet and peaceful conditions they observed during their neighbourhood assessments in wealthier neighbourhoods.



*Police officer on the ground ready to shoot*  
Photo credit: Ginel



*A hammock hanging in someone's yard in Crescentwood*  
Photo credit: Erica

**Fig. W5. Living in Fear.** The photo on the top of a police officer prepared to fire his gun was taken to represent the level of crime and violent activity that people in the North End live with on a daily basis. This image is contrasted with a photo of a Crescentwood resident relaxing in his front yard hammock. These photos show how people in other neighbourhoods like Crescentwood live at ease whereas in the North End they are constantly living in fear.



6. **Environmental quality (Figure W6).** Both the Centennial/Main Street and North End group discussed how they are bothered by the amount of garbage and debris that is scattered over their lawns, sidewalks, streets and parks, as one commented, “It’s gross in the North End”. Researchers noted in particular the way that garbage dumpsters are inconsistently emptied and often left overflowing with waste they felt was hazardous to children. Both the Centennial/Main Street and North End community researchers noticed the difference in recycling boxes in other neighbourhoods and the North End community researchers commented that the recycling disposal truck does not even drive down their streets. One participant contrasted his experiences of garbage collection with observations of the tidy back alleys in a wealthier neighbourhood:

*Look at that overflowing dumpster – it attracts rats, raccoons, squirrels. Then kids play in that space because that is the only part of grass that they have to play on. They have to play right next to all that garbage and who knows what is in there. [Whereas in wealthier neighbourhoods], their garbage gets picked up all the time. The drivers even pick up the garbage that falls out of the bins too.*

To this researcher, these observable differences speak to an unjustifiable level of disrespect perpetuated by a system that allows city sanitation workers to be held to a different standard in his neighbourhood.



*Back alley dumpster behind the Manitoba Housing Development in the North End*  
Photo credit: Sandie



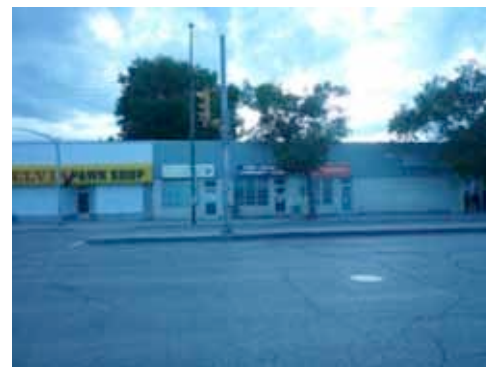
*Back alley dumpster in residential area in Crescentwood*  
Photo credit: Sandie

**Fig. W6. Environmental quality.** The photo on the top is of a vandalized dumpster in the back alley of a Manitoba housing development in the North End. This image is contrasted with a dumpster in Crescentwood that has been well maintained and completely cleared of any sign of debris, food or hazardous waste.

7. **Health services (Figure W7).** The North End group felt that health services available to them were insufficient and often of poor quality relative to those in other parts of the city. The group expressed particular animosity toward one community clinic in their neighbourhood. For example, one researcher recounted her sister's experience at this clinic:

*My sister went there because she felt light headed and she would get really bad headaches once in awhile and she had a sore bones as well. The doctor asked her to put out her arm and he touched her arm and said you have virus. He didn't even examine her; he just poked her in the arm.*

In addition to long wait times, researchers reported that patients that use this clinic were stereotyped by health practitioners as drug addicts in search of prescription slips for narcotics. Such stories were set against observations of a wide range of health care options that were available to residents in other parts of the city.



Community Clinic on Main Street  
Photo credit: Chris



Health services at strip mall in Seven Oaks  
Photo credit: Sandie

**Fig. W7. Health Services.** The image on the top is a Community Health Clinic on Main Street for residents of the North End, which has been placed in between a pawnshop and a pharmacy. This photo is contrasted with a sign advertising a wide range of services available at a Health & Wellness Centre in Seven Oaks. These photos show the perceived lack of choice in health services options in the North End.

8. **Nutrition and food (Figure W8).** Researchers from the three groups reported different experiences associated with the availability of healthy food options. The West Broadway group pointed out that there have been several initiatives, including community gardens and a local food co-op where people can purchase food at warehouse cost. Similarly, the North End group pointed to a local store, NEECHI Foods, as being extremely important and the only provider of fresh, healthy and traditional food options in their neighbourhood. Centennial/Main Street community researchers emphasized the importance of home gardening. They see a structural dependency created where a lack of usable public space for apartment dwellers creates a reliance on expensive, unhealthy store-bought food. North End researchers felt that larger grocers were less accessible to people who rely on public transit or who provide for a large family. One community researcher commented that people often resort to a shopping at local convenience stores that often only sell processed, packaged, and frozen food:

*If you want good food, it is way out of the way. And you have so many kids and you don't have a vehicle. So people just go to the corner store and you just try to pick out what is good and what will last a long time. A big box of Kraft dinner or a big box of noodles that is easy to cook and lasts a long time.*

Community researchers in general suggested the combined challenges of food insecurity contributed to a wide range of negative health experiences, including a high incidence of diabetes and obesity.



*Balcony gardens at IRCOM*  
Photo credit: Jim



*Resident's garden in Daniel McIntyre neighbourhood*  
Photo credit: Birinda

**Fig. W8. Nutrition & Food.** The photo on the top is of the balcony gardens developed by the immigrant and refugee residents at IRCOM (Immigrant and Refugee Community Organization of Manitoba). This photo is contrasted with the photo of a garden outside a single family dwelling in Daniel McIntyre neighbourhood. Residents of IRCOM envy those with the space they could be using to grow food locally that would lower the costs of their living expenses.

9. **Criminalization and disinvestment (Figure W9). Community researchers from the North End and Centennial/Main Street research groups** discussed a cycle of disinvestment and criminalization in their neighbourhoods. While they favoured employment opportunities and more 'watchful' eyes to the streets, they also felt outside investors did not listen to community priorities and concerns. For example, in contrasting different neighbourhoods, these researchers observed how the level of investment in a neighbourhood can influence whether criminal activity is acceptable or not, even among the offenders.

*That is at the end of the street here at the Exchange District. There are half a dozen to 10 bicycles there. The odd theft happens and that, but the people that rode them [leave them] there all day like it is not a bad neighbourhood whereas [in the north end] a pack of gang members or bike thieves walk up and they just go up and grab a bike.*

Similarly, North End community researchers discussed how disinvestment in their neighbourhoods leads to a lack of local employment and obliges them to encounter employment discrimination in other parts of the city. For example, one community researcher spoke about trying to get a job in another area of the city. Despite having work experience, she felt she had trouble getting a job because she was Aboriginal. Another researcher was concerned that he would not fit in outside of the inner city, because residents in other neighbourhoods would not allow it.



*Boarded up businesses on Main Street in the North End*

Photo credit: Chris



*Bike rack in the Exchange District*

Photo credit: Paul

**Fig. W9. Investment and development.** The photo on the top depicts a strip of boarded up businesses on Main Street in the North End. The photo on the bottom is of a bike rack in the Exchange District in Downtown Winnipeg. Together they represent a contrast in perceptions of criminality and neighbourhood level public and private investment.

