



Setting the Stage for a City of Vancouver Poverty Reduction Plan

**Lessons learned from community-based poverty reduction
initiatives and advocacy in Canadian municipalities**

Prepared by:
Jessica Hayes, MCRP
Healthy City Scholar
August 2017

Prepared for:
City of Vancouver
Social Policy & Projects Division

This report was produced as part of the Greenest City Scholars (GCS) Program, a partnership between the City of Vancouver and The University of British Columbia, in support of the Greenest City Action Plan.

This GCS project was conducted under the mentorship of City staff. The opinions and recommendations in this report, and any errors, are those of the author, and do not necessarily reflect the views of the City of Vancouver or The University of British Columbia.

The following are the official partners and sponsors of the Greenest City Scholars Program:



THE UNIVERSITY OF BRITISH COLUMBIA
sustainability

Acknowledgements

Thank you to the City of Vancouver's Social Policy & Projects Division for highlighting this important work, and for supporting this research. In particular, thank you to my mentor, Wes Regan, Community Economic Development Planner, who provided invaluable support and guidance throughout the project.

Finally, thank you to the many community groups and individuals who contributed to this research and offered feedback during consultation, including members of the Healthy City Leadership Table, the BC Poverty Reduction Coalition, First Call BC Child and Youth Advocacy Coalition, Metro Vancouver Aboriginal Executive Council, and the Community Economic Development Strategic Action Committee (CEDSAC). Your comments and insights have greatly informed this report, and will continue to enrich the development of a successful poverty reduction plan for Vancouver.

Contents

1. Research Objectives and Methodology.....	1
Purpose	1
Research Questions	1
Research Objectives.....	1
Rationale and Significance.....	2
Research Methods.....	2
Study Limitations.....	3
2. What Do We Know?	
Toward a Poverty Reduction Strategy	4
Introduction	4
Measuring and Defining Poverty	4
City of Vancouver Context.....	5
Province of British Columbia Context.....	6
Government of Canada Context	6
3. What Are We Doing?	
Building on Vancouver’s Foundation.....	7
Vancouver’s Vision for Poverty Reduction	7
Existing Poverty Reduction Initiatives in Vancouver	8
Community-Based Poverty Reduction Initiatives	8
BC Poverty Reduction Coalition (BCPRC).....	8
Community Economic Development Strategic Action Committee (CEDSAC)	9
Metro Vancouver Aboriginal Executive Committee (MVAEC)	9
Our Place	9
4. What Are Municipalities Doing?	
Lessons from Others.....	10
Poverty Reduction Frameworks.....	10
Governance	10
Partnerships	11
Engagement and Consultation.....	11
Theoretical Models	11
Collective Impact Approach	11
Community Resilience Approach.....	11
Strengths and Assets-Based Approach	12
Goal Areas	12
Income, Employment, and Community Economic Development	12
Health, Well-Being, and Social Inclusion.....	13
Transportation	14
Housing	14
Education and Training	15
Child Care and Early Childhood Development	15
Access to services, resources, and supports	15
Food.....	16
Aging Population.....	17
5. What’s Next?	
Considerations for Moving Forward.....	18
Conclusion and Next Steps.....	18
Actions for Consideration.....	18
Recommendations from Literature.....	18
Actions from Other Jurisdictions.....	19
Community-Based Recommendations	21
6. Works Cited.....	23
Works Cited and Resources	23
Municipal Poverty Reduction Strategies.....	27
Appendix A. Analysis of Existing City of Vancouver Plans, Policies and Programs	29
Appendix B. Summary of Municipal Poverty Reduction Strategies in Canada.....	36
Appendix C. Summary of Emergent Themes from Community Engagement.....	62



1. Research Objectives and Methodology

Purpose

The intent of this research is to better understand the following:

- How the learnings and successes of other cities can help inform the development of Vancouver's Poverty Reduction Plan.
- How existing city- and community-level initiatives in Vancouver can create the necessary foundation for a robust and effective Poverty Reduction Strategy.

The purpose of the report is therefore to provide preliminary considerations to the City of Vancouver as it prepares to engage communities and move forward on poverty reduction work.

Research Questions

This research examines two primary questions:

Question 1:

Based on what other cities have done, what is important for the City of Vancouver to consider when developing its Poverty Reduction Strategy?

- What are the important lessons learned from other municipalities?
- Which actions appear to be successful, and would align with the City of Vancouver's 'Healthy City' approach?

Question 2:

What promising work is already being done at the city-level and at the community-level to address poverty in Vancouver?

- How can the City of Vancouver build upon this foundation when developing a poverty reduction strategy?
- Which organizations and community partners are already successfully targeting poverty, and how should the City of Vancouver support this work?

Research Objectives

- Research and analyze poverty reduction initiatives in municipalities across Canada to determine which initiatives could be applicable to Vancouver
- Further the City of Vancouver's understanding of existing poverty reduction initiatives being explored and implemented in other municipalities
- Collect and synthesize existing local initiatives which directly or indirectly address poverty
- Provide strategic actions for consideration to the City of Vancouver in order to contribute to the implementation of evidence-based poverty reduction initiatives

Rationale and Significance

Research in this area is timely as the City of Vancouver has committed to creating a Poverty Reduction Plan. Following a motion brought forward by Councillor Andrea Reimer on June 13, 2017, city staff have been asked to explore opportunities for expanded action on poverty reduction as a result of new provincial and federal commitments, and report back to Council with an update on the Vancouver Poverty Reduction Plan in November 2017. Furthermore, the 2017 work plan for the Healthy City Strategy Action Plan includes Poverty Reduction, and foundational city documents such as the Downtown Eastside Community Economic Development Strategy provide the necessary foundation upon which to build the City of Vancouver's poverty reduction work.

In addition, there is the opportunity for strategic alignment and partnership as the Government of Canada prepares its own Poverty Reduction Strategy. Similarly, with the arrival of a new provincial government and NDP leadership, it appears as if British Columbia will soon have a commitment for a provincial Poverty Reduction plan, as Section 4 in the NDP-Green Agreement begins with a commitment to "design and implement a province-wide poverty reduction strategy that includes addressing the real causes of homelessness, including affordable accommodation, support for mental health and addictions and income security."¹ The renaming of the provincial Ministry of Social Development and Social Innovation to the Ministry of Social Development and Poverty Reduction also indicates leadership on the topic of poverty on behalf of the Province. Furthermore, John Horgan recently announced a \$100 a month rate increase for those on income and disability assistance, effective September 2017. Each of these commitments would greatly support and enhance municipal anti-poverty plans, and continued action is likely.

Furthermore, the City of Vancouver is acutely aware of the fact that those with low incomes are more likely to suffer chronic conditions, live with disabilities, require health services, suffer from mental distress, and die earlier. More equitable income distribution, healthy work environments, more accessible and affordable public services, and jobs that allow people to meet their needs are a crucial part of a healthy city for all. In response, the City of Vancouver's Social Policy and Projects division will be developing a poverty reduction strategy and implementing community-based initiatives throughout 2017/2018 to raise incomes and improve the health and wellness of those living in poverty in Vancouver. The outcomes of this research are expected to contribute to this process.

Research Methods

This research has been co-designed alongside staff mentors from the City of Vancouver's Social Policy & Projects division, Wes Regan, Social Planner, Community Economic Development, and Christopher Van Veen, Social Planner, Urban Health. The project was completed as part of the Greenest City/Healthy City Scholars program, a joint initiative between the City of Vancouver and the University of British Columbia's Sustainability Initiative.

The primary research methods are literature and document review. Due to the limited scope of the project, this research does not include the results of direct community engagement; however, it does summarize emergent themes gleaned during consultations with community partners convened to inform the City of Vancouver's submission to Employment and Social Development Canada regarding a federal poverty reduction strategy (see Appendix C).

¹ See *2017 Confidence and Supply Agreement between the Green Caucus and the BC New Democrat Caucus*, <https://www.scribd.com/document/349886757/2017-Confidence-and-Supply-Agreement-between-the-BC-Green-Caucus-and-the-BC-New-Democrat-Caucus>

Online journals, articles, and books were scanned for examples of successful poverty reduction models, frameworks, and best practices, or previous studies which evaluated the success of past poverty reduction initiatives. Literature review was conducted through keyword searches initiated in online scholarly databases. However, a larger emphasis was placed on grey literature, given that community-based organizations and independent research institutes disseminate much of the knowledge and produce high quality policy and position papers concerned with issues of poverty. Not all of the grey literature consulted was peer reviewed; however, non-peer-reviewed sources were deeply rooted in community consultation with the public and people with lived experiences of poverty. Additionally, thorough document review was conducted in order to analyze and summarize the Poverty Reduction Strategies of ten medium to large urban and rural cities in Canada: Calgary (2013), Edmonton (2012), Kingston (2010), London (2016), Medicine Hat (2017), Moncton (2015), New Westminster (2016), Saint John (2014), Thunder Bay (2013), Toronto (2015). Policies and actions from other cities in North America have also been considered throughout, and innovative actions have been identified as case studies.

The narratives and input shared during consultations with community partners and stakeholders, including members of the Healthy City Leadership Table, British Columbia Poverty Reduction Coalition, Community Economic Development Strategic Action Committee (CEDSAAC), and Metro Vancouver Aboriginal Executive Council (MVAEC) have been considered during the analysis of municipal case studies, as future engagement to guide poverty reduction work in Vancouver will rely heavily on the input and guidance of these and other community champions.

Study Limitations

There are two significant limitations to the information presented in this report. Firstly, as someone who has not experienced poverty, and as an academic researcher and a part of the settler society that resides on the unceded territories of the Musqueam, Squamish, and Tsleil-Waututh Nations, my own positionality is an important limitation which may prevent me from fully understanding what is needed to address poverty in Vancouver, as well as the appropriateness of my recommendations.

Secondly, it is important to consider the project scope, which impacted the depth of community engagement that was attainable. Overall, the project was able to gather rich insights and feedback from community champions; however, it was unable to sufficiently engage target populations, such as people with lived experience, seniors, youth, and other marginalized groups. Though this report has not been adequately validated by community partners and the public, the report is simply intended as an informational tool and stepping stone to inform the upcoming planning process and to prepare staff to engage at a more in-depth level when developing the Poverty Reduction strategy itself.

2. What Do We Know? Toward a Poverty Reduction Strategy

Introduction

Located on the unceded and traditional lands of the Musqueam, Squamish, and Tsleil-Waututh First Nations, the City of Vancouver is one of Canada's densest and most diverse cities. Despite being ranked as one of the most livable cities in the world, the challenging circumstances of many Vancouverites are highly visible on the streets of our city: deep poverty, mental health and addictions, and homelessness are evident realities. Beyond this, there are also residents of our city who struggle with hidden poverty and less visible stressors: the cost of living and affordability, access to services, access to safe and secure housing, social isolation, working poverty, and food insecurity, for example. In response, the City of Vancouver is committed to developing a Poverty Reduction Strategy that will guide municipal actions to reduce inequality and ensure that all Vancouverites can benefit from the strengths and assets that make Vancouver a great place to work and live.

Measuring and Defining Poverty

Currently, the Canadian government does not have an official definition of poverty. Certain measures exist; for example, Statistic Canada's Low-Income Cut-Off (LICO) and Low Income Measure (LIM) which are useful in that they provide a longitudinal analysis of poverty. Other measures such as the Market Basket Measure (MBM), attempt to measure poverty more holistically, for example, by considering local specificities and the cost of a specified basket of goods and services. Other measures, while not measuring poverty specifically, can provide important information regarding the extent of poverty, for example, the Gini Coefficient, which measures income inequality. While each of these measures is useful, income level alone does not accurately reflect the multiple and interrelating drivers of poverty, and a more comprehensive definition of poverty is needed.

The most commonly used set of income thresholds is Statistics Canada's Low Income Cut-Off After Tax (LICO-AT). The LICO is a hybrid of both an absolute and a relative measure of poverty and was formulated based on a 1992 survey of consumer spending, and annually inflated using the consumer price index. The Low Income Measure (LIM) is a relative threshold calculated nationally each year. The Market Basket Measure (MBM) is an absolute measure of poverty that was more recently developed and is based on the actual costs of a specified basket of goods and services in a particular community.

Poverty is a complex issue with no single cause, and it is important to recognize that individuals and communities each experience poverty differently. Broadly put, poverty can be defined as the lack or denial of resources and opportunities that provide the quality of life needed for people to be able to fully participate in all aspects of community life (social, cultural, economic, etc.). Many municipalities have developed locally-informed definitions of poverty through public and stakeholder engagement in order to agree on a common definition and shared understanding to guide poverty reduction efforts. In many municipalities, people with lived experience of poverty are helping define poverty and its programmatic and policy responses.

Furthermore, in defining poverty, it is important to recognize that certain communities and population groups are disproportionately impacted, for example; women, seniors, people living with disabilities, Indigenous peoples, immigrants, and refugees. There are many myths about what it is like and what it means to live in poverty and these misconceptions often contribute to stigma and increased barriers for poor people. The way governments define and measure the multiple dimensions of poverty is an important part of addressing these stigmas, and engaging people with lived experience is essential to getting it right. For example, a holistic definition will not only focus on crisis intervention, but also on the systemic barriers that need to be considered in order to effect meaningful structural change.

City of Vancouver Context

More than one in five Vancouver residents currently lives in poverty. Furthermore, Metro Vancouver is home to a diverse population including many recent immigrants and refugees, and has the third largest Aboriginal population in Canada. As a result, it is crucial to recognize the needs of these community members, who are at greater risk of being affected by poverty. Additionally, Vancouver is facing an acute opioid and overdose crisis, with 144 overdose deaths having been recorded in Vancouver between January and April - putting the city on pace for 432 deaths in 2017.² There is a strong link between mental health and addictions, and mental health status in turn impacts an individual's chances of living in poverty.³

As with other global cities, the dramatic increases in cost of living are outpacing incomes for a large number of households, and many individuals and families are finding it increasingly difficult to make ends meet. In fact, Metro Vancouver had the second-highest rate of working poverty (10 percent) of any major city in Canada in 2012.⁴ This is an indication of the increase in temporary, low-paid and precarious work in our city and region. Work within the service sector, for example; retail, food and beverage, and personal services, which serve the needs of the local population and visitors alike, have grown in importance in Vancouver as it becomes a worldwide destination city. However, the remuneration for work in the service industry is not as lucrative, despite its importance. Metro Vancouver's living wage rate for 2017, \$20.62, is far above median local incomes. Inadequate incomes coupled with the high cost of basic and essential services, for example, the second highest child care costs in Canada, is threatening Vancouver's ability to attract and retain young families and professionals. Furthermore, rising costs and lease rates in Vancouver are also affecting non-profits and small businesses which serve low-income people, and these crucial services are often being displaced as a result of the redevelopment of older building stock.

In October 2014, City Council adopted a poverty reduction target, and in 2015 committed to develop a poverty reduction plan as part of the Healthy City Action Plan (2015-2018). However, at that time neither the federal nor provincial governments were committed to poverty reduction strategies. Vancouver has made significant progress toward addressing poverty through the implementation of its Healthy City Strategy, and has supported the calls for provincial and federal poverty reduction strategies.

The City of Vancouver has a notable history of working in collaboration with other orders of government, and is committed to working on poverty reduction in tandem with the provincial and federal government. In March 2000, the governments of Canada, British Columbia, and the City of Vancouver signed the Vancouver Agreement for a five-year term, which was renewed to March 2010.

Among three levels of government, the agreement supported local community solutions to economic, social, health and safety issues and focused on Vancouver's inner city, particular the Downtown Eastside (DTES). Through poverty reduction initiatives, the city looks to renew this spirit of collaboration by working together to create healthy, safe neighbourhoods that are economically and socially prosperous, a goal that has been articulated in a submission to the federal government and in a brief submitted to the Province.⁵

² See *Illicit Drug Overdose Deaths in BC* (BC Coroners Service, 2017), <http://www2.gov.bc.ca/assets/gov/public-safety-and-emergency-services/death-investigation/statistical/illicit-drug.pdf>

³ See *Social Determinants of Mental Health* (Switzerland: World Health Organization, 2014), http://apps.who.int/iris/bitstream/10665/112828/1/9789241506809_eng.pdf

⁴ See Ivanova, I. *Working Poverty in Metro Vancouver*, (Canadian Centre for Policy Alternatives, 2016), https://www.policyalternatives.ca/sites/default/files/uploads/publications/BC%20Office/2016/06/CCPA_Working_poverty_full.pdf

⁵ See *Prosperity for All through a Healthy Communities Approach* (City of Vancouver, 2017), <http://vancouver.ca/files/cov/prosperity-for-all-through-a-healthy-communities-approach.pdf>

Province of British Columbia Context

British Columbia, the only province without a Poverty Reduction Strategy, also has the second highest rate of poverty in Canada. In 2011, a Canadian Centre for Policy Alternatives study found that the costs of inaction would far exceed the costs of poverty reduction in BC.⁶ The estimated yearly cost of not addressing poverty was found to be \$8.1 to \$9.2 billion, whereas the estimated cost of implementing a comprehensive poverty reduction plan in BC is \$3 to \$4 billion per year.⁷ With the new provincial NDP government, BC will now be able to match other provinces' efforts to set targets and timelines for poverty reduction. In July 2017, Premier John Horgan announced that his government would be raising income assistance rates by \$100/month, making the new monthly welfare rate \$710, and \$1,133 for those on disability, however, advocates have stated that this amount is inadequate and will not be sufficient to lift individuals and families out of poverty.⁸

Government of Canada Context

Over 3 million Canadians live in poverty, which means that 1.9 million families struggle to make ends meet.⁹ In Canada, one in five children lives in conditions of poverty.¹⁰ Child poverty is even worse for Indigenous children: 40% of Indigenous children live in poverty, and 60% of Indigenous children living on reserve are affected by poverty.¹¹ Furthermore, precarious housing and employment are national concerns, particularly in urban centres like Vancouver and Toronto, and these challenges sustain and exacerbate poverty. In 2014, approximately 746,000 Canadians lived in a poor household where the main income earner was working.¹²

In response, the federal government began consulting with Canadians and invited public input to guide the development of its national Poverty Reduction Strategy throughout the spring of 2017. Jean-Yves Duclos' Ministerial Mandate Letter directs the Minister of Families, Children, and Social Development to: "lead the development of a Canadian Poverty Reduction Strategy that would set targets to reduce poverty and measure and publicly report on our progress [...] Our strategy will align with and support existing provincial and municipal poverty reduction strategies."¹³ Throughout its consultation period, the federal government posed a series of questions to Canadians to guide its approach to poverty reduction. These questions included how to define and measure poverty, how to define success and measure progress toward targets, how to develop indicators, which dimensions of poverty to prioritize, which federal government programs were already seen to be effectively reducing poverty, how the federal government should align with existing provincial and municipal poverty reduction efforts, which initiatives in Canada or elsewhere were seen to be effectively reducing poverty, and how to encourage ongoing dialogue amongst levels of government and stakeholders going forward.

The City of Vancouver's Social Policy and Projects division offered a submission to the federal government in June 2017 to provide feedback and direction on a federal Poverty Reduction Strategy. The submission was also shared with the provincial Minister of Social Development and Poverty Reduction.

6 See Ivanova, I. *The Cost of Poverty in BC*, (Canadian Centre for Policy Alternatives, 2011), https://www.policyalternatives.ca/sites/default/files/uploads/publications/BC%20Office/2011/07/CCPA_BC_cost_of_poverty_full_report.pdf

7 Ibid.

8 See Rob, S. *NDP follow through with promise, raise B.C. welfare, disability rates*, (Vancouver Sun, 2017), <http://vancouversun.com/news/local-news/ndp-follow-through-with-promise-to-raise-b-c-welfare-disability-rates>

9 See *Toward a Poverty Reduction Strategy - In Brief*, (Employment and Social Development Canada, 2017), <https://www.canada.ca/en/employment-social-development/campaigns/poverty-reduction/toolkit/brief.html>

10 See *A Road Map to Eradicate Child & Family Poverty*, (Campaign 2000, 2016), <http://campaign2000.ca/wp-content/uploads/2016/11/Campaign2000NationalReportCard2016Eng.pdf>

11 See Macdonald, D. & Wilson, D. *Shameful Neglect: Indigenous Child Poverty in Canada*, (Canadian Centre for Policy Alternatives, 2016), <https://www.policyalternatives.ca/sites/default/files/uploads/publications/National%20Office>

12 See *Toward a Poverty Reduction Strategy - A Backgrounder on Poverty in Canada*, (Employment and Social Development Canada, 2017), <https://www.canada.ca/en/employment-social-development/programs/poverty-reduction/backgrounder.html>

13 See <http://pm.gc.ca/eng/minister-families-children-and-social-development-mandate-letter>

3. What Are We Doing? Building on Vancouver's Foundation

Vancouver's Vision for Poverty Reduction

Although the City of Vancouver doesn't currently have a Poverty Reduction Plan, this work has been explicitly identified in the Healthy City Strategy, which itself targets poverty in many ways. Since the City of Vancouver has yet to develop a Poverty Reduction strategy, it has the opportunity to build off the great work that other municipalities and organizations have been doing, and to take a comprehensive and thoughtful approach to this work.