**10. Healthy child development and safety (Figure W13).** All three groups discussed the importance of environments that promote healthy child development. Both the West Broadway and the North End groups recognized the plethora of youth-based agencies that provide services for children and youth that do not have the supports they need at home. While Central Park provides recreation and leisure for children and youth, the Centennial/Main Street group expressed the need for an indoor recreation centre during the winter season. Many of the community researchers also suggested that recreational opportunities were impaired by the lack of available adult supervisors because too many people are juggling multiple jobs to make ends meet:

*Some parents don't have time to go to the park because they have to make ends meet. They have a part-time job or something, but not everyone is bad. They are trying to make ends meet and they try to work or volunteer or whatever they are doing to better their life, but they just can't be with the kids 24 hours.*

Another impediment to youth was the lack of safe and creative public spaces available in their neighbourhoods. The absence of photos of such places stood in stark contrast to the ample open and green spaces, play structures, and other youth amenities that researchers encountered in wealthier neighbourhoods.



*Playground structure in the North End*  
Photo credit: Sandie



*Playground structure in Tuxedo*  
Photo credit: Elisia

**Fig. W10. Health child development and safety.** These photos represent contrasting perspectives on the relatively under-resourced playgrounds in the North End against the elaborate and creative opportunities provided for children in wealthier parts of the city.

## 5. CROSS-SITE ANALYSIS

In comparing and contrasting the findings from each of the three study sites, we are able to discern five key cross-site themes that characterize environmental health inequities as they are experienced in varying ways from city to city. In Table 2, we group the site-specific themes for each city under the five cross-site themes.

**Table 2. Cross-site ‘meta-themes’**

<b>Cross-site themes</b>	<b>Vancouver</b>	<b>Toronto</b>	<b>Winnipeg</b>
<b><i>CHARACTERISTICS: CYCLES OF STIGMATIZATION PERPETUATE INEQUITY</i></b>	Intruding outsiders	Delivery of public environmental services	Living in fear  Healthy child development and safety
<b><i>EXPERIENCES: INEQUITY FEELS LIKE BEING EXCLUDED FROM ONE’S OWN BACKYARD</i></b>	Exclusionary and inaccessible spaces  Deservedness	Exclusionary housing  Social status and access to therapeutic landscapes	Housing insecurity  Health services
<b><i>OUTCOMES: DISRESPECTFUL BEHAVIOURS LEGITIMIZE INEQUITY</i></b>	Beautiful and artistic aspects of a neighbourhood	Public congregation space	Use of space  Environmental quality  Nutrition and food
<b><i>MECHANISMS: UNDERINVESTMENT ‘CAUSES’ INEQUITY</i></b>	Visible effects of capitalism  Conspicuous inequality	Free-market vs. Community-driven development	Criminalization and disinvestment
<b><i>OPPORTUNITIES: COHESION AND SOLIDARITY CAN OVERCOME INEQUITY</i></b>	The importance of community	Social support networks	Local services support the community  Connections and supports

**1) CHARACTERISTICS: CYCLES OF STIGMATIZATION PERPETUATE INEQUITY.** Community researchers at all three study sites observed a common pattern of stigmatization that they felt presented a glass ceiling to the aspirations of their communities. In Vancouver, this largely came from the distrustful relationships the DTES and its residents have with outsiders. In Toronto, persistent garbage in the streets and public parks has led to notions of neglect and prejudice, which in turn contributes to a sense of demoralization and discrimination within the community. In Winnipeg, while community researchers acknowledge that North End residents live under the spectre of persistent violent crime, the construction of negative stereotypes of these neighbourhoods and the people that live within them (as opposed to the perpetrators who may or may not be residents) only exacerbates the confrontational attitudes of outsiders and contributes

to the creation of ‘invisible’ barriers that ultimately isolate North End communities from social and economic benefits that accrue elsewhere.

**2) EXPERIENCES: INEQUITY FEELS LIKE BEING EXCLUDED FROM ONE’S OWN BACKYARD.**

Community researchers in all study sites noted several ways that the built environment contributed to the social exclusion of people, even within their own neighbourhoods. In Vancouver, the gates, barred windows, and derelict buildings and shops in the DTES, compared to the inviting, well-maintained services in other areas, was a physical representation of discrimination toward the DTES and its residents. In Winnipeg, community researchers provided accounts of community members treated unfairly by service providers within their neighbourhood as well as in observations of private properties where the intent of unwelcoming features such as gates and bars are too obvious. In Toronto, a combination of cramped and densely populated buildings lacking in social meeting spaces combined with few welcoming outdoor congregation areas in Parkdale, undermines essential foundations for family and community gathering needed to maintain healthy social support networks.

**3) OUTCOMES: DISRESPECTFUL BEHAVIOURS LEGITIMIZE INEQUITY.**

The quality of neighbourhoods in all three sites was generally seen to be a direct consequence of the level of respect given to the neighbourhood by outsiders. On the one hand, Vancouver participants celebrated the high level of artistic pride that local residents had for their neighbourhood, even in the midst of its degraded surface-level appearances resulting from insufficient sanitary services. On the other hand, Toronto participants observed physical “symptoms” of the profound lack of respect for the neighbourhood, as rendered visible in the differences of the positioning and quality of public amenities such as park benches. In Winnipeg, the respect by community members for the neighbourhood environment was characterized as the difference between individualistic and communal pride. In wealthier neighbourhoods, community researchers saw many instances of spaces as displays of wealth and prosperity, whereas in their own neighbourhoods, there were very limited public spaces at all.

**4) MECHANISMS: UNDERINVESTMENT ‘CAUSES’ INEQUITY.**

In all study sites, participants felt that uneven capitalist urban development was readily observable within the physical and social environment of the city’s neighbourhoods. In Parkdale, signs of gentrification are raising concerns for lower-income residents and small business owners who fear that rent increases of residential and commercial space will force them out of the community. In Vancouver, the striking contrast in wealth that participants perceived, both within the DTES and compared to other areas, created feelings of being devalued or excluded. More importantly, community researchers in all sites realized that neighbourhoods in the city were designed for investment reasons, *for* wealthier people and their lifestyle and consumption preferences. Such decisions result in neighbourhood structures and amenities that are often completely inappropriate to the needs and desires of low-income residents.

**5) OPPORTUNITIES: COHESION AND SOLIDARITY CAN OVERCOME INEQUITY.**

In the face of social exclusion, community researchers were unanimous in their belief that their neighbourhoods offered a level of internal cohesion and solidarity against inequity that was simply not observable in other parts of the city. In Winnipeg, the community researchers were not necessarily envious of individual lifestyles in other parts of the city even while they admired the considerable amenities

available in wealthier neighbourhoods. They felt that their neighbourhoods were more appropriate and accepting of people facing financial hardship or social marginalization. Their neighbourhoods offer a variety of community-based organizations that assist them in making ends meet and connect them to their neighbours, friends and families. Likewise, in Toronto, shared needs around locally available food have led to unique gathering of diverse groups through the development of community gardens, canning and food preserving programs, and community hosted potlucks. In Vancouver, participants felt that there are many opportunities to be involved in their community, but saw many barriers preventing the DTES from becoming more unified. Overall, the sense of solidarity felt in all three communities was perceived to be a strength that is not often acknowledged by decision-makers in urban and public health planning, who often fall back on “deficit” oriented practices.