Building upon the success of the Healthy City Strategy, Vancouver's social sustainability plan, City staff are interested in using a similar approach to poverty reduction – one that focuses on upstream and preventative measures, innovative projects, programs, and policies, and rights-based interventions. Furthermore, this vision includes a broad and holistic understanding of healthy people and communities which recognizes that the wellbeing of Vancouverites is impacted by more than just medical treatments or lifestyle choices, but rather by the living conditions they experience, including income, wealth distribution, working conditions, access to social services, education, food, and housing, and several other factors. In other words, applying a social determinants of health approach to poverty reduction and emphasizing innovative actions which align well with the Healthy City Approach.

Guiding principles which the City of Vancouver is interested in exploring in their poverty reduction work include the following:

Prosperity: Placing a focus on shared prosperity and empowerment is a core principle of Vancouver's approach to poverty reduction. As a municipality, the City of Vancouver is interested in reframing what prosperity means and how it is measured. This includes moving the concept away from a strictly monetary or economic context, and into a public and social determinants of health context, where a prosperous city is one where everyone has the opportunity to thrive. Furthermore, Vancouver's vision for poverty reduction includes measuring not only prosperity and success, but also income disparity and inequality. While income inequality and poverty are different, they are related issues, and rising inequality can lead to increases in poverty. For example, international research finds that more unequal societies tend to tolerate higher levels of poverty.¹⁴ Prosperity is also about equity and equality, access, inclusion, and security, and in redefining prosperity, the City hopes to discover and demonstrate its existing assets, including human and social capital. Furthermore, in measuring inequality, it hopes to create a more equitable community where everyone is able to afford more than just basic necessities.

Reciprocity Is the principle of building connections, understanding, and compassion between one another in order to create sustainable and resilient communities. This includes the need to recognize systemic inequalities and the 'invisible' drivers of poverty, as well as the importance of involving people with lived experiences of poverty in municipal planning. Norms of reciprocity in our community can bring together neighbours and communities and build social capital, however, these norms can also prevent individuals from asking for help if they feel unable to return the favour.¹⁵ Building a network of reciprocity is important for poverty reduction as it builds strength, support, and agility within our networks.

¹⁴ See Ivanova, I. *The Cost of Poverty in BC*, (Canadian Centre for Policy Alternatives, 2011), https://www.policyalternatives.ca/sites/default/files/uploads/publications/BC%20Office/2011/07/CCPA_BC_cost_of_poverty_full_report.pdf

¹⁵ See Mazelis, J. *Our strength is in our unity: Reciprocity, stigma, and ideology as foundations of and obstacles to social capital among the poor*, (University of Pennsylvania, 2006), <https://search.proquest.com/docview/305278879>

Intersectionality describes the overlapping social identities embodied by individuals and communities and their relation to layers of social inequity and exclusion.¹⁶ Taking an intersectional approach to policy-making means recognizing that social categories are interconnected, that they cannot be examined separately when addressing poverty, and that the simplification and isolation of identities reproduces exclusionary policies and practices. Key factors such as age, gender, race and ethnicity, disability status, sexual identity, Aboriginal identity, citizenship, level of education, and employment status affect someone’s chances of living in poverty.¹⁷ Using an intersectional lens allows for a greater understanding of the ways in which certain individuals and communities become more vulnerable to poverty and are disproportionately affected by these realities. Furthermore, recognizing the ways in which various markers of identity intersect allows us to better understand the nuances and multiple dimensions of poverty.

Existing Poverty Reduction Initiatives in Vancouver

Though the City of Vancouver has yet to produce a formal Poverty Reduction Strategy, several of its existing plans and policies support upstream measures to reduce the effects of poverty in amongst Vancouver’s communities. The work to develop poverty reduction initiatives supports the following key goals, priorities, indicators, and focus areas of the Healthy City Strategy, Mayor’s Task Force on Mental Health and Addictions, and Downtown Eastside Economic Development Plan:

- A Home for Everyone
- Making Ends Meet and Working Well
- Being and Feeling Safe and Included
- Cultivating Connections
- A Peer-informed System
- Community and Stakeholder Partnerships
- Vibrant, Inclusive Local Economy



A high-level scan and keyword analysis of these and other municipal plans, strategies, policies, and programs revealed several themes which would support and align with efforts to reduce poverty. Broadly, these themes are: Accessibility, Social belonging, Partnership, Equity, Social Justice, Livability, Social and Economic Opportunity, and Well-Being. Appendix A reviews existing City of Vancouver programs, policies, and practices that relate to poverty in Vancouver, and provides a brief description of synergies and implications for each in order to define the foundation upon which a City of Vancouver Poverty Reduction Strategy can be built.

¹⁶ See Crenshaw, K. *Mapping the Margins: Intersectionality, Identity Politics, and Violence Against Women of Colour*, 1993.
¹⁷ See Klein, S. & Yalnizyan, A. *Better is Always Possible: A Federal Plan to Tackle Poverty and Inequality*, (Canadian Centre for Policy Alternatives, 2016), https://www.policyalternatives.ca/sites/default/files/uploads/publications/National%20Office/2016/02/Better_Is_Always%20Possible.pdf

Community-Based Poverty Reduction Initiatives

In addition to local government-led policies and plans, there are several community-based and non-profit organizations who are already leading the front lines of poverty reduction work in our city. This list of frontline advocates is long, however, there are several key partners with whom the City of Vancouver is already engaging in order to guide work in this area, including:

BC Poverty Reduction Coalition (BCPRC)

The BCPRC is a coalition of community and non-profit groups, faith groups, health organizations, First Nations and Aboriginal organizations, businesses, labour organizations, and social policy groups. The BCPRC has over 50 Coalition Members and almost 400 supporting organizations, who came together around a campaign aimed at seeing the introduction of a bold and comprehensive poverty reduction plan from the government of British Columbia that would include legislated targets and timelines to significantly reduce poverty and homelessness. Through this and other advocacy work, the coalition seeks to improve the health and well-being of all British Columbians.

Community Economic Development Strategic Action Committee (CEDSAC)

CEDSAC is a network of representatives of Vancouver Downtown Eastside (DTES) resident groups, community organizations, and social enterprises. CEDSAC was involved in the co-creation of the DTES Community Economic Development (CED) Strategy, and is now leading its implementation. It has three active working groups tasked with addressing social procurement, Community Benefits Agreements, retail gentrification, and social inclusion.

Metro Vancouver Aboriginal Executive Committee (MVAEC)

MVAEC is a society that includes 25 Aboriginal organizations representing a diverse range of programs, services, and mandates across Metro Vancouver. They are a united voice for the 40,000 Aboriginal people in the Metro Vancouver area. The Council meets regularly to discuss municipal, regional, provincial, and federal issues as they relate to urban off-reserve Aboriginal people. This is especially important, given that almost 60% of all Aboriginal people now live in urban centres. MVAEC's goal is to ensure that all levels of government, both mainstream and Aboriginal, acknowledge this reality and provide meaningful and sustainable efforts, financial investments, and ongoing support to meet urban Aboriginal people's short and long-term needs.

Our Place

Our Place (Promoting Local Access and Community Empowerment) is a collaboration of residents, community-based organizations, and service providers committed to ensuring that Vancouver's inner city children have every opportunity for success. Our Place promotes a place-based approach that builds on the capacity of our local community, eliminates inefficient service silos, and adapts to the unique challenges of living in the inner city. Their approach is to actively engage citizens by removing barriers, promoting people-centered, participatory service delivery and economic involvement, and creating comprehensive, holistic and integrated solutions targeting both individual and broader community needs.

4. What Are Municipalities Doing? Lessons from Others

Several municipalities across Canada, including large urban centres and smaller rural communities have developed and are implementing poverty reduction initiatives and strategies (see Appendix B: Summary of Municipal Poverty Reduction Strategies in Canada). Canada-wide, approximately 75 communities have developed Poverty Reduction Strategies. Most are community-led, while others are initiated, driven, and developed by local governments. A key success factor has been the inclusion of multi-sectoral engagement and community input. These initiatives are providing essential leadership and change on issues such as housing and homelessness, mental health and addictions, and wellbeing. Municipalities are also supporting federal and provincial governments on key issues such as income assistance, child care, education, and transportation. There is a spectrum of approaches that municipalities take when developing poverty reduction strategies, with some focusing on transformational and systems change by committing to preventative and upstream measures, while others focus on programmatic change that is program- and policy-specific within their realm of responsibilities.

In Canada, a catalyst for local poverty reduction initiatives was the Vibrant Communities Canada network, which now includes nearly 100 cities who are creating comprehensive poverty reduction strategies. Launched in 2002 by Tamarack Institute, the J.W. McConnell Family Foundation and Caledon Institute of Social Policy, Vibrant Communities Canada originally invited 13 municipalities to build multi-sector leadership roundtables and work on place-based poverty reduction. Abbotsford and Surrey were the two BC communities who took part in the first phase of the action research initiative. The impact of the network was significant with a number of municipalities reporting a 10 percent reduction in poverty which impacted the lives of 202,931 low-income Canadians.

Poverty Reduction Frameworks

Governance

The majority of Poverty Reduction Strategies focus on community-based and collaborative governance structures. Municipal governments often act as conveners and advocates, and though they provide leadership and support for the development of plans and initiatives, most strategies rely on a standalone, multi-sector governance body. These leadership bodies often take the format of a steering committee or roundtable. Furthermore, these core groups can be supported by community advisory bodies, working groups, and/or task forces who gather input and implement specific initiatives structured around the poverty reduction strategy's key goals and priorities. Using a systems approach to governance ensures that the leadership body includes representation from all sectors, with particular attention given to the inclusion of people with lived experience of poverty.¹⁸ Furthermore, ensuring that the leadership body includes influential members from sectors such as health, education, and business ensures greater buy-in from key stakeholders and facilitates implementation.

¹⁸ See *Nothing About Us Without Us: Seven Principles for Leadership & Inclusion of people with lived experience of homelessness*, (Lived Experience Advisory Council), <http://www.homelesshub.ca/sites/default/files/LEAC-7principles-final.pdf>

Partnerships

Based on the learnings from other jurisdictions, partnerships are the key to success for Poverty Reduction Strategies, and ensuring that community-based organizations are supported to drive the process is essential. Developing partnerships with funders and key stakeholders is also important. Larger organizations like the United Way have often played a co-leadership role in developing community-based poverty reduction strategies (i.e. in Calgary, Saint John, and Kingston). For example, the City of Saint John formed partnerships with more than 100 partners through their planning efforts. Furthermore, the systems-based approach proven successful by Vibrant Communities Canada relied strongly on partnerships to achieve collective impacts.

Engagement and Consultation

Public and stakeholder engagement is a crucial element of developing an effective poverty reduction strategy. Each of the municipalities considered in this research committed to extensive consultation phases to develop their plans. Cities employed a variety of engagement tools and methods, including online engagement, surveys, interviews, focus groups, workshops, open houses and community forums, and structured working groups to develop and implement priorities. Consultation phases varied in duration, with some processes lasting up to two years. Overall, broad, multi-sectoral and multi-stakeholder engagement is highly valued, along with engagement that occurs at a hyper-local level. Furthermore, several municipalities highlight the importance of engaging internally with city staff in order to embed the mandate of poverty reduction into every department and regularly report on progress.

Theoretical Models

Collective Impact Approach

Cities like Edmonton and Saint John, NB are using the Collective Impact Model which emphasizes structured collaboration between multiple stakeholders. Vibrant Communities action research initiative followed a Collective Impact model, with extensive evaluations of its success. The model is conditional upon the creation of a common agenda, shared measurement, mutually-reinforcing activities, continuous communication, and backbone support through a separate leadership body.

The Collective Impact model is based on the following five principles of poverty reduction¹⁹:

1. Poverty is better addressed when reduction, not alleviation is the goal
2. Poverty is more effectively addressed by multi-sector leadership and collaboration
3. Poverty reduction is more effective when it is focused on the interrelated causes and effects of poverty
4. Poverty reduction is more effective when it is built on local assets
5. Poverty reduction efforts are more productive when they are a part of an ongoing process of learning, evaluation, and change

Community Resilience Approach

The Community Resilience approach to reducing poverty strives to create transformational change that focuses on preventative and upstream measures, as well as on building linkages between actors. Building local capacity through bottom-up actions and supporting existing community-based poverty reduction initiatives is key to this approach.

¹⁹ See *Collective Impact Approach*, (Vibrant Communities Canada, 2013), http://vibrantcanada.ca/files/vibrant_communities_canada_collective_impact_approach_0.pdf

Strengths and Assets-Based Approach

Another approach being taken by some cities is to focus on the strengths and assets already available in a community in order to emphasize the notion of shared prosperity and reduce inequalities. This model is closely related to the concept of Asset-Based Community Development (ABCD²⁰) as it involves assessing the resources, skills, and experience available in a community, empowering the community to employ its strengths to create meaningful change, and using existing assets as the basis for further community development. The principles of listening to the community, recognizing that everyone has something to contribute, and placing citizens at the centre of poverty reduction initiatives are key to this approach.

Goal Areas

Income, Employment, and Community Economic Development

An important part of reducing poverty is raising incomes and supporting economic wellbeing through employment and sustainable livelihoods. Poverty Reduction strategies address this goal through actions to support workforce development along the livelihoods continuum, income security, asset building, quality jobs, living wage, minimum wage, basic income, recruitment and hiring practices, social procurement, gender pay, and training.

That being said, having a job is not a guaranteed pathway out of poverty. The majority of British Columbians living in poverty do not rely on welfare, and Metro Vancouver had the second-highest rate of working poverty of any major city in Canada in 2012. Several Canadians of working age who face barriers to employment, such as being homeless or having a mobility disability, could be working but are not, representing a lost earnings potential in our communities. In fact, the largest cost of poverty comes in the form of lost productivity and foregone earnings.²¹ Certain communities offer supports for those seeking employment, for example, Kingston's Transit Employment Program. However, many of the new jobs created in recent years remain part-time, temporary, low-paid, and precarious.²²

Municipal Fee Assistance Program

Kingston, ON

Similar to other Canadian cities, Kingston offers low-barrier access to municipal programs to help residents who live in lower-income through a centralized application which includes multiple services. Included in this program is an affordable transit pass, a subsidy program for affordable recreation, discounted theatre tickets, and vouchers for having a pet spayed and neutered. In addition, the Kingston Municipal Fee Assistance Program includes the innovative Transit Employment Program which provides recently hired Kingston residents (part-time or full-time) with a free two month Kingston Transit pass for those who need assistance getting to and from work in order to secure new employment.



Source: <https://www.cityofkingston.ca/residents/community-services/municipal-fee-assistance>

Actions being taken by municipalities in this area include social procurement and living wage policies. The City of Toronto's social procurement program requires that Requests for Proposals outline specific social procurement requirements, or will ask vendors to propose how they would incorporate social procurement into their work. The Social Procurement Program aims to promote diversity by selecting diverse suppliers (businesses that are at least 51% owned, managed and controlled by an equity-seeking community or social purpose enterprise) for city contracts, and create workforce development opportunities for vulnerable groups.

20 See McKnight, J.L. & Kretzmann, J.P. *Building Communities from the Inside Out: A Path Toward Finding and Mobilizing A Community's Assets*, 1993

21 See Ivanova, I. *The Cost of Poverty in BC*, (Canadian Centre for Policy Alternatives, 2011), https://www.policyalternatives.ca/sites/default/files/uploads/publications/BC%20Office/2011/07/CCPA_BC_cost_of_poverty_full_report.pdf

22 Ibid.

Furthermore, many municipalities are adopting living wage policies, including the City of Vancouver, which became a living wage employer in June 2017. Other cities, like New Westminster, who was Canada's first living wage employer in 2011, have also adopted this standard for contractors of city services.

Actions to increase incomes include initiatives such as Calgary's Financial Empowerment Task Force, which has been established to develop and support the implementation of various income and saving strategies, and Ontario's piloting of guaranteed basic income.

Furthermore, Community Economic Development actions support the growth of local economies and community-based small businesses and entrepreneurs. For example, the City of Edmonton Community Development Corporation is a non-profit company that creates and expands economic opportunity for low to moderate income people by developing a range of affordable housing (including affordable homeownership), encouraging business development and social enterprise, and supporting workforce training and development.

Health, Well-Being, and Social Inclusion

Addressing systemic issues such as mental health and addictions, social belonging, racism, gender equity, violence prevention, and the decriminalization of poverty are all challenges which can have an impact on the overall health and wellbeing of those living in poverty.

Previous municipal poverty reduction work appears to show that through public awareness, personal and community support networks, systemic change, and reconciliation, it may be possible to begin to address the social isolation and stigma felt by those who experience poverty. In New Westminster there's been a significant focus on increasing community awareness and reducing the stigma associated with poverty. For example, their Poverty Reduction Plan is accompanied by a Poverty Mythbusters publication that dispels common misconceptions about what it's like to live in poverty in their city. Furthermore, one of the simple ways that Toronto's Poverty Reduction strategy raises awareness around the realities of poverty is by inserting the voices of community members and people with lived experiences directly into their strategy using first-person testimonials.

Because the costs of poverty include higher public health care costs, increased policing and crime costs, lost productivity, and foregone economic activity²³, extreme poverty and financial stress can lead to crimes of desperation and harmful 'choices'. People living in poverty are vastly overrepresented in Canada's prison population, and they are also more likely to be victims of crime.²⁴ To address this, the Saint John Living SJ plan uses a Return on Investment (ROI) indicator to calculate whether their Poverty Reduction Strategy is resulting in reduced emergency room use and crime, for example.

To address well-being, both Edmonton and Moncton are using trauma-informed lenses to guide their poverty reduction work. Similarly, Medicine Hat has a priority that addresses Community Safety with actions that relate to anti-violence and the decriminalization of poverty. Increasing the number of organizations providing Cultural Competency training is one way that London's strategy focuses on equipping community members to effectively respond to poverty.

In order to ensure that policies and programs being implemented are equitable and contribute to the overall well-being of low-income people, the 'Health' working group of the Kingston, ON Poverty Reduction Strategy has developed a Poverty Impact Assessment Tool to assist municipal planners and organizations with policy review from a poverty reduction perspective to better understand the effects of specific policies on poverty in their city.

23 See Ivanova, I. *The Cost of Poverty in BC*, (Canadian Centre for Policy Alternatives, 2011), https://www.policyalternatives.ca/sites/default/files/uploads/publications/BC%20Office/2011/07/CCPA_BC_cost_of_poverty_full_report.pdf

24 Ibid.

Edmonton Shift Lab

Edmonton, AB

The Edmonton Community Foundation and Skills Society Action Lab launched the Edmonton Shift Lab in August 2016 in response to Action #9 in the EndPovertyEdmonton 5-year road map: “Implement a social lab project to generate ideas and test prototypes to end racism.” Building on the work of many local initiatives, the diverse collective making up the Edmonton Shift Lab is stewarding an exploration to develop potential service, policy, system and community action prototypes that will help reduce racism as it contributes to poverty. The lab is using design- and systems-thinking to co-create solutions to complex issues in a safe and experimental space in order to arrive at impactful community solutions.

Source: <http://www.edmontonshiftlab.ca>

Transportation

Transportation and public transit are key services for low-income people, and often facilitate key needs such as transporting children to school and accessing employment. However, several cities have recognized that transit equity is an issue in their communities. In response, cities like London and Toronto are allowing children under 12 to ride public transit free of cost. Several municipalities are also supporting reduced rate transit passes for low-income people. For instance, in April 2017, the City of Calgary introduced an innovative sliding-scale fare structure for transit passes.

Calgary Transit Low Income and Senior Passes

Calgary, AB

Beginning in April 2017, the cost of a low income monthly pass in Calgary is provided on a sliding scale which assesses income and assigns a purchase price based on income. Prior to implementing the sliding scale structure, a low-income Calgarian would pay \$44 to ride the bus or train every month. Under the sliding scale fare structure, those eligible for the deepest discount pay only \$5.05 per month. Calgary Transit also offers a Senior Yearly Pass (\$95/year; 2017 rate) and a Low Income Seniors Yearly Pass (\$15/year; 2017 rate). Seniors aged 65 or older with an income below \$30,625 for a couple or \$24,600 for a single qualify for the reduced rate.