## 6. MOVING TO ACTION: RECOMMENDATIONS FROM COMMUNITY WORKSHOPS

To help us to translate project findings into action, we organized a series of three-hour community workshops in each city. We invited community members to reflect back to us their impressions of the research and their ideas for specific collective strategies that might be implemented to address environmental health inequities. Over 130 participants attended workshops in Vancouver (40 participants, September 29), Toronto (42 participants, October 18<sup>th</sup>), and Winnipeg (50 participants, November 22). Participants represented a wide range of interested stakeholders, including community researchers from the project, city planners, staff of community and citywide service and advocacy organizations, residents, university students, and health authority representatives. Recognizing the historical, cultural, and social uniqueness within each of our neighbourhoods, we developed an informal conversational format that was customized to each community context and held in a Neighbourhood House community centre (Vancouver), a not for profit coffee shop (Toronto), and an Aboriginal cultural centre (Winnipeg).

### **Key recommendations**

In all three workshops, participants were mainly unsurprised by project findings but nonetheless felt that the project presented a well-articulated set of complex issues that legitimized community perspectives and experiences. There appeared to be a consensus that the solutions to address unequal treatment of neighbourhoods were very straightforward and that it was simply a matter of gaining political will to create change. Many participants offered suggestions for immediate improvements to the neighbourhood based on individual and community citizenship, but also cautioned against ‘downloading’ responsibility onto already overburdened communities. A prevalent theme during workshops was that people are ‘hungry for solutions, not just identifying problems’ and that there are many interesting creative solutions on the ground that are simply disjointed and under-resourced. Participants pointed out that the critical role of researchers is to shine a light on work that is already being done and to enable communities to leverage this knowledge into collective action. In this spirit, we focus here on summarizing the most tangible recommendations provided by participants for bringing research findings into practical community-driven action.



**1. Advance the concept of a “Just City”.** Open discussions from all workshops pointed to the need to develop a more robust concept of what an “environmental health equity” means in the context of urban social justice. At issue was what the city should look like from a citizen’s perspective, and although the project findings provide clear evidence of particular injustices, a common framework would help to incorporate seemingly unrelated elements and activities into a collective pursuit of an ‘environmentally-just city’ that represented a fundamentally alternative vision to the status quo. This suggestion was based on the idea that such a framework would be helpful to guide community mobilizing, priority setting, funding proposals and policy development. Some suggestions for what elements create a just city included: less exclusionary places, being able to access services, green space, community driven development, and the removal of barriers for participation in decision making. However, it was also noted that each neighbourhood has unique needs and that a framework should incorporate procedural mechanisms of equity and justice that integrate a diversity of perspectives in decision-making processes. For example, one participant in Winnipeg emphasized how racial-economic segregation in the city undermines reform participation, noting that people come into aboriginal neighbourhoods to fix them up according to their own middle class vision, and then go back at the end of the day to their “safe, white spaces”. Another participant echoed the problem of service providers who don’t have a personal investment in a neighbourhood, and noted that it is better to build community resources from within an area.

**2. Support local *and* systemic change.** Participants emphasized the need for a balance between local action and broader systemic change. On one hand, participants were enthusiastic about supporting local investment in common spaces and public amenities, particularly the rehabilitation of derelict or vacant properties.. For example, one participant in Vancouver felt that fenced off private property should be repurposed for gardens and suggested working with property owners to advocate for more communal use of space. However, in focusing on local change, participants also cautioned against losing site of ‘systemic causes’ that lead to local inequities. For example, in response to a suggestion to restore park benches in Toronto, one Vancouver participant said, “they give us 1000 park benches and that’s it.” To achieve ‘system level thinking’, participants suggested that planners “think through unexpected consequences of local actions.” For example, in Vancouver crime prevention strategies meant to deter drug dealing (like the removal of payphones and the lack of 24-hour grocery stores) often ended up undermining the needs of residents. To ensure a more holistic approach to neighbourhood planning, participants recommended integrating single issues (such as housing, sanitation and public spaces) into a collective picture of environmental health inequities and how they interrelate and even amplify each other. It was suggested that an integrated perspective would aid in the development of solutions that include new city level partnerships where the ‘experience of the neighbourhood’ is explored and responded to as a whole in relation to the rest of the city (as opposed to an issue by issue basis). In doing so there may be an opportunity to both shift as well as broaden public discourse from the discussion of single issues to the idea of intersecting community and city level inequities.

**3. Consider institutional causes, not just outcomes as “inequities”.** Rather than focusing exclusively on symptoms, participants raised the issue of tackling jurisdictional power as a major barrier impeding action on adverse environmental conditions. While local communities may be the most acutely aware of local problems and their potential solutions, the funding and power to act are often held at other levels of government thereby creating a sense of ‘intractability’ over

complex inequities. In Winnipeg, participants spoke about political structures and regulations that either contribute to poor neighbourhood conditions or have the potential to improve conditions, but are not currently being used or enforced. There were also several examples of undersupported policies that could better preserve neighbourhood environments. . One participant spoke about his work with tenants living in severely deteriorating housing, and noted that there are insufficient mechanisms to ensure that buildings are maintained, citing specifically a dearth of housing inspectors, inadequate penalties for landlords, and protections for whistle-blowing tenants against evictions. Participants suggested looking to other models of urban governance, particularly from Europe, with a particular emphasis on job creation focused on keeping neighbourhoods healthy.

**4. Promote a collective sense of ‘ownership’ of the neighbourhood.** Many participants pointed out that while some poorer neighborhoods show a sense of community, wealthier neighbourhoods have a sense of ownership, not only of their own properties and communities, but also their politicians. Others suggested that newcomers who felt ‘sent’ to certain parts of the city based on affordability often felt a lack of connection to ‘place,’ and preferred to focus on family and to ‘reject’ their outside community, thus leading to further discrimination between groups who share a community. Similarly, a participant in Winnipeg suggested that politics was driven by “price, taxpayers, and self-interest” rather than “values, citizenship, and collective interest”. Thus, political discourses tended to emphasize “tolerance” rather than “acceptance” of differences in identity and lifestyle. A Vancouver participant told an illustrative story about an elder in the DTES who had to cling to parking meters to rest on the sidewalk because there was nowhere to sit down. He contrasted this scenario with an example from Japan where he described elders are given a tree to take care of as a way to promote a sense of ownership of the local environment. These differences raised the question: how can we create a sense of political empowerment over place when there is a lack of private ownership by the citizen base? A proposed solution was to find ways to direct neighbourhood investments toward local institutions to support, for example, materially-poor artists who can ensure that neighbourhoods are beautified on their own terms rather than on the basis of outside preferences and aesthetics. Importantly, such investments should consider the proportional use of public space. For example, a policy mentality of ‘getting people off the street’ needs to be reconsidered in the context of understanding that people in the inner city have just as much right to spend time outdoors and walking as other urban residents. By comparison, in cases where many people are expected to be on the street (like a formally sanctioned parade), city officials make appropriate plans for safety and sanitation, whereas no such planning is considered for neighbourhoods like the DTES where the population is often as dense as during a parade on a daily basis. Accordingly, public officials in sanitation, parks and recreation, pedestrian traffic, need to consider the higher use value and wear-and tear of public areas and make investment decisions accordingly.