Sources: <http://www.calgarytransit.com/fares-passes/passes/low-income-monthly-pass>
<http://www.calgarytransit.com/fares-passes/passes/Low-Income-seniors-yearly-pass>

Housing

Housing plays a key role in reducing poverty, and while the provision of affordable housing isn't explicitly a municipal responsibility, many cities are contributing local efforts to improve housing supply and reduce homelessness. In Vancouver, this is done through contributions of city-owned land, for example. Other cities have also contributed funds to the development of housing, or housing incentive grants for renters and homeowners.

Housing affordability, supply and choice, stability and security of tenure, social housing, energy poverty, and homelessness are all key issues related to housing which can impact low-income households and those facing poverty. For example, Medicine Hat's Poverty Reduction Plan addresses energy poverty by including actions to improve energy efficiency and weatherization in low-income homes. As climate change continues to impact Vancouverites, access to energy efficient homes and low-cost utilities will become even more important in our region.

Education and Training

Providing equal right to education can have a significant impact on poverty in our communities. Actions such as financial literacy education and business skills training can help to build the employment potential of residents. Adult education can be promoted through partnerships with universities, colleges, and training centres.

Affordability of internet, digital equity, and promotion of information sharing can also improve educational opportunities for low-income people.

Furthermore, previous strategies have revealed that there is a need to educate the public through awareness campaigns which prevent stigma and discrimination toward low-income and poor people (for example, EndPovertyEdmonton and New Westminster). This includes investments in tenant and landlord education, intercultural competency, and anti-racism education, which cities like London and Edmonton have committed to.

Child Care and Early Childhood Development

A good start is one of the most crucial elements of early child development and is one of the foundations for reducing generational poverty. Growing up poor is closely linked to low school achievement and lower literacy rates. Since provincial governments are primarily responsible for child care and education, many municipal poverty reduction strategies have been investing in early childhood development actions such as out-of-school care, literacy, and free public transportation (for example, Medicine Hat and Calgary). In New Westminster, the local government has collected Early Development Instrument (EDI) data to calculate childhood vulnerability rates by neighbourhood as part of their poverty reduction work. Cities can also help to increase the number of licensed childcare spaces through grants, subsidies, and other tools, as well as advocate for campaigns such as the \$10/day child care plan.

Harlem Children's Zone

New York, NY

The Harlem Children's Zone is a non-profit organization for Harlem children and families who are living in poverty. The program provides free support in the form of parenting workshops, education programs (charter schools), and child-oriented health programs for thousands of children and families. The program's goal is to break the cycle of generational poverty in the Harlem neighbourhood. The neighbourhood-based program starts at birth and follows children until they reach college, building a social safety net around them, and operates on the principle that each child will do better if all the children around them are doing better. Eighty-eight percent of the roughly 3,400 children under 18 in the initial 24-block core neighborhood were served by the program, and over the years, the program has been expanded to include a 60-block zone that has been deemed a highly successful national model for breaking the cycle of poverty.



Source: <http://hcz.org>

Access to services, resources, and supports

One of the key actions that municipalities can support to make a difference in the lives of those facing poverty is to reduce the cost of participating in city-run programs and to increase access to municipal services. Most cities offer leisure access programs which provide free or reduced-cost memberships to city recreation and attraction facilities for those who qualify (usually based on income). In Edmonton, the city has further reduced barriers by creating relationship-based inclusion criteria whereby organizations can refer clients for access to free municipal services without having to test income. Furthermore, Edmonton, Calgary, and Kingston are all using harmonized application processes to reduce the administrative burden and depersonalization of services when applying for low-barrier municipal programs such as recreation and transit passes.

A lack of integration and coordination of support services is a key barrier to success in reducing poverty. Medicine Hat is using what they call a ‘Community System’ planning lens to encourage service providers and stakeholders to agree on a common set of principles and create strategic person-centered supports. Similarly, a ‘Community Hub’ model is used in Calgary to develop centres of activity, programming, services, and community economic development activity in existing core locations such as community centres and neighbourhood houses across the city, for example.

211 Service

Kingston, ON

In Kingston, 64% of 211 callers are on social assistance. The municipality has revamped its telephone helpline to increase the amount of information about community, social, non-clinical health and government services available to callers. 211 helps to navigate the complex network of human services quickly and easily, 24 hours a day, 7 days a week, in over 100 languages. The 211 service benefits individuals, families and professionals to community agencies and people facing barriers due to languages, poverty or personal difficulty.



Source: <https://www.unitedwaykfla.ca/programs/dial-2-1-1/>

Food

Most Poverty Reduction Strategies make mention of food access and food security, with some plans including Food as a core priority or goal within the strategy. Cities can make use of vacant land to promote urban agriculture, create policies to divert food waste, and promote increased access to affordable food. Cities can also take steps to ensure that small and specialty grocers, particularly those providing culturally relevant foods to the community are supported. The Mobile Good Food Market in Toronto and Free Frigo initiative in Sherbrooke are simple examples that cities can support to increase access to food for low-income populations.

Strathcona Breakfast Program

Vancouver, BC

In December 2015, Vancouver City Council approved a grant of \$80,000 to the Strathcona Community Centre Association Breakfast Program to support their work in addressing food insecurity in the neighbourhood. The program feeds up to 120 students and family members each morning. In just five months, students of Lord Strathcona Elementary School in Vancouver were served over 11,000 meals through the program which serves the Strathcona neighbourhood, where 70 per cent of children live in poverty. The City of Vancouver funding was able to increase the volume of meals served through the existing program, as well as upgrade kitchen facilities. The program is community-run and helps students develop leadership and food skills by featuring learning activities and workshops such as food safety and nutrition, dental health, and food industry mentorship.



Source: <http://foodshare.net/program/mobile/>

Frigo Free Go

Sherbrooke, QC

An initiative of Sherbrooke's Community Economic Development Corporation, the "Frigo Free Go" program was designed as a food waste reduction and food security initiative. Since June 2016, the successful project has benefitted from multiple partnerships with grocers, restaurateurs, local farmers, educational institutions, and community organizations, and aligns with the spirit of the sharing economy and zero waste movements. Three self-serve fridges are currently in place at the Cegep de Sherbrooke (post-secondary institution), the Salvation Army, and near a local grocery store and all are accessible 24 hours a day. Citizens and businesses alike are free to contribute to the fridge, and anyone is invited to access the donated food.



Sources: <https://fr-ca.facebook.com/FrigoFreeGo/>
<http://www.cdec-sherbrooke.ca/>

Aging Population

Public programs to provide income to seniors, including the Canada Pension Plan (CPP), Old Age Security (OAS), and the Guaranteed Income Supplement (GIS) had a positive impact on seniors when introduced, however, seniors' poverty has since increased in BC, from a low of 2.2 percent in 1996 to 12.7 percent in 2014 (a total of 96,000 seniors living in poverty). In addition, seniors living alone and senior women face a significantly higher risk of poverty. As populations age, municipalities are shifting poverty reduction strategies to focus more specifically on the needs of older adults as a core population group.

The City of Calgary, for example, provides an affordable transit pass specifically for seniors, and helps seniors to live safely and securely in their own homes by providing access to basic yard care, snow removal, house cleaning, painting, and minor repairs to low income renters and homeowners over the age of 65 as part of the Seniors Services Home Maintenance Program.

Fair Entry Program

Calgary, AB

In May 2015, the City of Calgary implemented a streamlined and client-centered application process for subsidized programs and services. The Fair Entry program assesses income eligibility (based on Statistics Canada's low-income threshold) for multiple City programs with a single application so that low-income residents only have to demonstrate their income situation once annually. In addition, the program allows low-income residents to learn about and qualify for City of Calgary programs and services that they may not have been aware of. Subsidy programs included are the Recreation Fee Assistance Program which provides lower cost fees for recreation facilities, golf courses, leisure centres, and partnering organizations, the Calgary Transit Low Income Transit Pass Program, the Property Tax Assistance Program which provides a credit of the increase in residential property taxes and a rebate from Waste & Recycling Services, the Seniors Services Home Maintenance Program for low income renters and homeowners which provides access to basic yard care, snow removal, house cleaning, painting, and minor repairs, and the No Cost Spay Neuter Program. In summer 2017, the Fair Entry program also benefitted from a pop-up location at the Calgary Public Library's Central Location.



Source: <http://www.calgary.ca/CSPS/CNS/Pages/Neighbourhood-Services/Programs-and-services-for-low-income-calgarians.aspx>

5. What's Next? Considerations for Moving Forward

Conclusion and Next Steps

Municipalities can show leadership with regards to poverty reduction, however, they have limited authority and resources at their disposal compared to provincial and federal governments. For this reason, it is essential that municipalities put significant efforts behind building effective partnerships and collaborations on issues such as housing and transit, which will have immense impacts on poverty reduction.

Every level of government has a role to play, but local government, as the level of government closest to citizens, is uniquely positioned to lead innovative strategies and make impactful community-based change with regards to poverty reduction. Municipalities need to be empowered to ensure that their residents can contribute to their communities and meet their everyday needs. The following Actions for Consideration provide an example of short and long-term actions that municipalities can take to move the dial on poverty in their communities.

Actions for Consideration

Based on review of literature, analysis of other jurisdictions' poverty reduction plans, and feedback received from local engagement, this section presents suggested actions to illustrate what the City of Vancouver could commit to. Recommendations are organized based on the source of information, noting when actions have previously been piloted or implemented in other cities.

Recommendations from Literature

- Engage all levels of government, Indigenous people, community organizations, poverty experts and academics, the business community, and those who have a lived experience of poverty (including students, seniors, new immigrants and refugees, single mothers, LGBTQ2+ people, youth, and other groups).
- Ensure that the community at large and People with Lived Experience of poverty are included in the development, implementation, monitoring, and evaluation of the strategy.
- Establish and support a community roundtable, steering committee, and/or advisory body on Poverty Reduction to provide leadership and feedback in the development and implementation of the Plan.
- Support the creation of independent multi-stakeholder governance bodies to develop and implement the strategy (i.e. an advisory committee to inform plan creation and an independent backbone agency to guide implementation).
- Support can be financial, through staff support, through official partnership agreement, etc.
- Ensure that all residents in their municipality have access to well-maintained playgrounds, parks, community centres and other recreation facilities, and that the fees for entry are not a barrier for low-income residents.

The Playbox in Central Park

The Playbox in Central Park was installed by the municipality to help families enjoy local parks and stay active at no cost. The box is filled with a variety of sports and play equipment including soccer balls, basketballs, badminton racquets, skipping ropes, chalk, tennis racquets, and more. The Playbox is accessible free of charge to anyone at any time, and individuals can sign up online, in person, or by phone to receive an access code.

Victoria, BC



Actions from Other Jurisdictions

- Evaluate how many low-income non-residents use City of Vancouver recreation facilities, and how many City of Vancouver residents access recreation in neighbouring municipalities to identify whether it would be useful to remove boundaries to recreation by establishing a regional access program that allows residents to qualify for low-income recreation passes in one Metro Vancouver municipality, and gain access to all facilities, no matter the municipal borders (for example, the Capital Regional District, BC's Leisure Involvement For Everyone (LIFE) Program – see sidebar).

Leisure Involvement For Everyone Program Capital Regional District, BC

Since 1998, the fee-subsidy program entitled Leisure Involvement For Everyone (L.I.F.E) has reduced barriers to leisure activities and recreation programs for low-income families and individuals throughout the Capital Region District (CRD) by making it easier for people to navigate recreation services across municipal boundaries. The program is unique in that it crosses local government borders; all thirteen municipalities within the CRD are involved in operating this program across fourteen parks and recreation facilities.

Staff from recreation departments and municipalities across the CRD make up the Greater Victoria Inter-Municipal Recreation Managers Committee, a collective governance body which allows municipalities to work together towards a shared goal. This collaborative approach minimizes the potential for duplicating efforts, and recognizes that residents look beyond local government borders for recreation opportunities, particularly those who commute for work or live nearby jurisdictional divides.

Source: <http://planh.ca/success-stories/capital-region-life-flourishes-recreation-facilities>

- Since lack of identification is often a barrier to accessing services, support the creation of an ID bank to provide homeless people with a safe place to store their identification documents (examples from other cities include: Street Health's ID Safe program in Toronto, the Homeless ID Project in Phoenix, Arizona, and Awenen Niin ID Bank in Thunder Bay).
- Create reduced-cost or free access to the Mobi bike share program, including options for low-income people to register without a credit card, and ensure that docking stations are adequately situated in low-income neighbourhoods (for example, Arlington Bikeshare – see sidebar).

Capital Bikeshare

Arlington County, VA

Since 2015, Arlington County, Virginia has allowed the 'unbanked' to access its Capital Bikeshare program by vouching for residents who want to join and use the system. Residents can pay cash for monthly memberships by visiting one of the city's five "commuter stores," where transit passes are sold. Applicants are required to present proof of identification and residency and can be initially registered for \$16 cash (membership fee and \$7 monthly fee).

Furthermore, Capital Bikeshare's Community Partners Program is a joint effort between Arlington and Washington, DC, to reduce the barriers to bikeshare memberships for low-income populations. By working with local non-profits to identify people who would benefit from this transportation option, Capital Bikeshare offers an annual \$5 memberships, helmets, and training on how to use the system.



Source: <http://www.bikearlington.com/capital-bikeshare/>

- Insert the voices of diverse community members and people with lived experience into the written strategy document, for example through storytelling and first-person testimonial (examples include Calgary's Enough for All plan and Toronto's TO Prosperity).

- Explore municipal strategies to support low-income access to transit (for example, Calgary's sliding scale transit pass, or Toronto's free access to transit for children under 12 years of age).
- Identify whether there is a need to align municipal poverty reduction efforts through a regional poverty reduction strategy for Metro Vancouver (for example, Region of Waterloo's Comprehensive Approach to Poverty Reduction).
- Review whether the City of Vancouver should reconsider its inclusion criteria for the Leisure Access Program, for example by expanding it to include referrals from service providers as is done in Edmonton. (The Vancouver Board of Parks and Recreation uses the LICO (before tax) as its criterion for the Leisure Access Program).

Ride Transit Program

Edmonton, AB

Beginning July 4, 2017, the Ride Transit Program offers a monthly transit pass to eligible low-income Edmontonians at a subsidized rate of \$35/month, and will be exempt from fare increases until at least 2019. The Low Income Transit Pass focuses on individuals who fall below the nationwide Low Income Cut Off (LICO) threshold. For citizens who are not already a member of the City's Leisure Access Program, it is possible to apply to both programs through a harmonized single application process.



Provide Accessible Transit Here (PATH) is a separate pass which falls under the Ride Transit Program and is a relationship-based transit initiative which specifically targets vulnerable individuals who are homeless or who are at high risk of becoming homeless. Staff working at 10 partnering social service delivery agencies work closely with individuals to determine eligibility and distribute monthly passes.

The Social Return on Investment was calculated for PATH, and indicated that for every \$1 invested in the project, \$1.92 was created in social investment. In other words, the program "paid for itself" in 3.1 months through avoided enforcement programs and associated court and administrative costs.

Finally, the Edmonton Transit Service Assured Income for the Severely Handicapped (AISH) Transit Pass Program is also part of the Ride Transit Program, and provides monthly passes at the subsidized rate to those who receive the Provincial AISH income supplement.

Sources: <https://www.edmonton.ca/ets/subsidized-transit.aspx>
<https://www.edmonton.ca/ets/access-pass.aspx>

- Implement strategies to promote access to 311 and enhance operator's knowledge of social services and services for those facing mental health and addictions, poverty, and other barriers (for example, in Kingston).
- Partner with community champions to develop directories and maps to promote awareness of existing supports and to identify gaps and opportunities (for example, in Kingston).
- Support a 'Point in Time Food Count' to estimate the use of emergency food services in the City of Vancouver in one day (for example, in Kingston).
- Examine options for implementing a 'hub' model for service coordination and delivery of social supports and facilitate access to essential services in all neighbourhoods and assist in the development of partnerships to realize the community hub model (for example, in Calgary, Kingston, and Thunder Bay).
- Ensure that there are minimal barriers to expanding urban agriculture (for example, in Moncton).
- Develop change management and staff training tools that promote a poverty-sensitive culture across the organization (for example, in Toronto).
- Work with utility providers to prevent utility cut-offs (for example, in Medicine Hat).

The Ontario Electricity Support Program developed by the Ontario Energy Board was introduced in 2016 and reduces the cost of electricity for low-income families who meet certain thresholds, depending on household size and combined household income. For qualifying households, the program reduces the cost of household electricity by applying a monthly on-bill credit. Small businesses and farms can also benefit from this program.



Source: <https://ontarioelectricitysupport.ca/>

Community-Based Recommendations

- Develop locally-specific indicators of poverty which take into consideration the cost of living, goods and services, and measures to evaluate improvement.
- Support access to culturally-specific programs and services for urban Indigenous residents and recognize that supporting healing is a necessary prerequisite for addressing poverty.
- Continue to partner with local Indigenous groups such as MVAEC to better understand the distinct challenges faced by Indigenous community members.
- Support Indigenous-specific treatment centres, healing services, and low-barrier access to cultural activities.
- Support the expansion of culturally appropriate and trauma-informed mental health services.
- Expedite enforcement of the City of Vancouver's Standards of Maintenance Bylaw to ensure better living conditions in low-income housing, particularly SROs.
- Validate the guiding principles of Prosperity, Reciprocity, and Intersectionality at the community-level and co-define or redefine these to reflect the community's shared understanding.
- Continue to support advocacy to the Province of British Columbia to reform social assistance programs, index social assistance to inflation, and review clawbacks to ensure that income assistance adequately meets the needs of those accessing it, or those who should be accessing it.
- Continue to work on the development of a Social Procurement Framework as a core poverty reduction policy to ensure inclusive economic growth and access to employment for people with barriers.
- Continue to work on building a social connections movement to reduce social isolation and increase social resilience. In particular, this work should meaningfully include people with lived experiences of poverty to increase the health and wellbeing of vulnerable populations.
- Continue to advocate for \$10/day childcare plan and invest in early years supports.
- Invest in and engage agencies in tenant and landlord education to promote understanding of rights and responsibilities, plans for housing development throughout the city, and education and empowerment.
- Advocate for Vancouver to become the site of a guaranteed annual income pilot.
- Assist in the expansion and affordability of telephone and internet access and education.

Olds O-Net Broadband Network

Olds, AB

Municipal broadband is a public Internet service provided by the community to its residents. Infrastructure is typically invested in by the local government, and is an alternative to Big Telecom's privately-owned networks. For a community, implementing a municipal broadband service is cost-effective and promotes job creation, efficiency, and greater savings on telecom costs.



In Olds, AB, the Olds Institute for Community and Regional Development owns the municipal broadband network, O-Net and its infrastructure. The majority of funding for the public utility has come from provincial loans guaranteed by the municipality. The Olds Institute secured a \$2.5 million grant from the Alberta government to plan its network and build a community facility at the library, making use of the network. That facility included a video conference centre and 15 terminals for residents without their own access to computers. The institute also received a \$6 million loan from the town of Olds to build the network itself.

Investing in municipal broadband is one way that local governments can address the digital divide between people who have adequate access to the Internet and those who do not.

Source: <https://www.oldsinstitute.com/choose-olds/gigabit-broadband-in-olds/>

- Implement Action 6 of the 'Caring for All' report: Expand the City of Vancouver Dialogues project to develop collective actions including advocacy to address the impact of poverty and stigma in Vancouver.