**5. Avoid ‘downloading’ responsibility.** In Toronto, while some participants pointed to individual citizenship practices as a way to improve urban environmental health (such as purchasing practices, community clean-ups, and community environmental education) others raised caution about this approach. Similarly, in Winnipeg participants suggested that the notion of local community mobilization, while important, puts the burden of change on the wrong set of shoulders. It was expressed that when families and whole communities exist under precarious circumstances and need to focus all their energy to access and maintain food and housing, it may be naïve to focus on local community mobilization as a sustainable response to reversing a legacy

of discrimination. While there was agreement that there were some immediate opportunities to improve environmental health conditions of 'disadvantaged' communities, relying on individual and voluntary community measures may be just another form of 'downloading' that does not address injustices and stigma that lead to discriminatory treatment of certain neighbourhoods.

**6. Scale up to the city.** The concept of environmental health inequity needs to be scaled up to include a broader public discourse that implicates 'middle class' urban citizens as well as multiple levels of government. Participants agreed that cities are sites of mutual exclusion where the privileged and under-privileged citizens are separated from each other by invisible boundaries. For example, in sprawling Winnipeg, people who work and live in the North End described getting lost when they would go to the south, while those from the southern part of the city described how they had little reason to "go over the bridge" to the north. These divisions arose as a main reason why people feel the city is divided, and helped to explain why policy makers and service providers from outside of a neighbourhood often resort to inappropriate approaches when working to address problems faced within inner city neighbourhoods. To resolve these divisions, participants highlighted the need for mobilizing strategies that could include citizens from all parts of the city to address problems that affect the whole city. This form of mobilization was differentiated from existing community service partnerships or advocacy-oriented approaches that often focalized their aims onto disenfranchised people and places. It was stressed that the citywide mobilization not to be seen as 'helping' or 'charitable', but rather was about improving city life for all. For example, several participants suggested that there is a large 'untapped' population of retirees who could offer a wealth of expertise from on how to influence decision makers and create change. Critical to this notion was the idea of developing co-educational strategies to engage potential activists by helping to shift their view of citizenship beyond a particular city enclave. For example, participants in Winnipeg and Vancouver discussed opportunities to form alliances, particularly with groups that have had successful track records in social justice and human rights. Many participants felt that there was an unfortunate level of division among organizations serving inner city communities as a consequence of competition over scarce resources, the sprawling and fragmented geography of Winnipeg (that obliged organizations to limit their jurisdictions in order to ensure their programming was effective), and entrenched "identity"-based niches and conflicts that focused more on differences rather than commonalities (e.g. recent immigrant vs. First Nations concerns). One key suggestion to improve the effectiveness of coalition formation was to influence the support mechanisms of organizations such as the Canadian Jewish Federation, Japanese-Canadian Associations, and others who could lend support and resources to social justice and human rights goals.

**7. Broaden the terrain of political discourse and promote democratic participation.** Participants at all workshops talked about the barriers that residents faced in having their voices heard in the political process, particularly within electoral politics. Many felt that even good intentions were to blame for the exclusion of low-income populations to participate, as middle class advocates often did not consider people's access to Internet and telephones, literacy levels, and overall availability and free-time in their efforts to reach out and provide information. At least one participant in Winnipeg pointed out that too many advocates assumed that people did not know their rights, suggesting instead that the reason people did not act against injustices was because they faced too many barriers to *realize* their rights. Some participants proposed practical solutions to help individuals overcome their individual obstacles, such as mobilizing community

organizations to coordinate “get out the vote” campaigns for particular populations (e.g. First Nation, recent immigrants) who often face barriers to voting. Specific ideas included ensuring voters (particularly the homeless and transient populations) were more accurately counted, educating people about the voting process, providing assistance in getting identification, offering free rides, bus rentals, and advocating for free public transit on election days. Some participants were more skeptical about electoral politics, suggesting that the what was on the “menu” was of limited range and did not represent well the perspectives, needs, and aspirations of those who wished to see issues of poverty, racialized and criminalized neighbourhoods, and colonialism addressed.

**8. Be loud in the face of injustices.** Participants considered several ways to counter the lack of political will in urban governance, with suggestions including making it “uncomfortable” for councilors to not listen to their constituencies, shaming the city and police through media coverage of blatant human rights violations, or being diligent in collecting evidence (e.g. to report to politicians or the police). Participants insisted on mobilizing against criminal offenders (e.g. drug dealers) rather than victims (e.g. drug users) in policing and community development. Less optimistically, participants in Winnipeg felt quite strongly that not only was there a lack of political will to address these problems but went further to suggest that there is political and economic incentive to “keep people poor and segregated”. It was suggested that maintaining city level segregation between the “haves and have-nots” was a way of managing an entrenched racism that works in favour of the city’s more affluent classes. While many participants discussed ways to reform the democratic system, some participants rejected the notion of deliberative democracy outright. Some participants in Winnipeg pointed to a lack of transparency in government, particularly within service agencies that they felt were often not forthcoming with information to help people navigate overly complex systems. These participants felt that “revolutionary” tactics were not often seen as palatable to Winnipeggers, but that progressive groups needed to look to successes of 21<sup>st</sup> century social movements elsewhere (e.g. Europe) for best practices in more protest-oriented democratic acts. One participant stressed the need to “humanize” poverty – that “putting a face” on issues of poverty and racism could lead to a transformation of public attitudes. Another participant suggested that people should see simple individual acts of mutual support through a democratic rather than charitable lens. Another suggested that the campaigns of the United Way were a successful example of effort to change the attitudes of the general public.

**9. Go directly to the people (not just the bureaucrats).** In order to instigate more collective action and more holistic views of citizenship it was suggested that knowledge translation activities focus less on reaching decision makers and more on reaching the broader population base. Participants suggested that too often we focus on official decision makers as the locus of action, and that instead, outreach needs to be expanded in order create longer term transformative shifts in citizen engagement that in turn influence decision makers through widespread political pressure. Several suggestions were offered. One participant in Winnipeg recommended bringing the results of SUCCEED to youth in an effort to shift how the city’s future generation of voters understand their city and overcoming prejudices that lead to stigmatization of particular neighbourhoods. Specific ideas included multi-media tools and creative/animated forums that bring together a diversity of youth from many parts of the city in an effort to overcome misconceptions about “the other”. Another participant suggested we bring the project findings to more affluent neighborhoods, where residents may not have a basic understandings of social

inequality or its consequences. There was some criticism that everyone around the table at the workshop were already well acquainted with the project findings, and that we needed to reach out to a broader group who were less aware of these issues in an effort to transform the way in which citizens view and understand their city – this included larger forums on an ongoing basis. A final suggestion was to include participants from more affluent neighborhoods to become community researchers and in future research and participate in the knowledge translation process.

## 7. ILLUSTRATIVE CASE STUDIES

To enable users of this report to put the nine recommendations into practice, we have assembled three illustrative case studies based on ideas generated from each of the study sites. For each, we propose locally led initiatives that are designed to improve neighbourhood environmental conditions while simultaneously exposing more deeply embedded inequities that within the urban system. It is our hope that these case studies might be taken up as-is or adapted by our partner organizations to their own programming and policy initiatives.

### ***Case Study One: Install more public benches in Parkdale, Toronto***

Evidence of a lack of public benches in Parkdale, in comparison to the rest of the city, provided a stark example of how discriminatory attitudes manifest as neighbourhood-level inequity. The lack of a publicly friendly ‘streetscape’ elicited strong reactions from Parkdale community members who felt a need to take action, and similar sentiments were expressed by counterparts in both Vancouver and Winnipeg. However, it was pointed out that simply reinstalling benches in the community as an isolated effort may not be an adequate response to a larger issue of a lack of support for public gathering space. By adhering to the nine recommendations above, local actors may be enabled to consider ways in which a public bench initiative may form part of a more comprehensive strategy that responds to the need for more community-centred public spaces. Just how might this be put into practice?

**1. Advance the concept of a “Just City”.** The need for park benches and public gathering space emphasizes that all Torontonians deserve community centred public spaces no matter where they live or visit in the city. The quantity, location, and appearance of these benches should be decided by community members and be distributed in such a way as to meet local needs.

**2. Support local *and* systemic change.** A public benches initiative provides an entry point for a deeper exploration of the reasons why the benches and other public amenities were removed from Parkdale in the first place, and for consideration of the underlying rationale for the maldistribution of similar investments across the city. Community researchers felt that incorporating benches and public gathering space into Parkdale would be most beneficial if it corresponded with broader city-level response to homelessness, addiction, and social exclusion in the city.

**3. Consider institutional causes, not just outcomes as “inequities”.** Efforts to install public benches provides an opportunity to reveal jurisdictional barriers that impede

effective neighbourhood change. For example, it has been suggested that some of the stigma around public benches in Parkdale was the result of irresponsible business practices by local bar owners. Residents who made formal complaints to the city were met with barriers since the issuing of liquor licenses fell under provincial jurisdiction. Therefore, the business sector needs to be informed about the unforeseen impacts of their decisions and included in future strategies to support public spaces in their community.

**4. Promote a collective sense of ‘ownership’ of the neighbourhood.** A public bench initiative should be driven by a process of community engagement in which local actors retain decision-making control over how best to invest an allotted budget to create community centred public spaces suited to the unique needs of Parkdale. While benches should be built by qualified contractors, their design and layout should reflect the wishes of typical users of the benches.

**5. Avoid ‘downloading’ responsibility.** While a ‘ground up’ approach to public benches is preferable, key stakeholders from parks and recreation, planning, transportation need to be involved from the beginning so that appropriate sectors take long term responsibility for maintaining the initiative. Inner city neighbourhoods are full of one-off arts related projects that are not given the resources necessary to sustain their use value.

**6. Scale up to the city.** Unchecked private sector development does not only affect inner city communities as public spaces become increasingly privatized and commodified. The issue of a lack of benches in Parkdale could be used to instigate broader city-level policies regarding access to public gathering spaces that affect all Toronto citizens. For example, the implementation of a mandatory policy that would ensure all wards must have a per capita designation of open community-centred public spaces tailored to its neighbourhood.

**7. Broaden the terrain of political discourse and promote democratic participation.** A public bench initiative could easily be linked with strategies to promote broader collective community activism including improved participation in electoral politics. The lack of public benches links to a broader need for more neighbourhood-level public spaces that are conducive to community resilience, civic engagement, and democratic life in the city.

**8. Be loud in exposing injustices.** Parkdale advocates could link and mobilize with other communities in the city who may face similar issues of neighbourhood disinvestment. By combining local issues into coordinated inter-neighbourhood action, those in positions of political power (and whose power is a function of public support) may be more compelled to listen.

**9. Go directly to the people (not just the bureaucrats).** Public benches are not a luxury, but are one part of a wider ‘public good’ that is under threat in the increasingly privatized city. The focus on ‘public goods’ would resonate with all Torontonians as public benches and other amenities are key features of the ‘good life’ in the city.

### **Case Study Two: Forming a community art collective in the DTES**

Many public spaces and buildings in the DTES were observed to be unwelcoming – dark, dingy, fenced or barred off. Derelict properties give residents a feeling of exclusion, particularly in comparison to the more attractive, welcoming spaces in other neighbourhoods. Some DTES community researchers felt that in other neighbourhoods where people own property, they are more likely to take pride in and care of their spaces. Workshop participants proposed that community artists partner with the city, local agencies, and property owners to create beautiful spaces that can promote pride and ownership of the community for DTES residents. The process of this action is equally as important as its outcomes in order to ensure that local art is not merely window-dressing in the DTES. By considering the nine recommendations, a community art collective can draw upon the DTES community’s strengths.

**1. Advance the concept of a “Just City”.** Improving the aesthetic of derelict properties in the DTES follows the ethic that DTES residents are just as deserving of beautiful, welcoming spaces as are residents of other areas of Vancouver, regardless of whether they rent or own property.

**2. Support local *and* systemic change.** In Vancouver, community researchers felt that absentee property owners had little connection to daily life in the DTES. Through an initiative where residents work with property owners to create art projects, there is an opportunity to not only beautify local spaces, but also reexamine the relationship between absentee landlords and those who actually live in the neighbourhood.

**3. Consider institutional causes, not just outcomes as “inequities”.** The physical appearance of the DTES is a visible outcome of inequitable public investments by both governmental and private sector decision-makers. Therefore, improving the outward conditions of the neighbourhood must address the reasons why such decision-makers fail to respond to the blatant material poverty, poor housing, and disinvestment in the DTES. A community art program must be free of the barriers people with low-incomes routinely face (financial barriers, long line-ups, excessive paperwork). Community artists would not be volunteers, but workers whose time is valued and compensated fairly.

**4. Promote a collective sense of ‘ownership’ of the neighbourhood.** An art program in the DTES would promote a sense of ownership if it were community led and not externally directed. Local cultures and skills should be showcased in permanent installations by artists who represent the neighbourhood, including people of Aboriginal, Chinese, and Japanese ancestry as well as the myriad other social, cultural, and ethnic groups who call the DTES home. Prioritizing the involvement of people who are often excluded can help to increase their connection to community.

**5. Avoid ‘downloading’ responsibility.** While an art program should be community driven, other city actors are also responsible for supporting such an effort. City staff, local landowners, businesses, and agencies can all play a role in promoting and maintaining spaces for art. Adequate protections must be put in place to ensure that art projects are not just transient “bandaids” but an integral component of the neighbourhood for the long-term.

**6. Scale up to the city.** Local art projects may reframe the way that art is used in other parts of the city, not as an agent of economic growth, but as a vehicle through which communities take pride in their neighbourhoods. Particularly as gentrification increases in the DTES, local projects can be used to reaffirm the strengths of longtime resident artists in the neighbourhood as opposed to using art as a way to attract tourists and more affluent residents.

**7. Broaden the terrain of political discourse and promote democratic participation.** An artist collective that involves open communication and collaboration between residents, organizations, and local government officials may serve to increase civic engagement and dialogue among community members who are otherwise preoccupied with the challenges of their everyday struggle with poverty.

**8. Be loud in exposing injustices.** Public art has always been used as a form of political activism. A community art program can mobilize residents to deliver political messages in a highly visible way through installations and showcases that coincide with politically salient events such as elections, days of memorial, or local-to-national celebrations.

**9. Go directly to the people (not just the bureaucrats).** The arts are a powerful way to bring people together and to garner the attention and support of the wider public. One suggestion in Vancouver was to ally with existing activist artist groups who have a track record of public education toward issues of social and environmental justice.