6. Works Cited

Works Cited and Resources

- Anderson, L. Ballantyne, M. & Friendly, M. (December 2016). Child care for all of us: Universal child care for Canadians by 2020. Canadian Centre for Policy Alternatives. Accessed from https://www.policyalternatives.ca/sites/default/files/uploads/publications/National%20Office/2016/12/Child_Care_AFB2017_technical_paper.pdf
- Arai, S. & Burke, R. (June 2007) A Legacy of Poverty? Addressing Cycles of Poverty & the Impact on Child Health in Niagara Region. Region of Niagara, Department of Community and Social Services. Accessed from <http://www.unitedwayniagara.org/uwcms/wp-content/uploads/2016/08/Legacy-of-Poverty-Report.pdf>
- Battista, K. & Pei, N. (2017). 10: A Guide for Businesses Reducing Poverty. Ed: Holmgren, M. Accessed from https://cdn2.hubspot.net/hubfs/316071/Photos/Image%20Library/TEN_2017_Final.pdf
- BC Poverty Reduction Coalition. (March 2017). Make Poverty Public: Join the Election Campaign. Accessed from https://makepovertypublic.files.wordpress.com/2017/03/bc_povert_reduction_election_march-28-20171.pdf
- BC Child and Youth Advocacy Coalition. (2016). 2016 BC Child Poverty Report Card. Accessed from <http://stillin5.ca/wp-content/uploads/2016/11/2016-BC-Child-Poverty-Report-Card.pdf>
- BC Poverty Reduction Coalition. (2017). Policy Actions within a Poverty Reduction Plan for BC. Accessed from <http://bcpovertyreduction.ca/wp-content/uploads/2017/02/Policy-Actions-2017-1.pdf>
- BC Poverty Reduction Coalition. (April 2016). The Call for a Poverty Reduction Plan (Open Letter). Accessed from http://bcpovertyreduction.ca/wp-content/uploads/2016/04/TheCallforaPovertyReductionPlan_Apr2016.pdf
- BC Poverty Reduction Coalition. (2014). Poverty in British Columbia is a Violation of Human Rights. BC Poverty Reduction Coalition. Accessed from http://bcpovertyreduction.ca/wp-content/uploads/2014/12/2014_prc-HR-framework1.pdf
- Block, S. & Galabuzi, G. (March 2011). Canada's Colour Coded Labour Market: The Gap for Racialized Workers. Wellesley Institute, Canadian Centre for Policy Alternatives. Accessed from <https://www.policyalternatives.ca/sites/default/files/uploads/publications/National%20Office/2011/03/Colour%20Coded%20Labour%20Market.pdf>
- Cabaj, M. (2014). Evaluating Collective Impact: Five Simple Rules. The Philanthropist 26: 1. Accessed from http://tamarackcci.ca/files/evaluating_collective_impact_five_simple_rules_-_m_cabaj_philanthropist.pdf
- Campaign 2000. (2016). The Time to Act is Now: Ontario Children Can't Wait. Accessed from <http://campaign2000.ca/wp-content/uploads/2016/11/ReportCardOntarioNov182016.pdf>
- Campaign 2000. A Road Map to Eradicate Child & Family Poverty: 2016 Report Card on Child and Family Poverty in Canada. Accessed from <http://campaign2000.ca/wp-content/uploads/2016/11/Campaign2000NationalReportCard2016Eng.pdf>
- Canada Without Poverty. (2016). British Columbia Poverty Progress Profile. Accessed from <http://www.cwp-csp.ca/wp-content/uploads/2016/12/BC-Report-Fixed.pdf>
- Canadian Union of Public Employees (CUPE) Ontario. (October 2013). Towards a Living Wage: Submission to the Ontario Minimum Wage Advisory Panel. Accessed from <https://cupe.on.ca/wp-content/uploads/webarc/archivedat5943.pdf>
- Carlton, B. & Born, P. 10: A Guide for Cities Reducing Poverty. Tamarack Institute. Accessed from https://cdn2.hubspot.net/hubfs/316071/Miscellaneous/Documents%20VC/10_guide_cities_reducing_poverty_final_shareable.pdf
- Cattari, L. (2013). Hamilton Roundtable for Poverty Reduction: Policy Brief: A renewed poverty reduction strategy for Ontario. Hamilton Roundtable for Poverty Reduction. Accessed from <http://162.219.163.96/~hrpr/wp-content/uploads/2013/11/HRPR-Poverty-Reduction-Strategy-White-paper-Final-Nov-2013.pdf>

- Chamberlain, P. (2008). Place-Based Poverty Reduction Initiative: How Community Economic Development is reducing poverty in Canada and how it could be doing more. Accessed from https://ccednet-rcdec.ca/files/ccednet/Place-Based_Poverty_Reduction_Main_Report.pdf
- City of Toronto. (2014). Municipal Poverty Reduction Strategies Across Canada: A Summary Report of Emerging Principles and Practices. Accessed from <https://www1.toronto.ca/City%20of%20Toronto/Social%20Development,%20Finance%20&%20Administration/Strategies/Poverty%20Reduction%20Strategy/PDF/Summary%20Report%20-%20Municipal%20Poverty%20Reduction%20Strategies.pdf>
- Cox, W. & He, A. (June 2016). Canada's Middle-Income Housing Affordability Crisis. Frontier Centre for Public Policy. Accessed from <https://fcpp.org/wp-content/uploads/2016/06/Cox-He-Middle-Income-Housing-Crisis.pdf>
- Dignity for All: The Campaign for a Poverty-Free Canada. (n.d.) Dignity for All: A National Anti-Poverty Plan for Canada. Accessed from https://dignityforall.ca/wp-content/uploads/2017/02/DignityForAll_Report.pdf
- Early Childhood Educators of BC & Coalition of Child Care Advocates of BC. (2017). Community Plan for a Public System of Integrated Early Care & Learning. Accessed from https://d3n8a8pro7vhmx.cloudfront.net/10aday/pages/92/attachments/original/1487824686/10aDay_Plan_7th_edition_Spring_2017_web_6.pdf?1487824686
- EndPovertyEdmonton & Capital Region Interfaith Housing Initiative. End Poverty Action Guide For Edmonton Religious and Spiritual Communities. Anglican Foundation of Canada. Accessed from <https://static1.squarespace.com/static/54eb5df3e4b0904aceb80bc4/t/589a05f3d2b8578e63585699/1486489122558/End+Poverty+Action+Guide.pdf>
- Falvo, N. (2012). Poverty Amongst Plenty: Waiting for the Yukon to Adopt a Poverty Reduction Strategy. The Canadian Homelessness Research Network Press. Accessed from http://homelesshub.ca/sites/default/files/Final_Yukon_22052012_0.pdf
- Fleury, D. & Fortin, M. (August 2006). When Working is not enough to Escape Poverty: An Analysis of Canada's Working Poor. Human Resources and Social Development Canada. Accessed from http://vibrantcanada.ca/files/when_work_not_enough.pdf
- Frank, L. (November 2016). The 2016 Report Card on Child and Family Poverty in Nova Scotia: Another Year, No Improvement. Accessed from <http://campaign2000.ca/wp-content/uploads/2016/11/NovaScotiaReportCard2016.pdf>
- Freiler, C., Rothman, L. & Barata, P. (May 2004). Pathways to Progress: Structural Solutions to Address Child Poverty. Campaign 2000. Accessed from <http://campaign2000.ca/wp-content/uploads/2016/03/PathwaytoProgressFullPaper.pdf>
- Gaetz, S. et al. (2016). The State of Homelessness in Canada 2016. Canadian Observatory on Homeless Press. Accessed from http://homelesshub.ca/sites/default/files/SOHC16_final_20Oct2016.pdf
- Gamble, J. (2010). Evaluating Vibrant Communities: 2002-2010. Tamarack Institute. Accessed from http://vibrantcanada.ca/files/vc_evaluation_complete_report.pdf
- Gamble, J. (2012). Inspired Learning: An Evaluation of Vibrant Communities' National Supports 2002-2012. Tamarack Institute. Access from http://vibrantcanada.ca/files/evaluation_report-aug2012.pdf
- Garner, T. (March 2017). Submission to the Standing Committee on Human Resources, Skills and Social Development and the Status of Persons with Disabilities. BC Poverty Reduction Coalition. Accessed from http://bcpovertyreduction.ca/wp-content/uploads/2017/03/BCPRC_SubmissionHUMA_Mar2017.pdf
- Gerbrant, I. et al. (n.d.) Creating Shared Prosperity: Cities that Lead, Succeed. Tamarack Institute. Accessed from https://cdn2.hubspot.net/hubfs/316071/Miscellaneous/Tamarack_New_Website/VC_Creating_Shared_Prosperty_Tamarack_Ed_Document.pdf
- Government of Canada. (October 2016). Toward a Poverty Reduction Strategy: Discussion Paper. Accessed from http://www2.gov.bc.ca/assets/gov/family-and-social-supports/services-supports-for-parents-with-young-children/reporting-monitoring/00-public-ministry-reports/community_poverty_reduction.pdf
- Government of Canada. (October 2016). Towards a Poverty Reduction Strategy – A Backgrounder on Poverty in Canada. Employment and Social Development Canada. Accessed from <https://www.canada.ca/en/employment-social-development/programs/poverty-reduction/backgrounder.html>

- Graham, S. et al. (2009). Poverty Reduction Policies and Programs: The Best Place on Earth? Contemporary and Historical Perspectives on Poverty Reduction Policies and Programs in British Columbia. Canadian Council on Social Development. Accessed from <http://www.sparc.bc.ca/wp-content/uploads/2017/03/poverty-reduction-policies-and-programs-in-british-columbia.pdf>
- Green, D. (April 2015). The Case for Increasing the Minimum Wage: What does the academic literature tell us? Canadian Centre for Policy Alternatives. Accessed from https://www.policyalternatives.ca/sites/default/files/uploads/publications/BC%20Office/2015/04/CCPA-BC-Case-for-Incr-Minimum-Wage_0.pdf
- Holmgren, M. Sometimes to hear the music you have to turn down the noise: A game-changer approach to poverty reduction strategy and evaluation. Tamarack Institute. Accessed from http://cdn2.hubspot.net/hubfs/316071/Events/CCI/2016_CCI_Toronto/CCI_Publications/A_Game-Changer_Approach_to_Poverty_Reduction_Strategy_and_Evaluation.pdf?t=1494612620118
- Hennessy, T. et al. (October 2013). Making Every Job a Good Job: A Benchmark for Setting Ontario's Minimum Wage. Canadian Centre for Policy Alternatives. Accessed from <http://www.policyalternatives.ca/sites/default/files/uploads/publications/Ontario%20Office/2013/11/Making%20Every%20Job%20a%20Good%20JobFINAL.pdf>
- Ivanova, I. (June 2016). Working Poverty in Metro Vancouver. Canadian Centre for Policy Alternatives. Accessed from https://www.policyalternatives.ca/sites/default/files/uploads/publications/BC%20Office/2016/06/CCPA_Working_poverty_full.pdf
- Ivanova, I. (2011). The Cost of Poverty in BC. Canadian Centre for Policy Alternatives, Social Planning and Research Council of BC, Public Health Association of BC. Accessed from https://www.policyalternatives.ca/sites/default/files/uploads/publications/BC%20Office/2011/07/CCPA_BC_cost_of_poverty_full_report.pdf
- Ivanova, I. (2017). Poverty and Inequality Among British Columbia's Seniors. Canadian Centre for Policy Alternatives. Accessed from https://www.policyalternatives.ca/sites/default/files/uploads/publications/BC%20Office/2017/04/ccpa-bc_seniors-inequality.pdf
- Jones, R. (2014). Disability Assistance: An Audit of Program Access, Integrity and Results. Office of the Auditor General of British Columbia. Accessed from https://media.wix.com/ugd/43fb43_295da567486646368ff12dcecb975608.pdf
- Juster, J. S. (2013). Collective Impact Case Study: Vibrant Communities. Accessed from http://vibrantcanada.ca/files/ci_case_study_vibrant_communities.pdf
- Klein, S. (2016). A Good Jobs Economy in BC: Ideas from the CCPA-BC's Jobs Conference. Canadian Centre for Policy Alternatives. Accessed from https://www.policyalternatives.ca/sites/default/files/uploads/publications/BC%20Office/2016/02/CCPA-BC_Good-Jobs-Ideas.pdf
- Klein, S. & Yalnizyan, A. (2016). Better is Always Possible: A Federal Plan to Tackle Poverty and Inequality. Canadian Centre for Policy Alternatives. Accessed from https://www.policyalternatives.ca/sites/default/files/uploads/publications/National%20Office/2016/02/Better_Is_Always%20Possible.pdf
- Klein, S. et al. (December 2008). The Time is Now: A Poverty Reduction Plan for BC. Canadian Centre for Policy Alternatives. Accessed from https://www.policyalternatives.ca/sites/default/files/uploads/publications/BC_Office_Pubs/bc_2008/ccpa_bc_poverty_reduction_summary.pdf
- Klein, S., Ivanova, I., Leyland, A. (January 2017). Long Overdue: Why BC Needs a Poverty Reduction Plan. Canadian Centre for Policy Alternatives. Accessed from https://www.policyalternatives.ca/sites/default/files/uploads/publications/BC%20Office/2017/01/ccpa-bc_long-overdue-poverty-plan_web.pdf
- Klein, S. et al. (2008). A Poverty Reduction Plan for BC. Canadian Centre for Policy Alternatives. Accessed from http://www.socialrightscura.ca/documents/democratic/prov/ccpa_bc_poverty_reduction_full.pdf
- Kurrein, M., Li, C., Rasali, D. (2016). Food Costing in BC 2015. Provincial Health Services Authority. Accessed from <http://www.phsa.ca/population-public-health-site/Documents/2015%20Food%20Costing%20in%20BC%20-%20FINAL.pdf>
- Laurie, N. (2008). The Cost of Poverty: An Analysis of the Economic Cost of Poverty in Ontario. Accessed from http://www.niagaraknowledgeexchange.com/wp-content/uploads/sites/2/2014/05/Cost_of_Poverty.pdf

- Lee, C.R. & Briggs, A. (2013). Reducing the Cost of Poverty in Medicine Hat: Moving From Charity to Investment. Vibrant Communities Calgary. Accessed from <http://livingwagecanada.ca/files/6113/8539/6936/Medicine-Hat-Report-Mar-4.pdf>
- Loewen, G. (n.d.). A Compendium of Poverty Reduction Strategies and Frameworks. Tamarack Institute. Accessed from https://cdn2.hubspot.net/hubfs/316071/Miscellaneous/Tamarack_New_Website/Compendium_of_poverty_reduction_strategies-final.pdf
- Macdonald, D. & Wilson, D. (2016). Shameful Neglect: Indigenous Child Poverty in Canada. Canadian Centre for Policy Alternatives. Accessed from https://www.policyalternatives.ca/sites/default/files/uploads/publications/National%20Office/2016/05/Indigenous_Child%20_Poverty.pdf
- Macdonald, D. & Friendly, M. (2016). A Growing Concern: 2016 Child Care Fees in Canada's Big Cities. Canadian Centre for Policy Alternatives. Accessed from https://www.policyalternatives.ca/sites/default/files/uploads/publications/National%20Office/2016/12/A_Growing_Concern.pdf
- Macdonald, D. (2016). A Policymaker's Guide to Basic Income. Canadian Centre for Policy Alternatives. Accessed from https://www.policyalternatives.ca/sites/default/files/uploads/publications/National%20Office/2016/10/Policymakers_Guide_to_Basic_Income.pdf
- MacKinnon, S. (2015). Fast Facts: Community plays an important role in poverty reduction. Canadian Centre for Policy Alternatives. Accessed from <https://www.policyalternatives.ca/publications/commentary/fast-facts-community-plays-important-role-poverty-reduction>
- McCain, H. & Chu, O. (2017). Sharing Our Realities: Life on Disability Assistance in British Columbia. BC Poverty Reduction Coalition. Accessed from <http://bcpovertyreduction.ca/wp-content/uploads/2017/04/SOR-Final-for-Web.pdf>
- Momentum. (2016). Supporting Albertans to Save: An asset-building approach to poverty reduction. Accessed from <https://www.momentum.org/files/Publications/SupportingAlbertansToSave.pdf>
- National Council of Welfare. (2011). The Dollars and Sense of Solving Poverty. Government of Canada. Accessed from http://publications.gc.ca/collections/collection_2011/cnb-ncw/HS54-2-2011-eng.pdf
- Niagara Connects. (2014). Living in Niagara 2014: Critical Indicators for Reflecting on Life in Niagara. Accessed from http://www.livinginniagarareport.com/wp-content/uploads/Living_In_Niagara_2014_summary_booklet.pdf
- Ninacs, W. (2003). Community-based Poverty Reduction: The Quebec Experience. Caledon Institute of Social Policy. Accessed from <http://www.caledoninst.org/PDF/553820665.pdf>
- Novick, Marvyn. (2007). Summoned to Stewardship: Make Poverty Reduction a Collective Legacy. Campaign 2000. Accessed from <http://campaign2000.ca/wp-content/uploads/2016/03/SummonedToStewardship.pdf>
- Province of British Columbia, (2014). Community Poverty Reduction Pilot Projects: 2014 Progress Report. Province of BC & Union of BC Municipalities. Accessed from http://www2.gov.bc.ca/assets/gov/family-and-social-supports/services-supports-for-parents-with-young-children/reporting-monitoring/00-public-ministry-reports/community_poverty_reduction.pdf
- Province of British Columbia. (2015). Community Poverty Reduction Strategies: 2015 Progress Report. Accessed from http://www2.gov.bc.ca/assets/gov/family-and-social-supports/services-supports-for-parents-with-young-children/reporting-monitoring/01-bc-changing-families/t15-0144_community_poverty_reduction_strategies_2015.pdf
- Saulnier, C. et al. (2016). Working for a Living, Not Living for Work: The Halifax and Antigonish Living Wages for 2016. Canadian Centre for Policy Alternatives. Accessed from https://www.policyalternatives.ca/sites/default/files/uploads/publications/Nova%20Scotia%20Office/2016/12/CCPA-NS_Halifax_Antigonish_LivingWage_2016.pdf
- Shillington, R. (2016). An Analysis of the Economic Circumstances of Canadian Seniors. Broadbent Institute. Accessed from https://d3n8a8pro7vnm.cloudfront.net/broadbent/pages/4904/attachments/original/1455216659/An_Analysis_of_the_Economic_Circumstances_of_Canadian_Seniors.pdf?1455216659
- Smith-Carrier, T. & Lawlor, A. (2017). Realising our (neoliberal) potential? A critical discourse analysis of the Poverty Reduction Strategy in Ontario, Canada. *Critical Social Policy* 37 (1). 105-127.