***Case Study Three: Implementing a comprehensive community-driven waste management and sanitation program in the core neighbourhoods of Winnipeg.***

The core neighbourhoods of Winnipeg, particularly the North End are perceived by many across the city as ‘dumping grounds’ for unwanted furniture, electronics, construction materials and household organic and hazardous waste. The lack of respect of these neighbourhoods has angered many residents who feel that they have a right to live in and use clean, safe and aesthetically-pleasing spaces. Despite community-driven initiatives to conduct garbage clean-ups and repair public infrastructure, it is recognized by community residents that this response will do little to alter the discriminatory attitudes and behaviours of residents, businesses, and government workers from outside of the neighbourhood. By considering the nine recommendations, implementation of a more comprehensive municipal city sanitation program in the core neighbourhoods of Winnipeg may generate a systemic level response to the unjustifiable level of disrespect perpetuated towards this area of the city.

**1. Advance the concept of a “Just City”.** A Just City should encompass a place where all city residents live in and have access to clean, safe and aesthetically-pleasing public spaces - sidewalks, streets, parks, playgrounds, green spaces, courtyards, alleys and their own back/front yards. Assigning more city sanitation workers to clean and maintain public spaces in the core areas of Winnipeg that have been abused emphasizes the point that



residents of these neighbourhoods like the rest of the city are deserving of these resources and services.

**2. Support local *and* systemic change.** While residents support local investment in garbage clean-up projects of streets, sidewalks, alleys and green spaces, community researchers emphasized that residents across the city need to start focusing on why there is more ‘visible’ waste in the core neighbourhoods of Winnipeg and to reveal the underlying reasons for the City’s lack of action to address this issue.

**3. Consider institutional causes, not just outcomes as “inequities”.** While community members have become active in monitoring dumpsters and organizing clean-ups in their neighbourhood to address the outcomes of environmental inequity, all levels of government particularly at the municipal level need to take action (i.e. by-law enforcement) to address illegal disposal of waste in residents’ ‘backyards’. The lack of political structures and regulations and enforcement to remediate the waste problems contributing to poor neighbourhood conditions perpetuates the notion that the core neighbourhoods of Winnipeg are acceptable ‘dumping grounds’.

**4. Promote a collective sense of ‘ownership’ of the neighbourhood.** A comprehensive neighbourhood waste management program in the core neighbourhoods of Winnipeg would promote a sense of political empowerment and ‘ownership’ over place among neighbourhood residents if it were community-driven. Involving the community in the decision-making process will influence more residents to actively monitor and report incidences of inconsistent garbage collection, vandalism, littering and illegal dumping.

**5. Avoid ‘downloading’ responsibility.** While community grassroots initiatives to organize neighbourhood clean-ups and consistent calls to 311 to report overflowing dumpsters and illegal dumping to by-law officers have been essential in maintaining public spaces and infrastructure, the burden of these responsibilities can no longer be rested entirely on the shoulders of community members and local organizations. City Council members, City sanitation workers, BFI Canada Waste Management, urban planners, parks and recreation officials, business owners and agencies all have a role to play in ensuring optimal waste management and sanitation of all areas of the city.

**6. Scale up to the city.** There is a reason why ‘middle class’ urban citizens are driving all the way to the West and North End neighbourhoods in Winnipeg to dispose of their furniture, electronics, household waste and construction materials in their dumpsters and back alleys. This demonstrates the need to engage citizens from all parts of the city residents to co-mobilize towards improving the waste disposal and recycling programs in Winnipeg and to put pressure on all levels of government to implement incentives to do so.

**7. Broaden the terrain of political discourse and promote democratic participation.** The reduction in the number of city workers in the core neighbourhoods of Winnipeg as a result of the current Mayor’s decision to implement hiring freezes and his decision to contract out garbage collection to a private company, BFI Canada, links to the need for more citizen voices in the electoral processes. Organizing a garbage coalition, for example North

End sought to engage and empower resident by educating them about municipal, provincial and federal government and the importance of voting in directing the fate of their neighbourhood is needed to promote democratic participation at the level of the city.

**8. Be loud in exposing injustices.** Core neighbourhood residents of Winnipeg are already quite active in addressing community issues particularly the Manitoba Citizens on Patrol Program (COPP) organized to mobilize citizens to participate in a community-based crime prevention initiative in cooperation with local law enforcement agencies. Getting these citizens on board with monitoring the neighbourhood's autobins and reporting incidences of illegal dumping to the Community By-Law Enforcement Services can play a crucial role in improving their neighbourhoods 'liveability' in addition to increasing residents' collective power to send a political message to the rest of the city.

**9. Go directly to the people (not just the bureaucrats).** Organizing a garbage coalition among residents in the core neighbourhoods of Winnipeg in collaboration with many of the Residents Associations is a powerful way to actively engage citizens that can put political pressure on the City to reduce garbage and illegal dumping and to improve recycling programs to a standard experienced by the rest of the city.

## 8. DISCUSSION

Our combined use of quantitative and qualitative methodological approaches proved to be very successful for the assessment of environmental health inequities at the level of the city. While the statistical analysis revealed predictable patterns of relative deprivation between neighbourhoods at all three study sites (i.e. all cities showed geographic patterns of areas with higher and lower levels of deprivation), a more complete picture required an in-depth analysis *by* residents of these neighbourhoods. Comparatively, photography-mediated assessments highlighted how inequities are better understood as a *relational* construct – manifestations of specific instances of deprivation only become inequities when they are contrasted to environmental conditions in other parts of the city. It is through these observations that underlying 'mechanisms' might be ascertained. For instance, the process of comparing visible observations such as park benches, public spaces, and sanitation practices helped community researchers to 'see' the negative attitudes, popular stereotypes, and discriminatory policies and practices that produce these surface-level differences.

Our efforts to return the knowledge to those community actors best positioned to act on them proved to be very beneficial and rewarding. Over 120 contributors from a wide variety of sectors "translated" our research findings into recommendations for concrete and imaginative action strategies that would help to reconceptualize the ways that environmental health inequities are understood within the urban context. The way forward was understood to require both local and systemic action that included a concerted effort to reach beyond conventional actors to push collectively for a fundamental transformation toward a "just city" rather than simple incremental local change.

The next steps in our ongoing research efforts are threefold. First, we will continue to work with community partners to advocate for a more coordinated mobilization among advocates, researchers, and policymakers around the priority environmental health inequities revealed by this study. Second, we will disseminate this report to key target audiences with the help of our extensive network of partners and contributors. Third, we will apply to the Canadian Institutes of Health Research and other funding agencies for research support to build on the findings of this study. We plan to use our priority environmental inequities as the basis for more rigorous and community-driven approaches to health impact assessment.

## Appendix A: Project Timelines and Key Activities

PHASE	VANCOUVER	TORONTO	WINNIPEG
Partnership Development	Carried out in pilot project (2007-2008)	Carried out in pilot project (2008-2009)	Carried out January – March 2010
Key Stakeholder Interviews	Carried out in pilot project (2007-2008)	Carried out in pilot project (2008-2009)	Carried out March – May 2010
Community Researcher Recruitment	<p>(Aug – Sep 2009)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>First recruitment: DTES Neighbourhood House, Oppenheimer Park, Gallery Gachet, MAKA Project, Pivot Legal Society, Lore Krill Housing Co-op, Downtown Eastside Women’s Centre, Watari, PACE, AIDS Vancouver, Carnegie Learning Centre, Aboriginal Front Door, YWCA Crabtree</li> </ul> <p>(Jan – March 2010)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Second recruitment: DTES Neighbourhood House, WISH, Urban Native Youth Association, First United Church, contacts from previous participants, Health Contact Centre, United We Can, Downtown Community Health Clinic, Watari, Vancouver Second Mile Society, Carnegie Centre</li> </ul>	<p>(Feb – April 2010)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Ecuhome Corporation</li> <li>Greenest City</li> <li>Parkdale Intercultural Association (LINC)</li> <li>Parkdale Public Library</li> <li>Parkdale Activity and Recreation Centre (PARC)</li> <li>St. Christopher’s House</li> </ul>	<p>(April – July 2010)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Building Urban Industries for Local Development (BUILD)</li> <li>New Directions</li> <li>Wolseley Family Place</li> <li>Broadway Neighbourhood Centre</li> <li>Art City</li> <li>Spence Neighbourhood Association</li> <li>Aboriginal Centre of Winnipeg Inc.</li> <li>Ma Mawi Whi Chi Itata Centre</li> <li>Immigrant and Refugee Community Organization of Manitoba (IRCOM)</li> </ul>
Fieldwork	<p><i>Team 1</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Intro training &amp; discussion – Oct. 6, 2009</li> <li>Photography training – Oct. 13, 2009</li> <li>Neighbourhood assessments &amp; photography field trips in the DTES, Kerrisdale, and Kensington/Cedar Cottage – Nov. 15, 22, 29, 2009</li> <li>Focus group – Dec. 7, 2009</li> </ul> <p><i>Team 2</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Intro training &amp; discussion – Oct. 4, 2009</li> <li>Photography training – Oct. 14, 2009</li> <li>Neighbourhood assessment/photography field trips in the DTES, Yaletown, and Riley Park – Oct. 28/Nov. 2, Nov. 4/9, Nov. 25/30, 2009</li> <li>Focus group – Dec. 13, 2009</li> </ul> <p><i>Team 3</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Intro training &amp; discussion – March 21, 2010</li> <li>Photography training – March 28, 2010</li> <li>Neighbourhood assessment &amp; photography field trips in the DTES, Kitsilano, and Sunset – April 11, 18, 25, 2010</li> <li>Individual interviews with community researchers – April 26-May 7, 2010</li> <li>Focus group – May 9, 2010</li> </ul>	<p><i>Team 1</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Training, group dialogue about urban environmental health equity and the social determinants of health, March 16, 2010</li> <li>Introduction to digital photography, March 23, 2010</li> <li>Team led tour of Parkdale, April 12, 2010</li> <li>Tour of Longbranch, April 13, 2010</li> <li>Tour of Swansea/Bloor West Village, April 14, 2010</li> <li>Individual interviews, April 27 – May 5, 2010</li> <li>Focus group dialogue about neighbourhood comparisons, May 6, 2010</li> </ul> <p><i>Team 2</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Training, group dialogue April 15, 2010</li> <li>Introduction to digital photography, April 19th, 2010</li> <li>Team led tour of Parkdale, April 28, 2010</li> <li>Longbranch tour, May 5, 2010</li> <li>Swansea/Bloor West Village tour, June 2nd and 12th, 2010</li> <li>Individual interviews, June 17th – 23rd</li> <li>Focus group dialogue about neighbourhood comparisons, July 6, 2010</li> </ul>	<p><i>Team 1</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Photography training – June 7, 2010</li> <li>Intro discussion - June 9, 2010</li> <li>Neighbourhood assessments &amp; photography field trips – June 16, 24, 24/26, 2010</li> <li>Individual Interviews – July 15-18, 2010</li> <li>Focus Group – July 20, 2010</li> </ul> <p><i>Team 2</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Photography Workshop – June 14, 2010</li> <li>Intro discussion – June 17, 2010</li> <li>Neighbourhood Assessment – June 29/30, July 8, 12, 2010</li> <li>Individual Interviews – July 29-August 4, 2010</li> <li>Focus Group – August 5, 2010</li> </ul> <p><i>Team 3</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Training Session – July 31, 2010</li> <li>Photography Workshop – August 7, 2010</li> <li>Neighbourhood Assessment – August 8/9, 21, September 11, 2010</li> <li>Individual Interviews with community researchers to discuss their photos – September 15-24, 2010</li> <li>Focus Group – September 26, 2010</li> </ul>

		<p><i>Team 3</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Training, group dialogue May 6, 2010</li> <li>• Introduction to digital photography, May 13th</li> <li>• Team led tour of Parkdale, June 1st</li> <li>• Longbranch tour, June 10, 2010</li> <li>• Swansea/Bloor West village tour, June 15, 2010</li> <li>• Individual interviews, June 17-23, 2010</li> <li>• Focus group dialogue about neighbourhood comparisons, June 24, 2010.</li> </ul>	
Data Analysis	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• February – March 2009 – Groups 1 and 2</li> <li>• May – July 2010 – Group 3 and integrated themes for all three groups</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• July – September 2010</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• August – September 2010 Groups 1 and 2</li> <li>• September – October 2010 Group 3</li> </ul>
Knowledge Translation	<p><i>Community-Research Liaison</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• March 2010 - Hired one of our community researchers as a Community-Research Liaison to assist with presentations and Conversation Circles</li> </ul> <p><i>Conversation Circles</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Nov. 2009 – July 2010: A series of biweekly drop in sessions at the DTES Neighbourhood House. We facilitated discussions and activities on themes brought up in the research process.</li> <li>• Examples of activities:             <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ An introduction to Environmental Justice</li> <li>○ Question posing on photos from our research</li> <li>○ “The Story of Stuff” screening and discussion on low-income people’s relation to “stuff”.</li> <li>○ An imagined Hastings Street - participants drew pictures of what they would like to see in place of currently shut down storefronts.</li> </ul> </li> </ul> <p><i>Community events</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Feb. 23, 2010 - Workshop at Women’s Night at the DTES Community Health Clinic</li> <li>• July 31, 2010 – Photo exhibit at the DTES Neighbourhood House</li> <li>• Aug. 1, 2010 – Booth at the Powell Street Festival</li> <li>• Aug. 24, 2010 – Traveling display with the DTES NH Roving Community Kitchen, a mobile smoothie stand stopping at several local agencies</li> <li>• Sept. 16, 2010 – Booth at the Alley Health Fair</li> </ul> <p><i>Conferences</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Rebecca Haber, “Focus: Your Environment, Your Health. Collaboration and Community partnership in environmental health equity research.” Thematic poster presentation at the 11th Community Campus Partnerships for Health Conference. May 13, 2010.</li> </ul>	<p><i>Community-Research Liaison</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Recruitment of Community Project Coordinator/ KT Liaison, May 17, 2010</li> </ul> <p><i>Community Voices Dialogues</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 2-3 hour open dialogue meetings to present initial findings and discuss local understanding and concerns related to neighbourhood environmental health inequalities</li> </ul> <p><i>Community events</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• July 7, 2010 – Ecuhome Corporation “Engagement Room” dialogue with Ecuhome Corporations’ tenants, staff and management</li> <li>• August 18, 2010 – Ecuhome “Engagement Room” catered event. Presentation and dialogue with Ecuhome’s extended local networks</li> <li>• August 24, 2010 – PARC (Parkdale Activity Recreation Centre) members and staff</li> <li>• August 31, 2010 –Ground Level Youth Ventures (non-profit for at-risk and street-involved youth)</li> </ul> <p><i>Network/Partnership Building</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• August 14, 2010 –Presentation to Councillor Gord Perks, Parkdale – Highpark Constituency</li> <li>• August 26, 2010 – Parkdale Care Summit, Loyola Arrupe Centre for Seniors</li> <li>• September 1, 2010 – Presentation to Evergreen Foundation staff and local community partners</li> <li>• September 3, 2010 – Presentation to Cheri Dinovo - MP Parkdale - High Park Constituency Office</li> </ul>	<p><i>Community-Research Liaison</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• September 2010 – Hired one of our community researchers as a Community-Research Liaison to assist with presentations and Conversation Circles</li> </ul> <p><i>Community Events</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• March 2010 – A Celebration of Neighbourhood</li> <li>• February 18, 2011 – Community presentation at Wolseley Family Place</li> <li>• February 25, 2011 – Community presentation at Aboriginal Visioning</li> </ul>