- Snyder, J., Cheff, R. & Roche, B. (2016). Perceptions of the Social Determinants of Health Across Canada: An Examination of the Literature. Wellesley Institute. Accessed from <http://www.wellesleyinstitute.com/wp-content/uploads/2016/12/Perceptions-of-SDOH-across-Canada-2.pdf>
- Stapleton, J. (2009). Why don't we want the poor to own anything? Our relentless social policy journey toward destitution for the 900,000 poorest people in Ontario. Metcalf Foundation. Accessed from <http://metcalffoundation.com/wp-content/uploads/2011/05/why-dont-we-want-to-poor-to-own-anything.pdf>
- Tamarack Institute. (2013). Convening a Comprehensive, Multi-Sector Effort to Reduce Poverty: A Primer: A Tool for Vibrant Communities, 2nd Edition. Accessed from http://vibrantcanada.ca/files/povertyprimer_2nd_ed_final.pdf
- Torjman, S. (1998). Community-Based Poverty Reduction. Caledon Institute of Social Policy. Accessed from <http://www.caledoninst.org/Publications/PDF/260ENG.pdf>
- Torjman, S. (2015). Poverty Policy. Tamarack Institute. Accessed from https://cdn2.hubspot.net/hubfs/316071/Miscellaneous/Tamarack_New_Website/povertypolicy_storjman-final.pdf
- Torjman, S. & Makhoul, A. (2016). Disability Supports and Employment Policy. Calendon Institute of Social Policy. Accessed from <http://www.caledoninst.org/Publications/PDF/1105ENG.pdf>
- Tweddle, A., Battle, K. & Torjman S. (2016). Canada Social Report: Welfare in Canada, 2015. Calendon Institute of Social Policy. Accessed from <http://www.caledoninst.org/Publications/PDF/1109ENG.pdf>
- United Way Alberta Capital Region. (n.d.) Creating Pathways out of Poverty: A Results-Based Approach Toward a Bold New Vision. Accessed from <http://static1.1.sqspcdn.com/static/f/1930194/22888886/1370959561757/Creating+Pathways+Out+of>
- United Way Toronto. (2011). Vertical Poverty: Poverty by Postal Code 2: Declining Income, Housing Quality and Community Life in Toronto's Inner Suburban High-Rise Apartments. Accessed from <http://www.unitedwaytyr.com/document.doc?id=89>
- Vall, C. & Thompson, A. (2012). From Getting By to Getting Ahead: Six Levers for Building the Wellbeing of Families with Lower Incomes. United Way Calgary and Area. Accessed from http://www.calgaryunitedway.org/images/uwca/our-work/poverty/public-policy-research/From_Getting_By_v2_online.pdf
- Vancity. (2013). Rent Race: The Growing Unaffordability of Rent in Metro Vancouver. Accessed from <http://www.richmondprc.org/wordpress/wp-content/uploads/2013/08/rentracerental-report06282016-160704223047.pdf>
- Viens, O. (2010). Next steps on a well-marked path: 2010-2015 Strategy of Centraide of Greater Montreal for Fighting Poverty and Social Exclusion. Centraide of Greater Montreal. Accessed from http://www.centraide-mtl.org/media/upload/documents/2010_2015_Strategy_of_Centraide_of_Greater_Montreal_FINAL_1.pdf
- Wallstam, M. (2016). Out of Control: CCAP's 2016 Hotel Survey and Housing Report. Carnegie Community Action Project. Accessed from <http://www.carnegieaction.org/wp-content/uploads/2017/03/CCAP-SRO-HOTEL-REPORT-2016.pdf>
- Whaley, D. & Weaver, L. (2010). Approaches to Measuring Less Poverty in Communities. Tamarack Institute. Accessed from <https://cdn2.hubspot.net/hubfs/316071/Resources/Publications/Approaches%20to%20Measuring%20less%20Poverty%20in%20Communities.pdf>
- White, A., Dragicevic, N. & Granofsky, T. (2014). What works? Proven approaches to alleviating poverty. Mowat Centre. Accessed from https://mowatcentre.ca/wp-content/uploads/publications/95_what_works_full.pdf
- World Bank. (2016). Poverty and Shared Prosperity 2016: Taking on Inequality. World Bank. Accessed from <https://openknowledge.worldbank.org/bitstream/handle/10986/25078/9781464809583.pdf>

Municipal Poverty Reduction Strategies

- Calgary, AB. (2013). Enough for All: Unleashing Our Communities' Resources to Drive Down Poverty in Calgary. <http://enoughforall.ca/wp-content/uploads/2016/03/Enough-for-All-Strategy.pdf>
- Edmonton, AB. (2015). End Poverty in a Generation: A Strategy. https://www.edmonton.ca/city_government/documents/PDF/EndPovertyInAGeneration_Strategy.pdf

- Huron County, ON. (2014). Challenging Poverty through Collaborative Action: Poverty to Prosperity in Huron. <https://www.huronhealthunit.ca/wp-content/uploads/2017/01/P2PHuron-Report2014.pdf>
- Kingston, ON. (2010) Plans for Action as a Community: What part will you play in reducing poverty? 2013 Report. http://www.unitedwaykfla.ca/wp-content/uploads/2012/05/PovertyReduction_ActionPlan.pdf
- Lancaster City. (2016). One Good Job: A strategic plan to cut poverty in half in Lancaster City by 2032. <http://www.lancastercityalliance.org/wp-content/uploads/2016/12/Mayors-Commission-to-Combat-Poverty.pdf>
- London, ON. (2016). London for All: A Roadmap to End Poverty. <http://www.informationlondon.ca/Uploads/ContentDocuments/London%20for%20All.pdf>
- Medicine Hat, AB. (2017). THRIVE: Medicine Hat & Region Strategy to End Poverty & Increase Wellbeing. <https://cdn.jeal.io/thrivemh.ca/file/2017-Thrive-Plan.pdf>
- Moncton, NB. (2015). Social Inclusion: Quality of Life for All Monctonians Plan 2016-2021. http://vibrantcanada.ca/files/social_inclusion_plan_eng.pdf; https://www.moncton.ca/Assets/Residents+English/Social+Inclusion/Social+Inclusion+Plan_ENG.pdf
- Nelson, BC. (2016). Nelson at its best: Poverty Reduction Strategy 2017-2018. <http://www.bestnelson.org/wp-content/uploads/2017/02/Poverty-Reduction-Strategy-NaiB-2017-2018.pdf>
- New Westminster, BC. (2016). Community Poverty Reduction Strategy. http://vibrantcanada.ca/files/moving_forward.pdf
- Ottawa, ON. (2010). Ottawa's Poverty Reduction Strategy: Poverty Affects Us All: A Community Approach to Poverty Reduction. <http://ottawa.ca/calendar/ottawa/citycouncil/cpsc/2010/01-21/04%20-%20Poverty%20Reduction%20Strategy-eng.pdf>
- Peel Region, ON. (2012). Peel Poverty Reduction Strategy: Awareness, Access, Opportunity. <http://www.povertyinpeel.ca/pdfs/peel-poverty-reduction-strategy.pdf>
- Region of Waterloo, ON. (2012). The Region of Waterloo's Comprehensive Approach to Poverty Reduction. http://communityservices.regionofwaterloo.ca/en/communityPlanningPartnerships/resources/-comprehensiveapproachtopoverty_web_8_5X11_.pdf
- Revelstoke, BC. (2012). Revelstoke Community Poverty Reduction Strategy. <http://www.revelstokesocialdevelopment.org/wp-content/uploads/2013/04/Rev-Poverty-Strategy.pdf>
- Revelstoke, BC. (2013). Revelstoke Poverty Reduction Action Plan (2013-2017). http://www.revelstokesocialdevelopment.org/wp-content/uploads/2013/10/Revelstoke_PovertyReductionActionPlan.pdf
- Saint John, New Brunswick. (2014). Living SJ: Social Renewal Strategy. https://media.wix.com/ugd/a57d80_e745801a7f3b4264ae6f0a059ba34702.pdf
- Surrey, BC. (July 2012). This is how we end poverty in Surrey: Surrey Poverty Reduction Plan. https://www.surrey.ca/files/Surrey_Poverty_Reduction_Plan_Web_Version.pdf
- Thunder Bay, Ontario. (2014). Building a Better Thunder Bay for All: A Community Action Strategy to Reduce Poverty. http://vibrantcanada.ca/files/thunder_bay_povertyreductionreport.pdf
- Toronto, ON. To Prosperity: Toronto Poverty Reduction Strategy. https://www1.toronto.ca/City%20of%20Toronto/Social%20Development,%20Finance%20&%20Administration/Strategies/Poverty%20Reduction%20Strategy/PDF/TO_Prosperty_Final2015-reduced.pdf

Appendix A. Analysis of Existing City of Vancouver Plans, Policies and Programs

Healthy City Strategy

The Healthy City Strategy Four Year Action Plan directly addresses poverty reduction under its 'Making Ends Meet' goal. One of the 2025 targets is to 'reduce the city's poverty rate by 75% by 2025'. In addition, Action #7 is to determine how the City and local communities can, through proactive policies and practices, help reduce poverty and drive action at other levels of government, working closely with partners like the BC Poverty Reduction Coalition.

Several of the Healthy City Strategy goals have implications for poverty reduction, and as the city's overarching social sustainability plan, the actions within it are some of the most significant city-led commitments which can have an immediate impact on poverty in our city.

Community Economic Development (CED) Strategy

The City of Vancouver has co-created a Community Economic Development Strategy with Downtown Eastside communities to help meet goals of the Downtown Eastside Plan, the Healthy City Strategy, and other directives. Phase I of the Strategy began in 2015 with the dedication of City-owned assets to CED initiatives including:

- 501 Powell Street (Downtown Eastside Market)
- 312 Main Street (Centre for Social and Economic Innovation)
- The Lux (Low-Barrier Income Generating and Employment Hub)

The CED Strategy has the potential to move beyond a crisis response, to long-term actions that help reach goals in the DTES Plan, Healthy City Strategy, City of Reconciliation Framework and work underway on Mental Health and Addiction and Poverty Reduction.

In particular, the following core ideas from the CED Strategy support poverty reduction:

- Acknowledging the important role of Low-Income Self-Employment and Inclusive/Supported Employment along the livelihoods continuum, through which DTES residents make ends meet in the face of stagnant welfare rates or limited earnings exemptions, both of which have been identified as contributing to "poverty traps"
- Increasing incomes and reducing poverty by making connections between advocacy work on poverty with work to create inclusive low-barrier income and employment opportunities appropriate to a range of residents
- Retaining affordable, culturally-appropriate, and socially inclusive neighbourhood retail
- Increasing social hiring practices through Community Benefits Agreements and social procurement advocacy and business development

The CED Strategy's close alignment with the City of Vancouver's vision for poverty reduction will ensure that it is a guiding and foundational document for the development of a Poverty Reduction Strategy.

Mayor's Task Force on Mental Health and Addictions

The third action area in the 'Caring for All: Priority Actions to Address Mental Health and Addictions' report; 'De-stigmatization Feeling Safe and Included' recognizes that poverty adds an additional layer of stigma to mental health and addictions and that increased community awareness of mental health and addiction is a required step toward wellbeing. A recommended action within this plan is to 'Expand the City of Vancouver Dialogues project to develop collective actions including advocacy to address the impact of poverty and stigma in Vancouver.'

City of Reconciliation Framework

The City of Reconciliation vision is to form a sustained relationship of mutual respect and understanding with local First Nations, key Indigenous agencies, and the urban Aboriginal community, to incorporate a First Nations and urban Aboriginal perspective into the city's work and decisions, and to provide services that benefit members of the First Nations and urban Aboriginal community. It is therefore essential that a Poverty Reduction strategy commit to Reconciliation as one of its core principles. Poverty Reduction initiatives should further support the long-term goals of the City of Reconciliation framework:

- Strengthen local First Nations and urban Aboriginal relations
- Promote Aboriginal peoples' arts, culture, awareness, and understanding
- Incorporate First Nations and urban aboriginal perspectives for effective City services

Vancouver Food Strategy

The city's food strategy identifies a number of gaps and vulnerabilities affecting our food systems including the considerable variation in socio-economic and demographic conditions across Vancouver's neighbourhoods. A growing income gap, social polarization, child poverty, unaffordable housing, and rising rates of hunger and preventable disease are noted as barriers for the city's food strategy.

Action 5.4 of the strategy is to 'Support the provincial government in creating a comprehensive anti-poverty program that brings attention to the links between food, health and income'.

Housing Vancouver Strategy

The City of Vancouver is currently developing an updated housing strategy, which includes emerging directions such as 'supporting the most vulnerable' and 'housing lower-income residents'. Because poverty and access to housing are inextricably linked, this strategy will have important implications for poverty reduction in the City of Vancouver.

Transportation 2040 Plan

The City's Transportation 2040 Plan focuses on the physical accessibility of transit and transportation infrastructure, but not on equal access to transit and transit equity. Action 4.1 to 'Support a universally accessible transit system with a goal of equal transit outcomes for people of all incomes, ages, and abilities' is a related policy action which could be deepened to support poverty reduction goals.

Culture Plan 2008-2018

Accessibility is one of the core values in the City's culture plan. This value seeks to ensure that all Vancouverites have the opportunity to participate in and share in the benefits of the city's cultural life, including through access to affordable spaces and places for the creation of art, the ability to earn a living from the creative process and retention of accomplished artists in the community. Given the rise in precarious work, temporary, and low-wage work, protecting the arts and culture sector will be an important part of poverty reduction.

Greenest City Action Plan

The Greenest City Action Plan's 'Local Food' section recognizes the importance of access to nutritious food for low-income residents, and also recognizes that access to fresh produce is not distributed equally across the city. Goals such as 'Green Economy', 'Green Transportation', 'Access to Nature', and 'Clean Water' have the potential to be better aligned with poverty reduction efforts and to be examined through the experience of Vancouverites living in poverty.

VanPlay Parks and Recreation Strategy

'Vancouver's Playbook: a plan for the future of our parks and recreation' is the newly announced 25-year recreation plan for the city. The VanPlay plan identifies increased unaffordability, income distribution, and the growing need for social services as challenges for resilience and wellbeing in our city. In its preliminary issue papers, the Park Board specifies that Vancouver is a city with high rates of poverty, and commits to making Vancouver parks and recreation more resilient to emerging issues such as social justice, social isolation and natural disasters.

Vancouver's Digital Strategy

One of the pillars of the digital strategy is 'Engagement & Access', which examines how the City and its constituents engage with each other, through transactional service delivery, collaboration and communication. The digital divide is the other aspect of this focus area, and its objective is to provide access to technology and increase digital literacy for all. The City of Vancouver has already made a significant investment in addressing the digital divide through the Vancouver Public Library's network of computers providing internet access, however, the expansion of this program is identified as an action in the plan.

Vancouver Economic Action Strategy

There is an opportunity to better align the Vancouver Economic Commission (VEC) as a natural ally and partner for poverty reduction efforts in Vancouver as it is currently beginning to engage internal and external stakeholders to develop a new economic strategy. One of the three key aspects of the VEC's current Economic Action Strategy is 'A Focus on People - Attracting and Retaining Human Capital', which could be enhanced to better support small businesses in low-income areas and local entrepreneurs beyond the creative economy and tech sector. As its mandate is to work to position Vancouver as a globally recognized city for innovative, creative and sustainable business, there is ample opportunity for the VEC to support Vancouver's work to reduce working poverty and increase affordability in our city.

Neighbourhood Plans

Plans such as the Downtown Eastside Local Area Plan and the Grandview-Woodland Community Plan align well with poverty reduction initiatives. Compared to other communities in Vancouver, families in Grandview-Woodland are more likely to face challenges associated with single parenting and low incomes. Similarly, there are approximately 18,500 people living in the DTES and 60 per cent of the population is low-income with a median income of only \$13,700. Over half of the children and adults are living in poverty. Poverty efforts in Vancouver could help to support goals related to community and economic wellbeing in these and other local areas.

The DTES LAP's goal to 'Encourage Inclusive Local Employment' further identifies poverty as a significant challenge to the community's health, social well-being and resilience as a whole, and Policy 6.10.1 states that all City of Vancouver staff working in the community-based development area should be informed of the plan and provided with opportunities for awareness and sensitivity training in the following areas: addictions, mental health, homelessness, poverty, Aboriginal reconciliation, and multiculturalism. Furthermore, guidelines such as the 'Neighbourhood Fit Tool' are being applied to development applications in the DTES planning area to protect and incentivize important retail assets.

Sex Work Response Guidelines

The City of Vancouver Sex Work Response Guidelines were developed to promote a respectful, non-discriminatory and consistent approach among city employees who interact with anyone in the sex industry through the course of their duties. The specific objectives of the guidelines are to:

- Ensure fair and unbiased treatment towards sex workers and promote sex worker safety, dignity and well-being;
- Encourage an equitable and non-discriminatory approach with all individuals engaged in the sex industry;
- Mitigate negative impacts of sex work on sex workers, residents and neighbourhoods;
- Promote safe environments for all residents and neighbourhoods; and
- Build positive relationships with individuals and businesses engaged in the sex industry, and individuals, businesses and neighbourhoods impacted by sex work.

Since the push to leave poverty brings some women to sex work, and since sex work is often a way for individuals to sustain their livelihoods, it is important to recognize the unique needs of sex workers when considering poverty reduction. As part of the DTES CED Strategy, the City funded the Transitions Project, assisting sex worker organizations to support individuals transitioning to other employment areas.

Social Infrastructure Plan

The process of developing a Social Infrastructure Plan officially launched in early 2017. Social infrastructure refers to facilities and services that help individuals, families, groups, and communities meet their social needs, maximize their potential for development, and enhance community well-being. Examples of social infrastructure include neighbourhood houses, family places, youth centres, seniors' centres, and immigrant-serving organizations. The city is facing a collective challenge to meet social infrastructure needs as Vancouver's population is expected to increase by 150,000 people over the next 30 years. Rising real estate costs, an uneven distribution of social infrastructure across the city, social vulnerability, and affordability challenges add further pressure. The plan will focus on finding out:

- What social infrastructure exists, who it serves, and how well it meets our current needs
- What social infrastructure will be needed in the future
- The best way to fund and deliver new social infrastructure
- Priorities and decision-making criteria to guide our strategic and sustainable investments

The Social Infrastructure Plan will develop recommendations for how to meet the needs of a dynamic city in a more strategic and sustainable way, and poverty reduction efforts could build upon the findings of this plan.

Age-Friendly Action Plan

The Age-friendly Action Plan is a series of over 60 actions that the City can take to help make Vancouver a more safe, inclusive, and engaging city for seniors across the full spectrum, from fully independent older adults and seniors, to those who are more vulnerable and need additional supports. The plan includes is informed by two of the Healthy City Strategy's guiding principles: improving health and well-being for all, and addressing inequities. As a result of the aging population and high rate of senior's poverty, age-friendly policies are crucial to poverty reduction.

Leisure Access Pass

The Leisure Access Program (LAP) provides low-income Vancouver residents with access to basic recreation programs and services at Park Board facilities at a reduced cost. Caregivers for low-income seniors also receive free admission to Park Board recreation facilities, and The Leisure Access Agency Pass gives free access to basic recreation services at Park Board facilities to non-profit agency staff and volunteers when they accompany and assist clients who live in the City of Vancouver. This initiative is a core municipal program to improve access to recreation for those living in poverty in Vancouver.

Open Data Access

The city's Open Data catalogue provides free and open access to over 145 anonymized City datasets which are free and available to everyone in one or more open and accessible formats. Of particular interest to those living in poverty is the drinking fountains and public washrooms data, as these are essential resources for many low-income and homeless residents.

Community and Social Service Grants for Non-profit Organizations

To help build strong communities in Vancouver, the City offers a range of funding for non-profit social service groups and neighbourhood organizations in the form of grants.

The below grants can add to the city's capacity to respond to poverty by empowering partner organizations to respond to related issues.

Aboriginal Healing and Wellness Grants

Provides funding to social service organizations to support Elder Services Programs that provide traditional, spiritual, and cultural healing and wellness activities in Vancouver's urban Aboriginal community.

Childcare Enhancement Grants

Provides funds to non-profit organizations to support new and existing daycares.

Childcare Program Development Grants

Provides funds to licensed non-profit daycares to help cover costs for starting new programs or expanding existing ones.

Childcare Program Stabilization Grants

Provides funds for non-profit daycare centres facing financial emergencies, to help them strengthen their cash flow and better manage their money.

Childcare Research, Policy Development, and Innovation Grants

Provides one-time funding for research, policy development, and related projects to improve childcare in Vancouver.

Chinese Society Buildings Matching Grants

Supports critical capital upgrades to buildings owned by Chinese family clan and benevolent societies in Chinatown or the Downtown Eastside (DTES). Helps the societies continue contributing to the cultural legacy and overall revitalization of Chinatown.

Direct Social Services Grants

Provides funding to non-profit organizations which are working to address specific social problems and bring about positive social change.

Hastings Legacy Fund

Provide support for social services in the Hastings-Sunrise neighbourhood.

Homelessness Action Week Grants

Provides funding to non-profit community groups to host an event or do a project for Homelessness Action Week that directly benefits people who are homeless or at risk of homelessness.

Organizational Capacity Building Grants

Provides funding to non-profit organizations which help other non-profits serve their clients better.

School-age Care Expansion Projects Grant Program

This program offers small grants for non-profit organizations, to assist with the capital costs of outfitting rooms in schools to house licensed childcare.

Social Innovation Project Grants

Provides funding to social service organizations to turn innovative ideas into viable projects that address social change, create or enhance social inclusion and belonging, and help Vancouver's most vulnerable residents.

Capital Project Grants

Includes the Downtown Eastside (DTES) Capital Grants and Social Policy Capital Grants. Provides support for capital projects that preserve or increase the capacity of facilities used to address the needs of vulnerable communities in Vancouver. Downtown Eastside (DTES) Capital Grants only fund capital projects within the DTES that help implement actions from the DTES Plan. Social Policy Capital Grants fund small capital projects anywhere in Vancouver.

Sustainable Food Systems Grants

Provides funding to non-profit organizations building sustainable food systems at the neighbourhood scale.

Vantage Point bursaries: Free professional development workshops and labs

Provides free access to workshops, labs, and other learning opportunities for staff and board members of eligible organizations.

2017 Contingency Budget for the Opioid Crisis

Supports programs to mitigate the effects of the Opioid Crisis.

2016 CED Quick Start Project Funding

Applications from eligible non-profit organizations were invited to seek funding for CED quick-start projects and initiatives in the areas of social-procurement facilitation, local hiring and supported employment, socially-inclusive and community-needs retail (including grocery, food, and beverage), peer-supported low-barrier work, informal economy (including binners and vendors), urban Aboriginal social enterprise and micro-enterprise, capacity-building and scaling in social enterprise and micro-enterprise, capacity-building in manufacturing and light industry, and arts economy.



Appendix B. Summary of Municipal Poverty Reduction Strategies in Canada

Calgary, AB

May 2013

Enough for All: Unleashing Our Communities' Resources to Drive Down Poverty in Calgary

<http://enoughforall.ca/wp-content/uploads/2016/03/Enough-for-All-Strategy.pdf>

The City of Calgary's Calgary Poverty Reduction Initiative (CPRI) moved the stewardship of the Enough for All Strategy to the community in January 2015. Under a four-year agreement, the City of Calgary, United Way, Vibrant Communities Calgary, and Momentum have agreed to use a Collective Impact Approach to support the community in this work. The Enough for All poverty reduction strategy uses the collective impact model to guide its process, engagement, implementation, and to maximize the result of the collective efforts towards poverty reduction in Calgary. Enough for All collaborators are also working intentionally with the Indigenous community to develop an Indigenous Poverty Reduction Strategy, which will be implemented as an integral component of the overall Enough for All strategy.