## Appendix B: Demographic Information of Community researchers

Category	Vancouver	Toronto	Winnipeg
<i>Age and Gender</i>	Ages range from 19 to 65 years old. Most (10) are over 50, three are in their 20s, and the remaining three are 19, 46, and 47 years old. The group was comprised of 7 females, 5 males, 1 transgendered, and 3 who preferred not to say.	The age range of the group fell between 20 and 72 years old with the most (n=13) between the age of 30 and 60. There were 11 male participants and 5 female participants.	Ages range from 18 to 65 years old. Most (12) are under 40, three are in their 40's, and the remaining are 55, and 65 years old. The groups were comprised of 8 females and 9 males.
<i>Income</i>	Incomes ranges from about \$580 to \$2250 per month. This income comes from disability or social assistance, Pension and Old Age and Guaranteed Income Supplements, child tax benefits, part-time jobs, freelance piece and craft work, boyfriends, and volunteer stipends.	The monthly income of participants ranged from \$530 to \$ 4167 with the largest group (7 or 46.7%) earning less than \$1000/month. Income sources included social assistance programs (Ontario Works and Ontario Disability Support Program) part time, temporary and casual labour opportunities, fulltime employment and self employment.	Incomes range from about \$285 to \$2000 per month. This income comes from disability or social assistance, family, foster parenting, full-time & part-time employment, First Nations Band, recycling, freelance work, and selling artwork.
<i>Education</i>	Most (9) obtained up to Grade 10 or 11 and one has a GED, and two completed up to grades 6 and 8. Six have completed some college, two completed professional programs (Early Childhood Education and Nursing), and 2 others are currently finishing Grade 12.	Education levels ranged from less than grade 12 (n=4) to graduate level studies (n=1), six earned a high school diploma or technical degree, one earned a professional designation and four earned an undergraduate degree.	Most (8) obtained up to Grade 11 or 12, some (6) had post secondary education with 2 currently completing degrees and one person with a Bachelor of Science and two completed up to grades 8 and 9.
<i>Residence</i>	All have lived in the DTES for at least three years, three have lived in the area for their entire lives or since their early childhood, and six have lived in the neighbourhood for ten to twenty years.	Most (n=13) have lived or worked in Parkdale for 9 years or less. One person has lived in the neighbourhood between 10 and 14 years and one person has lived in the neighbourhood for over 20 years (one person chose not to answer).	One person had only been living in Winnipeg for 5 months but the majority had lived in Winnipeg at least 2-4 years. One person has lived in Winnipeg for over 25 years, another their whole life and 5 people between 8-19 years.
<i>Health issues</i>	Most (11) identified one or more health issues they are living with. Four have Hepatitis C, two have or have had cancer, one is living with HIV, and two have mental health issues.	Health issues included physical disabilities, addiction and mental health issues such as post traumatic stress disorder,	Most (9) identified one or more health issues they are living with. Some of the conditions mentioned were arthritis, asthma, fatty liver disease, diabetes, back aches, psycho affective bipolar disorder, and high blood pressure.
<i>Anything else</i>	Three said they have children; a few let us know they love the DTES. One has been alcohol and drug free for 5 years, one likes doing craft work, and another is a proud Native woman.	N/A	Four people said that they either identify as artists, hip hop dancer singers or musicians. Two people said they like working with people and another enjoys new challenges, and two are single parents.

## Appendix C: Social determinants of health identified as most salient to community researchers in initial focus group sessions

Social Determinant	Local capacity and concerns identified								
	Vancouver			Toronto			Winnipeg		
	Team 1	Team 2	Team 3	Team 1	Team 2	Team 3	Team 1	Team 2	Team 3
Income, employment, and social status	• Money	• Income – enough to meet your needs • Jobs or meaningful activity	• Employment	• Income • Affordability of food and housing • Sustainability of income support and job creation programs	• Employment	• Income • Sense of purpose/work • Opportunities to own a home		• Meaningful employment	• Employment
Social support networks	• Family • Self-esteem	• Family and friends • Safety • Participation • Pride	• Safety & security	• Healthy relationships • Friendship	• Safety and social familiarity	• Family • Cultural familiarity • Self discipline	• Community resources & services	• Family and friends • Safety and security • Community resources & services	• Safety & security • Mental health & emotional well-being • Community resources & services
Education and literacy		• Education, opportunities for learning		• Free adult education	• Ability access to institutions such and banks, lawyers, school system	• Ability to communicate/overcome language barriers			• Education & opportunities for learning and gaining English skills
Social environments	• A sense of community • Connection to a group • Belonging	• Home and community • Drug dealers • People from other neighbourhoods or tourists • New condo development		• Supportive employers			• Compassionate & caring community	• Home • Sense of Community • Personal relationships	• A sense of belonging
Physical environments	• Nutrition • Parks, community gardens • A decent home • Mobility • Physical activity	• Food • Green space • Housing • Air quality • Noise pollution	• Healthy food, kinds of food available • Housing • Transportation • Exercise	• Compassionate community • Reduction of excessive law enforcement	• Absence of stigma and stereotyping • Community communication • Positivity in social environment	• Compassion and support for homeless/“others less fortunate” • Safety	• Exercise & recreation • Transportation & walkability • Green space, parks • Community gardens • Affordable, healthy food	• Healthy, fresh food • Housing • Green space • Sanitation • Clean environment • Exercise/recreation	• Clean environment • Housing • Green space, parks • Exercise & leisure • Healthy & culturally diverse food • Community gardens
Healthy child development				• Healthy food • Green space • Housing Quality (Pests) • Air Quality • Space/Solitude	• Green space • Sanitation • Access to food • Supportive housing • Lack of noise stress	• Nature • Beauty • Space to grow food • Garbage removal/sanitation • Serene quiet place	•	• Safe & secure environment	
Health and social services	• Empathetic attitudes of service providers • Healthcare – access and quality of dental and medical services	• Police and Emergency Services • Healthcare	• Attitudes of government service providers • Doctors and healthcare				• Availability and affordability of health services	• Attitudes of doctors and nurses • Lack of services and inadequate treatment	
Gender				• Access to healthcare information, doctors • Nondiscrimination at hospitals/urgent care • Support for extra health care not covered under universal programs	• Equal access to healthcare • Reduction of bureaucratic barriers to health and social service information	• Healthcare access • Ability to communicate with Physicians			
Culture	• Spirituality • Freedom to make choices about one's life	• Respect for elders and children • Discrimination, judgment • Acceptance and non-judgment		• Diversity	• Inclusion	• Multiculturalism • Honouring heritage and history • Belonging	• Celebration of multiculturalism		• A sense of belonging