Vision

A community where no human being is deprived of the resources, means, choices and power to acquire and maintain self-sufficiency while being able to be an active participant in society.

Mission

To end poverty in Calgary and enhance the well-being of all Calgarians.

Definition of Poverty

Poverty is the condition of a human being who is deprived of the resources, means, choices and power to acquire and maintain self-sufficiency while being able to be an active participant in society.

Values

- Integrity
- Respect
- Social Equity
- Participation
- Inclusion
- Diversity
- Collaboration

Priority Outcomes

- By 2023, 95% of all people living in Calgary are at or above Statistics Canada's Low-Income Cut-off (LICO) rates
- By 2023, 90% of all people living in Calgary are at or above 125% of Statistics Canada's Low-Income Cut-off (LICO) rates
- By 2018, Calgarians consider reducing poverty to be a high priority

Key Points

- Values-based, universal, 'for all' lens
- Rights-based framework
- Collective impact approach which emphasizes multi-stakeholder coordination
- Integrated and inter-connected mutually supporting actions
- Focus on preventative actions to address the underlying forces of poverty, rather than alleviating only the effects of poverty
- Asset-based approach - redirection of resources rather than seeking new ones, to build on existing initiatives and integrate these into existing structures and operations

Innovative actions

- Collaboration: Developing an information sharing tool that provides the benefits of a common intake system, while minimizing the investment costs and overcoming inter-agency barriers and client fears about sharing personal information (online portal where individuals enter and manage their own profile which can be shared with the organizations of their choice)
- Basic needs: community food centre, centralized housing registry, housing incentives, policies and regulatory measures, social assistance reform
- Community Hubs: centres of activity, programming, and services, as well as potential centre of community economic development activity
- Financial empowerment: Development of a community investment fund, establishment of a financial empowerment task force to develop income and savings strategies, including financial literacy education, and working with the banking industry to develop programs and services that provide access to banking services for all Calgarians
- Decriminalization of poverty: Working with Alberta Justice and Animal and Bylaw Services to increase diversion of those charged with minor poverty-related offences to community-based supports rather than incarceration; expand restorative justice programs
- Public awareness: reducing stigmatization and Aboriginal awareness
- Employment and income: social business centre, community investment fund, community economic development training, living wage policies, ethical purchasing and procurement policies, pay-day lender bylaw , progressive hiring practices to ensure diversity, opportunities for workers with disabilities, employment supports for vulnerable workers (i.e. childcare, transportation, housing support)
- Reconciliation: Development of an Aboriginal Poverty Reduction Strategy

Governance

- The Calgary Poverty Reduction Initiative is a joint initiative of the City of Calgary and United Way of Calgary.
- A Stewardship Board comprised of community leaders from the private sector, funders, academic leaders, the non-profit sector, government, and persons with current lived experience of poverty. This Board is the leadership team and public face of the Poverty Reduction Strategy.
- Implementation Teams (i.e., Aboriginal team, service team, asset-building team) are responsible for implementing priority areas in the strategy, and report to the Stewardship Board.
- The Secretariat is a staff team reporting to the Stewardship Board, who coordinates and support the work of the implementation teams and contributes to managing partnerships, public education, communication, and funding for continued implementation of the plan.

Engagement

- The engagement process consisted of three components: (1) a constellation of working groups, (2) community workshops, (3) independent submissions.
- The Constellation network (C-Net) was comprised of 16 working groups consisting of over 200 members organized to address specific poverty issues. These groups met consistently between June and November 2012 and contributed approximately 13,000 working hours.
- 24 community workshops were conducted with the public and stakeholder groups
- CPRI invited and received independent written submissions from stakeholder groups.

Framework

Goal 1: All Calgary communities are strong, supportive and inclusive

- Establish community hubs
- Build personal support networks
- Raise public awareness about poverty

Outcomes:

- Concentrations of poverty are reduced so that no community in Calgary has a poverty rate of 30% or more
- All Calgarians report that they have at least 3 people they can rely on for support in times of need.

Goal 2: Everyone in Calgary has the income and assets needed to thrive

- Doing business differently
- Building assets together

Outcomes:

- Calgary has the highest Employment Quality in Canada
- 95% of working Calgarians are earning a living wage
- Calgarians have the best credit risk score in Canada
- All Calgary households have a three month emergency savings fund

Goal 3: Everyone in Calgary can easily access the right supports, services and resources

- Develop an integrated service access platform
- Increase access to information
- Ensure peoples' basic needs are met

Outcomes:

- Everyone who needs a service can access it within a timely manner, regardless of income.
- Calgarians only need to tell their story once when accessing services.
- All those who require income assistance receive sufficient support.
- Calgary Food Bank usage is significantly reduced
- Homeless shelter utilization is significantly reduced

Goal 4: All Aboriginal peoples are equal participants in Calgary's prosperous future

- Work intentionally with the Aboriginal community to develop an Aboriginal Poverty Reduction Strategy, which will be implemented as an integral component of the overall Poverty Reduction Strategy
- Develop a public awareness campaign to increase understanding of the issues affecting Aboriginal people, and address discrimination and stereotypes

Outcomes:

- By 2023, Aboriginal poverty rates are identical to Calgary's overall poverty rate
- By 2023, Aboriginal workers will earn an income equal to that of the rest of the Calgary workforce

End Poverty in a Generation: A Strategy

https://www.edmonton.ca/city_government/documents/PDF/EndPovertyInAGeneration_Strategy.pdf

EndPovertyEdmonton is a community-based initiative aimed at advancing shared prosperity for all, where every Edmontonian has an equal opportunity to live, work, participate and thrive. Edmonton's strategy is based on the Collective Impact model and focuses on upstream and preventative actions. The strategy builds on a strong case for ending poverty on three fronts: the economic argument, the human rights case and the public opinion approach. Furthermore, the strategy is grounded in the concept of "Nothing about us without us": that people with the lived experience of poverty are the experts and that solutions must come from them, and believes that eliminating poverty is a profound act of Reconciliation for Edmonton's Indigenous community, which is disproportionately impacted by poverty.

Definition of Poverty

Poverty is defined as when people lack, or are denied, economic, social and cultural resources to have a quality of life that sustains and facilitates full and meaningful participation in the community. (Task Force definition, 2014)

Key Points

- People-centered approach, igniting a place-based movement, focusing on trauma-informed action, and committing to sound evaluation and a valid theory of change
- Anti-racism and reconciliation focus
- Defines prosperity and income inequality
- Uses an economic, human rights, and public opinion case for ending poverty
- Defining what poverty looks like in an Indigenous context (i.e. beyond monetary definitions)
- The plan will measure change using economic, social, and cultural indicators
- The root causes of poverty are identified as: personal vulnerabilities (low education, lack of skills, generational, language (ESL), disability, women), disruptive events (migration, job loss, disability, family breakdown, illness, recession), life stages (children, youth, seniors, parents), and systemic barriers (household debt, access to services, asset-stripping, discrimination/racism, stagnant or low wages, credential recognition)
- Plan differentiated between transitional poverty, chronic poverty, and intergenerational poverty
- Plan includes profiles of four Edmonton families who have experiences life below the poverty line.
- Actions to decriminalize poverty and divert individuals facing minor infractions to restorative justice initiatives
- The plan includes a 'Count me in' section under each priority area, to encourage Edmontonians to get involved in small actions which will impact Edmonton's movement to end poverty

Governance

- The EndPovertyEdmonton Task Force was formed in March 2014 with the mandate to develop the city's Poverty Reduction Strategy
- The Task Force built upon the work of the previous Edmonton Poverty Elimination Initiative which was co-chaired by the United Way Capital Region and the City
- EndPovertyEdmonton will be made up of five community tables and supported by a Secretariat who will coordinate, communicate, and support the work: (1) Stewardship Roundtable, (2) Investment Collective, (3) Stakeholder Forum, (4) Indigenous Circle, (5) Count Me In Network

Engagement

- The Task Force began by consulting with two Round Tables, reviewing past work and commissioning new research
- Based on their initial learnings, the Task Force engaged approximately 200 people in seven Working Groups to focus on specific aspects of poverty
- More than 3,000 Edmontonians were consulted and engaged over two years. They came up with 400 recommendations, which eventually formed the 35 actions in the EndPovertyEdmonton Road Map

Framework

Priorities

Toward true reconciliation

- Establish an Aboriginal culture and wellness centre
- Initiate people-first and trauma-informed policy and practice
- Implement a community witness program
- Provide opportunities where Aboriginal people in poverty and “show and grow” their talents
- Make systemic changes to better reflect the needs, interests and culture of Aboriginal people

Justice for all

- Eliminate racism
- Decriminalize poverty
- Make it easier to vote and participate in elections
- Make Edmonton a “human rights city”

Move people out of poverty

- Advocate for livable incomes for Edmontonians
- Improve and expand transit services
- Negotiate with other orders of government to increase funding for affordable and supportive housing as well as rental subsidy programs
- Develop a community-based learning group to look at housing and zoning innovations
- Improve skills training to help people gain sustainable employment
- Improve literacy
- Reduce barriers to getting information and accessing City programs and services
- Help people navigate systems in order to access resources and opportunities
- Improve timely access to mental health and wellness services

Invest in our poverty-free future

- Grow social enterprises to build sustainable livelihood and assets
- Invest in food security-oriented enterprises aimed at increasing food access and gainful employment
- Partner with community organizations and other stakeholders to create a community development corporation
- Plan and implement a system of early learning and care
- Reduce barriers for children and families to access services, including out-of-school care and respite care
- Advocate to the provincial government for the implementation of culturally sensitive curricula and for standards that require well-educated staff in all early learning and care centres
- Advocate to the provincial government for sustainable, predictable, and adequate funding for school-based wrap-around services
- Keep the individual at the centre in providing care, services and supports

Change the conversation: Build a movement to end poverty

- Launch a collaborative broad-based community engagement and education initiative to change people's attitudes about poverty

Actions***Goal 1: Toward true Reconciliation***

1. Design and plan a new Indigenous culture and wellness centre
2. Create spaces, events and opportunities to show and grow the talents of Indigenous Edmontonians
3. City of Edmonton to complete a review of programs and services to better reflect the needs of Indigenous peoples and champion the Truth and Reconciliation Commission's Calls to Action
4. Launch a Community Witness Program

Goal 2: Justice for all

5. Host an annual Day of Dignity to recognize and honour human rights and dignity for all
6. Provide opportunities and supports to vulnerable populations to participate in all City committees
7. Support and promote training opportunities to build understanding and end stigmatization between vulnerable people and law enforcement personnel
8. Develop policies and amend bylaws to provide law enforcement with structured flexibility when issuing minor infractions
9. Implement a social lab project to generate ideas and test prototypes to end racism
10. Work with local Indigenous and refugee youth on an anti-racism public awareness and action campaign
11. Expand initiatives on intercultural competency, anti-racism and trauma informed training as mandatory for City staff
12. Incentivize business, educational institutions and not-for-profit employers to implement intercultural competency and anti-racism education in their institutions

Goal 3: Move people out of poverty

13. Implement the "1,000 Families" initiative in five Edmonton communities
14. Draft a living wage policy for all City of Edmonton staff and contracted services to be approved by City Council
15. Actively encourage local employers in all sectors to learn about and implement living wage policies
16. Expand the spectrum of financial empowerment initiatives
17. Initiate a community dialogue to remove systemic barriers and improve coordination of training and employment opportunities
18. Implement a low-income transit pass at 60% discount for eligible low-income transit customers
19. Provide free passes for agencies to distribute to vulnerable youth and adults
20. Conduct a feasibility study of the costs and opportunities of free public transportation for children under 12 years
21. Evaluate Edmonton Transit Services (ETS) Late Night Owl Service and expand/improve service as appropriate for shift workers
22. Increase supports to the Community Bridge initiative to prevent evictions
23. Revisit and renew affordable housing agreements with other orders of government, implement a housing awareness campaign, and initiate a Centre of Excellence for social housing
24. Research leading practices on housing design and innovation and raise awareness of the need for and right to affordable housing
25. Resource the Edmonton Mental Health Steering Committee to implement the coordinated community mental health action plan

26. Advance partnerships to support the implementation of the Edmonton Suicide Prevention Strategy and the Managed Alcohol Program
27. Advocate to increase funding and access to mental health services and education including the expansion of full service hours for multi-disciplinary mental health services
28. Apply an integrated poverty lens to guide decision-making and operations in the City of Edmonton

Goal 4: Invest in a poverty free future

29. Resource a new Early Learning and Care Steering Committee to guide the implementation of an integrated system and strategy for early learning and care in Edmonton
30. Resource and grow the All In for Youth wrap-around initiative in five school sites
31. Establish a Community Development Corporation to invest in affordable housing and community economic development
32. Advance the development and stability of local food system providers through access to appropriate business skill training, mentoring, and capital sources (both for start-up and to scale)
33. Support ongoing work and facilitate discussion amongst Edmonton's and Alberta's financial systems players, business support agencies and post-secondary institutions to collectively address barriers faced by low income Edmontonians when starting or growing their own businesses

Goal 5: Change the conversation: Build a movement to end poverty

34. Create a "Design by Doing" action lab to catalyze grassroots community-led projects as prototypes to end poverty
35. Produce participation toolkits that enable different groups to engage and empower them to action

Kingston, ON

September 2010

Plans for Action as a Community: What part will you play in reducing poverty?

http://www.unitedwaykfla.ca/wp-content/uploads/2012/05/PovertyReduction_ActionPlan.pdf

Kingston's plan is a coordinated, community-based strategy to reduce poverty, and the initiative is funded and supported by the City and the United Way. Leadership was provided through a Poverty Reduction Initiative Steering Committee composed of representatives from the City of Kingston, the United Way serving KFL&A and the Kingston Community Roundtable on Poverty Reduction. Some focuses of the strategy include public education including dispelling myths and sharing Kingston poverty data, and giving children a good head start.

Definition of Poverty

Living in poverty means there is not enough money for the basics of a healthy life. Poverty imposes hard economic choices – between shelter and medicine, nutritious food and transportation, childcare and employment opportunities, moving towards a self-sufficient future versus just getting through today.

Key Points

- The Kingston Community Roundtable on Poverty Reduction and the Poverty Reduction Strategy were born out of the recommendations of the Mayor's Task Force on Poverty in 2010
- The Plan uses the Five Principles of Poverty Reduction from the book 'Cities Reducing Poverty' edited by Mark Cabaj and published by the Tamarack Institute in 2011:
 1. Poverty is better addressed when reduction, not alleviation is the goal
 2. Poverty is more effectively addressed by multi-sector leadership and collaboration involving business, government and non-profit leaders as well as people with firsthand experience living with poverty

3. Poverty Reduction is more effective when comprehensively focused on the interrelated causes and effects of poverty as opposed to isolated and unrelated efforts to address symptoms
 4. Poverty Reduction is more effective when built on local assets as opposed to looking for solutions from outside the community.
 5. Poverty reduction efforts are more productive when they are a part of an ongoing process of learning, evaluation, and change rather than the pursuit of a silver bullet.
- Plan examines the combined effects of both material and social deprivation
 - A core deliverable of the Poverty Reduction Plan's 'Health' working group was the development of a Food Policy Council to coordinate between sectors in the food system. A Point in Time count was also coordinated to estimate the use of emergency food services in Kingston in one day.

Innovative Actions

- Kingston's Poverty Impact Checklist ensures that all municipal planning and policy efforts are considering the effects on poverty.

Governance

- The Poverty Reduction Strategy is funded and supported by the City of Kingston and the United Way.
- Leadership was provided through a Poverty Reduction Initiative Steering Committee composed of representatives from the City of Kingston, the United Way serving KFL&A and the Kingston Community Roundtable on Poverty Reduction.
- Working Groups were established in each of the plan's strategic focus areas (housing, health, skills and employment, social services and community support, and education)

Engagement

- Engagement included a public survey, community consultations, conversations and focus groups, research on leading practices and learnings from other communities, and a public workshop used to develop the goals and objectives of the plan
- People who experience poverty were involved in public consultations

Framework

Housing

Goal: A safe, stable, accessible and affordable home for everyone

- Empower landlords, tenants and neighbours with knowledge
- Engage neighbourhood networks in the solution
- Facilitate access to essential services

Health

Goal: Understanding the impacts of poverty and other determinants of health

- Look at policies and programs with a health equity lens
- Promote community understanding of the impact of poverty on health outcomes
- Develop methods by which vulnerable persons can obtain health care at the right time and in the right place to meet their needs

Social Services and Community Supports

Goal: A compassionate community & system of supports for people in need

- Use "smart cards" to enable people living in poverty to access goods and services
- Facilitate and promote access to 211 for information on social services
- Develop networking mechanisms for service providers and for people living in poverty

Community Supports for Education

Goal: Help children succeed in school with parental and community support

- Build on successful models/strategies to stimulate parent-teacher engagement
- Use directories and maps to promote awareness of existing supports and also identify gaps and opportunities

Skills Development and Employment

Goal: Enhance access to living wage jobs; build employment potential of people

- Promote information sharing, mapping resources and employment supports
- Explore public transportation improvements to support employment
- Promote recruitment practices and hiring opportunities for low-income applicants

London, ON

March 2016

London for All: A Roadmap to End Poverty

<http://www.informationlondon.ca/Uploads/ContentDocuments/London%20for%20All.pdf>

The recommendations in London's poverty reduction strategy are rooted in the Social Determinants of Health, the best available research, good work already happening in London, and deep engagement with over 1,000 Londoners. The strategy recognizes that poverty is a human rights issue, an equity issue, and an economic sustainability issue. Furthermore, it provides information to create immediate action, systems change, and shift mindsets with regards to poverty.

Definition of Poverty

Poverty is a complex issue that has no single cause. Our sense of what poverty "means" must at all times be approached with a mindset of humility and an understanding that each person experiences poverty differently. Each person's story is unique and a product of multiple complex, interrelating causes.

Key Points

- Recommendations rooted in a Social Determinants of Health Approach
- Rights-based approach, poverty as a human rights issue

Governance

- The Mayor's Advisory Panel on Poverty was convened in September 2015 and given a six-month mandate to develop recommendations on what more the community could do to address poverty in London, ON.

Engagement

- Over 1,000 Londoners consulted
- Initial engagement was through 15 informal and targeted conversations with groups and individuals already focused on addressing poverty in London.
- The second phase of engagement sought broad public input on the definition of poverty and goals for the strategy using community conversations, online engagement, partner-hosted conversations, and delegation presentations to panel members.
- The third phase of engagement reviewed the draft recommendations and asked Londoners to prioritize actions.

Framework

Changing Mindsets

- Develop a campaign that educates and engages the community on poverty
- Grow existing awareness and engagement initiatives
- Increase the number of organizations providing Indigenous Cultural Safety training

- Increase the number of organizations providing Cultural Competency training
- Collaborate with school boards to build on existing resources that help students understand the impacts of poverty and to reduce stigma

Income & Employment

- Use London's Community Economic Roadmap to accelerate skills training programs that meet local labour market needs
- Become a Basic Income Guarantee pilot site
- Develop and implement hiring practices aimed at increasing diversity
- Implement social procurement policies at public institutions
- Establish the Living Wage figure for London

Health

- Create a coordinated local mental health and addictions strategy

Homelessness Prevention & Housing

- Build a culture of practice around effective implementation of the Housing First approach
- Engage landlords in keeping more people housed
- Invest in housing allowances to support flexible, permanent housing stability for individuals and families
- Implement strategies that assist in housing women at risk of or experiencing homelessness
- Implement strategies that support housing youth at risk of or experiencing homelessness
- Leverage funding and invest in the regeneration of existing London and Middlesex Housing Corporation (LMHC) properties

Transportation

- Reduce transit-related costs for people with low income
- Engage all stakeholders, including businesses and London Transit Commission, regarding timing, routes, and accessibility
- Allow children under 12 to ride public transit free

Early Learning & Education

- Increase the number of licensed childcare spaces
- Reduce the wait time to receive childcare subsidy
- Demonstrate active use of an equity lens in childcare quality strategies

Food Security

- Support development of the London & Middlesex Food Policy Council

System Change

- Review supports and services to understand which to scale up and which to stop
- Bring poverty-focused planning tables together to coordinate, collaborate, and streamline efforts
- Engage people with lived experience in democratic processes and institutions

The THRIVE Strategy is a collaboration between the Poverty Reduction Leadership Group and a substantial number of community members and begins with a community call to action. The plan focuses on 13 priorities and key actions, including income security, affordable housing and health and wellness. The strategy takes an upstream approach to alleviating the symptoms of poverty by calling for system changes that will prevent poverty by addressing its root causes. Loosely modelled by the Collective Impact approach, the strategy looks to coordinate efforts to create an integrated community system.

Vision

By 2030, Medicine Hat will have ended poverty in all its forms, ensuring wellbeing for all. As a result, everyone will have the resources and opportunities needed to achieve a standard of living that allows full participation in the economic, social, cultural, educational, and political spheres of society.

Definition of Poverty

Poverty is a lack of resources and opportunities to achieve a standard of living that allows full participation in the economic, social, cultural, educational, and political spheres of society. Poverty derives from a mixture of complex and compounding factors.

Foundational Principles

- Everyone has an equal right to justice, education, personal security and privacy, work, cultural, political and recreational participation.
- Our approach is person-centered and community-driven.
- To end poverty, we must prevent it in the first place.
- Ending poverty and increasing wellbeing requires a collective effort.
- Social change requires innovation.

Key Points

- Strengths-based, holistic, person-centered
- Systems planning/prevention-focused system planning and integration approach: coordinated approach versus interventions on a program-to-program basis (structural change)
- Collective Impact is the theory behind one of the strategy's foundational principles, which outlines the collective effort required to end poverty
- Purpose of the plan is to validate the good work underway, set a clear direction for the future, and spur action to move forward, innovate, and create
- Proposed strategies and actions emerged from the existing body of evidence and plans already in place, but also resounded in the community voices heard throughout the strategy's development
- Going beyond an income or 'basic needs' perspective and considering quality of life across dimensions of wellbeing (focusing on enhancing quality of life rather than on what's not working/the needs and gaps)
 - * THRIVE's interventions will focus on enhancing the overall wellbeing of people, rather than focusing on their level of deprivation
- Considers multi-dimensional measures including OECD's Better Life Index, Human Development Index, UNDP Multidimensional Poverty Index, Canadian Wellbeing Index, WEF Human Capital Index, UNICEF Child Deprivation Index, Pembina Institute's Genuine Progress Indicator, and the Canadian Index of Wellbeing.
- Includes comprehensive section on 'local trends' including population, income, housing, homelessness, health, safety, recreation, food security, early childhood development, education, and transportation stats.

- Strategy considers the impacts of colonization and systemic racism, commits to the principles of Reconciliation.
- “Nothing about us, without us” lens – including Indigenous, LGBTQ2S, and visible minorities
- Draws on international examples of successful innovations which significantly impacted poverty including in Belo Horizonte, Brazil; the Brownsville neighbourhood of New York; and China.
- Plan advocates for policy coordination and government leadership to align areas of accountability such as income assistance, infrastructure, health, family violence, corrections, child intervention, education, and affordable housing/rent supports.
- Public education and challenging myths
- Social inclusion, gender equity, Reconciliation

Innovative Actions

- Looking at best practices that are already working locally and finding ways to increase their impact, for example Housing First policies and Food Bank FoodFirst Pilot.
- ‘Community System’ planning lens – encouraging service providers and stakeholders to agree on a common set of principles to create a person-centered Community System- restructure services so that they become increasingly coordinated and strategic – taking the onus off of those in need to navigate and piece together services from a complex system
 - * Developing and using a Common Quality of Life and Poverty Assessment Tool can develop more coordinated ways of matching participants to services and supports rather than an agency-centric way of delivering resources
- Real-time service and funding map – “while we may understand in theory how the Community System operates, in practice, those who find themselves in need often report that resources are not delivered in a transparent manner and they have difficulty navigating the complex networks of supports”- information and data access
- Supporting social enterprise and innovation

Governance

- Poverty Reduction Leadership Group:
 - * Group initiated work on a community-based effort to reduce poverty in Medicine Hat in 2013 by commissioning a report on key issues and trends locally – starting point for the action plan
 - * 12 members
 - * Medicine Hat Community Housing Society, Medicine Hat & District Food Bank Association, City of Medicine Hat Family and Community Support Services, Prairie Rose School Division, Medicine Hat College, YMCA of Medicine Hat, four ‘community members at large’
- Council of Champions – cross-sectoral high-level decision-makers who will lead the work of implementation – their role is to provide the initiative and influence to move their respective sectors in alignment with the THRIVE Strategy (to be launched within first month, i.e. Feb. 2017)
- Independent backbone organization to support the Council of Champions (start-up with staff and location)
- Dr. Alina Turner (Turner Strategies) hired as a consultant
- Advisory Lived Experience Leadership Group to provide strategic advice on an ongoing basis to the new backbone organization and Council implementing the Strategy.
- Financial support provided by the City of Medicine Hat Family and Community Support Services Grant, Medicine Hat Community Housing Society, and the Medicine Hat & District Food Bank Association
- The next step is to develop the leadership and coordination infrastructure to support implementation, track progress and ensure shared accountability moving forward. The goal is to launch a new entity to spearhead the Thrive strategy by March 2017

Engagement

- 338 participants responded to a survey and ranked the following four dimensions of life as those that should primarily be considered in an effort to end poverty: (1) income, (2) employment, (3) housing, (4) mental health & addiction.
- Engagement was led by the Poverty Reduction Leadership Group and began with consulting those with lived experiences of poverty (143 individuals who provided input reported having experienced poverty and 96 were currently living in poverty)
 - * Service providers, researchers, funders, government, and the broader public were brought into the process after
- 150 individuals responded to an initial survey at the launch of the strategy process to gauge perspectives on how people defined poverty, its effects, and proposed priorities and solutions to moving forward.
- Small group discussion with 30 people to develop strategy direction.
- Community Conversation session with 80 stakeholders (service providers, government, funders, education, health, justice, social housing, economic assistance, etc.)
- Draft priorities and actions were taken back to the community in December 2016, and were deepened and strengthened following two Community Conversations with 45 participants.
- Overall, 500 Medicine Hat community members participated, including people with lived experience.

Framework

Leadership & Systems Change

- Advance policy, embed lived experience into implementation, engage residents in a social movement to end poverty, declare and demonstrate commitments to social inclusion and Reconciliation, support Council of Champions initiative.

Community System Planning

- Map available funding and services, create a 'Community System' with the help of community members and support its funding and capacity-building, enhance coordinated access to services.

Income Security

- Work with financial institutions to make banking more accessible, creation of a task force on financial literacy and asset-building, support citizens with accessing financial and other benefits and entitlements, increase employability through training and labour force attachment strategies, develop a comprehensive income security policy agenda (income supports, living wage, universal basic income, asset-building).

Business Innovation

- Support CED Strategy, engage partners in business community, information sharing of innovative social impact strategies and tools, creation of Social Innovation Fund to support social enterprise incubation, recognize and promote innovation.

Energy Poverty

- Work with private sector and government partners to reduce energy pricing and improve home energy efficiency, develop partnerships with energy providers to negotiate better rates and reduce utility cut offs for low-income people, enhance basic weatherization and energy efficiency upgrades for low-income homeowners and people in social housing, explore clean energy ventures (i.e. solar power technology).

Affordable Housing

- Advocate for renewed government investment in new affordable housing and repair and upgrade of existing stock, explore innovative incentive programs for private landlords to improve affordable housing options, energy efficiency, quality, and accessibility, support the work of the Landlord Roundtable, continue to support City Council's contributions to land or surplus sites for affordable housing and encourage similar partnerships with other levels of government, non-profits, and private sector stakeholders, develop an Affordable Housing Real Estate Strategy, explore how current affordable housing programs can integrate within the Community System.

Homelessness

- Continue to support the priorities of the plan to end homelessness using a Housing First approach, confirm the achievement of Functional Zero end to homelessness in partnership with national partners, move upstream into homelessness prevention (eviction prevention, discharge planning with public systems), begin delivering Permanent Supportive Housing (place-based), develop alignment moving forward as an integrated Community System in examining priorities in homelessness initiatives.

Food Security

- Advance food security initiatives, support the creation of Community Food Centres, enhance Food Redistribution Strategies to reduce food waste, explore innovative community sustainable farming models targeting lower income households as food producers and consumers, support social enterprise models, encourage urban agriculture on underutilized land and facilities, enhance food and nutrition knowledge.

Transportation

- Support the City of Medicine Hat in implementing Low-Income Transit Passes (fare-gated-to income), expand options for shared-ride and curb-to-curb transportation services, solicit provincial and federal investment to subsidize transit service for low-income residents, advocate for enhanced infrastructure supports from provincial and federal levels of government, explore alternative methods of transit (car-shares, car-pools, rent-a-bike) modeled after innovative practices in the private sector (i.e. Uber) that are social enterprises.

Health & Wellness

- Support partners to enhance physical and mental health, including addictions, explore the development of peer-based models for accessing services, mobile health outreach services, school-based physical and mental health and wellness programs, advance government asks for increased infrastructure investment to upgrade recreation facilities and create new ones in underserved areas, optimize the use of existing structures and spaces for multiple purposes (i.e. schools, recreation centres, churches, vacant land and lots), encourage recreation providers to introduce reduced user fees for low-income residents and leverage recreation centres as access points for engagement and early intervention.

Learning & Literacy

- Provide parents with access to leading edge early years' information and tools, enhance accessibility of Early Childhood Education programs, advance increased investment for accessible and affordable child care, increase supports for quality after-school programs, remove school attendance barriers (especially financial, i.e. bus passes, school fees, eyeglasses, etc.), leverage school and educators as key partners to integrate into the Community System, increase mentorship supports for children and youth in schools, enhance peer mentorship for adults (particularly emerging social entrepreneurs with lived experiences of poverty), engage adult education providers in developing strategies to enhance access to learning and literacy for residents experiencing poverty.

Resilient Families

- Advocate for enhanced support for healthy pregnancies, streamline access to supports for families experiencing periods of vulnerability to increase children's safety, support family reconnection whenever possible, ensure those experiencing violence have access to the immediate supports they need to be safe, work with men and boys to change attitudes and behaviours about masculinity, as well as with women and girls to advance a gender equity agenda, apply a gender lens to the Policy Agenda.

Community Safety

- Work with law enforcement to promote a balanced approach to community safety and crime reduction based on prevention, intervention and enforcement, advance effective interventions to mitigate the dangers posed to victims by those who perpetuate violence, expand access to affordable legal supports, help decriminalize poverty, explore diversion of those charged with minor poverty-related offences to community-based supports rather than incarceration, explore enhancing the availability of restorative justice programs.

Moncton, NB

2015

Social Inclusion: Quality of Life for All Monctonians Plan 2016-2021

https://www.moncton.ca/Assets/Residents+English/Social+Inclusion/Social+Inclusion+Plan_ENG.pdf

Moncton's Social Inclusion plan is designed to meet the City's goal of 'inclusion for all', which, through actions related to inclusion and diversity, work to reduce poverty. The plan is city-led, and for each of the plan's goals, indicators were developed to track success.

Vision

That all citizens enjoy a great quality of life.

Mission

That the City of Moncton will work strategically with community and government partners to improve the quality of life of its most vulnerable citizens.

Guiding Principles

- The City of Moncton will facilitate the community's efforts in social inclusion.
- The City of Moncton will adopt and implement by-laws, policies, plans and strategies that will improve the access and availability of affordable housing in the city.
- The City of Moncton will adopt and implement policies, plan and strategies that will improve the access and availability of affordable and nutritious food in the city.
- The City of Moncton will adopt and implement policies, plans and strategies that will improve the education and training opportunities of its vulnerable citizens.
- The City of Moncton will adopt and implement policies, plans and strategies that will improve the access and availability of mental health services in the city.

Key Points

- Council contributed \$50,000 for the effective implementation of the plan
- The plan identifies the City of Moncton's role as (1) facilitator, (2) capacity developer, (3) partner, and (4) promoter of the plan.

Governance

- The City of Moncton Social Inclusion and Poverty Committee is responsible for the implementation of the Social Inclusion Plan.

Framework

Inclusion and Diversity

Goal 1: Inclusive and welcoming city

- Collaborate with various stakeholders in the development of an annual fact sheet for each priority topic (e.g. housing, mental health, food security, inclusion and diversity, education and training)
- Explore the process of establishing inclusive public signage (LGBT, impairments, languages, etc.)
- Collaborate with internal and outside groups to enable more affordable and accessible events, through subsidies and partnerships
- Host an annual Social Inclusion Summit

Goal 2: Build a sustainable community by continuing to support smart growth

- Facilitate and support in collaboration with community members, committee of a whole informational presentations.
- Facilitate and collaborate in the development of a Downtown Ambassador Program, in partnership with DMCI, ReConnect, RCMP and City staff.
- Work with communications and various other stakeholders in the development of a semi-annual community events brochure to promote events and programs within the community that are socially inclusive.
- Work with communications and various other community stakeholders, in updating the community resource contact list, semi-annually for accuracy.
- Evaluate existing policies and recommend changes so that they may be more socially inclusive.
- Facilitate city staff discussion around the implementation of drinking fountains in the urban core, trails, and highly populated parks.
- Implement Water for All initiative, in partnership with the Petitcodiac Watershed Alliance.
- Develop and implement an interdepartmental dispatch protocol for vulnerable people in public spaces.
- Facilitate and support the delivery of street outreach awareness training in partnership with ReConnect for frontline City staff, DMCI, and other interested partners.
- Facilitate, develop and deliver a five-year tri-community affordable transit pass pilot program.
- Present results of the affordable transit pass program, for permanent delivery.

Housing Choice and Affordability

Goal 1: Reduce homelessness on the streets and in shelters within the city

- Participate as a member of the Greater Moncton Homelessness Steering Committee.
- Facilitate and coordinate a discussion with Université de Moncton as a potential research partner specific to housing focused studies and research.
- Pursue a partnership with the New-Brunswick Non Profit Housing Association in hosting SPDAT training and implementation, for all interested partners in the community.
- Explore and inquire further on Data collection systems.
- Design a new Social Inclusion grant program with existing municipal funds better adapted to the needs of the social inclusion community and in conjunction with the implementation of the Social Inclusion Plan.

Goal 2: Increase supply of affordable housing

- Ensure social inclusion is a part of the city assessment, as specified in the municipal plan.
- Facilitate a city-wide housing needs assessment study.
- Present findings of city-wide housing needs assessment to council and public, through a Monctonians Housing Need report.
- Facilitate and develop a Municipal Housing implementation plan, including rooming houses and all other housing models.

- Explore and inquire on land banking and affordable housing policies, including density bonusing and inclusionary zoning.
- Develop an affordable housing policy.
- Explore and develop a business case for a city-owned entity to deliver affordable housing, in partnership with community-based agencies and private sector stakeholders.
- Participate actively as a member of Municipalities who lead in the reduction of poverty Canadian committee.

Goal 3: Maintain quality, safe and affordable housing throughout the city

- Explore standards and maintenance bylaws specific to rooming houses.
- Discuss opportunities to appropriately mandate, support and address issues related to rooming houses with By-Law Enforcement Services and the Building Inspection Department.
- Facilitate and collaborate with various community agencies on opportunities to develop rental housing training and support for property owners.
- Explore and develop a business case for a Rental Standard Database, to keep property owners and landlords accountable and motivated in keeping their properties in good order for renters and a place to advertise their apartments, in addition to assisting renters in making informed decisions about renting in the city and acquiring affordable housing.
- Enhance accountability, efficiency and transparency of approval processes and clarify regulations in order to reduce development costs and enhance affordability.
- Facilitate and coordinate the development of building affordable housing fact sheet and fast track building approval process for affordable housing projects.
- Facilitate and coordinate with Urban Planning, Building Inspection, and Social Development, opportunities for renovation incentives, including all other affordable housing incentives municipally and provincially.

Urban Agriculture and Food Security

Goal 1: Support and encourage sustainable food production

- Explore opportunities to install community gardens and other urban agriculture models on city property.
- Develop an urban agriculture toolkit to enable the creation, participation, and awareness of community gardens, urban farms, beekeeping, permaculture, and other urban agriculture models.
- Facilitate the creation of an urban agriculture network to assist in capacity building, information sharing and to develop planting options, maintenance and harvesting strategies, as well as food allocation protocols.
- Lead by example by ensuring all new municipal tenders have provisions for local food.
- Encourage the implementation of guidelines to allow for growing vegetables and other food plants in residential boulevards, traffic circles, and bulges.
- Gradually integrate and/or replace traditional plants with food-producing plants.
- Ensure that existing city programs (city tree program) that offer trees to our local residents provide or require food-producing tree species wherever possible.
- Enhance funding partnerships to support the creation, operation, improvement and capacity building opportunities for community gardens and other urban agriculture models.
- Research, inquire and pursue the creation of an urban farming business license category.

Goal 2: Assure that all members of the community have access to food at all times

- Facilitate and collaborate with various community groups to engage community members in making use of local community kitchens.
- Update existing or develop new protocols and other regulatory levers for food purchasing by city facilities.
- Support existing centralized food distribution system for all community based food related services.

- Identify the need for the installation of community kitchens or retrofit existing kitchens in new developments, social housing sites, churches/community centres and/or city facilities.
- Support advocacy to the provincial and federal government for a just and sustainable food system, through financial and/or resource support.
- Support the Nutritious Foods in our Schools Committee in planning, by supporting school food needs assessment, regional strategic plan, and a local action plan for all 22 schools within the City of Moncton catchment.
- Ensure the City of Moncton is an active partner in the delivery of the Community Food Centre.
- Facilitate and support the establishment of a community based emergency food network, to provide more consistency and centralized support for soup kitchens and other emergency food services throughout the city.
- Facilitate and develop asset mapping and an action plan for a community based emergency food network.
- Enhance funding and resource partnerships to support the creation, operation, improvement and capacity building opportunities for a coordinated and inclusive food system.
- Actively attend and participate in Our Foods SNB work.

Goal 3: Empowering people to make informed decisions about healthy eating

- Increase our physical food assets and infrastructures currently in place, through funding or other resources available.
- Engage ethno-culturally diverse communities, socio-economically diverse, age-diverse and harder-to-reach communities, through storytelling, best practices and networking opportunities.
- Support learning opportunities through community based workshops (urban agriculture, preservation, producing, etc.).
- Support public education programs on pollinator bees, honeybees and beekeeping.
- Increase the planting of food-bearing trees when planting new trees in parks and on other civic lands, and encourage community stewardship of those trees.
- Support businesses and social enterprises involved in processing and distribution of healthy, local and sustainable food within the city and connect to local agricultural producers in the region, through subsidies, grants and networking.
- Facilitate and support the establishment of a community garden network to promote the operation of community gardens, including the procurement of ripe fruits, vegetables, and edible plants throughout the city.
- In partnership with our internal GIS system, develop an edible landscape map to promote the locations of fruits, vegetables and plants throughout the city.
- Develop and install edible landscape signage to help identify the fruits, vegetables and plants publicly accessible throughout the city.

Goal 4: Reducing food and drink waste

- Map out and measure food and drink waste within various sectors, as feasible.
- Map out food loss and waste in our city.
- Present evidence-based report findings to council and public.
- Establish a baseline and set a target.
- Ensure that food composting is available in city facilities and that dishes and food packaging are reusable, recyclable or compostable.
- Facilitate and install water fountains/ling stations within the downtown core, parks and trails, where appropriate.
- Support community-based groups in the education and awareness around food and drink waste.
- Facilitate and collaborate in the development of a strategy for a voluntary collective action program.
- Explore food recovery programs and initiatives to channel surplus edible food to people, such as the provincial Charitable Donation Food Act.
- Re-evaluate our food scrap model to expand on an impact based model.

Mental Health

Goal 1: Improve overall health and well-being of our citizens

- Facilitate and collaborate in the development of a mental health knowledge assessment to identify mental health awareness of City staff.
- Facilitate the development of an awareness training series focused on mental health in collaboration with CMHA.
- Conduct a post-knowledge assessment to identify awareness of City staff.
- Assess municipal services and policies for impact on mental health across the life span.
- Facilitate with outside groups to identify gaps in services. This includes the development of community-based emergency services as identified and/or needed.

Goal 2: Reduce stigma around mental health and support the diverse needs of our community

- Facilitate and establish a collaborative trauma-informed policy with resources from various stakeholders and partners.
- Support collaborative partnerships within community based groups that encourage inclusion within the community for citizens that have survived trauma.
- Provide facilitation, resources and support for community based groups leading awareness activities specific to mental health.

Education and Training

Goal 1: Promote integrated school and community collaborations

- Facilitate a community based networking event to allow school community agents to network with various groups.
- Facilitate and collaborate in the development of a resource presentation for teachers looking to incorporate social inclusion within the classroom, in partnership
- Support community agents in the development of socially inclusive initiatives within schools surrounding the City of Moncton catchment.

Goal 2: To increase skills and employability of our citizens

- Develop inclusion policies specific to municipal contracts and/or tenders to include 10 per cent of staff that otherwise would be unemployed, but employable.
- Facilitate and collaborate in the development of an awareness training series, focused on culture, mental health, disabilities, inclusion diversity and communication for city staff. In partnership with CMHA, MAGMA, Inclusive Employer working group and the Accessibility committee.
- Pilot a mentorship program in conjunction with the Immigration plan.
- Establish partnerships between outside education and training groups and City of Moncton HR department.
- Support and participate in education and training networking, best practices, partnerships and program development.

The City of New Westminster is working with the Ministry of Children and Family Development (MCFD) and local organizations to reduce poverty in New Westminster through the Community Poverty Reduction Initiative. The strategy has a focus on children and families, and includes specific actions to enhance the quality of life of families, while providing a supportive environment and opportunities to help families move out of poverty. Furthermore, it incorporates a five-year action plan and is based on research and community consultation, including with those with lived experiences of poverty.

Definition of Poverty

The Low Income Measure is used in the 2011 National Household Survey and for the purposes of measuring poverty in this strategy. This measure utilizes income inequality, with the general concept being that a household's income is low income if it is less than half the median income of all households. While this definition of poverty is measurable and comparable, the committee views poverty as the condition by which an individual or a family does not have sufficient social and economic resources to achieve holistic wellbeing or the choices, dignity and power to fully participate in society.

Key Points

- 5-year action plan
- The Community Poverty Reduction Initiative began in May 2012 as a partnership between MCFD and UBCM – New West was one of 7 pilot communities.
 - * Pilot project was said to have had insufficient results in making systemic changes (i.e. anything beyond connecting families to services)
- Poverty Reduction Needs Assessment and Directional Document (2014) included the following preliminary actions:
 - * Collect benchmark information related to family poverty, consult with families living in poverty, identify, inventory, and map community resources, develop terms of reference for the committee, prepare information to educate the community and reduce the stigma associated with poverty, join the Cities Reducing Poverty Learning Community and Network.
- Mentions the need for collaboration with senior levels of government in order to address systemic barriers
- New Westminster first municipality in Canada to institute a Living Wage policy (2011)
- Focus on child and youth and family poverty, including early years poverty
 - * Early Development Instrument (EDI) data to calculate childhood vulnerability rates by neighbourhood
- Identifies vulnerable populations more likely to be affected by poverty
- Noticeable focus on addressing stigma and social exclusion
 - * Poverty Mythbusters publication
- The strategy identifies existing poverty-related initiatives that the City of New West is working on (and which create a strong foundation for the strategy), as well as identifies coordinating bodies who directly or indirectly address poverty (i.e. committees and working groups).
- No apparent Aboriginal representation on committee (augmenting membership is included as an action in the plan)

Framework

- Community Poverty Reduction Committee
- Employment, Income, and Financial Literacy
- Housing and Shelter
- Information, Services, and Support
- Public Awareness, Empowerment, and Mobilization
- Social Connectedness and Community Engagement
- Transportation

Governance

- Community Poverty Reduction Committee met monthly to inform and oversee the development of the strategy
 - * Includes 3 city staff, and other stakeholder representatives, for example, ISS of BC, MCFD, Fraser Health, Salvation Army, etc.
- Pilot project led by MCFD in 7 communities (Cranbrook, Kamloops, New West, Port Hardy, Prince George, Stewart, Surrey) to develop community-based poverty reduction strategies.
 - * Half-time MCFD consultant was assigned to New West
- MCFD funded family consultant position

- City of New West staff support and in-kind assistance for the Community Poverty Reduction Committee

Engagement

- Actions based on research and consultations began to be drafted by the committee in fall 2015 and were shared with over 30 organizations who attended a community conversation on November 20, 2015. The actions were refined and augmented following feedback to create the strategy.
- Consultation with those with lived experience: 36 families with lived experiences of poverty participated (focus group sessions and survey)

Implementation

- Actions are documented and categorized but not assigned specific responsibilities or timeframes (participating community partners felt that this had proven divisive as part of a previous action planning exercise)
- Community partners felt that the committee should review the complete listing of actions on a yearly basis and develop an annual action plan reflective of capacity and resources.
- Membership of the committee may be augmented to address a specific action or a sub-committee established

Monitoring and Evaluation

- Continued updating of the Poverty Profile to determine if poverty rates are improving, deteriorating, or staying the same
- The committee will prepare an annual update report to City Council and other interested bodies to provide an update on progress
 - * The update will identify the number of actions implemented, and will state reasons for partially or incomplete actions
- The strategy may evolve to address new issues or respond to unforeseen circumstances as identified in its annual review

Saint John, NB

2014

Living SJ: Social Renewal Strategy

https://docs.wixstatic.com/ugd/a57d80_e745801a7f3b4264ae6f0a059ba34702.pdf

Living SJ is a movement to end generational poverty in Saint John. The strategy uses a Collective Impact approach and works with a network of over 100 partners (including the United Way) from three levels of government, the private sector, non-profits and neighbourhoods. Living SJ consists of a leadership team, four collective impact teams, a planning team and two backbone staff.

Vision

Our vision is a strong community working together to improve the quality of life for all citizens of Greater Saint John.

Key Points

- Collective Impact Approach which includes a common agenda, shared measurement systems, mutually reinforcing activities, continuous communication, and backbone infrastructure.
- The strategy is aligned with the priorities and plans of local and provincial governments and with the region's economic development plan.
- The Lean 6 Sigma approach was used in the focus groups to prioritize key issues objectively.

Governance

- Partnership between the United Way, The Community Foundation, Business Community Anti-Poverty Initiative, Vibrant Communities SJ, Human Development Council, the City of Saint John, the Province of New Brunswick, and the University of New Brunswick-Saint John.
- Leadership Team: educators, non-profit and business leaders, funders, neighbourhood representatives and all levels of government.
- Planning Team: two levels of government, non-profit agencies, funders, the university, and two Living SJ staff. The Planning Team reports to the Leadership Team.
- Community Advisory Team: non-profit and community organizations.
- Collective Impact Teams: provide leadership to develop and implement specific strategies with members drawn from all sectors of the community.

Engagement

- 27 focus group sessions to discuss 12 issue areas were held in the Spring of 2014 with over 100 participants
- Stakeholder meetings were held with several community partners from the municipal government, provincial government, post-secondary institutions, neighbourhood groups, health sector, and non-profit sector.

Framework

Priority #1: Transform low-income neighbourhoods into vibrant mixed incomes communities

- High level target: The low-income population in one neighbourhood has been reduced by 15%

Priority #2: Close the education achievement gap

- High level target: Within two years 90% of all children will achieve grade 2 literacy standards. Within five years, 90% of all students will graduate from high school

Priority #3: Improve the health of residents through neighbourhood-based models of care

- High level target: Every low-income neighbourhood has a health care delivery model which demonstrates a return on investment (e.g. reduced emergency room use)

Priority #4: Education and training leads to employment for low-income residents

- High level target: In 2 years 200 families on income assistance attain employment, and in 5 years 500 families attain employment

Thunder Bay, ON

2013

Building A Better Thunder Bay for All: A Community Action Strategy to Reduce Poverty

http://vibrantcanada.ca/files/thunder_bay_povertyreductionreport.pdf

Thunder Bay's plan is informed by research, consultations and interviews with many individuals and groups, including persons experiencing poverty and representatives of local organizations concerned with the effects of poverty. The plan is a collaborative work by the Lakehead Social Planning Council and Poverty Free Thunder Bay with support from the District of Thunder Bay Social Services Administration Board, and the City of Thunder Bay. The plan aims to assist those most in need in order to create a better community for everyone.

Vision

A Better Thunder Bay for All

Guiding Principles

- Uniquely Ours: We will seek out evidence-based actions and solutions that respond to the needs of our community.

- Achievable: We will build new strengths and collaborate to leverage existing and available resources, services, and programs.
- Respectful: We respect and value each individual, each story, and acknowledge the collective contribution to our diverse community.
- Inclusive: We strive to acknowledge our different journeys in a way that creates a sense of belonging for all.

Key Points

- The strategy includes an implementation and monitoring framework which recommends that an Implementation Panel be established and that a Report Card be updated annually.
- Consent to collect data such as income, gender, age, marital status, dependents under 19, accommodation type, use of public transportation, internet access, total number served, total number refunds is being incorporated into a volunteer income tax clinic program to augment the snapshot of the low income population in Thunder Bay.
- Encouraging the construction of one fully accessible floor in new builds
- Development of partnerships to facilitate transportation to grocery stores and outlets from low income neighbourhoods
- Investigating the feasibility of free tuition and debt forgiveness for post-secondary students

Governance

- The plan is a collaborative work by the Lakehead Social Planning Council and Poverty Free Thunder Bay with support from the District of Thunder Bay Social Services Administration Board, and the City of Thunder Bay.
- A Steering Committee was formed by inviting a broad cross-section of the community to draft terms of reference.

Engagement

- Approximately 440 individuals took part in forums and interviews
- Engagement included a community forum, open houses, focus groups, key informant interviews, and consultations with persons experiencing poverty and representatives of organizations concerned with the effects of poverty.

Framework

Housing

- Increase non-market, affordable, and social housing stock
- Promote affordable market rental housing and home ownership opportunities for low income individuals and families
- Develop short-, medium- and long-term solutions to homelessness
- Enhance the quality of life with respect to housing
- Advocacy

Income and Community Economic Development

- Promote Living Wages
- Improve access to social assistance and earned income opportunities
- Develop collaborative approaches to employment training
- Promote Community Economic Development strategies
- Advocacy

Infrastructure

- Enhance communications capacity for low income individuals and families
- Improve transportation affordability and accessibility
- Develop multi-sector community hubs
- Promote food security coordination and access

- Increase recreational opportunities for low income individuals, people with disabilities, and disenfranchised groups
- Strengthen collaborative and preventative approaches to public safety
- Promote enhanced coordination and partnership among health providers
- Advocacy

Inclusion and Engagement

- Enhance educational opportunities and promote lifelong learning as a public good
- Support a welcoming community
- Increase opportunities for community dialogue and engagement
- Make racism and discrimination unacceptable in Thunder Bay
- Advocacy

Toronto, ON

2015

TO Prosperity: Toronto Poverty Reduction Strategy

<http://www.toronto.ca/legdocs/mmis/2015/ex/bgrd/backgroundfile-84626.pdf>

Toronto's plan reflects key concerns and issues prioritized by Toronto residents during a broad engagement process, as well as knowledge of best practices to address poverty in Toronto and other jurisdictions. An Action Plan will be revised every four years, and annual work plans will be developed. The Toronto strategy focuses on tackling systemic issues such as inequality and racism, and takes a strengths-based approach by focusing on the resources the community already has which leads to its prosperity.

Vision

By 2035, Toronto is a city with opportunities for all: a leader in the collective pursuit of justice, fairness and equity. We want to be renowned as a city where everyone has access to good jobs, adequate income, stable housing, affordable transportation, nutritious food, and supportive services.

Key Points

- Strategy inserts the voices of people with lived experience of poverty into the document by using first-hand testimonials and creative contributions throughout
- Action plan includes improving the quality of affordable housing by strengthening the enforcement of minimum housing standards and expanding incentive programs for private landlords and low-income homeowners to improve essential health, safety, and accessibility repairs and modifications
- Toronto's plan has a large focus on transit equity and includes innovative actions such as allowing children under 12 to ride free and a fare-g geared-to-income model, when purchasing an annual transit pass, buyers pay only for 11 months.

Governance

- Accountability table: community sector, residents, business, labour, academia, and key funding institutions to oversee the effective engagement, implementation, and measurement of the strategy
- Senior staff steering committee: chaired by the Deputy City Manager, Cluster A, with membership drawn from City divisions, agencies, boards, and commissions coordinates City service and policy alignments.
- Lived experience advisory group: Toronto residents with lived experience of poverty contribute their expertise to the effective development, measuring, and monitoring of poverty reduction initiatives.
- Private sector roundtable: Toronto business leaders, United Way Toronto & York Region, and the Toronto Region Board of Trade contribute strategic advice and identify opportunities that meet economic and employment goals.

- Monitoring and evaluation working group: Measurement and evaluation experts monitor key indicators and measure the effectiveness of the Strategy's recommendations and actions to address poverty.

Engagement

- 101 community conversations
- 10 days of dialogue
- 635 completed online questionnaires

Framework

3 Overarching Objectives

The Strategy sets out three overarching objectives focused on the effects, trajectories, and causes of poverty, namely:

- Address immediate needs: ensure that essential services are effective, well-funded, coordinated, and meet the needs of those living in poverty.
- Create pathways to prosperity: improve the quality of jobs in the city, attract investments to low income areas, and ensure that City programs and services are integrated, client-centered, and focused on early intervention.
- Drive Systemic Change: Create a more accountable and participatory government, where reducing poverty and inequality is an integral part of day-to-day business.

6 Issue-areas and recommendations

Housing Stability: The city needs more quality affordable housing so that individuals and families with low-incomes do not need to sacrifice basic needs to live in decent conditions.

- Improve the quality of all affordable housing
- Assist low-income individuals and families to secure and maintain affordable housing
- Increase the supply of affordable housing

Service Access: Not all residents find the services they need when they need them; the City can do more to make services available and effective.

- Increase service access and availability
- Improve access to high quality programs for children and youth

Transit Equity: Public transit needs to be affordable and reliable; it needs to take residents to opportunities and bring opportunities to neighbourhoods.

- Make transit more affordable for low-income residents
- Improve access to high quality programs for children and youth

Food Access: Torontonians, especially in many low-income communities, need better access to affordable, nutritious food.

- Eliminate hunger
- Increase access to affordable, nutritious and culturally appropriate food

Quality Jobs and Livable Wages: Toronto cannot achieve its vision of being an equitable and inclusive city while so many residents are unable to find quality jobs.

- Improve the quality of and access to income supports
- Create employment opportunities for low-income groups with high unemployment rates
- Improve the quality of jobs

Systemic Change: Mobilizing an entire city to reduce and ultimately end poverty will take new ways of

thinking and new ways of working.

- Leverage the economic power of the City to stimulate job growth, support local businesses, and drive inclusive growth
- Create a seamless social support system
- Coordinate and evaluate the implementation of TO Prosperity
- Engage City staff and residents on poverty reduction efforts
- Dedicate funding to poverty reduction actions

Structure

- TO Prosperity contains 17 recommendations. Each recommendation is linked to a set of actions to be carried out over a four-year period. Combined, these recommendations and actions comprise the 2015–2018 Term Action Plan.
- The plan reflects key concerns and issues prioritized by Toronto residents during a broad engagement process, as well as knowledge of best practices to address poverty in Toronto and other jurisdictions. Recognizing that priorities, knowledge, and economic landscapes constantly evolve, the City will evaluate and revise the Action Plan every four years.
- Annual work plans will identify key City initiatives to address poverty and deliverables expected in the short-term. An annual progress report and a revised work plan will be brought to City Council for consideration each year.

Appendix C. Summary of Emergent Themes from Community Engagement

Leading up to its submission to the federal government in June 2017, the City of Vancouver consulted with key stakeholders and community partners. The City of Vancouver recommendations to the federal strategy were developed with input from over 70 organizations through four engagement processes, all of which included the voices of people with lived experience of poverty. The groups consulted included the Healthy City Leadership Table, which includes senior leaders from the City, academia, and health, philanthropic, urban Aboriginal and non-profit organizations. Notably, the British Columbia Poverty Reduction Coalition, First Call: BC Child and Youth Coalition, Community Economic Development Strategic Action Committee (CEDSAC), and Metro Vancouver Aboriginal Executive Council (MVAEC). Emergent themes from these discussions include:



Defining and measuring poverty

Throughout our engagement, we heard that Vancouverites are dissatisfied with the way in which poverty is being measured in Canada – there is a desire for more holistic and comprehensive ways to understand what it means to live ‘below the poverty line’, and the current definitions and measurements don’t resonate with the public. In fact, we heard that the ‘poverty line’ itself does not adequately reflect the multiplicity of experiences faced by people grappling with poverty in our city. For example, even individuals and families located ‘above the poverty line’ (as defined by current measures, i.e. LIM and LICO), are often struggling nonetheless. Place-based measures that are framed in terms that the public can understand are greatly needed to truly communicate what it is like to live in poverty in a developed nation. Many of the stakeholders with whom we spoke reinforced the importance of not only measuring poverty, but measuring inequality to truly understand the scale and impacts of poverty, and the drivers of inequality and wealth accumulation. Furthermore, our community partners were interested in the idea of redefining what it means to measure ‘prosperity’. In other words, to redefine our common understanding of what it means to prosper as an individual and as a community. Currently, this narrow understanding is almost purely economic, and as a result, is having an effect on the ways in which we evaluate our success in sustaining healthy cities and people. Expanding our definition of ‘prosperity’ to include social innovation, the social determinants of health, and non-Western forms of measurement, and including a recognition of inequalities in our measurement of poverty would bring us closer to a holistic definition.

National standards and universality

Overwhelmingly, we heard that Vancouverites want to see the federal government implement national standards that will encourage poverty reduction in provinces and cities. Some examples include:

- Guaranteed basic income
- Universal child care
- Universal access to dental care, vision care, and pharmacare
- Universal living wage policy
- National minimum wage policy
- Gender pay equity
- Increase income assistance nationally
- Increase CPP, OAS
- Restore basic EI rate to 75% of average insured earnings for all claimants instead of 55%
- Legislating standardized poverty reduction targets and timelines across the provinces and territories
- Reducing the cost of telecommunications in Canada and increasing access to telephone and internet services

Indigenous lens

Our stakeholders told us that it is crucial for poverty reduction initiatives to carefully consider the impacts on Aboriginal communities and families. There is a need to develop programs in consultation with Indigenous groups for specific Indigenous populations, on-reserve, off-reserve, and in urban, rural, and remote areas. It is known that poverty disproportionately affects Indigenous communities; therefore, they should be primary partners in developing community-based solutions. Some strategies and actions that were shared include:

- Using a trauma-informed lens and understanding the links between poverty, violence, and intergenerational trauma in Indigenous communities
- Supporting self-determination
- Being mindful of what an Indigenous versus non-Indigenous definition of innovation looks like
- Increasing funding to First Nations on-reserve; return to core funding models
- Investing in Aboriginal health and education
- Addressing the stigma around poverty
- Using a rights-based approach to poverty reduction
- Decriminalizing poverty
- Recognizing the First Nations wellness model
- Recognizing that there are trade-offs required when deciding whether to receive a stable income through welfare vs. the uncertainty of working in a precarious job
- Federal government needs to allow fluid funding to on-reserve communities (i.e. the ability to reinvest funds if they are successful in getting community members off income assistance)
- Need to create new measures of success and indicators
- Should reinstate Katimavik as a program that encourages local community-building and programs that connect Indigenous youth from Canada to international Indigenous groups through a cultural exchange program
- Exploring potlach economies as a definition of what success looks like
- Need for a national Indigenous Healing Strategy to prepare people to heal before adequately address poverty
- Support Indigenous-specific treatment centres, healing services, and low-barrier access to cultural activities
- Increase the number of organizations providing Indigenous Cultural Safety training (like in London, ON)

Welfare reform

In conversation with community leaders, we repeatedly heard concerns surrounding the repeal of the Canada Assistance Plan (CAP) under the 1995 federal Budget, and the establishment of the “Canada Health and Social Transfer” (CHST) in 1996, which was described as an important social policy change which significantly impacted federally-funded welfare programs and services. Other concerns regarding welfare included:

- Improving equal access to welfare (online services, in person support)
- Improving access to Medical Services Plan (MSP)
- Implementing national welfare standards

Innovative Actions and Policy tools

Participants in our community consultations offered several ideas for innovative policy tools and actions that the Government of Canada could implement to advance poverty reduction efforts. Some examples include:

- More progressive taxation
- Community benefits agreements
- Social integration policies (i.e. cooperative housing models)
- Canadian Disabilities Act
- Investments in housing
- End refugee transportation loans
- Federal program for supportive income assistance (i.e. support businesses to hire employees with barriers through government subsidies)
- Index child benefit
- Innovation fund
- Federal government incentives for businesses to become living wage employers
- Top up GST credit
- More funding for employment programs for youth
- Better and less restrictive funding for non-profits



VANCOUVER
COMMUNITY
COLLEGE
50
YEARS

let's heal the divide